

NEEDED

TRUTH.

EDITED BY

J. A. BOSWELL, JOHN BROWN,
C. M. LUXMOORE, L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

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

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Mr. F. MATTHEW, 529, Battersea Park Rd.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ABRAHAM	44
ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED	234
ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD	239
ASSEMBLIES, THE COUPLING TOGETHER OF	242
BELIEVING AND REALIZING	238
BETHEL, THE GOD OF	192
BROODING	167
CALL TO DUTY	142
CHILDREN OF GOD	118
CHRIST OR SELF	43
CHRIST, THE OBEDIENCE OF	46
CHRIST, THE SUFFERINGS OF	197
CORRESPONDENCE	37
COUPLING TOGETHER OF ASSEMBLIES, THE	242
CRITICS, OUR, A REVIEW	169
CRY OUT AND SHOUT	168
DAYSpring FROM ON HIGH, THE	264
DESIRE, HIS, IS TOWARD ME	139
DUTY, A CALL TO	142
DUTY, THE PATH OF	21
EARTHLY THINGS, MINDING	190
EXAMPLE, HE LEFT US AN	95
FAITH'S TRIUMPH	70
FEELING AND KNOWING	185
FLESH AND SPIRIT	89
GIVE ATTENTION TO READING	166
GO FORWARD	189
GOD OF BETHEL, THE	192
GRACE SUFFICIENT	59
HE LED THEM FORTH BY THE RIGHT WAY	120
HE LEFT US AN EXAMPLE	95
HIS DESIRE IS TOWARDS ME	139
HOPE	1, 34
HOPE OF SALVATION, THE	42
HOPE, THAT BLESSED	47
HUMILITY OF THE LORD JESUS	129
HYMN (<i>See also Poetry</i>)	241
IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS	224
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY	212
ISRAEL'S JOURNEY FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN	64, 92, 116, 163, 186, 209, 232, 258, 278
JOHN, THIRD EPISTLE BY	155
JOSEPH	49, 79, 97
JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH, THE	261
JUDGMENT, PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE	68
KINGS OF JUDAH, THE	10, 29, 60, 83, 105, 121, 145, 181, 193, 217, 265
LENTILS, A PLOT OF	134
LET US MAKE US A NAME	53, 73
LORD JESUS, THE, OR THE POOL	161

	PAGE
LORD, THE SECRET OF THE	67
LORD, THE TEMPEST'S	144
LORD'S COMING, THE, AND CONSEQUENT EVENTS	256, 276
LOVE	156
LOVE OF GOD, THE	237
ME, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO	96
MEDITATION, A	136
MILK AND SOLID FOOD	208
MINDING EARTHLY THINGS	190
NAME, LET US MAKE US A	53, 73
NEWNESS OF LIFE	206
NEWNESS OF SPIRIT	229
NO ACCUSATION	114
NO CONDEMNATION	112
NO SEPARATION	115
NO SMALL STIR ABOUT THE WAY	226
NOTES ON REVELATION	149
OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST, THE	46
ONE THING LACKING	20
OUR CRITICS, A REVIEW	169
PATH OF DUTY, THE	21
PEACE	158
PLOT OF LENTILS, A	134
POETRY . 24, 47, 59, 120, 144, 168, 192, 216, 224, 239, 241, 253, 264,	284
POOL, THE LORD JESUS OR THE	160
PRAYER	94
PRAYER ENDED	165
PSALM 132.	253
QUESTION AND ANSWER 39, 63, 109, 156, 202, 254,	274
QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG	216
READING, GIVE ATTENTION TO	166
RESURRECTION MORN, THE	284
REVELATION, NOTES ON	149
SAVED FROM THE CURSE	6
SECRET OF THE LORD, THE	67
SELF JUDGMENT	91
SONS WITHOUT REBUKE	41
SONSHIP	24
SUFFERINGS OF THE CHRIST, THE	197
TEMPEST'S LORD, THE	144
THANKS IN EVERYTHING, GIVE	224
THAT BLESSED HOPE	47
THIRD EPISTLE BY JOHN	155
THOUGHTS FOR THE SEASON	15
UNBELIEF	215
WATCH!	18
WAY, THE, EVIL SPOKEN OF	25
WAY, THE, NO SMALL STIR ABOUT	226
WE KNOW IN PART	32
WELLS OF WATER	160
WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH DAY	103
WORD, THE	280
WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION	40
YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME	96

NEEDED TRUTH.

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HOPE.

IN seeking to write a little upon this most interesting and helpful subject, it may be necessary to make plain what it is. Many, if not all, of those who have received Jesus as Saviour, have felt the influence of hope. But some may not know what it is.

The blessed Holy Spirit has been pleased to tell us plainly in Romans 8. what it is *not*, and if we but clearly grasp this, it will fit us for knowing what it *is*.

It is not a seen thing. "Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

Hope is an expectation of something in the future, something not realized at present, not seen. It always views something better, and never anything worse. It plays a large part in the life of a Christian, whether understood or not.

When in the kingdom of darkness, bound by Satan, we had no hope (Eph. 2. 12). No hope in life, and in the same condition at death (1 Thess. 4. 13)—no hope. Should the eyes of an unconverted person fall upon these lines, our prayer to God is, that he may realize his true condition. The eternity that stretches out before such, in its boundless space, in its never-ending duration, is wrapt in the thick darkness of the wrath of God. Not one ray of hope shall

ever break into that eternal night, to cheer the hearts of the grace-rejecting ones. No hope!

But when, in the greatness of His love, He made us alive together with Christ, we were begotten again unto a living hope. (By grace ye are saved.) The joyful news of God's love for guilty man brought hope in it, even the hope of the Gospel. It was, and is, an anchor of the soul, holding us fast, amidst the storms of life, on a wild, tempestuous sea. Blessed hope!

The hope of the children of God is one, from the descent of the Holy Spirit unto the coming of the Son of God; or in other words, this entire dispensation. "One hope of your calling." So that whether at home with the Lord, or in the wilderness toiling on, still the hope is one. It can never belong especially to any sect of Christians, nor is it the exclusive property of those who have been builded together for an habitation of God in spirit in these days. It belongs to every member of His glorious body. However much Christians may differ from one another down here, and find themselves separated into numberless parties, the hope is one.

It is however set before us in a number of different aspects. Just as the peerless Son of God is shown out in the variety of offerings, so the blessed hope has a variety of phases.

In Romans 8. we are introduced to a groaning creation, waiting in hope for a glorious deliverance, when the blighting curse that sin has brought upon it will be removed, and Nature shall bask once more in the sunlight of her Creator's face. Her groans shall change into a song of gladness, when her Creator and Lord shall sit upon His throne. But there are other groans heard in Romans 8., even the groans of the Christian, who feels the heavy burden of the body of his humiliation, and looks with longing gaze for the redemption of the body. Who has not felt the

burden of the body, weak and frail as it is, but worse still, so prone to err? Oh, how the heart longs betimes to be free, to be clothed with a body which shall never have an evil desire, nor know pain or sickness! How the hope of His coming brightens up the dark scene! When He comes, He will fashion our poor weak, sinful, dying bodies like unto His glorious body. Surely this is worth waiting for.

The phase of the hope in 1 Thessalonians 5. 8 is that of salvation. We have tasted of the sweetness of salvation, at the hands of our Saviour God. But the fulness is yet to come. *We have been saved from the penal consequences of our sins*, but how different even that will be when we look back from the very presence of His glory to the hell we have been saved from! How little we know of salvation from the power of sin to what awaits us, when no thought shall ever have place for a moment in our minds out of keeping with the perfect holiness of God. Sin shall never cause Him nor us one pang of sorrow again. Perfectly holy within, and perfectly holy without. More than that, sin shall have no place where we shall be, our eyes will never fall upon the scenes we are so familiar with to-day. The place itself is holy. What a blessed hope!

Again, it is different in Titus 1. 2—"In the hope of eternal life." The blessed Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." How precious is that life, which we received as a gift from God, upon believing in the Son! Like unto its Author, all its aspirations are holy. Everything about it is according to the mind of God. But how little we are able to enter into its fulness! Our bodies are not capable of bearing it, even if everything else was compatible. The fulness of the eternal life awaits us, when "He who is our life shall appear." Then shall we enjoy the life abundantly. The more we know of its preciousness

down here, the more our hearts will long for the realization of the hope.

Then in Galatians 5. 5, it is a hope of righteousness on the same principle as Titus 1.

Our hope is a person; so Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "Christ Jesus, our hope." Again in Colossians 1. he says, "Christ in you the hope of glory." It is not a doctrine, but a living person, and that person Christ—God's glorified Son, our Saviour and Lord. What a soul-stirring truth, "Christ in you the hope of glory"! Our hope can never fail, for it is Christ Himself. It can never be blighted, for He is omnipotent. No power of Satan, or demons, or man, can hinder our being with Him in the fulness of glory. We wait, with a hope that cannot fail.

This hope we have just been contemplating in some of its different phases is centred, as to its being realized, in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is itself called the blessed hope. Surely no theme will find a greater place in the heart of the Christian than the theme of His coming again. It manifests how far the heart has got out of touch with Him when the thought of His coming again has no place in the mind; and even when spoken about, fails to move the heart in the least. The withering garland of this poor, guilty world's applause attracts and holds many a Christian's heart. Pleasure's bower, the mirage of Satan, fills the mind and eye of many. But the coming of the Lord of Life and Glory, the *unveiling* of the glory of the great God, the coming of the One who gave Himself up to the unutterable anguish of Calvary in order that we might be saved, fails to move the cold heart that has left its first love. He who so loved us as to die for us, and keeps Himself for us, in the midst of Heaven's transcending glory, whose heart longs for the time when He will have us with Himself, is coming again. Blessed hope; how it cheers the darkest hour! The coming One will come,

and will not tarry. What will it be to see Him face to face, know as we are known, and love as we have been loved? Surely our hearts will find their expression in the words so often sung:

“The Bride eyes not her garments,
 But her dear Bridegroom’s face.
 I will not gaze at glory,
 But on the King of Grace;
 Not at the Crown He giveth,
 But on His piercèd hand.
 The Lamb is all the glory
 In Immanuel’s Land.”

This hope, when living in the heart of a Christian, has a wonderful influence on his or her life. John says it causes one to purify himself, as He (Christ) is pure. What more mighty incentive could a Christian know than the thought, to-day—to-night—may find me “with the Lord”? How it would keep back words and actions which should never be heard or seen, and provoke unto beautiful works! It is a helmet for the head in the sore warfare we are called to endure. Thus the mind of the Christian is kept in perfect peace, in safety, as his heart is guarded by the Breast-plate of faith and love. It is an anchor of the soul, which keeps us from drifting, in the wild storms of life, on to the rocks of destruction. It can never shift, it can never drag, for the Blessed Lord Jesus is inside, the holiest of all, as Forerunner of the living saints, and as First-fruit of the sleeping saints. The tempest may rage and the billows roll, but the anchor holds. God’s word and oath are at stake. The hope of the Christian can never fail. He shall come—we shall meet Him—and together enter the home of God.

F. VERNAL.

(To be continued.)

SAVED FROM THE CURSE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. A. BOSWELL.

MANY things that I know I have learned by watching others do their work, and specially from the Great Worker in the workshop of creation. The first verse of Genesis 1. stands in great measure alone. It has thrown to me a gleam of light back into the far past. Although I do not intend to dwell upon it, I do not hesitate to say that between the first and second verses a great period of time may have elapsed, and the chaos and confusion of which the latter speaks was, in all probability, brought about by the fall of Satan. Such a scene is surely not the handiwork of God, not the object for which the great Worker had created it; no, it depicts a marred, ruined creation. Again, you find the three-one God at work remodelling and restoring the wrecked scene of earth, and as you follow step by step through each day's work, there comes a point when the Great Workman stands aside, as it were, and views His handiwork and pronounces it to be "very good." Then God entered upon His rest. But look around at the restless world to-day—this world that never knows a moment's repose, but is always in continual agitation and trouble. What is the meaning of it all? Turn to Genesis 3. 17, "*Cursed* is the ground for thy sake." Have you ever stood in the bright sunshine when suddenly a dark cloud has overshadowed the scene, effectually blotting out the beautiful landscape from view, and wrapping all around in gloom and darkness? I am sure we have. In this verse you find that what God pronounced "very good," a little before, is now pronounced as "cursed." What was once glory and sunshine is now a scene of desolation, misery, and sin, and all comes in with that woeful word, "cursed." Go to the

graveyard, the battlefield, to the desolate homes rendered vacant and mournful by the ravages of war; look at the trembling monarch on yonder throne as from the quiet of his palace he looks forward to the future and shudders as he anticipates the horrors of the coming conflict, and is appalled as he reckons up the grim armaments of the nations. What does the Czar of Russia do? Horror-stricken and with bated breath he pleads for peace. And what is it but the mocking whisper of false peace when there is no peace amid the death throes of the curse? There is no peace, saith my God, to this scene of the curse, for "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is" (Ezek. 21. 27).

Look on a step further, and see that man Cain as he turns away with his hands red with his brother's blood: "cursed," he goes out from the presence of God. Now you have a cursed creation and a cursed man, and God is not in all his thoughts. Yea, if men had eyes to see and minds to comprehend it, the very flower that blooms at their feet would take them up in thought to the Creator, God, who has pronounced the curse.

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Men try to live and make the best of life apart from God; they mockingly dream of peace, as if the curse was not lying heavily upon them. Turn to the closing verse of Old Testament Scripture; you will find that the last word is "curse." The Scriptures open by letting us see God working in creation and pronouncing it very good; but through fallen man destruction comes, and the Old Testament closes with the sad echo of the curse. At this time the heathen world in all its ignorance was in its last extremity, and they were conscious in their heathenism of departure to grosser ungodliness. Judah, though sunk in overwhelming ignorance

of God, still clung to their profession, and adhered to the outward forms of the true worship.

In the beginning of Genesis we get the generations of the heavens and the earth, in the day that the Lord God made them; in the gospel by Matthew we get "the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," and in the gospel by John He is seen as the Son of God. Still we have the busy Worker proceeding with His work, and here in the opening of the New Testament the centre object is man again. Not the first Adam, but the man from heaven who stands for God amid the withering blight of a cursed earth. Pass on to the last verse of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and you will find that the last word is "Jesus." In the Old Testament it is "curse," in the New "Jesus." "Ye shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." And how did He save them? On yonder cross He became a "curse" for them, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Oh, child of God, you have never grasped it in its fulness, nor ever will! You may have grasped it sufficiently to cause an inexpressible peace to possess your soul, to make a great calm in the troubled sea of your life; but oh, the depths, the wondrous depths, of the love and mercy of God have never been fathomed by any one of us in their fulness. It will take eternity to learn, it will take eternity to understand, the depths of the wrath and curse that overwhelmed the Lord Jesus when He made peace by the blood of His cross.

I was remarking, while preaching the gospel last night, how many clever infidel arguments one hears to-day. And why? because they have never sought to be guided by God in their thoughts. With blasphemous presumption the infidel dares God to His face, and even many professed children of God are tampering with reasonings regarding the Holy Scriptures, who, if they were honest, would

own that the legitimate issue of their arguments would land them in open infidelity. Nevertheless, the day is not far distant when men and women will have to range themselves on one side or the other. The frivolous neutrality of the present day cannot stand much longer; it must vanish. The pride and profession and sham around us will have to go, and man, cursed of God, will totter to his eternal doom with the brand mark of hell boldly blazoned on his forehead, or sneaking with it covered up in the palm of his hand, frightened to declare that he has taken sides with the Devil against God. The time, we say, is rapidly hastening on, when men will have to take their stand for God or for the Devil.

Look at that troubled sea of earth! Where is the escape from the curse? Is it a fact that the Son of God has been made a curse for us? Yes, on the cross, and that is the only escape. Look at the last great battlefield of earth; see man as he lifts his puny arm in rebellion against God, and repenteth not to give Him glory! See how he is withered up before the wrath of the Almighty God. Will that wrath ever end? will that curse ever be removed? Never! "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

I tell you honestly I have often trembled as I thought of "eternal life." If you imagine you can fathom it, it is simply because you have never tried to grasp it in its fullness. In such matters we are only like the baby grasping a chronometer. It admires the outside, but knows nothing about the intricate mechanism within.

But we know Him, thank God, as Jesus, and have learned that He is able to save them to the uttermost who come to God through Him. Thank God for that precious name and person, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Well may we rejoicingly re-echo the closing words of the New Testament, while contrasting them with the closing words of the old, "*Come, Lord Jesus.*"

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

IN our consideration of the lives of the Kings of Judah, we do well to continually remember the New Testament Scriptures, which speak thus: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15. 4).

"And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3. 15). "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Cor. 10. 6). "These things" referring to the sins which the people fell into when in the wilderness.

As we shall frequently come across battles in our consideration of the lives of the kings, let us ever bear in mind that "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10. 3, 4).

We purpose in these notes to make reference to the contemporaneous kings of those mighty empires of old which have long since passed away, such as Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. Towards the close of the monarchy of Judah, they force themselves upon our consideration in the reading of the Scriptures. First, we find that the ten tribes are carried away into captivity by Assyria; and, finally, Judah, by the King of Babylon.

It is not our intention to touch at all on the reigns of David and Solomon. Much has been written and said concerning these. Besides, these two reigns form a complete period in themselves before the disruption, when all Israel were *one*. It is not a little strange, however, that not very much has been written, to my knowledge, on the

subsequent kings of the divided monarchy, with the exception of the more prominent ones, such as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

We confine ourselves at present to the Kings of Judah—the royal line out of which the Christ sprang (Matt. 1.; Heb. 7. 14)—which the Book of Chronicles exclusively deals with, in contrast to the Book of the Kings, which is a history of all Israel. Our remarks, therefore, will be based nearly entirely on the Book of Chronicles.

It is remarkable that, while we have a few good kings in Judah, the Kings of Israel (the ten tribes) were bad, without an exception.

To help in the understanding of much which is about to be written, Deuteronomy, chapters 12. to 16., ought to be very carefully and prayerfully read, along with, "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, *there* am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20).

I. REHOBAM. (2 Chron. 10., 11., 12.)

"And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead" (2 Chron. 9. 31).

No sooner had he come to the throne than Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had fled into Egypt, rose in rebellion against him, and succeeded in drawing away the ten tribes around himself, Judah and Benjamin alone remaining faithful to Rehoboam. From this time onward, Israel is no more "*one*," nor will it be, until that glorious day when Jehovah shall restore them to their own land.

The kingdom of Judah continues to worship in the place of the Name; but Jeroboam immediately sets up a worship after his own imaginations, abominable to God. The two are brought before us in the Book of Ezekiel under the names "Oholah" and "Oholibah" (chap. 23. 4, 5). We have them explained as being "Samaria" and "Jeru-

salem." The marginal readings of the Revised Version give these two names as meaning "her tent" and "my tent is in her." The first sets up her own, but the latter retains that which was of God, and which Jehovah owned as His. Albeit the day came when Oholibah came to be more corrupt than her sister, Oholah. As in the history of the opening centuries of the present dispensation, the day came when the "churches of God" which had been planted by the Apostle Paul and others ceased to be that which God could delight in, although originally of a Divine creation. Surely this ought to speak to us in no uncertain warning notes. We might learn another lesson from this: that the more light one professes to have, the greater the darkness will be if there is a departure from God and His Word—the measure of responsibility being commensurate with the measure of our privileges and knowledge of the truth of God.

"Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted" (2 Chron. 13. 7). When he came to the kingdom first, he asked counsel of the old men (2 Chron. 10. 6) as to what answer he should give to Jeroboam. They gave counsel to treat the people kindly, and speak good words to them. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him. Their answer will be seen in verses 10, 11. Rehoboam answered the people roughly (ver. 13). If he had remembered the inspired words as uttered by his father, he would have shown himself a wiser man: "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stirreth up anger" (Prov. 15. 1); for "There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health" (Prov. 12. 18).

The Book of Proverbs being the words of Solomon (chap 1. 1), and having been addressed to a son, Rehoboam would have known those words; but apparently

the word of hearing did not profit him, not being united with faith. In verse 15 we read: "So the king hearkened not unto the people: for it was brought about of God, that the LORD might establish His Word, which He spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." For a full account thereof see 1 Kings 11. 26-40.

We are told that "the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 11. 13). To serve God then cost something, as it does also to-day. There must be a willingness "to leave all and follow Him," even "unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13. 13). They remembered, among other commands, the injunction "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offering in every place that thou seest: but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes" (Deut. 12. 13). Such, indeed, knew what it was to buy the truth (Prov. 23. 23); and we do well to bear in mind, "Yea, and *all* that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3. 12). "And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem" (ver. 16).

In Old Testament times, during the Mosaic economy, there was one literal place where God was to be worshipped. In the present day it is different. The Lord Jesus says, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). This implies something collective. Accordingly we read, "Ye also, as living stones, are built a *spiritual* house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2. 5).

Actions speak louder than words. Those Levites, methinks, were abundantly rewarded for their faithfulness when they saw many out of all the tribes of Israel stirred

up to like faithfulness. What an influence, either for good or evil, has man upon his fellows. This we see exemplified all through the pages of holy writ. Unquestionably God has allowed it to be so. Therefore the awful power for evil the child of God may have if but the heart gets estranged from God. We find an illustration of this, in contrast to the former, in Rehoboam, for we read, "And it came to pass, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established, and he was strong, that he forsook the law of the Lord, and *all* Israel with him" (2 Chron. 12. 1). It is far easier to get a multitude to follow that which is evil than to follow that which is good. It has been said with truth,—

"The progress of truth is ever slow,
While error moves with rapid strides."

With all this we might bear in mind, "Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4. 16).

The history of Rehoboam closes with the solemn words, "And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek the Lord" (2 Chron. 12. 14). Truly a contrast to verse 16 of chapter 11., and to "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing; yea, I will sing praises" (Psa. 57. 7).

J. C. RADCLIFFE,

For Young Believers.

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

THOUGHTS FOR THE SEASON.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may get us an heart of wisdom," may well be our prayer at such a season as the present. Another milestone on the short road of life is passed by each one, with all its never-returning opportunities! A sobering influence, surely, should such thoughts have upon us; especially as we also remember that soon, in the light of God, we shall review every step of it at the judgment-seat of Christ. Still, the past should be but that which shall enable us the better to serve our God for the future little while! By its failures we should be instructed; by its broken vows and resolutions we should be humbled; by the forgiveness known we should be encouraged; by the memory of the never-failing goodness and faithfulness of our God we should be cheered. Surely, if we are learners in the school of God this dawning year does not find us where former ones did! Do we know our God better? Can we trust Him more implicitly? Is the image of His Son being formed in us? As with unveiled face we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord are we advancing in the Divine life and being changed into the same image as from glory to glory? Oh, beloved! what are we learning from the lessons of the way?

Many have, doubtless, gleaned never-to-be-forgotten lessons during the past year. Many and varied have been the experiences through which God has brought them; deep may have been their sorrow or great may

have been their joys ; their hearts may have been filled with anguish or gladdened by happy surprises. But whether this or that, they have discerned the kindness of God their Saviour in it all, and can "bless the hand that guided," and adore "the heart that planned." With overflowing hearts they know themselves drawn closer to their God, and the dawn of heaven illumines their pathway as they exclaim,—

"He hath done all things well !
 His pilgrim saints can tell
 Of quenchless love, unfailing grace ;
 On every path this record trace—
 He hath done all things well !
 Amen. Each soul adoring bends.
 Amen. Each heart in praise ascends,
 And owns that all is well."

Others, alas ! may be further from their God than at the beginning of last year : an evil heart of unbelief may have caused them to depart from the Living God. Now is the time for such to think, now is the opportunity for their downward course to be arrested. Swiftly, swiftly the years glide past ; soon, soon shall the mighty opportunities and possibilities of life be gone for ever. Oh, for grace to number our days, and get us an heart of wisdom.

Don't be disheartened because you find that the resolutions you started the past year with appear to have yielded but little, because failure seems to have outweighed success. Grace abounds still—grace to meet and supply your need, and wondrous grace to bear with and pardon your failure and sin. Therefore, get the loins of your intention girded up afresh, and face the conflict with a heart strung to endeavour.

The glory is coming in the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and whatever there may be of failure, it

will be much if our Lord find us in conflict striving with the little strength we have for Him.

All endeavour must be precious to Him, for our blessed Master knows the source of our endeavour. There may be little to encourage from saints, and little sympathy; your path may seem to you to be more difficult than that of your brethren, but the Lord knows, and every effort will be judged by Him, not so much by its results as by the motive whence it sprung. Press on, then, beloved, for you may count on the same appreciation that filled the heart of Mary with joy when she heard her Lord say approvingly, "She hath done what she could."

God's object in calling us out of darkness into light was that we might be conformed to the image of His Son. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we are growing in His likeness. We know that He is coming to shout us up to meet Him in the air, and that we shall be changed and shall be like Him.

Will the change have to be a very great one? we sometimes wonder.

Will He find many of us so nearly conformed to His image that there will be little to change? What of those He finds as unlike Himself as on the day they were called into the light of His love?

Ah! the opportunities may be fewer than we know, beloved. "Behold, I come quickly," are His last words to us, and He does not tarry.

Beholding the glory of our Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, until in that coming revelation of Himself, not as in a glass, but face to face, the image is complete.

Fellow-saints, are we learning? Are we growing?

Are we pressing on? Are our eyes becoming more accustomed to the brightness, and can we look with more steadfastness than at first? And does that prayer find an eager echo in our hearts—"Come, Lord Jesus"?

WATCH!

WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ walked this desert scene in company with His disciples, we learn from the Scriptures that He repeatedly called upon them *to watch*. In that dark scene in Gethsemane's garden He said to them, "Abide ye here, and watch with Me," and surely in such solemn circumstances they will give heed to His words; but scarcely has the sound of His footsteps died away when they go to sleep, and He is left in His agony to watch alone. He comes and finds them sleeping, and with words of gentle rebuke reproves Peter by asking, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?"

From His place of exaltation on the throne, He utters afresh to us the same solemn word, "Let us not sleep as do the rest, but let us *watch* and be sober." How precious it is for us to look at the exact words He speaks, and to note that He not only says "Watch," but "*Watch with Me*"! We are not alone in our watching; He is with us, and the "one hour" is surely but "a little while."

This word "watch" simply means, guard against going to sleep, or keep awake, and nothing will enable us to obey His voice in this matter, save a deep consciousness of the fact that "the coming of the Lord hath drawn nigh," and that "the Judge standeth before the doors." The little hour of our watching is well nigh spent, and at any moment the Master of the house may return—at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, "suddenly," "quickly" He will come. Who

amongst us will He find sleeping? He is not tarrying yonder amid the splendours of the glory; He has not forgotten His promise, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Oh no! His heart is set upon that fast-approaching moment, and when the hour arrives He shall quickly arise from the throne and come to the air to gather unto Himself His Bride, the purchase of His love.

Are we in fellowship with His heart regarding that joyous hour? Are His earnest longings shared by us? and are we really waiting for the Lord from heaven? Do our hearts vibrate beneath the tender touch of the Spirit, and do we, in the fulness of delight, cry, "Come, Lord Jesus"?

Alas! it is to be feared that, in these days, many have given up the attitude of waiting and watching for His coming, and have settled down in a condition of drowsy sleep and indolence, saying in their hearts, "My Lord delayeth His coming." They know quite well about the Lord's coming, but, instead of waiting in momentary expectation and conscious preparedness, knowing that He is not slack concerning His promise, that blessed hope appears to have no charm for their souls, and so far as its having any effect on their manner of life is concerned they might almost as well have known nothing about it. Their indifference is solemn indeed; and they are sleeping away the quickly-passing moments of the fast-fleeting hour.

How one longs that God should re-echo in the ears of such in Holy Spirit arousing power the words, "Awake!" "Watch!" for in the glad light of that nearing coming their condition is solemn in the extreme.

"I come quickly" is the thrice-repeated word in Rev. 22., and how soon we may gaze on the Lord face to face in all the effulgence of His heavenly glory, who can tell?

Our weary feet may stand now in the last moments of the eve of His coming, our waiting hearts may even now be on the verge of the eternal glory; therefore, let us lift up our heads and exult in that blessed hope. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

"What is it that He saith?"

'A little while!'—our hearts within us burn;

There rests to us one memory—'tis His death!

One hope—'tis His return."

ONE THING LACKING.

"ONE thing thou lackest; come, take up the cross and follow Me," were the words addressed by the Lord to the young man who declared that from his youth he had kept the commandments. With all his rigorous attention to the law and his carefulness regarding the keeping of the commandments, he still lacked one thing; and the Lord touched the vital point with the searching words, "*Follow Me.*" These words direct the heart from commandments to a person, and centre the gaze on Him who was the delight of the Father's heart; and the test of true love now is not the keeping of commandments, but heart devotion to the person of Christ, which will find expression in obedience to the words, "Follow Me."

It is well for us to remind ourselves of this truth in the days in which our lot is cast. We value the truths which God has been pleased to teach us from His Word, and the practising of them has cost us much. The cost increases their value in our eyes, and we are, perhaps, in danger of giving them a higher place than the Lord Himself.

This young man was dissatisfied, in spite of all his doings, and the reason was that, with all his sincerity, he was

occupied with that which could never give satisfaction, and missed accompanying with the only One who could. The things of God, however blessed, cannot fill the heart : none but Christ can satisfy !

None should be so happy, and contented, and satisfied as those who have returned to the old paths, and who are walking in them. But it is not the paths that give the joy and satisfaction ; it is the Lord who leads therein. If we miss fellowship and companionship with the 'person of Christ, the truth becomes a burden and a weariness.

We are assured that many have learned this truth experimentally ; and it is well that it should be impressed on the hearts of young Christians as they start out on the pathway of the truth. " Our joy is in the Lord ; " and in this simple statement is found the secret of a happy life.

Therefore, let us hear the Master's words afresh, " Follow Me," and let them sink deeply into our hearts ; so that our gaze may be centred on Himself and our hearts charmed by His beauty and worth. All His paths drop fatness ; and there can be no lack of any good thing to those whose hearts are fixed to follow Him.

THE PATH OF DUTY.

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Withal, there is a significant absence of " Thou shalt " and " Thou shalt not " in the writings of the Apostles, and as it is to these that the saints of this dispensation look principally for guidance, they sometimes wish that there had been just a little more express rule and regulation than there is. Young Christians especially find this to be the case, as difficulty after difficulty arises

in their lives. But the absence of this element in the Apostolic writings is more apparent than real, and the reason for it, when found, cannot but cause our hearts to swell with joy and gratitude and exultation, for it leads us to the glorious realization of the responsibility that God has honoured us by laying upon us. And it brings us very near to the enjoyment, here below, of that blessed and glorious liberty which we shall enter into in its fulness one day, and in which creation itself shall participate (Rom. 8. 18-21).

We spend a lot of our time speculating about the kind of crowns with which we shall be rewarded. Why, even now, God has made us co-workers with His Christ—the exalted Lord of heaven and earth. What could be greater honour than this? Well, it is just here, in our association with Him as co-workers, that the explanation lies of the apparent absence of rules of conduct for every part of our life.

Those who had such rules—the circumcised—were servants. It was necessary to hedge them round by rule. Every detail of their lives was to be attended by some form or other. But it is different with us. We are Christ's freemen; we are, by grace, children of God and joint heirs with Christ, and our responsibility is the responsibility of sons. As sons we have to be worthy of our position; the law we have is a law of liberty, and we walk according to the perfect law of liberty with all its responsibilities.

What, then, does this entail? Here we see that in wondrous grace God has made us freed men in Christ. Further, He has called us to be sons, and as such made us heirs of God and co-workers with Christ.

The glory of the Father, God, was ever the object of our blessed Lord—His one aim to do the things which were pleasing to the Father, and so to let the light of the glory of God illumine and dispel the darkness around.

Here, in all its simplicity, yet with all its wondrous responsibility, lies the path of the believer. To be co-workers with Christ, His sympathies to be our sympathies, His hopes to be our hopes, leaves no room for indecision. Let us apprehend that for which we have been apprehended of Christ, and we shall rise to our responsibilities, and they admit of no temporising. If, as sons of God and co-workers with Christ, we have girded up the loins of our intention to do only those things which are pleasing to the Father, and in everything to work only for the honour and glory of our Father, God, the very fact that a certain thing is doubtful and requires some argument to justify it should be sufficient cause for our shunning it. We are speaking here of individual conduct; of the thousand and one little things that crop up in our daily lives and give rise to the questions—"Is it right to do this?" "Can a Christian do that?" and so on; of all those things that make us wish we had a distinct "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." Surely we require only to remember that glory to God is the least we can give, while, at the same time, it is the greatest, and do the thing that will yield glory to His name; because, like the Captain of our salvation, our first duty is to do the thing that pleases the Father.

It is only in the light of eternity that we shall see the results of doing things which *please* the Father. Beautiful word! beautiful thought!—to *please* the Father, to give pleasure to God.

It can be done by the biggest and greatest things a saint can do; and also by the very least and apparently most insignificant.

We have looked into the perfect law—the law of liberty. God grant that as we apprehend the responsibility that He has honoured us by laying upon us, we may each become the doer that worketh.

SONSHIP.

I AM a son! my dignity I prize.

No servile chains enthrall and compass me.
My soul, thou'rt free! in sonship's freedom rise
And scan the treasures of thy liberty.

Soar on faith's pinions to the realms of light;
Christ's wealth now trace, His majesty behold;
Brightly His glories strike thy raptured sight,
Expanding ever as they still unfold.

Lo! all is thine—all that His wealth can give.
See the rich glories of His Godhead shine!
Advance thy claim; as son of God now live
And triumph in His fulness—all is thine.

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

A son art thou, in sonship's circle free?
Then tread the shining path that place demands.
In all thy ways, ah! constant son-like be,
Obedient to high liberty's commands.

No servile chains thy freeman's hands enthrall!
Thy portion liberty, from th' law set free!
No galling yoke hangs round thy neck—withal,
In all thy ways, right loyal, lawful be.

The Father's glory—standard of the free!
Onward, ye saints! nor deem too high for thee;
Such is thine honour, this life's purpose be—
The Father's glory, matchless dignity.

THE WAY EVIL SPOKEN OF.

IN the days of the Apostle Paul, the Way was branded as heresy, and was everywhere spoken against. Yet, the way in which the Apostle trod, and in which he taught others to tread, was none the less surely God's way, in spite of all the opposition he encountered.

When he arrived at Rome, and met there his brethren after the flesh, they told him of the evil report that had reached their ears regarding his sect, but intimated at the same time their wise desire to hear him for themselves, and to prove thereby the value and accuracy of what they had heard. This is a very praiseworthy way to deal with a report, and would to God that His people to-day were possessed of the honesty to face rumours and reports in the same way. It would, we are convinced, go a very long way to help to bind as one in the truth and therefore in the Lord the scattered people of God, for many of them, we believe, are honestly desirous of pleasing their Lord and Master.

There is evidence in the Scriptures, we think, to support the idea that the teaching and practice of the Apostle Paul did not receive universal acceptance amongst the Christians in his day, and some who understood not what he wrote and taught wrested his words to their own destruction, whilst others turned away from him and the truth altogether, and others again prated against the apostles with malicious words (Gal. 4. 16; 2 Tim. 1. 15; 2 Pet. 3. 16; 3 John 10).

When an evil report has once gained currency regarding an individual or a community, many Christians are apt, in all sincerity, to accept it as truth, and, without attempting to sift the matter for themselves, are likely to act upon the impression the story has left upon their

minds; and this all the more so if some influential and respected party propagates the evil report.

In a recent number of a contemporary magazine, intended for the help of young Christians, the statement appears:—

“Neither Pope, Archbishop, Synod, or United Oversight has any right to make laws for God’s Church.”

With the truthfulness of this statement we have no desire to find fault, and, moreover, we embrace the present opportunity of most heartily endorsing it; but with the hinted falsehood that underlies it we find serious fault, and would seek to expose it, for such statements are so very evidently made for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of Christians that it becomes a duty to endeavour to enlighten them.

What is more likely than that on reading such a statement many Christians should be led to believe that what has been termed a united oversight claims to have the “right” to make laws for God’s people and to enforce them? Popes, Archbishops, and Synods do claim and exercise this power, and, clearly, by associating with them what is called “united oversight,” the writer desires his readers to believe that it also does so. We confess to our inability to understand Christians who so glaringly and so persistently misrepresent their brethren; and who, in spite of repeated protest, continue to attribute to them both doctrine and practice that they would repudiate and combat with all the vigour they possess. Let not Christians, we implore, accept such unwarranted statements nor be misled by such dust-throwing; but rather let them with unbiassed mind investigate for themselves the practices of brethren referred to, and compare the same with the Scriptures.

By the term “united oversight” is meant men who

seek to guide amongst the assemblies of saints gathered into the Name of the Lord, most of whom have separated themselves, within recent years, from the companies of Christians known as "open brethren," and by attributing to them the claim to be law-givers, Christians are taught to look upon them as on a level with Pope and Archbishop.

Surely we might reasonably expect that those who continually make such statements should trouble themselves to refer to the writings of some responsible party in the community they assail, and show clearly where and by whom the doctrine is taught which they constantly attribute to them.

Some time ago an able and respected Christian ventured to make statements of a very similar nature regarding the doctrines held by us, and had afterwards to admit that he did so without reading for himself our publications (where the opposite is taught), or taking steps to ascertain the accuracy of his averments, and he was ultimately obliged to withdraw from his untenable position and retracted his statements (see N. T., vol. viii., p. 52).

Let us again state clearly (for we are not the first who have done so) that brethren so named lay claim to no such pretensions, but what they do believe is, that they are responsible, according to the grace and ability granted them by God, to endeavour to see that the "all authority" of the one and only law-giver and Lord, Jesus Christ, is respected and bowed to by His saints, so that they thereby may be delivered from every man becoming his own law-giver and doing that which is right in his own eyes, which obtains amongst the companies of open brethren from which, in the fear of God, they have separated.

Perhaps the publisher of the statement to which we call attention would himself admit the need of overseers or guides amongst the assemblies of God, and that when we behold men answering in some measure to the qualifi-

cations set forth in 1 Timothy 3., in whose hearts God has put a care for His people resulting in their seeking to shepherd the little flock, we are called by the Lord to know, and to esteem, and to obey such. That such men in apostolic days formed a definitely separate and known circle from the saints in general there is abundant Scripture to prove (see Acts 15. 6; 20. 17; 21. 18; Phil. 1. 1; 1 Thess. 5. 12; Heb. 13. 17-24; 1 Pet. 5. 1).

We do not, however, yield a blind obedience to such men, nor do we follow their guidance because of any authority which they possess in themselves, but only as they are under the authority of the Lord Jesus and as they point to His Word for justification of their acts and words. "United oversight" asks no more; saints are called by God to render no more; and in the recognition of this simple truth lies, in great measure, the secret of that unity which is so good and so pleasant to behold; where every eye and heart is directed to the one Lord, and where His Word alone is listened to, and as to the actual experience of such blessedness in our day we can most joyfully testify.

If, in calling the attention of God's people to this matter, we only removed the odium resting upon ourselves, and showed the fallacy of such statements and the evil intention of those who make them, we would not trouble to lift our pen to do so, for it is indeed a very small matter that we should be judged of "man's day" and by his ever-erring judgment; but if, by God's help, we were enabled to remove false impressions left on the minds of any of His saints, and to tear to shreds the veil that has been thrown over their eyes in order to lull them to sleep in the trammels of tradition, and where the will of the Lord is rejected, and if any thereby were brought into the liberty wherewith the truth sets us free, we would bless our God for the opportunity, and count such service a pleasure.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

II. ABIJAH. (2 Chron. 13.)

It is written concerning Abijah the son of Rehoboam, "And he walked in all the sins of his father that he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 15. 3); after which we read the statement which suggests a greater than David—even his great Antitype—the One through whom all blessings flow. "Nevertheless, for David's sake, did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem."

Jeroboam, still living, having survived Rehoboam, carries on the same wars with his son Abijah. The latter joined battle with an army of 400,000, exactly half the number which Jeroboam mustered. After Abijah charged home to Jeroboam and his followers some of the sins against Jehovah which they had been guilty of—such as making the two calves of gold and setting them up in Bethel and Dan, making priests of the lowest of the people, driving out the priests of the Lord, walking after the manner of the peoples of other lands, so that whosoever came to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same might be a priest of them that are no gods—Jehovah once again laid bare His arm, and showed Himself strong towards His people; for is He not slow to anger and of great mercy? "I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Malachi 3. 6). The climax was reached when Abijah said, "And, behold, God is with us at our head, and His priests with the trumpets of alarm to sound an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper" (v. 12). As far as human resources and power were concerned, it was likely to fare ill with Judah, for Jeroboam caused an

ambushment to come about behind them ; so that they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them (v. 13). It only afforded another instance, however, of proving man's extremity to be God's opportunity, just as when that mighty host of Israel, numbering probably 2,000,000 souls, or thereabouts, after being delivered out of Egypt, arrived on the shores of the Red Sea, shut in with enemies before and behind—for not only was the sea before them, but the hosts of Egypt behind. But the same omnipotent Jehovah, who so wonderfully delivered them at the first, was well able to deliver them all their journey through ; and as with them so with us “ Who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver ; on whom we have set our hope that He will also still deliver us ” (2 Cor. 1. 10). What appeared at first to be their enemy, God turned to be their salvation ; for we read, “ By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land : which the Egyptians essaying to do were swallowed up ” (Heb. 11. 29). They see their foes dead upon the sea-shore in the morning : “ And He led them safely, so that they feared not : but the sea overwhelmed their enemies ” (Psalm 78, 53).

God has various methods by which He accomplishes His purposes to the deliverance of His people. We are reminded here of the very different way in which those saints in Damascus were delivered, who fled thither from Jerusalem on the death of Stephen : how their bitterest enemy was arrested by God in his path of destruction outside the walls of Damascus City. Who at the time would have dreamt of such a deliverance ? Saul of Tarsus, proud and persecuting, become the devoted follower of the Lord ! Such instances call to mind the words :—

“ Say not, my soul, from whence
 Can God relieve my care ?
 Remember that Omnipotence
 Hath servants everywhere.

His methods are sublime,
 His ways extremely kind;
 God never is before His time,
 God never is behind."

"And when Judah looked back, behold the battle was before and behind them : and they cried unto Jehovah, and the priests sounded with the trumpets." What is the meaning of the sounding with the trumpets? If we turn to Numbers 10. 9 we shall find an explanation, "And when ye go out to war in your land against the adversary that oppresseth you, then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets ; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." They just acted upon what was written ; they did what Jehovah commanded them to do, and the victory was theirs. How simple ! "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The highest service that can be rendered to God is obedience : "Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction on himself : but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Prov. 13. 13). Oh ! for us at all times, and under all circumstances, to do just what God tells us to do, even though it may be our own brethren in Christ who fight against us ; for let it be remembered that the ten tribes stood in the same relation to Judah as many brethren in Christ (not in the Lord) stand to those to-day who are in the place where the authority of the Lord Jesus is paramount. Such obedience not only delights the heart of our God, but procures blessings without number to us. Those who obey the word of God in devotion and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ have nothing whatever to fear from enemies, either in the character of saint or sinner, human or infernal ; therefore,

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break
 With blessings on your head."

“ WE KNOW IN PART, AND WE PROPHECY IN PART ”

(1 CORINTHIANS 13. 9).

It is marvellous how even children of God are influenced by tradition or by prejudice, not by a right understanding of the Word of God. How many would be astonished were they to quietly sit down and seek for the foundation of their belief in the Scriptures! Many contend earnestly, yea, most earnestly for what they believe, but it is not the Faith they contend for (Jude 3), but their own thoughts and opinions. Were they quietly to look the matter in the face, too many of God's dear children would have to discover that what they have taken for granted as divine are after all but the doctrines of men (Matt. 15. 9). Solemn indeed is this state of matters, not only for those who are led astray, but for those who lead, for it is written, “ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven ” (Matt. 5. 19). To be little in the kingdom will be no small loss, to be ashamed at His appearing will bring a pang of sorrow into even that moment of bliss, and to lose reward will be a loss never to be recovered. Let us prove all things, and only hold fast that which is good.

Weak minds naturally take refuge behind the strong, and those who speak positively will too often gain a following, even though it be in the pathway of error, while the way of truth' will' still be evil spoken of. This state of things seems very much to arise from the natural lethargy and indolence of the human mind in spiritual things. There is a lack of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and a willingness to let others think for us—to accept, as we have said, as divine that which is clearly and

strongly stated. It is on this weakness of humanity that false teachers so largely trade. Rome, of all other systems of men, undertakes to do the most for her followers, without giving them any exercise of conscience or trouble as to their belief; in fact, to think within her guilty fold is made a sin. The dogmas of her Church traditions must be accepted on pain of persecution even unto death.

Thus, unthinking one, you are on the road that, followed out, will lead to Rome, to darkness, superstition, and the surrender of the conscience into the hands of men. We are taught in the Word of God that the man who thinks he knows anything, knows nothing yet as he ought to know it. It is most dangerous for us to suppose that we have arrived at the end of knowledge and learnt all that God can teach us on any one subject. Let us tread the pathway of knowledge with reverent and trembling steps, taking heed lest we fall in it, as many a one who has gone before has done. While ever ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear, let us not be unduly troubled by the opposition of those who oppose themselves. Opposition to the truth there will ever be, yea, and hatred of it, so that the more of truth we have, the greater the opposition we may expect to meet with. If in a day of abounding error we have much of truth, we may expect to find ourselves in the forefront and heat of the battle. A great man of this age, speaking of his opponents, said, "Their first powerful weapon is bold assertion; their second powerful weapon, persistent exaggeration; their third, constant misrepresentation; their fourth and last, copious, arbitrary, and baseless prophecy." These are the weapons of earthly warfare, and they are carnal. Alas! that even children of God should be found, as they often are, using such weapons. Those who have the truth can well afford to leave such to their opposers. The 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is

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a portion most wholesome for the careful consideration of those who are striving for the mastery; lest we strive without that love which suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Again, let us consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we become weary and faint in our minds, remembering that it is written, "In due time ye shall reap if ye faint not."

J. A. BOSWELL.

HOPE.

(Continued from page 5.)

IN the Epistle to the Romans, where the deep need of man and the matchless grace of God are so perfectly brought before us, the voice of the believer is heard, as his feet stand in such infinite grace, boasting in hope of the glory of God. What a subject to boast of—the glory of God!

As one thinks of the writer of the letter to the Romans having given up all that a natural man would glory in, and becoming an outcast of society, friendless, penniless, and hungry betimes, yet boasting in hope of the glory of God, our hearts are filled with wonder. Is it not true that many times our boasting is in things vastly different from the coming glory of God? Boasting in our knowledge, in our attainments, and, it may be, in our very disobedience to the will of God. Boasting (or glorying) in unworthy things and persons is a mark of the last days (see 2 Tim. 3.).

What are you boasting in, child of God, as you journey through the wilderness? It may be your path is one of suffering and trial, and the dark clouds of suffering seem to shut out both sun and stars, until your heart sinks under the ordeal. Look through the thin veil of time, see the accumulated, inexpressible, eternal glory of God about

to be revealed in us or unto us. Eye hath never seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it come upon the mind of man, what the fulness of that glory is. Boast in it, child of God—it is yours. God has called us unto it; the hope can never fail. What though tribulations lie in the path, the suffering is not worthy of a comparison with the glory.

Again in this same letter the believer is called upon to "Rejoice in hope." It seems to me that this is only possible when the heart is filled with Christ, the Hope of glory. To rejoice in a thing or person tells of a heart satisfied with the object. It is the same word that the Lord Jesus used to express His joy in the finding of a lost sinner. If our joy in the hope was only a tithe of His joy in saving the lost one, what an influence it would have on our lives! What happy, holy Christians it would cause us to be!

Then last of all the Apostle desires that the God of the hope may fill them with all joy and peace in believing, so that they may abound in the hope, in the power (ability) of the Holy Spirit. Boasting in it, rejoicing in it, abounding in it.

The place that the hope has in the Epistle to the Hebrews is most instructive, as well as most important. Many know that the letter to the Hebrews deals with the salvation of the saint more than the salvation of the sinner; and here it is well to notice the very especial place hope has. In Hebrews 6. 18, we have laying hold of the hope in connection with salvation from sin's penalty. In chapter 3. the builded together saints are House of God if they hold fast the boldness and boasting of the hope firm unto the end. Notice it is not letting go the hope itself, but the boldness and boasting thereof. Much has been said lately about the "if" of Hebrews 3. and our conditional existence as House of God. Would it not be well to spend a little time upon what the Spirit speaks

of here as the very ground of our continuing House of God?—holding fast the boldness and boasting of the hope. Is there not the sad possibility, beloved fellow-saints, of having an outward form, without the kernel so precious to God and man?

Are we holding fast the boldness and boasting of the hope? Oh, how the question will search our heart's deep recesses, and, if fairly faced, may bring us down before Him. The boldness of the hope will enable us to face all opposition for God.

“It makes the coward spirit brave,
And nerves the feeble arm to fight.”

No power of the enemy can quell the boldness of the hope. Remember and consider Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross. Hope held Him up, in the midst of Calvary's surging breakers. His boldness was the boldness of hope. The boasting of the hope will enable us to give up all for Christ. The one enables us to dare all, and the other to sacrifice all. Are we indeed holding them fast?

Then in chapter 6. 11, it is the desire of the heart of the Apostle,—better still, it is the longing desire of the heart of God, that they should show the same diligence, to the full assurance of the hope, unto the end. Here it seems to me to view a full reward at the judgment seat of Christ and of God. They had toiled on in love, ministering to the saints, taking “joyfully” the spoiling of their goods, looking forward to the enduring inheritance laid up for them in heaven. But they are in danger of giving up, hence the longing desire of Paul's heart that they should go on to the end. Beloved fellow-saints, is that not the danger of to-day? You remember when the light first illuminated your souls, how your hours and days were spent with these words on your lips and in your hearts—

“Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?”

But as time wore on, the world with its many charms, the devil, and the deceitfulness of sin, chilled the warmth of the love of God in the heart, and chased the words from your lips, until the work you so fondly loved to do is left undone. Ye ran well for a time, but—— What will it be when we stand before His face, who is coming, and bringing His rewards with Him? Shall we hear His well done? Will it be a full reward? God grant we may show the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the hope, unto the end. The end—that may come at any moment. Then shall the sure, unwavering hope be fully realized, for He is faithful.

The worship of the gathered saints is dealt with in chapter 10., in connection with which we are exhorted to hold fast the confession of the hope unwaveringly. So that, continuing to be House of God, a full reward at the judgment seat of Christ, and our giving to God collectively, depend upon our holding fast the boldness and boasting of the hope—the full assurance and confession of the same.

What an important part it has in the life of the Christian! How much depends upon our knowing it, enjoying it, and holding it fast! What a cheer and comfort and strength it would be if it had the place the God of the hope intended it should! God grant it may, for His glory and our good.

F. VERNAL.

Correspondence.

“Hearken to me,

* * * *

I also will answer my part,

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

DEAR BRETHREN,

I do not quite understand your quotation from the Prayer Book on page 227, NEEDED TRUTH, with which you agree.

I don't understand the *natural* body and *blood* of Christ being in heaven. I was under the impression He was raised a glorified body, similar to our expectation, as taught 1 Cor. 15. 44, and verse 50 says "flesh and *blood* cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." I thought His glorified body was without the blood (that being shed), but "flesh and bones" (Luke 24. 39).

Did He not lose the *natural* body in resurrection? if so, His *natural* body cannot be in heaven.

I quite see that, as to His manhood, He cannot be in two places at once.

Perhaps this is the point you were calling attention to, but the article reads as though you agreed that His natural body and blood were in heaven.

This quotation is a little difficulty to others as well as myself.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

W. H. B. F.

In quoting the sentence as to the natural body and blood of Christ being in heaven it was not intended to emphasize the words *natural* and *blood*. The body which the Lord Jesus had on resurrection evidently differed in most important respects from that which He had before His death. The exact nature of these differences, however, the present writer is not able to specify. Certainly the resurrection body can only be in one place at a time, which was the fact we wished specially to emphasize—as essential to a true apprehension of the real humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus Christ or those bodies that we shall have in the morning may or may not be said to have blood circulating in them is a question that I am not sure about—I am not quite certain that the Scrip-

ture quoted (1 Cor. 15. 50) has the significance attached to it by our esteemed correspondent. It should of course be well noted that 1 Cor. 15. 50 speaks of inheriting the kingdom of God, not inhabiting it.

C. M. L.

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 131.—*Does the word water in John 3. 5 (R.V.) mean literal water, and is it spoken to Jews or Gentiles?*

We understand that water as here referred to was literal water, and connects itself with the Kingdom as preached by the Lord and His apostles in the Gospels. This preaching was undoubtedly to the Jews, as in *Matthew 10. 5*. We must bear in mind that the Kingdom as then preached to Nicodemus, and the Kingdom as preached to-day, are not identical, although they may closely resemble one another.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 132.—*What is the meaning of Rom. 8. 9—“But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”?*

“If so be the Spirit of God dwell in you;” and the Lord says, “We will come unto him and make our abode with him” (*John 14. 23*), thus showing that the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son. This seems carried out by the expression in *Rom. 8. 10*—“If Christ be in you.” The expression, “have not the Spirit of Christ,” does not seem to us to mean “have not the like Spirit as He had.”

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

"WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION."

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. 2. 12.

THERE is nothing in these words to raise a doubt in the young believer's mind as to the certainty of the salvation of God which is his by faith in Christ Jesus. In fact they are confirmatory of it; for they show that the believer has a place, and an important one, in the purpose of God.

The words do not suggest the idea of working for salvation and receiving it ultimately as a reward for working in contrast to the reward or wages of sin, which is death. On the contrary, they distinctly mean that the possessor of salvation has to carry that salvation which he possesses onward towards a certain point—to work it out on given lines in a certain direction. In short, the worker is the possessor of something which he has to carry forward towards completion. This is our part. We may do it well, or we may do it badly—the responsibility is ours. But what God has done and will do for us is outside of ourselves altogether.

What then is this point towards which we must carry our salvation? In what direction does it lie? And what is the completion towards which we must work?

Romans 8. 29 sets this out clearly and fully. Here we see that those whom God foreknew He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that His Son might be the first-born of many brethren.

What a calling is ours! The glorified Son of Man occupies the throne at the right hand of God, and in order that He might not be alone in His place many are called to be conformed to His image and to share with Him the

glory to which He is heir. So whom God foreordained, them He also called for this wondrous purpose.

Complete conformity to the image of the Son of God is the ultimate point to which our individual salvation is to be carried. And it is towards that, that we individually must work.

Hence in view of our high calling, in view of God's great purpose with us, in view of the dignity which it is ours by grace to share, let us with fear and trembling, and with great solemnity, work towards the consummation of our salvation.

"SONS WITHOUT REBUKE."

"WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

We have seen that the consummation of our salvation is conformity to the image of the Son of God. This is the end towards which we must work, and in doing so we fulfil God's purposes with us here below. For the passage goes on to say that the great care, ay, care even unto fear and trembling, must be exercised in order that we may be sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine as lights (Phil. 2. 15).

Now this is conformity to the likeness of the Son of God in the world. The First-born is yonder; the many brethren are here in the world, and theirs is the wondrous privilege of carrying on the testimony which He so gloriously bore.

One who was with the Lord from the beginning, says: "We beheld His glory." The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone from Him into the darkness of the world. And another, who also beheld that glory, says that God hath shined into our hearts that the same light should shine from us; for with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image

from glory to glory. No wonder we are urged to work onward in this direction with fear and trembling; for, truly, as the apostle goes on to say: "We have this *treasure in earthen vessels.*"

We are called to be sons, and as sons in testimony, we reflect the glory of our Lord, and are thus led from glory to glory. As sons in conflict, the Captain of our salvation is before leading us from victory to victory.

"THE HOPE OF SALVATION."

"WE look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who 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 to Himself" (Phil. 3. 20, 21).

In spite of the body of our humiliation we can work out our salvation to the eternal glory of God and His Christ, and reflect, here below, the knowledge of the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus Christ. For to this end God has put forth the power that He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

In this power are our resources of strength. It is ours to draw upon and to use; so let there be no faltering nor shrinking from the difficulties of the conflict; but let us face the dangers, and with fear and trembling, because the glory of God is at stake, quit us like men for the Christ who died for us.

We have as a sure hope and an anchor to our soul the promise of the verse at the head of this paper. We look for the Strong One to come, and by His mighty power to change even this body of humiliation and fashion it like the body of His glory. Then shall our salvation be complete, and the first-fruits of God's rich harvest gathered home.

Note how the Strong One, our Redeemer, is kept in view throughout the whole three stages of our salvation. It was the Strong One who delivered us from death; it was the Strong One who broke for us the power of sin, and made it possible for us to live unto God. It is the Strong One who keeps from day to day—the Captain of our salvation who leads from victory to victory. And again, it is the Strong One, our Saviour, the Lord, who comes to redeem our bodies according to the working by which He is able to subject all things to Himself.

CHRIST OR SELF.

It is the will of God that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. Perhaps we are scarcely aware of how much of our lives is lived unto ourselves.

If, at evening, we were to analyze all that we did and said during the day we would often find that self was the centre to which the bulk of our acts led, and the object to which the greater part of our words pointed. To state what living unto ourselves consists of so that it would be applicable to all is impossible; for to each one of us in its details it must be different according to our circumstances and surroundings in life. It is possible, however, for each one to know whether or not they are living unto themselves or unto the Lord, and the need for arriving individually at a clear understanding regarding this matter is of vital importance.

The Apostle Paul could say, "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Self and self-seeking had no place with him; Christ was all in all to his heart; he lived unto God.

Beloved, let us search our hearts and see what place Christ occupies there, for it is vain to profess to be set apart for Him and to be waiting for His return if we are living for self and worldly in our ways. Either Christ or self dominates ; the query for each to answer is, *which ?*

ABRAHAM.

IN the eleventh chapter of Hebrews Abraham, the friend of God, is presented to us as a tent-dweller. To him God gave promises, and having believed God and triumphed through faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a land not his own ; for he looked for the city which hath the foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.

A tent bespeaks a pilgrim condition and a people in a stranger's land ; the city tells of home at length reached, and the wilderness wanderings for ever past.

Although all the land upon which Abraham trod was his own by the promise of God, he did not set his heart upon it ; but as he believed God, and greeted from afar the bright shining glories of that heavenly city of which he had been told, he manifested to all around that he sought after "a better country, that is, a heavenly." From the dim distance of the far-off place the never-fading brightness of that glorious city rolled o'er his raptured vision, for the glory of God doth lighten it and the lamp thereof is the Lamb ; and so infinitely blessed was the present enjoyment by faith of that distant home of God's providing that his heart was wooed and won from everything pertaining to the present transient scene, and his whole being was absorbed by the brightness of things eternal.

O beloved, if to Abraham, from the distant place whence he gazed upon it, that city appeared so glorious and so captivating that it caused him to walk as a pilgrim and a stranger even in the land that was his own by

promise, and to manifestly declare to all around that he sought after a country beyond the stain of sin and the sphere of death, how much more, from the near place of perfect acceptance in the Beloved, should the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ bathe with its sunshine and splendour our willing hearts; and how, as with unveiled face we behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, should we daily be transformed into the same image as from glory to glory.

Here, like him, we have no continuing city, but we also look for one to come; and the Lord Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you." But what joy to multitudes of His people does such a thought convey? There is scarcely a longing in their benumbed souls after Him, and the place He is preparing rarely costs them a thought. It would almost appear as if it would be loss in their estimation to be called away to meet the Lord in the air with voice of archangel and trump of God. Oh! how Abraham puts us to shame! and while God was not ashamed to be called his God, how often of His people to-day He may well be ashamed!

Is He ashamed of thee, dear reader? Is thy heart set upon the perishing things of earth? Are the glory and the home of God nothing to thy soul? Be aroused from such deadly slumber, and lift thine eyes to the throne and learn God's estimate of Christ in the place He has given Him at His right hand. Let the sunshine of His love and glory flood thy joyless soul, for there is glory nowhere else but in His face; and as He shall be the light—the only light—of thine eternal abode, ask no other sunshine now than the sunshine of His face.

"His Spirit to my spirit sweet words of comfort saith,
 How God the weak one strengthens, who leans on Him in faith;
 How He hath built a city of love, and light, and song,
 Where the eye at last beholdeth what the heart had loved so long."

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

WE are exhorted in 2 Corinthians 10. 5 to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Perfect obedience to God was that which ever characterized Him; and He became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. The cost of obedience was great; but there was no wavering on His part, and His wondrous death was the crowning act of a wondrous life of obedience to God. By the things which He suffered He learned obedience experimentally; and in the overwhelming sufferings of the cross we may behold in measure the reality of the cost of His obedience. Such obedience was precious to God, who alone could understand and estimate it according to its infinite value.

It is very blessed for us to contemplate Him as the Obedient One, and to remember that in reality the Man of Sorrows has trod the pathway of obedience on earth to its end. He knows the suffering that such a pathway entails, and He has shared in the offering up to God of the prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears which ever arise from the toiling hearts of all who tread that path. This knowledge should comfort and sustain us as we remember that His heart upon the throne beats in sympathy with us in all that our obedience to God entails.

The obedience of Christ is the standard that God places before our hearts for emulation. The obedience of Christ! Let us grasp this in all its immensity, and let us learn that it is ours to render such obedience to the will of God. Oh the glory of such an ideal! Do not let us question as to whether it is possible of attainment. Never let us shrink back from its glorious, searching light; and never let us allow the sufferings which such obedience entails to appal us; nor let us ever ask where such a path will lead.

Where did obedience lead our Lord? To death, yea, the death of the cross!

Have a thought only to render this obedience; bring every thought into captivity, and let this be the point toward which the life's energies are directed; and think not of what may result from or accompany such obedience. He who heard and has told us of the prayers and supplications and strong cryings of the Lord, and who numbered His tears, shall take note of these.

May we each seek grace to grasp, with clearer understanding, the lofty ideal that God has set before us in the obedience of Christ, and arouse us from the vague indefiniteness and the lack of purpose which characterize so many of the Lord's people to face, as men clad in the power of God, the enormous reality and blessed possibilities of a Christian's life.

"THAT BLESSED HOPE."

THE Lord is coming—coming soon;

For Him I wait with mingled song and sigh;
 Mayhap at midnight or at noon,
 In dazzling light or deep'ning gloom,

He'll come to take me home with Him on high.

My spirit vibrates 'neath the sound

Of His sweet voice, so pleasant to the ear;
 Conflicting voices all around,
 Peace only in His presence found,

I wait the gath'ring shout—the summons clear.

The list'ning ear shall sure descry

That trumpet tone ring out in angel's strength;
 A sleeping world unmoved shall lie,
 While from its midst bright hosts on high
 Shall mount, the longed-for tryst to keep at length.

The vaulted courts of heaven shall ring
 With ransomed hosts from sin for ever free;
 And none than I more loud shall sing,
 As to His feet my flight I wing,
 For none knows what He has forgiven me.

Ah! none but Thou, O Lord, couldst know
 My failings many, and my faithlessness;
 And well I trow that this is so,
 For none but Thou couldst bear, I know,
 With such as I, and love me none the less.

But Thou art God! my song I raise,
 For love has taught these faltering lips to sing!
 Adoringly I trace Thy ways—
 Triumphantly Thy name I praise—
 With glowing heart love's tribute, Lord, I bring.

Thus at Thy feet I humbly lie;
 O Lord, my God, before Thy throne I fall
 And praise Thy love; for surely I
 'Mid failures know Thy succour nigh;
 Thy grace, O God, has triumphed over all.

And grace shall triumph till the shout
 In all its glory rolls upon mine ears!
 O joyous hour! when that glad shout
 Shall banish far mine every doubt,
 And God's own hand shall wipe mine eyes from tears.

JOSEPH.

ONE main thought is intended to be conveyed by the Spirit of God in His writing or the voice of the Lord Jesus in His teaching. Whether it be biography of the old Scripture or parable of the new, each little detail only contributes its share towards the filling in of the picture, but is not the central object of that picture.

Thus in Joseph the one leading thought is government, administration, and rule, and the details or filling in only add to and in no wise take from or weaken the point.

In Jacob you have the shepherd, through whom Laban never lost a sheep (Gen. **31. 38-40**); but whether Jacob or Joseph, both point to Christ. Our special business now is with Joseph, and for the saint of God to know the anti-type, the Lord Jesus in His rule and administration, is to be in touch with the mind of God concerning Him. For all authority has been given unto Him. As yet His sphere of rule is not the world. "We see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. **2. 8**). That we may each learn for ourselves wherein that rule is, and be found under it, is the object in view.

Genesis **36.** is full of the names of kings who reigned "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (ver. 31). The chapter of Gentile rule and rulers comes to its end; the last one fills up his little day before Joseph comes into the scene at all. And so now the chapter of Gentile rule must run its course, and the last Gentile must sway the sceptre in Gentile interest and pass off the scene before the Lord Jesus, our Joseph, can come into it. For this He waits.

It is in perfect harmony with the will of God that there is such a chapter, and that the Gentile day continues, though it is now doubtless nearing its close. It

began with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2. 37, 38); and it may be to mutual profit, both to writer and reader, to trace the source from whence this power came, and its extent at that time, differing in many respects from the present phase of it, though it be still Gentile.

The God of Heaven gave kingdom, power, strength, and glory—far-reaching indeed, for wherever children of men were did he rule. And not only so, but even beast and fowl were given into his hand—he was made to rule over them all. He was this head of gold. See the message God gave by the mouth of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 27. 5-8: “The beasts of the field also have I given to serve him; and God will visit that nation that will not bend to his yoke.” Nebuchadnezzar had himself a lesson to learn, and a painful lesson it was. Yet it was learned. Daniel 4. is the king’s own statement of what took place under the symbol of a *great tree*, expressing the greatness of his kingdom, from which for a time he had to be driven. Under the far-spreading branches of this tree the beasts found their shade, and therein the birds of the air built their nests, and all flesh was fed thereof. This is still the God of Heaven, here as the Most High, ruling in the kingdom of men, giving it to whomsoever He will, and setting over it the basest of men. And this the living are to know, that “the heavens do rule” (ver. 26). God has aforetime used the symbol of a tree to express the greatness of Gentile rule, as in Ezekiel 31. 1-9: “Whom art thou like in thy greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon his stature was exalted above all the trees of the field All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

The New Testament form of expression more correctly given would not be, “The kingdom of Heaven is at

hand," but rather, "The rule of the Heavens hath drawn nigh unto you," for the Heavens then ruled, and yet still rule, though, we repeat, differently in many things from the days under Nebuchadnezzar, for universal dominion is not now in the hands of any one crowned head, as it was with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman.

There is nothing here of ecclesiastical power, nothing religious—it is the world, not the "Church." Political, not ecclesiastical. Many have failed in linking the world religiously with the rule of the Heavens. Whatever power Joseph had, it was not religious or spiritual power. He did not change Egypt's worship. Whatever place God had in Goshen did not affect the sacred rites of Egypt. Yet in Goshen Joseph was owned in government, and he was Egyptian in habit and speech, clean-shaved, with change of raiment befitting the court of Pharaoh. Did he not take an Egyptian bride, the daughter of a priest? And when the Canaanites saw the mourning at the burial of Jacob, they said: "This is a grievous mourning to *the Egyptians.*" It is a Gentile throne to which the men in Goshen are subject.

This state of things to-day is true of Israel, and is the rule of the Heavens. Far otherwise had it been had Israel known their day, ushered in by the rousing cry, "Repent, for the rule of the Heavens hath drawn nigh unto you." Then the throne had been in Goshen, and Egypt been subject, as in the future the rule of the Heavens will be so expressed, the throne established in connection with Jerusalem, and Gentile nations bring their wealth and glory into it.

"Bow the knee" was Pharaoh's introduction of Joseph to Egyptians, as the stranger, unknown and unheard of, appeared. Implicit obedience; not a knee that did not bow.

“*Repent*” was the introduction of the coming King. The herald was not arrayed in royal apparel, riding in the first chariot, but rude of speech, simple fare, rough exterior. Yet he bowed the hearts of the many thousands crowding to his baptism, confessing their sins (Matt. 3. 2-6).

Repent is the cry of the King Himself. Jesus cried, “The rule of the Heavens hath drawn nigh unto you.” How gladly the multitudes hang upon His lips. Never man spake like this man (Matt. 4. 17).

The cry of the Twelve, as sent forth by the King, is, “The rule of the Heavens hath drawn nigh unto you” (Matt. 10. 7).

A hearty, glad submission was accorded to Joseph by all the rulers of Egypt; its princes sat at his feet and learned wisdom. Not so the rule of the Heavens as presented to Israel. Satan sought His death as the Babe; then met Him as He was about to enter on His public ministry, and disputed His claim to the kingdoms of this world, saying, All these are mine, and the glory of them; to me they have been given (Luke 4. 5, 6). He failed, but others followed on to the death that which he began. Herod and the rulers and chief priests opposed, and the rule of the Heavens suffered the violence. John was beheaded, the Lord Jesus was crucified, the Twelve imprisoned and slain without resistance, they suffered patiently. God is silent, and the kingdom as presented to Israel is not ushered in until as a repentant people they shall again hear the cry of the herald, the true Baptist, Elijah (Mal. 4. 4-6). And they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as for an only son. The Twelve shall sit upon the thrones of the twelve tribes.

G. R. GEDDES.

(To be continued.)

“LET US MAKE US A NAME.”

I WOULD ask your careful consideration of these words in Genesis 11. 4, taken in connection with Genesis 1. 28. We find a commandment has been given to man in his un-fallen state, and this commandment is, “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it.” But soon another will than the Will of God is seen at work on the earth (Gen. 3.), the end of which will being done is death.

After the flood God again expressed His will to the sons of men (Gen. 9. 1), but in chapter 11. verse 4 we still find man in rebellion against the Will of God, seeking to make himself a name on earth, and gathering as God had not gathered. Into this scene of rebellion God enters and scatters man from Babel’s Tower over the face of the earth; but this scattering is not an objectless spreading abroad; no, no! our God is a God of order, lawlessness and disorder are hateful to Him. From Babel’s Tower He spread abroad the people upon the face of the earth; as a sower sows his seed, that he may reap an abundant harvest, so the Great Sower spread the nations. Please read carefully Deuteronomy 32. 8.

But man persisted in his rebellion against the Will of God and continued in the doing of his own will, thus becoming more and more hopelessly under the power and authority of the lawless one, that rebel spirit that now rules in the realms of this world and will rule until He come again, who has already come, to do the Will of God on earth, the One who hated lawlessness and was put to death by a lawless world, led on by the lawless one, who is yet to be revealed (2 Thess. 2. 8).

We will not now dwell on God’s gathering of Israel and spreading them in the land, nor their rebellion against

the Will of God being done in their midst; such is man—such is man's history. After the Cross we again find God gathering in His wondrous grace and goodness, and distributing such according to His will on the face of the earth, not now as with the nations, nor yet as with Israel in the land, but gathering a redeemed people to Himself in the name of His blessed Son in the midst of the rebel scene of earth. These gathered ones are first delivered from the authority and dominion of Satan, they are translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1. 13), and called into the holy fellowship spoken of in 1 Corinthians 1. 9. There was that once again established on earth in accordance with the Will and Mind of God in Heaven—a sphere wherein the Will of God could be done on earth as in Heaven; something apart from the sphere of Satan's rule, yet that which he might again bring under his power and ensnare.

If we turn to 1 Corinthians 1. we find a church of God addressed, gathered ones who are what they are and where they are by the Will of God, they are gathered by His authority and in His order. God gives to such names as please Him—Saints they are called collectively, Christians individually; assemblies of God, in distinction from all the assemblies of rebel man. Thus were these gathered and spread abroad with Heaven-given names and titles; the naming is not confined to Corinth, nor the order to any one locality; very far from this, one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephes. 4.)—not one Lord for Corinth, another for Ephesus, one faith for one assembly, another faith for another; far from this, the Will of God for His saints was, that they should be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1. 10). Therefore note that what was addressed to Corinth was addressed to all the saints in *every place* (1 Cor. 1. 2). Please read this verse attentively. The “put away from amongst

yourselves" of chapter 5. 13 was a command to Corinth therefore, but not only to Corinth—there undoubtedly the first responsibility to act for God lay, for where evil originates, there the responsibility to deal with it first arises, and it is for those in the locality who rule the allotted portion to act first for God; but we see here that all the saints in every place owning the one Lord and His authority are called upon to act in fellowship with Corinth. In those days no such thing was known as one being put out of an assembly in one place and yet not out in another, or two assemblies in one town not in fellowship because in one place evil doctrine is held, yet individuals from both of these assemblies meeting at the same table a few miles away as though what was evil and blasphemy at their own door might be tolerated when at a distance. Even were we not told the precise way in which God would have this order maintained in His house, it would not lessen our responsibility to see that this order was carried out, but we believe God has distinctly indicated the means to be employed to bring about united action amongst His saints; these means we believe to be the acting together of the overseers, as clearly indicated in 1 Peter 5.

To-day men act on very different principles. Independence and indifference as to the honour and holiness of the House of God characterize this age. Sin is tolerated at a little distance that would not be tolerated by many at their own door, but not so then. "The Church is in ruins" we are now told, and practically every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes or what he considers most expedient; "if," say such, "we keep our own door clean, our responsibility goes no farther." And how has such a condition of things come about? we ask. We have not far to look for the answer.

Read carefully the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 3.

Satan is still without, but he is seeking to enter in and ensnare those who have been delivered from his authority. He is at work as with the nations of old, and as with Israel. It was needful for God in His grace to begin afresh outside all the failure and rebellion of the ages past after the cross, where the rebellion of Jew and Gentile culminated, and, as we have already said, this fresh arrangement of men on earth was after a heavenly pattern, something apart from and outside the rule of the god of this world (Ephes. 3. 10), that which was manifested to principalities and powers in the heavenlies. The reins of government given to the nations to carry out God's order upon the earth, upon their failure in responsibility, were given to Israel as a nation to carry out the rule of God in the land, but upon the failure of the nation of Israel the reins of government were again given back to a Gentile nation. Read carefully Daniel 2. 37, 38, and it will be seen that the same language is used to Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, as was used to man before the fall (Gen. 1. 28), and also to man after the flood (Gen. 9.). But it is important for us to notice that no special form of government is given on these three occasions; this God reserved for the special line or sphere of His action, first in the nation of Israel, then in the church and churches of God. We would ask our readers specially to notice that we *do not* say that the rule in Israel and in the church and churches of God are synonymous; on the contrary, we have previously pointed out points of difference, although the mode of carrying out practically this rule may be very nearly analogous in both dispensations. For a fuller understanding of this subject we would ask our readers' most careful consideration of "The Rule of God," in NEEDED TRUTH, vol. viii., 1896.

But, again, mark attentively what is taking place in 1 Corinthians 3. Spiritual lethargy, carnality, death, darkness are struggling to gain ascendancy once more

over those who have been delivered from the power and authority of Satan, brought from his kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and glory, turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Men in this chapter are again found taking names, and other names than the God-given ones; thus name-taking and name-making is again seeking to enter the place where the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ should alone be owned. And this is no small matter, as some dear saints of God hold it to be; it is a sure index that the one and only Lord is losing His place and His authority in the midst of His gathered-out and gathered-together ones, that another voice than the voice of the Good Shepherd is making itself heard, that the day is drawing nigh when men shall arise even from amongst the overseers speaking perverse things and gathering to other names and other systems than the name of the Lord Jesus and the principles of the House of God.

These men who have fallen into the snare of the Devil are now his agents to ensnare others (1 Tim. 3. 7). Another will has come in, as of old at Babel's Tower, and in this chapter we have thus early the foreshadowing of the spiritual Babylon or Babel (see Gen. 10. 10), that Babel which men are busy building to-day, where names are taken and names are made and given that come not from Heaven, but originate with him who puts the names of blasphemy on that which he creates (Rev. 13. 1). It may seem of little moment to men, and even Christians, that the names of men and things are so freely taken to-day, such as Established Church, Free Church, Wesleyan, Independent, Baptist, and a multitude of others, and made centres of gathering and systems of men. In reality these gatherings are but scatterings, and scatterings not in the sense we have already referred to as a spreading abroad in godly order, but such a scattering as takes place when the wolf

enters the fold and scattereth the sheep; for be it distinctly remembered that the Good Shepherd Himself has said, "*He that gathereth not with Me scattereth*" (Luke 11. 23).

Beloved reader, in the light of these solemn considerations, ask yourself the question, Am I a gatherer or a scatterer? Am I satisfied with the one and only name—the name of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords—gathered to Him alone and where His will alone can be carried out? or am I a scatterer, bearing another name than the name of the Lord Jesus, gathering it may be with those who have a name to live whilst they are dead, or *with those who are not ashamed to own a party name, to add some sectarian badge to the sacred name "assembly of God,"* that name given of Him to His gathered-out and gathered-together saints? If so, dear reader, how solemn your position. We speak in all love, yet with plainness, and beseech you to consider the end of these things, which is indeed death. We have seen they had their origin in carnality and death, in the beginning of that spiritual Babylon that has spread and spread till like the grain of mustard seed in whose sheltering branches the birds of the air that first sought to destroy the good seed have now found a secure resting-place.

Nor does the evil stop here; the picture shows us again another's will being done on earth than the Will of God. The wills of men, themselves misled and misguided by the prince of the power of the air, are being done. God's order has been set aside and man's order established. What shall the end of these things be? Not manifest, utter confusion and anarchy; far from this. The last development of the lawless one's kingdom and his rule on earth will be a mighty despotism, a despotic reign. Men whom he is using now as his tools will in his coming kingdom have to bow implicitly to his rule. See Revelation 13. 7, 8, and notice that the word is translated "authority" in the Revised

Version. Notice also verses 16 and 17. Here men are no longer taking names by choice or ranging themselves with a rebel world unknowingly; the scatterer has here laid hold of groaning earth with his mighty grasp and men are forced to take the names that he gives, for no man may buy or sell without them. And what is his number? Six, six, six; no seven, speaking of rest and completion, for those who take his names and badges, for such there can be no rest day nor night for ever and ever (Rev. 14. 11).

And this, reader, is the end of name-making and name-taking. And yet not the end. The bitter, far-reaching results of rebellion against God and the doing of His Will are to reach on into the coming ages of ages.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

GRACE SUFFICIENT.

(2 COR. 12. 9.)

WHAT a wonderful promise I see,
 "My grace is sufficient for thee";
 "My strength is made perfect in weakness,"
 What a comfort these words are to me.

Thy grace is sufficient for me,
 Thy grace is sufficient for me;
 Thy strength is made perfect in weakness;
 Thy grace is sufficient for me.

The Lord is my strength and my song,
 And when I am weak I am strong;
 The Lord is become my salvation,
 In Him will I boast all day long.

O Lord, I give thanks unto Thee
 That weak Thou hast made me to be,

That the power of Christ may rest on me,
And His grace be sufficient for me.

Then pleasure in weakness I take,
In injuries borne for Christ's sake;
Necessities, nor persecutions,
Nor distresses my confidence shake.

Thy grace is sufficient for me,
Whatever the trial may be,
For Thou wilt not fail nor forsake me—
Others fail, but I always have Thee.

A. F.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

III. ASA. (2 Chron. 14., 15., 16.)

THE three chapters that are occupied with the acts of this king, who enjoyed one of the longest reigns of the kings of Judah—forty-one years—may be summed up briefly thus:—

1. Dependence upon the Lord. 2. Blessing from the Lord. 3. Departure from the Lord.

On the whole this reign is a bright spot in the too often dark history of God's ancient people; it is, however, a disappointing one, and the following words, though spoken in a different connection, somewhat describe his life: "Ye were running well; who did hinder you?" (Gal. 5. 7).

DEPARTURE FROM THE LORD (2 Chron. 14.).

The first statement we read is, "In his days the land was quiet ten years" (2 Chron. 14. 1). The number "ten" in Scripture apparently suggests man under trial and responsibility to God. Compare "And ye shall have tribulation ten days" (Rev. 2. 10) and other scriptures where this number occurs. What was Asa going to do with this

time of quiet and of great possibility? Let us see. "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God" (ver. 2). Almost, certainly, anything but what was right in the eyes of some of the people, for he took away the strange altars and the high places, and brake down the pillars and hewed down the Asherim. All this was necessary and right; but he did not stop there, for "he commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment" (ver. 4). Too often what answers to the first is attended to, without proceeding to what answers to the second. Oh! to learn to follow in the steps of Him who was "mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24. 19).

Besides, "he built fenced cities in Judah" (ver. 6). Although the land was quiet then, he had no guarantee that it would be always so, for enemies surrounded on all sides; and he, like a wise man, turned this time of quiet to good account, for there is "a time for war and a time for peace" (Eccles. 3. 8). Is there not with us also much that answers to this? Times of comparative quiet, when things seem to be going on so smoothly and well; and, if it was not for living faith, we might be inclined to lay our armour by? Yet such are the very times when, in reality, the enemy is nearest and most powerful, although unseen by us—just as some of the most awful and disastrous occurrences of nature have been preceded by an unnatural stillness. We should then, like Asa, make the most of these opportunities of immunity from more open warfare, in preparation for the conflict, which is sure to come (as with Asa, so with us) sooner or later. "So they built and prospered" (ver. 7).

Soon they are called to meet an enemy in the shape of one million and three hundred chariots under Zerah, an Ethiopian (a country that lay to the south of Egypt,¹ and

¹ Now usually called the Soudan.

a people who at this time, and afterwards, competed with that country for supremacy). The army which Asa numbered was scarcely more than half. The lesson which God has stamped on many a page of holy writ is that which we in our unbelief so often forget, that with God numbers are nothing. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing" (Isa. 40. 15). Consequently, had the Ethiopians numbered ten millions, it would have been the same thing with God.

We do well to remember here, however, that God works through human instrumentality, taking up a people prepared by Himself to accomplish His own work. We should make as great a mistake, on the other hand, if we supposed that Asa's preparation and army gave the victory against this mighty host. Verse 12 tells us it was the Lord. Verse 11 shows us clearly that they relied entirely upon the Lord for victory, and the subsequent chapter indicates that Asa himself assigned the victory entirely to the Lord. There is that which God ever expects from us—a preparation of whatever He Himself has given us for Him. "For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee," accepting according as a man hath, not according as he hath not. Asa rolls the whole war upon the Lord. This is according to faith. "Let not man prevail against Thee" (ver. 11). Here they own their own utter inability to do anything, as well as reminding the Lord that they were His people. This brings us back in mind to Exodus 32., verse 7, where we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." But Moses, the man of God, casts back upon Jehovah the people as being His: "Consider that this nation is Thy people" (Exod. 33. 13). "For wherein now shall it be known that I have found grace in Thy

sight, I and Thy people? Is it not in that Thou goest with us, so that we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth?" (Exod. 33. 16). The victory of this chapter is just a fulfilment of the promise of blessing (Deut. 28. 7): "The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways." It is for us to remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "Apart from Me ye can do nothing," but "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (John 15. 5; Phil. 4. 13).

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

(To be continued.)

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 133.—"*Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace*" (*Rom. 6. 14, R.V.*). *Is this in the sense of having claim over us, or influence?*

"The strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15. 56).

We understand it to refer to the claims of sin. The penalty of a broken law is the curse of that law (Galatians 3. 10). No man has ever continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them, so that all the sons of Adam that seek to approach God by law-keeping come under a double condemnation—that of being sinners, therefore lawless ones, and also law-breakers. The object of the law was not to save sinners, but to convict them, and bring them to a sense of their hopeless condition (Rom. 5. 20). No man but the man Christ Jesus ever fulfilled the obligations of the law in their entirety. He, however, did so, and thus would never have come under sentence of the

law on His own account. But, as His people Israel had fallen under the sentence of the law, it was necessary for the blessed Lord to bear that sentence in all its awful fullness. Thus has He become the end or conclusion of the law to all those that believe (Rom. 10. 4). And this is brought about by death with Christ (Gal. 2. 20), not by pardon, for a pardoned man may again break law, thus afresh coming under its condemnation. Not so one who has died to law; on such a one the law has no further claim. Where law is sin abounds, but where death has taken place sin and law lose their power. Thus the believer is told to reckon himself dead unto sin, but alive unto God. In proportion as this is done, and the believer's work is in the Spirit, and not in the flesh, sin loses its power over him.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

I.

It has often been said that in the Old Testament the new lies concealed, and in the New Testament the old lies revealed.

There is much in this, dear young believer, that, when understood, will be found exceedingly helpful in our searchings on the most interesting and instructive subject of the journeyings of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. What gives it double interest and makes it so important is the fact that God has caused these things to be written for our learning and, also, for our admonition. Surely, then, we should become acquainted with them, and should seek

that the purpose for which they have been written should be accomplished—that is, that we should both be instructed and warned thereby.

The first mention of this people you will find if you refer to Genesis **13. 15** ; also chapter **15. 4-7**. Here God gave to Abram the promise of a land for an inheritance and a seed for a possession. Shortly before this Abram had left his native land and had parted with many that were near and dear by nature's ties that he might be found in the path God had chosen for him, and accomplish the purpose of God concerning him. At that time he was, so to speak, alone : he had no child, no heir (except his servant), and no portion on the earth ; yet, the Lord God was his portion ; in His friendship he was blessed ; and in His purpose and by His promise he was enriched. The people are thus seen in the purpose of God, seen in association with Abram even before they had an actual separate existence ; and Abram too sees them there, and he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness. In other words : they were chosen in, and to be blessed through Abram according to the purpose and promise of God.

We wish you now to read a New Testament scripture in Ephesians **1. 3, 4** : “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ : even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” Here we have brought before us another seed : like Israel, seen in the purpose of God ; but unlike Israel, chosen not in Abram, but in Christ ; and that not in time, but ere time began. In other words : we have here revealed God's eternal purpose associated with the honouring of His Son by giving Him the promise of a seed who should occupy a relationship nearer and dearer to Him than ever Israel occupied to Abram—even members of His body, the object which He loved and for which He gave Himself. “ This is a great

mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5. 32).

Concerning such He could also speak in the language of Psalm 139. 16, and say: "In thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Yet were they seen in the purpose of God—chosen in Christ, "hidden in the Saviour's side." Even as Eve was seen in Adam, so was the church seen in Christ; and ere the ages of time began His eye saw, and His heart was set upon winning the object of His love. For this He was willing to yield up all that He had of riches and place, as Philippians 2. 6 to 8 declares; and He became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. This was involved in reaching and winning the object of His love, even suffering and death; yet, His love was stronger than death.

A picture of this is doubtless seen in the vision God gave to Abram in connection with the earthly seed (see Gen. 15. 8 to 12). The deep sleep and horror of great darkness that fell upon Abram reminds us of the deeper sleep and denser darkness of the Cross which the Son of God passed through when, His hour having come, for the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross and despised the shame.

God further revealed to Abram the condition in which the seed of His choice would be found, even as strangers in a strange land, oppressed, afflicted, and downtrodden; reminding us, too, of the position and condition in which we were when the grace of God reached us: a condition fully known to Him even when He undertook to save us. Yet can we, who have believed, say with appreciative hearts: "God who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal" (2 Tim. 1. 9).

In Israel we have an earthly people, called with an

earthly calling, with earthly hopes and blessings. In the church we have a heavenly people, called with a heavenly calling, with heavenly hopes and blessed with spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Unto the further unfolding of God's purposes with the heavenly seed and the accomplishment thereof upon the earth we yet hope to turn to the history of Israel and learn therefrom.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

EVERY word of God is profitable for instruction, for teaching, and for a great many more things besides.

In these days, when "religious beliefs" are a shifting sand, changing after every wave of thought, the child of God cannot be too well versed in the Scriptures. To be in the secret of the Lord with regard to the past, the present, and the future will be a stay to his soul, as it was to David's of old.

Get into the past and see how the present has shaped itself out of the past, and with the knowledge thus gained see how the present is shaping itself for that future that the Scriptures reveal.

When many were forgetting the God of their fathers and serving the changing gods of the lords of their captivity, Daniel, who "understood by books" the limits that God had placed upon the time of the captivity, stood fast for the God of Abraham. He was in the secret of the Lord and the decrees of the wise men did not affect him. So it should be with us to-day, beloved. Let the wise men make decrees founded upon "higher criticism" or anything else they please. We have "understood by books" the limits that God has placed upon their folly, and we can tread the old paths unaffected by the changing opinion of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.

JUDGMENT PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

SINNERS—sons—servants—with which we link up the thought of judgment—first of the sinner, then of the son, and then of the servant, covering thus the past, present, and future of the child of God.

To apprehend this will greatly help each young or old believer; and for our peace of mind as saints, and joy in service as servants, this must be known.

God dealt with the *past* of the *sinner*. The *Father* deals with the *present* of the *son*. The *Master* will deal with the *future* of the *servant*.

Our responsibility as sinners was Godward, we sinned against God. That is what Adam did: he cast God off; and man refuses to have God in his knowledge. He is a hater of God, and there is no fear of God before his eyes. We know how true all this was of ourselves.

Now all this cannot go by unpunished—none of it. God is holy and must punish sin; and now, thank God, we can see in the Cross how God Himself, according to His own knowledge of *us* and our *sins*, has dealt with our *sinner past*—our short or long history, as the case may be—all, every atom, judged there on Calvary. It is past; it will never come up again. With glad heart we sing

“Settled for ever, sin’s tremendous claim.”

Shall not come into judgment, never stand as a sinner before God to be judged; that is *behind* us, not *before* us, praise God!

Now the moment we were saved by His grace we became *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus. And now begins responsibility *as* children to please our Father, to obey Him; and any disobedience or wrong will bring trouble to us and sorrow to Him. Hence the present judgment of sons from the hand of a loving Father (read Heb. 12.). We had fathers of our flesh who chastened

us—indeed, often for their own pleasure. The boys are romping about as boys only can, and father is reading a book or paper. Dear me! how can any one read and such a noise going on? it is a perfect Babel. Boys, go out and don't come in again! The profit of the boys is not considered, only the pleasure of the father. Not so with the Father of spirits; He chastens for our profit! May we profit thereby, and by exercised hearts bring forth fruit; even the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

But let us not suppose that by the word *judgment* we always mean punishment. No, by no means! The thought often is training, teaching, discipline. When the gardener is pruning a tree he is not cutting it down; he is training it, so that it may bring forth more fruit. There are more schools for children than the Board school: home is a school. Mother is training and teaching the bigger girl into house-work. She does not now have all play—oh no, that would never do; so being kept in is not punishment, but training, that she may be a useful woman when she grows up, and be an honour to her parents. So God wants us to grow up useful for Him, to bring honour to His name down here upon earth, where we can do it now as we never shall again. So, dear young Christian, prize the present, and use it well for God!

We are also *servants*. I say *we*, for all can do something; yet there are some more especially called to do service for the Master, and, indeed, some are wholly given to this work. But whether it be the one giving leisure hours after the day's toil, labouring, it may be, in the Gospel or caring for the saints, or giving all their time, it is the *one Master*, and for such the day is coming when each man's work will be tried as by fire as to what sort it is, and then the "*well done*," or, it may be, alas! "*disapproved*." This is a *judgment future* for the servant; and the Lord Jesus, the Lord and Master, will try the

work of each at the judgment-seat of Christ. It will indeed be a deeply solemn scene to see so much burnt up as valueless, though it may have been, and very likely was, highly esteemed amongst men (read carefully 1 Cor. 3rd chap.). Many a lowly and lonely toiler passed by here will get honourable mention there; when many whose name and fame were world-wide will find they have had their reward, the praise of men, for which they laboured and toiled.

May each and all keep ever before us in our path of service, especially in the Gospel, the sinner's judgment seen in the dark shadow of the Cross; but our own judgment, as servants, seen in the fierce light of the judgment-seat of Christ. How soon this may burst upon us we know not; then fill in well the little while, for the night cometh, when no man can work. And may we be missed if taken away before the Lord comes, not only by men, but in a sense, if we may say so, by God, for hear His lament to Joshua: "*Moses, My servant, is dead.*" He was a *faithful servant* in all God's house; a place *hard to fill*.

FAITH'S TRIUMPH.

WE have often read with emotion and interest approaching to wonder of the deep sorrows and sore troubles of David, the man after God's heart. Few of the Lord's people have ever been called upon to tread so dark and troublesome a pathway as he, and yet in the midst of it all he could say to the Lord, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul" (Ps. 94. 19). All around him the un pitying blasts of adversity and suffering raged furiously, and many a time but for the help and upholdings of Jehovah his foot would have slipped, as heart and flesh failed him; but in such circumstances, unruffled and unaffected by them, through the multitude of his thoughts regarding the never-failing

goodness of God, his delighted soul could glory in God as the rock of his heart and his portion for ever. God's Word and the record of His faithfulness to him and his fathers contained therein was that, clearly, from which David derived sweetest comfort, and made him a happy, rejoicing man in the midst of adversity and suffering.

Jeremiah also, in after years, with weeping eyes is heard to say, "I am the man that hath seen afflictions with the rod of His wrath" (Lam. 3, 1); but in the midst of these circumstances he tells how God's words were found and he did eat them, and His word was unto him the joy and the rejoicing of his heart (Jer. 15. 16).

So with Habakkuk. All around him was blight and barrenness, and he appears as a lonely man on the watch-tower listening for the words and answer of God. In that place of elevation, far above the blighted scene of corruption and departure from God around, he got to know his God and His will, so that he could say, "Although the fig tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord and I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3. 17, 18).

Indeed, all the witnesses to the triumph of the life of faith in Old Testament days were men who treasured in their hearts every jot and tittle of the word of God, and who found in God and His Word that which kept their souls fat and flourishing, and enabled their hearts to rejoice, though all around them was desolation and death.

Alas! we fear that it is only the very few who know their God thus in our day, even though we possess the full revelation of God in His Son; with the majority such knowledge of Him and His sustaining power appears to be but a tale which they have heard with the hearing of the ear, but they are absolute strangers to its reality and

enjoyment. Circumstances and surroundings too often regulate the joy, and form the measure of rejoicing of the many. When these are according to their desires they are all bright and happy; when otherwise, the spring of their joy fails and leaves them portionless. Like the foolish virgins, they have lamps, but at the very moment that their lights are most needed they fail them, for, lo! they find that there is no oil in their vessels, and their lamps are gone out.

Such sad experiences are altogether impossible to any whose joy is not in their surroundings, but in God, who sits supreme above all circumstances, and in His precious Word, which ever shines the brighter and becomes the more unspeakably precious as the fading, failing nature of everything beneath the sun is experimentally proved by them. This is perhaps the most difficult lesson our God has to teach us, and the one above all others which He would have us to learn to-day; for it is verily possible for us to be occupied more with the will of God, and many things which are according to His Word, *than with Himself*.

How often Christians are found to get along admirably so long as meetings are going on well, and everything connected with the testimony to the Lord's Name is appearing to triumph; but if meetings are not all that they desire, and the contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints brings trials or persecution, they seem to collapse, as if there were no backbone in them.

Does not this condition of things, which may be seen on every hand, demonstrate clearly that many have got very little beyond men and meetings, and know far too little of the gathering and sustaining power of God? What is needed, surely, is more intimate dealings with God and the Word of His grace, so that we may know Him and His will sufficiently to enable us to stand by God and the truth He has taught us, although all around may be shaken.

“LET US MAKE US A NAME.”

(Concluded from page 59)

BELOVED reader, again we beseech you, pause and consider ere you add another name to the names and titles given by God Himself. As we have before said, His individual people He calls Christians and brethren, His collective people, saints, His assemblies, the church and churches of God. His Will first done in us individually, His Will done amongst us collectively, thus the Will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. But some say it is assumption for us to take the name of saints; such a title for poor, failing creatures as we are is too high, too heavenly. But, beloved reader, it is not what we call ourselves, but what God in His grace calls us. Others again say it is presumption to call ourselves church of God in this day of failure, but is it not presumption to talk about being on divine ground and gathered in the name of the Lord, and yet not to accept the title that He gives to those who are truly gathered to Himself, to add some other name, as gathered simply as Christians—gathered on the ground of life—gathered on the ground of the One Body, or, as a dear old brother amongst those called “Exclusives” used to say to the writer, “We are just a few of the rafters of the house put together,” the house itself being in ruins? Think of this. Who are these people? we ask. They are a few rafters coming together in the ruin! No, no; let us remember that House of God is the title that God gives to His gathered saints on earth.

For those who gather outside the principles of House of God, there is no legislation in the Word of God as to their collective responsibility; such are outside the circle of God’s collective rule on earth,

gathering names they may make and may have, but names that speak of men's wills being done instead of the will of God, and further, tell of another's will again being done, even the will of him who works amidst the children of disobedience. And he even brings children of God into his snare—those who should be free to follow the Lord as His bond-slaves alone, purchased at the price of Calvary's Cross, where He wrested the Kingdom from the god of this world, and He is now waiting for the time when He shall reign, and those who overcome shall also reign with Him (Rev. 2. 26, 27). There is but one way that the desire of our blessed Lord as expressed when upon earth, in John 17. 21, can ever be brought about, and that is by laying aside all names but those given of God, of all Creeds and Catechisms, and taking the Word of God alone as our guide. When this is done, then, and only then, may we hope to see the children of God of one mind in the Lord.

Beloved child of God, if you are a Babel builder we beseech you think on these solemn things, ere the mighty hunter—the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, the beginning of whose kingdom is Babel, and who is to be cast into the abyss (Rev. 20.)—ere he has succeeded in occupying the whole of the brief period of your life as a co-worker with himself in Babylon's mysteries to your sorrow, loss, and shame, when you find that the work of a life-time has been wood, hay, and stubble. We would say, ere this be so, awake yourself out of the snare of the Devil to sobriety of life and obedience to the will of God (2 Tim. 2. 26), so that with your God you may be a co-worker in the things of the Kingdom, not receiving His grace in vain.

We would ask our readers specially to note that in 1 Timothy 3. 1–7 guidance is given concerning those who are fitted of God to lead the flock, and what their qualifications must be, lest they should fall into the snare of the

Devil, for he will seek first to ensnare the guides, and through them to reach the flock, as predicted in Acts 20. 30; but in 2 Timothy 2. we get God's directions for the recovery of His saints—living ones—out of the snare of the Devil into which they have fallen. This recovery, or rather awakening, has no reference to the unconverted, but refers to those to whom God may peradventure give repentance, those taken alive as captives (see R.V., and carefully read closing verses of this chapter). Some have sought to do away with the force of this passage, as applicable for the present day, by saying that although a Christian at that time could be recovered because he had fallen into the snare, yet that those born in the snare could not be spoken of as recovered. With regard to this we would ask our readers to notice the words used in Isaiah 11. 11. Here those recovered were those born in exile, but, as we have already pointed out, the word is not "recover," but "awake." In another Scripture we are told "it is high time to awake out of sleep." These awakenings refer to the saint and not to the sinner.

The legislation as given for the guidance of saints in times of apostasy is that which is given for the guidance of saints to-day who desire to continue in the old paths; and notice that in the end of the third chapter it is the written Word—the Scriptures—that we are thrown back upon; not some new development, but the already delivered principles of church and House of God. The first responsibility in carrying out these principles devolves on those elders who are fitted of God to rule—fitted of God, we say, and would to God that His will in this matter were better understood. Oh, the sorrow upon sorrow that has arisen, and yet arises, from the disregard of these things; allowing men to come to the front whom God would never place there—men who, when they find they cannot do their own wills as they

like, will become the most bitter and relentless enemies of the truth.

But some will say, and do say, if elders have so failed in the past to guide aright as to lead the very flock with which they have been entrusted into the snare from which they should keep themselves, we must set the elderhood aside. With regard to this, be it remembered that those addressed by Paul in Acts 20, 28 were divinely appointed men; also we have little doubt that the men dealt with by the Apostle in 1 Timothy 1, 20, with those spoken of in the second Epistle and second chapter, were guides. *If the fact that such guides may fail is to authorize our bringing in some new order of things, surely this would imply that the very appointment of the elders in Ephesus was a mistake, but who would dare to say this?* We must set the elderhood aside, say some, and only follow those whom we judge to be fitted to go before the flock. But is not this very much the old thing that men are returning to, of the sheep choosing their shepherds? The word of guidance, both in 1 Timothy 1, and 3., and Titus 1., was not spoken to the churches at large, but to individuals. To suppose that spiritual men alone will be those who seek for a place and seek to guide, and that the flock will ever be so spiritual as to recognize and follow only such, is contrary to all facts and experiences of the past. What has even an Apostle to say to his son Timothy (second Epistle, chapter 1, 15)? And this, remember, in the early days of the Church's power, when apostolic authority was still enforced by living men.

It is but a baseless supposition, that anything more can be expected from individuals *who appoint themselves* and appoint the sphere of their rule (which often is far removed from their personal knowledge), than from those who, after a godly manner, have been recognized by godly men as already doing the work, and then associated with such in

the work of oversight ; this supposition is, we believe, contrary to bitter experience. Whilst some men of special gift and grace may come to the front amongst their brethren, what is there to hinder men with little grace and little gift acting on the same principle? If the reply to this is, The saints should not recognize such, we answer, No, they should not, but, alas ! they have done so in the past continually, and will do so to-day, for be it remembered that many saints are carnal and walk as men, occupied with the outward appearance, with little spiritual discernment.

With regard to any greater safety arising to the flock from men appointing themselves to oversight, and looking upon themselves as specially qualified leaders in these difficult days, we would note, as we have done before in these pages, that the very deliverers given by God were oft-times men who bitterly failed in their own lives ; witness Samson, Gideon, Jehu, and others. Not only did some fail, but they led the people of God into the very idolatry and the very snare from which they had been delivered. If Ezra and Nehemiah are referred to as remnant times parallel with present days, then let us notice that there was never a time that the elderhood was more clearly associated with the leaders of the people. Also be it remembered that both Ezra and Nehemiah would probably be in and of the elderhood, and this would in no wise hinder them in the exercise of any special gift they had for God. Please read attentively **Ezra 5**. The eye of God was upon the elders of the Jews (verse 5) ; and in verse 9 the elders are spoken to by the opposers as though they were alone responsible for the building of the House and of the wall. Notice also chapter **10.**, verses 8-14.

If the elderhood has failed, so have individuals also equally, and safety does not lie in setting aside God's order and bringing in something else, but in continuing

in the doctrine, for in so doing we shall both save ourselves and those who hear us (1 Tim. 4. 16). Collective responsibility—that is, the acting together of overseeing men in cities and counties—has no doubt its dangers, but so has the acting of individuals on their individual responsibility or choosing those they like to act with them. An individual may think of himself more highly than he ought to think, and be lifted up with pride, and this may be either when acting as one amongst many, or, as we have said, in his individual capacity.

We would again press upon our readers to carefully notice that when failure entered the church of Ephesus (and we are not told that the same evil affected Corinth or other assemblies), the saints in Ephesus were thrown upon the written Word of God, in which the principles of government for church and churches of God and House of God had been revealed, just as the remnant of Israel was cast for guidance upon the law of Moses, which we find was given for *all Israel* (Mal. 4. 4). These words are spoken at the close of the Old Testament and the remnant's history therein, and we feel they cannot be too strongly urged upon the attention of the Lord's people to-day, for they are truth for remnant times.

That there is fresh legislation for the saints separated afresh from evil at Ephesus we do not deny, but this legislation, as in 1 Corinthians 5., refers to those who are separated from and the responsibilities towards such; it in no way affects the construction of the assembly, for those separated still continued the church in Ephesus, no matter how many Christians were left as unclean vessels in the snare of the Devil. The responsibility towards such entangled ones was first to come out from them, and then to seek in meekness to instruct them, "if, peradventure, God would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," always remembering that it is God

alone who can give this, whether to saints or sinners. But when thus purged out and seeking in the fear of God to carry out our responsibility towards those outside the circle in which the will of God can be carried out, we shall still be, if gathered in accordance with His will, church or churches of God. The fact that in Revelation 2. 1 the churches are addressed as *the* church in Ephesus and other places, precludes the thought that in these places there were other assemblies equally gathered in the name of the Lord, and equally pillar and ground of the truth which alone characterizes those who are gathered in accordance with the will of God. Those, again, who are gathering according to their own wills—calling themselves by the names of men, making names that they be not spread abroad according to God's purpose and God's order upon the earth—are, however unknowingly to themselves, helping on the confusion of the last days. Beloved brethren, let us not be Babel builders. We may have a zeal, but not according to knowledge. "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?" were the proud words of a proud man; but he was near his humbling and his end. Let us be in earnest, but let us see that we strive lawfully, so that we lose not our crown.

J. A. BOSWELL.

JOSEPH.

(Continued from page 52.)

AND does the rule of the Heavens yet suffer? Yea, verily, the raving of men, anarchy, nihilism, communism, all leagued against government, for the slaying of crowned heads—even a peaceful lady like the late Empress of Austria. And God is silent. The rule of the Heavens still suffers the violence; but, may I ask, will it always suffer? *Nay, verily!* The feeble gatherings of lawless

men against kings is borne with, but when *the kings themselves gather together against His Christ* then patience is over, the silence is broken by thunderings, lightnings, and voices out of the throne, and the King of them that reign as kings and Lord of them that rule as lords Himself takes fitting vengeance (Rev. 19. 19), and again universal dominion is centred in one Man, the Lord Jesus. And the great tree is again grown; beast and bird find their shelter and shade, as in Matthew 13. 31, 32. We speak not now of Kingdom of God, vastly differing from that of the Heavens, though also expressed in the tree of Mark 4. 31, Psalm 8. 6-9, Isaiah 11. 6. Such rule was committed to Joseph. All was his, to the cattle of the field—his by purchase—each and all owed their existence to him. Neither was he alone in this place of power; one shared his throne who never shared his prison—Asenath.

Joseph's two dreams foretold all this; yet not all, the choicest part was not revealed. Stars and sheaves told of Egypt and Israel. When he spake of sun, moon and stars, the answer was, "Shall I, thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" The narrow circle of Israel is Goshen, but the field is "the World"—the larger circle of Egypt. But what he never dreamt of, much less uttered, was Asenath in the throne—the grand secret only to be revealed by Zaphnath Paaneah, the revealer of secrets. But how much lay between the dream and the manifestation! What a mystery of Suffering and Woe preceded the mystery as revealed in Asenath and Joseph—which is only the shadow both as to the *Woe* and the *Glory* through which *Christ passed!*

There is something, however, still deeper than either suffering and prison house, and higher than the glory and the throne; that is, the love that suffered on the Cross is deeper than the Cross, and the love that placed us on the throne is higher than the throne.

“ Deep were those sorrows, deeper still
The love that brought Thee low.”

Yes, we owe it all to revelation ; not a love in word only, but in deed and in truth—Joseph manifested the love, the suffering, and the glory.

Gen. 37. Israel loved Joseph. But this was mutual ; so when Joseph was sent to see how his brethren fared, and the flocks (first themselves, then the flocks ; for if it is not well with the shepherds, it cannot be well with the sheep, as Acts 20: “ Take heed to *yourselves* and *the flock*”), he was simply declaring, telling out, what was in the father’s heart—his love to them ; and who of all the twelve knew that love as he did?—none. He alone dwelt in that bosom, he knew the beating of that heart, the warmth of that affection and its largeness, so it is well that Joseph was sent. The sent one of the Father. But what a reception awaited him—from purest love to bitterest hate ! They envied him, they hated him. And hating him, they hated the father ; casting out the sent one, they insulted the sender. A great way off they saw him *seeking them*. “ I seek my brethren.” They never sought him. The first thought (out of the heart proceedeth murder), Let us kill him, and we will see what will become of his dreams. This was their purpose, though kept from it. God looketh upon the heart. He said to David, It is well that it was in thine heart ; and in a coming day the purposes of the heart will be made manifest, and then shall every man have praise from God (1 Cor. 4. 5).

This is the mirror that reflects ourselves—our hatred of Father and Son, our killing of the One, the only One who ever did come or could come and tell of the Father’s love ; but that very Cross of man’s shame and degradation—down to its very depth, is the Cross that told the height and depth, the length and breadth of God’s love—to us, even while we were yet sinners.

Joseph's sorrows began from the time he sighted his brethren, and though he wept seven times, he never wept once for himself. He never occasioned his own sorrows. Others caused all this—the sundering, cruel sundering, from his father, brethren and home. Those bitter tears, strong crying and importunate entreaty received no sympathy. He was alone in his sorrows, like the shepherd of Luke 15., alone in his weary wandering over rugged ways until he found his sheep; and like the Man of Sorrows, who wept at the tomb of Lazarus, as none other did, over the doomed city and the deepening sorrow of the garden, with strong crying and tears, to Him that was able to save, not from going into death, but to save *out of it*. Resurrection was the answer to that.

We come now to a contrast—chapters 38., 39. Why does this chapter come in here? What place does this occupy in the narrative? A most important one. The shameful conduct of Judah and the spotlessness of Joseph side by side, for Joseph's life is a blameless life. But it is not by such a life, though so pure, sinners are to be reached. There are a butler and baker in the prison house; hence the depths are to be known, and Joseph must be numbered with the transgressors. And through the wickedness of that vile woman, the wife of Potiphar, the captain of the guard, the innocent man is condemned and imprisoned. Not even the spotless life of the Lord Jesus could save; He must die. Apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission. Infidels, and professors of "the higher criticism," may see much to admire in His life, who never saw beauty in His death. It is the sinner who has seen his own life to be only sin, who finds a value in that death.

G. R. GEDDES.

(*To be continued.*)

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

III. ASA.

*(Continued from page 68.)*BLESSING FROM THE LORD (2 Chron. 15.).¹

THIS chapter opens with the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded (please read), in which Asa was reminded that victory would only be assured to him and to Judah as long as he hearkened diligently unto the voice of the Lord his God and observed to do all His commandments. If not, they would be surely broken in pieces, like those whom Azariah describes in verses 5, 6; and instead of five chasing a hundred, they would flee and fall when none pursueth, for the sound of a driven leaf would chase them (see Lev. 26.).

On the hearing of these words, Asa took courage and did the work of the Lord with even more zest than heretofore—a contrast this to what we read in the next chapter; but more of this anon. The abominations were put out of the land, and the altar was renewed. Some aggressive work had evidently been done, for he put away the abominations out of the cities which he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim. Asa was not content in merely holding his own, but desired to gain further ground. Is there not much here to instruct and stimulate us unto a going forward unto the gaining of fresh ground for the truth of God? “And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him” (2 Chron. 15. 9).

Oh, that there may be that in us answering to this,

¹ The sub-heading “Departure from the Lord.” on page 60, was a mistake; it should have read “Dependence upon the Lord.”

and to the early disciples of whom it is recorded, "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4. 13). "One unbelieving or unlearned fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed" (1 Cor. 14. 23-25). Unto the bringing about of this blessed result, let each one of us take heed that there is in us that condition of heart and soul individually answering to our position collectively. Verse 10 shows that they were gathered together in the right place, and verse 9 that they were in the right condition. After this there was another interval of rest and tranquillity (ver. 19).

Perhaps what the 16th verse records was the severest test that Asa was put to at this time. How many fail here! Abram failed here (see Gen. 11., 12.). How often have we seen family ties hindering the will of God from being done! Nevertheless, Asa overcame here; so intent was he on doing the will of God that he did not allow even his own mother to stand in the way thereof. Has one not seen before now whole assemblies well-nigh broken up through what in reality was nothing but a family feud? A parent, perhaps, standing in the way of discipline being carried out toward a child, or a child as regards the same toward a parent, or such like. Happy they who hold the principles of God's truth so firmly, and dear, that even the nearest and dearest relative has no influence in deterring the carrying into effect the same. Suffer a word of exhortation here. We cannot too carefully guard ourselves on this point. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14. 26).

DEPARTURE FROM THE LORD (2 Chron. 16.).

It was not to be expected that this state of blessing, rest and prosperity would pass by very long unchallenged. Accordingly we read, "In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha, King of Israel, went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa, King of Judah." Oh, what difficulties Satan puts before a child of God as to carrying into effect the Scriptures of truth; being defeated in hindering the salvation of the sinner, he strains every nerve to hinder the salvation of the saint. What tempting baits are offered to the young Christian (and indeed, for that matter, aged ones too) when he finds out that where he is the will of God cannot be done. Such has always been Satan's mode of procedure. When he is foiled in one attempt he tries another, for he is like the conjurer—he has in his bag more tricks than one.

One calls to mind an incident in connection with Jerome of Prague (A.D. 1416) in seeking to make him retract. "The Cardinal of Florence, Zabarella, sent for him. After extolling the choice gifts with which he had been enriched he said that there was no office of dignity, and no position of influence, to which he might not aspire and was it not, he asked, the height of folly to throw away all these splendid opportunities and prospects by immolating himself on the heretic's pile?" Jerome was not dazzled by the brilliant offers he had made. Likewise with Luther a century after, there were those who thought that the monk might be silenced and satisfied by a means other than the stake. "Send him a pall; give him a red hat; make him a Cardinal." Oh, that Christians reading this may have grace to act like these men, whose privileges and opportunities were so deficient and meagre compared with ours. It is not likely that any reading these pages will ever be

offered a red hat or the like. Yet, has not Satan to-day for each of us that which exactly answers to the same? Remember that "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (Prov. 29. 5); "And a flattering mouth worketh ruin" (Prov. 26. 28). The fact is, Satan hates the authority of the Lord, and leaves no stone unturned in order to deter God's saints from being gathered under His authority.

We find the same evil principle at work in the opening chapters of Exodus. The word of the Lord is, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me," "three days' journey into the wilderness." The word of the adversary is, "Ye shall not go very far away." Anything will please Satan but absolute separation to God. This he hates. No wonder, then, that the difficulties are so great in carrying out the truth of God. Yet faith can surmount all difficulties, for although Satan is mighty, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4).

Is not the contempt and scorn with which those to-day are held who seek to give effect to the truth of God (notwithstanding much failure) an indirect evidence that such are right, and doth both illustrate and demonstrate the Scripture of truth?—"without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13. 13). Would we not have a right to question severely the correctness of our position if it was not accompanied by scorn and reproach? Those who are not a sect from God's standpoint will ever be held up to scorn as the most contemptible in the eyes of men who are not in the mind of God. The Apostle Paul did not deem it prudent to discuss the point with his opposers; but said, "After the Way which *they* call a sect, so serve I the God of my fathers" (Acts 24. 14).

How often, however, is the acme of blessing the point of departure from the Lord. So it was with Asa. How few

seem to run in the course like the Apostle Paul to the very end, who said in truth, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7). Verse 2 of our chapter describes Asa's great mistake, which apparently was but the commencement of a path of departure from Jehovah. May we not fall into a like mistake, and have recourse to expedients beyond that which is written which may bring us numbers, and as we think power, but the latter end will not be blessed? Is there not a possibility of making friendship with the world, even to the passing over of our brethren in Christ? Let us take heed that we are as separate from the former as we are from the latter as regarding their false ecclesiastical position. We may sum up our lesson thus:—We cannot be too separate to our God—a people of Him, for Him, and to Him. "He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke 11. 23). Please read 2 Corinthians 6. 14–18, but note especially, "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing," with which compare the Scripture: "Remove thy way *far* from her, and come not *nigh the door* of her house, lest thou give thine honour unto others," and so forth. A word indeed of deep significance (Prov. 5. 8–10).

And at that time Hanani, the seer, came to Asa, King of Judah, and said unto him, "Because thou hast *relied* on the King of Syria, and hast not *relied* on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the King of Syria escaped out of thy hand" (ver. 7). What a contrast to verse 11 of chapter 14! "We *rely* on Thee, and in Thy name are we come against this multitude, O Lord," and so Hanani reminds him of the same, and the victory that accrued therefrom. "Because thou didst *rely* on the Lord, He delivered them into thy hand" (ver. 8). And then comes the sublime statement of verse 9, for such a one is the Lord

seeking, in order that He may do great things in him, and through him, even him whose heart is perfect toward Him. "To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (Isa. 66. 2). But alas! it was far from this with Asa, for instead of his heart being perfect and trembling at the Word of the Lord, he was wroth with the Lord's messenger and put him in prison, losing his temper, at the same time showing himself to be anything but a man of understanding, being hasty in spirit, exalting folly; and not content therewith, he added sin to sin, for Asa oppressed some of the people the same time—those whom one would suppose remonstrated with Asa concerning his sin, and who acquiesced with the message of the seer. As far as I am aware he thus became an example of religious persecution for all time, being the first among God's people to persecute the same. How are the mighty fallen! Alas, poor Asa!

So we see that Asa, instead of humbling himself before God, did the very opposite. Is not this somewhat similar to the principle of Matthew 18. 15-20?—the sin at first not so heinous, but increasing until it culminates in not hearing the church. There the voice of God is not heard through the church; in the case of Asa the voice of God is not obeyed through the prophet, but the principle is the same. Similarly in Corinth the sin would have been great, but there the Word of the Lord was given heed to, which brought about a repentant and humbled condition, and accordingly they still continued to be a "church of God" and are addressed as such in the second letter. There was room for the whole truth of God to be carried out.

The closing days of Asa suggest much. "Asa was diseased in his feet. His disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not unto the Lord, but to the physicians" (ver. 12), exemplifying the words of the Proverbs: "There is grievous correction for him that

forsaketh the Way ; and he that hateth reproof shall die ” (Prov. 15. 10). Which was fulfilled, and more, in the case of Asa, for “ He that refuseth correction despiseth his own soul ” (Prov. 15. 32).

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

For Young Believers.

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

FLESH AND SPIRIT.

It is no uncommon thing to meet young Christians who are surprised and dismayed to find that, although converted to God, the desire and liability to sin still oppresses them. They perhaps thought that if they were saved the desire to sin would for ever vanish, and that it would require no effort to live for God. They find, however, that the desire to sin, instead of disappearing, has only come more prominently to their notice, appalling them so that they sometimes wonder if they have been saved at all.

Now, if the Word of God, which alone must be the young Christian's guide in all things, is appealed to in connection with this matter, the difficulty in understanding what it all means very quickly vanishes. To the Scriptures, then, we urge our young friends to turn, and there they will find that, previous to conversion, they were gliding down the stream according to the course of this world, guided unconsciously by the prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind without any effort at resistance. All went on smoothly, and they sought to gratify their natural desires so far as they could, utterly unconscious of the power that held them fast. They enjoyed the pleasures of sin, and the gay world charmed them, and there was little to suggest that their course was opposed to God.

But at conversion a mighty change ensued ! They were

born from above, and the Spirit of God took up His abode in them, and they were sealed as God's property. But did this imply that the old nature was removed, and that its sinful desires would no longer be known? Surely not! Nevertheless, a great change took place; for a new life was imparted to them by God, and a new tenant, the Holy Spirit, took possession of their hearts. In a word, there were now two claimants for the throne of their hearts where there was only one before; and, consequently, a struggle must follow to determine which will gain and keep the place of rule.

Of these rulers and their continuous struggle the Scriptures speak very plainly. The old ruler is there named "the flesh," and the new one is the Holy Spirit; and the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other.

We see, therefore, that there are two powers at work within us: the one, the flesh, seeking to possess us for Satan and to lead us to serve sin as we did before conversion; the other, the Holy Spirit, desirous to possess us for Himself, and to lead us to do the holy will of God, which is only possible after conversion. If young Christians grasp these facts they will be delivered from surprise at still being troubled with the desire to sin, for they explain, in some measure, the secret of our difficulty to do the pleasure of God as we fain would. It is not now smooth sailing down the stream, but hard pulling against it.

But have both these rulers equal power and rights, and must we submit to be governed by each in turn? By no means! The one is a usurper; the Other alone has a just claim to the throne! The rights of the old ruler came to an end at the cross, when we died in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, he will not give up the throne without a struggle, and so the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and desires to gain our allegiance and to dis-

place the rightful Ruler in our hearts. But the fact that we know the flesh is a conquered foe, whose rights and claims have been broken through the cross, should give us triumph over it, and should enable us with rejoicing hearts to glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivers us from the tyrant's grasp.

Thank God, the power of the flesh is broken, and the worst it can do is to harass and try to hinder us from yielding ourselves unreservedly unto God while in the body ; and the day is fast approaching when, eternally free from its presence, as well as its power, we shall know without hindrance the reality of the Divine life, for when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory.

SELF-JUDGMENT.

SELF-JUDGMENT is a healthy and a profitable occupation, but one for which there do not appear to be too many candidates in these days. Its rival business of neighbour-judging, however, seems to be flourishing, and appears to have special charms for many. Strange that what God commends should be avoided, and what He condemns should be so much run after!

This is "man's day," and puny man will presume to occupy the judgment-seat and judge and set at nought his brother. It would be more profitable to leave such work to Him whose right it is, for all judgment has been given into the hands of the Lord, and His is righteous judgment.

Any who desire to exercise their judicial powers will find an excellent case for practice in their own hearts, and words, and ways. We exhort to more rigid and continuous discharge of the profitable duty of self-judgment ; neighbour-judging had better be left alone.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

II.

IN our last paper we reviewed the children of Israel as seen in the purpose of God; we now come to view them in actual existence. In Exodus 1. 8-11 we have a minute account of their condition as they then were. In Egypt, under the authority of Pharaoh, their lives were made bitter by taskmasters, and from their hearts sighs and groans were wrung. Their case was indeed a sad one; and they found themselves helpless to alter it. Both the power and subtlety of their oppressors were exercised to keep them where, and as they were, and every appeal for relief was only answered by greater oppression.

If we turn to Ephesians 2. 1-3, we find a very complete answer to all this in the condition of those who, we have already pointed out, are seen in the purpose of God in chapter 1. 4. There it will be seen that we were held in bondage worse than Israel's by far, and the stronger cords of sin bound us. Our ruler was a more dread oppressor than Pharaoh, even the prince of the power of the air, he who is the prince of demons, and rules the powers of darkness. All who are yet unsaved are under his authority, and are instruments through whom he seeks to accomplish his will on the earth; and unless they are delivered from his power, they will ultimately share his final doom, which is the Lake of Fire. Such, then, were we—by nature and by practice far, very far, from God; but where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and to reach us where, and as we were, the grace of God shone forth, bringing salvation. What mercy from God that we learned our true condition, that we were awakened to see our danger, and to cry, "What must I do to be saved?"

In the manner as well as the measure of Israel's deliverance we learn much in type of the greater deliverance of

the sinner in the present age. God answered the groan of that oppressed people, and sent His word to them, saying: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrow, and I am come down to deliver them." What Jehovah saw and heard touched His heart, and moved His hand to the deliverance of that oppressed people. Yet if deliverance is to be known, *He must come down*. Oh! that wondrous stoop of the High and Lofty One from the throne of His majesty on behalf of those bond-slaves in Egypt!

From Deuteronomy 7. 6-8 we learn the reason why God chose Israel—even because He set His love upon them; and because He loved them, He came down to be their Deliverer and Redeemer. It was not because of any merit in them, or love they showed, or deeds they performed, but out of the boundless compassion of His heart did they know the deliverance of His hand through the instrumentality of Moses, who was born in due time, and was preserved by Jehovah from the hand of the king, and fitted as the instrument in the hand of God to effect the deliverance of His people.

This reminds us again that when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4. 4), and that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3. 8). The Babe of Bethlehem was no other than the Deliverer of God's appointment—God manifest in flesh; God come down to deliver. God wrought by the judgments of His hand for the deliverance of Israel until the strength of Egypt was broken and its pride was laid low, when the firstborn died, and Pharaoh had to learn in his bitter experience that "God is stronger than His foes"; and he finally thrust the people out, saying, "We be all dead men."

Not more fully nor completely did Jehovah work for His people of old than He hath wrought for us in the person of

His Son, who took part of blood and flesh, that through death He might destroy (or render powerless) him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15). As we contemplate all that Christ has accomplished in spoiling principalities and powers and triumphing over them, in rising again from the dead, the Mighty Conqueror over death and Satan, well may we exclaim: "See what God, our God, hath wrought!" He hath delivered us from the authority of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Hallelujah!

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

PRAYER.

Most of us know how necessary is the action of breathing. Now what breathing is to the natural life prayer is to the spiritual; it is vital. If respiration is inactive, the result is coldness and lack of vigour in the body. The same results follow in the soul when prayer is neglected—coldness and inactivity, indifference to spiritual things, and no zeal for God. No wonder, then, at the absence of all signs of strong Christian life when there is little or no attention given to the twice-repeated exhortation to "Continue steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12. 12; Col. 4. 2). When in good physical health we do not breathe spasmodically, but with almost clock-work regularity; so to be steadfast in prayer we require to be regular.

Our Lord was in this, as in all else, a most beautiful example. He was often alone with His Father when others were asleep, and, in some instances, continued all night in prayer to God.

But, beyond these occasions, when we seek unto God in private, ought not our hearts to rise to the Throne of Grace even amid the noise and bustle of daily duties? Our duties require our constant attention, but how often

in the midst of them the attitude of our souls might be heavenward; and how much better would these very duties be done if we sought to discharge them to the glory of God, and how much anxious thought we would be saved if we remembered, "The Lord is at hand." This sentence has no reference to the coming of the Lord for His saints, but to His nearness to us now (see Phil. 4. 5, with Ps. 119. 151). In the thoroughfare or in the wareroom, as we stand in the presence of our master or mistress, or wherever we are, let us pray without ceasing. Would it not alter and improve the thoughts and tendencies, the words and acts, of our lives, perhaps even the tone of our whole being, if we sought to obey this simple Scriptural exhortation?

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

It is of the first importance to a soldier in active service to guard well his lines of communication. If he allowed these to be broken by the enemy, what would become of supplies, reinforcements, etc.? He would find himself at a great disadvantage, if not hopelessly disabled.

Is it less important to us, who ought to be good soldiers of Christ Jesus, to see that our lines of communication are kept open? Is it not to be feared that these too often fall into the enemy's hands, and our supplies and resources from the Throne fail us, and we find, to our cost, how helpless we are? Watching and praying are necessary to a successful warfare; therefore, let us "continue steadfastly in prayer, watching thereunto with thanksgiving."

W. F. C.

"HE LEFT US AN EXAMPLE."

THE necessity and importance of prayer is shown by the frequency and duration of the prayers of the man Christ Jesus. God-man though He was, He needed to pray. Once and again, having withdrawn Himself from the excitement and toil of life, on a lonely mountain-side He poured out in

prayer the thoughts of His heart to His Father and God. In the time of popularity, in the time of rejection, and in the last terrible struggle, He prayed. This illustrates the expression, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

The disciples, too, knew the need of continual prayer. Peter retired from the bustle of circumstances to the quiet house-top, and the disciples met in a lonely upper room. Never, then, let us, who are but "little children," neglect daily opportunity of earnest prayer in the place where only God is present to hear our cry. W. M. R.

"YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."

THEY had forgotten all about it, but the Lord had not, and in amaze they ask: "When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came to Thee?" "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me," answered the King.

Paul seems to have entered into the Lord's thoughts in this matter when he said, "I . . . rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake, which is the Church."

Look around you, child of God, at the need and opportunity, and learn that when you are ministering to your brethren you are ministering to Christ. Therefore gird up your loins with renewed vigour and emulate Him who was amongst His disciples as a servant, though in very truth He was their Lord and Master. The opportunity is golden, and will only occur once; gain it and it is gained for ever, lose it and it is lost for ever. Bend, then, every energy to your task "for Christ's sake," remembering that a cup of cold water given in His name will not lose its reward.

JOSEPH.

(Concluded from page 82.)

WHAT had Potiphar seen in Joseph that he promoted him and put these men under his charge? (Gen. 40. 4). Perhaps he had learned his innocence. Then why not declare it? Ah, there is the vile woman, his wife. To do that would expose her guilt, and that must not be. So Joseph is left to suffer now, as an innocent one, a deeper wrong, and to wear a criminal's fetters. Of another it is written, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." Pilate says, "I find no fault in Him," and another said, "Surely this was a righteous man," yet He died the criminal's death; but, thank God, the blessed Lord Jesus never knew the *criminal's grave*, though it had been dug, for they "made His grave with the wicked" (Isa. 53. 9., R.V.). The two thieves each knew a criminal's grave. Not so Christ. God put honour upon the dead body of Jesus, for a *poor man* was buried in a *rich man's* tomb. As the prison of Joseph was the lowest point Joseph reached, so the Cross marked the climax of the Lord Jesus' suffering. Let me point out a serious mistake in the well-known verse of a hymn:

"Left His people's sin
Behind Him in His open grave."

Never did any one sin go there. "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Does this meet the eye of one suffering *wrongfully* for conscience, for righteousness, as a Christian, or for the Name's sake? You are in good company. Joseph and the Lord Jesus—a glory awaited them, and a reward awaits you.

God had His ruler Joseph in a good school. He was learning obedience by the things that he suffered. He served in the house of the captain; he served also in the

prison. He was faithful in the little things. The captain knew not what he had—all was in Joseph's keeping. And now that which was the scene of his service and suffering became the sphere of his rule. In that house and in that prison Joseph was owned as next to Pharaoh. The captain of the guard had not now a slave in Joseph, but a master. And this earth on which the Lord suffered, and that city over which He sorrowed, shall yet indeed be the scene of His rule.

Chapter 41. "All things put under Him." Now in this which foreshadows resurrection—coming glories of Christ and bridal glories of the Church in association with Christ—all this is seen in Joseph long before Israel comes into the scene, so that "*Israel is not the bride.*" And now, as Joseph goes through the land in royal honour, each bows the knee. To him every knee shall bow. Wisdom dwelt in him. Egypt, noted for its wisdom, was made foolish. Can we find such an one as this is? No. Never was there such seen in Egypt before.

Now let us look at God's dealings with ourselves as seen in Joseph's brethren; for whether Jew or Gentile, all must know themselves as guilty before God, and know it where only it can be known—in His presence. God uses the famine as he did in Luke 15., to bring each home to Himself. We may often trace God's hand in some circumstance—nothing too trivial, nothing too small; too great it may be, too small it cannot be. So, *Go and buy us corn.* They came. Joseph knew them; they knew him not. The clean-shaved face, courtly or official dress, the strange speech—how completely was Joseph hidden from them. Yes, Joseph knew them; alas! too well. To his sorrow he had known them, their hatred and cruelty. How strangely he seems to deal with them. It is in order that they may know him, but this cannot be until they know themselves. Oh, how very far from this they were!

Just hear them tell Joseph they are *true men* (42. 11)! We are all one man's sons. We are true men. Not until the end of the book do we hear Job say, "I am vile." Mine eye seeth Thee. The humbling process is slow and oftentimes long. We don't like it. To be saved as a sinner, a common guilty sinner, is too humbling to our pride. It takes God to teach us this. And so in Joseph is the wisdom to know how to deal with the hearts of these men.

They had been full of envy at the favoured son—as Joseph was—and as Benjamin *now is*—perhaps more dear, as he in some measure fills Joseph's place: Benjamin, the one of whom they spake, "the youngest is this day with our father"; and Joseph tests them by sending them to fetch him. They know well how the father's heart is doubly bound to Benjamin, seeing "Joseph is not." This takes them back twenty years ago, when they sinned against "the child that is not."

Joseph will keep Simeon until the youngest comes "*to prove them.*" How they watch that mysterious binding of Simeon by Joseph (and sure I am it was Simeon that had bound Joseph), just as he had been bound. They looked at one another in amazement, and with bated breath they said, "We are guilty" (Gen. 42. 21, 22.) As they saw the anguish of Simeon's face, they remembered the anguish of another, and again heard, as they never had before, his entreaty and bitter cry, when they *would not hear*—now they must hear. "We"—it was a common *guilt*, one as well as another—we sinned against "the child"; a real work of God has begun, that will yet deepen. Mark, they are not dealing with sin's habits, else all might have cast stones at one another; and Judah would have fared badly. It was sin's *guilt*, not sin's habit: it was against "the child"—this is real, this is of God—bringing sin home as against Christ. Reformer, philanthropist, humanitarian, socialist may deal with the habit, but its guilt is

beyond them. Nothing but the death of Christ can reach down to that. A man may loathe himself in the sight of his fellows as he has lost character and caste, but may yet pride himself as step by step he regains the lost position, yet never have said, with face in the dust, "I have sinned against the child." Benjamin will prove this. Do they really loathe their envy, their jealousy, when they saw the "coat of many colours"? We will see. Your youngest brother *must come down*—and Simeon remains bound. They were glad when they left Joseph bound in the hands of Ishmaelitic traders. They return now, and must stand in the presence of one whom they also had wronged, the *father of the child*; there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; father and son are both involved; they are jealous of each other. And the sin against the father must be learnt as well as against Joseph, for this Benjamin is also needed. The men return to buy corn; Simeon is released; they are glad.

Joseph's orders are, "They shall dine with me to-day." And Benjamin gets the special honour, the special attention. What a special blessing! and at the table five times as much as any other. Was there any trace of envy at Benjamin thus honoured? How Joseph would watch and see! No; they drank and were merry. Once more they set their face towards home with wonderful things to relate of their good fortune, such favour conferred upon them all, and the greater fell to Benjamin's lot. They little thought of the coming calamity, so unexpected, so unlooked for. They are to be tested and tried yet more from another standpoint. They were not envious at his *good fortune*. Will they at all rejoice in his *adversity*? They were with him then; he is alone now, the cup in the sack. He is the thief, no doubt, proved up to the hilt, caught almost in the act. It is there, cannot be denied, no question about it. Is such their language? Oh, no; not a trace.

With what *genuine grief* they retrace their steps—he is no worse than they : it is our guilt. God hath found it out ; no undertone now, said one to another. No ; down in the dust before Joseph they say, *God hath found* out our guilt ; as they think of appearing before Jacob, and no Benjamin : it will kill him. They remembered his anguish when they returned without Joseph. This will be his death. And so if in Simeon they learned their sin against Joseph, in Benjamin they learned their sin against the father. In Judah's pleading he mentions the father *fifteen times* (Gen. 44. 14–34).

Then Joseph could not refrain himself, jealous indeed for the father's honour. Now they own their guilt before him, he can *reveal himself* to them—hide himself no longer—that painful self-restraint past ; and that pent-up desire to say “I am Joseph” can now be fulfilled. “I am Joseph, your brother”—they were not in condition for this before. They know him now in rich, unmerited grace, in order to the fuller revealing of himself in government. A father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. *Grace and Government.*

It is in this Joseph excels—administration. Seven years of famine, and no lack, no bread riots, nor military called out ; and at the end, long before the end, a most grateful people saying, “Thou hast saved our lives ; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants” (Gen. 47. 25).

And how came this about ? Did Joseph set on foot benefit societies, clubs, provident associations, proclamations urging to carefulness and thrift—by all means save ? Oh, no (such men would not need such exhortation) ; by the second year of famine there would be poverty the direst, for men then, as men now, were to be found living up to and beyond their means, and the moneylender at hundreds per cent. would make himself rich out of the ruins of others. Men

would sell themselves as slaves to greedy tyrants, and a groaning people the result. Instead of this we find a happy and contented folk.

It came about thus: they firstly gave Joseph his place as absolute lord; his word was law, and the wealth of corn was put under his hand, under his control. From all the country round they gathered into the cities—and when the little or big store at home is done, and the people go to Pharaoh, “Go to Joseph” is the command. “We want corn.” “Well,” says Joseph, “*buy it*; we don’t want to pauperize you.” And when their money was done, again they came. “We want corn.” “Then bring your cattle, and I will sell you corn for your cattle.” Again they come. We will not hide it from my lord (Gen. 47. 18). No false pride; they knew well the grace in the heart of Joseph—nothing hid. There is nothing left but our *bodies* and our *lands*; buy us and our lands for bread; and so Joseph bought all, both them and theirs; everything was under his control—money, cattle, goods, houses, lands, themselves, *all bought*. This was “the society” they were in, that over which Joseph was lord, and in this no poverty, though many poor.

■ Have we learnt the secret joy of being in such a fellowship over which Christ is as Lord, the One Who bought us? Not my own—anything better than hell fire I owe to Him. It used to be so once as prodigals in the far country. “Give me my own,” was once the cry. Happy day when all that was spent.

What we want is in Ephesians 3.—the Stewardship or Administration of the Mystery, so that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

With what amazement the wise men of Egypt, noted for their wisdom, would witness the splendid stewardship of Joseph! What is stewardship? The meaning of it can

be seen from Luke 16., "Thou mayest be no longer steward," entrusted with another's wealth, to be rightly used for Him in the assembly; the right use of gift in ministry will show forth to principalities and powers in the heavenlies a wisdom that never was ours as men, and only in the assembly where the authority of Christ is owned can this be manifested.

Alas! alas! I wonder oftentimes what they think when they see man's folly, man's self-will—men who owe to Christ blessings which the angels never knew, yet they who always obeyed see those for whom He died doing as they please—indeed, oftentimes acting in self-will, in the face of the known will of Christ.

Thus the assembly, and not as yet the *World*, is the direct sphere of the rule of *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

G. R. GEDDES.

WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH DAY.

(LUKE 13. 10-17.)

THIS is a narrative recorded by Luke alone. No evangelist tells so fully as Luke does what Christ and His Gospel did for woman.

Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbaths. The word in the Greek being in the plural number may perhaps imply that He was in the habit of teaching on Sabbath days. Among the congregation was an invalid woman, whose case Luke, the physician, describes minutely. She probably had curvature of the spine, for she was bent together and could not at all unbend herself. She had been in this state for eighteen years. Notice the expression "she had a spirit of infirmity." The Jews looked upon her as desiring to straighten her body, but some superior power stood in the way.

The eye of Jesus lights upon her, and within His breast compassion is kindled; so, giving expression to His feelings, He calls her to Him, and while she is coming says, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." The verb is in the perfect tense, and indicates that her cure is accomplished even as she is yet coming. When she came near He laid His hands upon her, and by His touch her cure is consummated; whereupon she bursts into exclamations of praise to God. Then came a cavil against this Sabbath cure. The ruler of the synagogue was shocked at this breach of the Sabbath, for the Rabbis declared that doctors might practise their art in a case of emergency, but not in a case like this one, of long-continued disease; so he spoke *to* the multitude *at* Jesus. He urged them to take advantage of the six days and not come to be healed on the seventh day. He, however, admitted the cure, and might have left it to one who had done such a great deed, and who was Himself, in very truth, Lord of the Sabbath, to decide whether or not it was right to do it on the Sabbath day. Jesus at once perceived that the ruler was not actuated by a zeal for keeping the Sabbath, but by jealousy of the power and present popularity of the Lord and by dislike at seeing the woman praising God.

Jesus calls the ruler a hypocrite—that is, one who speaks under a mask, or, as Scotch children would say, one who wears a false-face. Then He proceeds:—If on the Sabbath day you are justified in caring for an ox or an ass, much more am I in healing a woman who is a daughter of Abraham; if for a creature bound to a stall, much more for a daughter of Abraham bound by Satan; if for a creature bound for twenty-four hours, much more for a daughter of Abraham bound for eighteen years. What was twenty-four hours' thirst compared to curvature of the spine for eighteen years?

The result was that His adversaries were ashamed, but the people were glad, rejoicing at the glorious things that were being done by Jesus.

W. McR.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

IV. JEHOSHAPHAT (2 Chron. 17. to 20.).

THE history of this memorable king is told in no less than four chapters, although his reign extended over a period of only twenty-five years. This fact alone would suggest that God has some very special and important truths to teach. We must content ourselves, however, by touching briefly upon a few of the more salient points, as volumes might be written on this most instructive and intensely solemn reign.

We remember that Asa departed from the Lord towards the close of his life, from which apostacy the word of God records no repentance. This fact is suggestive of some New Testament Scriptures, but more especially of the letter to the Hebrews taken as a whole—from moral evil there is often restoration (1 and 2 Cor.), but seldom or never is there restoration from doctrinal delinquency. Jehoshaphat seems to have had a better ending than might have been expected, for he appears, unlike Asa, to have obeyed the voice of the Lord, through the prophet; but this, alas! only after mischief had been done such as could never be undone. Not for many a long day (covering a period of four or five reigns) does Judah regain anything like her former prestige; indeed, it is questionable, even in the glorious times of Hezekiah, if Judah had entirely retrieved from the calamitous results consequent on the well-meaning, but ill-advised methods which this king adopted to effect a union of all Israel.

This thought seems to have been uppermost in his

mind, a somewhat similar line of things to that which Jonathan had recourse to in a former day, with as sad results, to the wasting of the lives of those who tampered with such unholy tactics, and of others as well.

We find a latter-day illustration of this sort of thing in Melancthon, the colleague and friend of Luther, who well-nigh wrecked the so-called Reformation by seeking to reconcile two principles which are totally opposed—"justification by faith and creature merits." One thing, however, must not be lost sight of, which appears to us a foremost lesson to be learnt from this history—*the immediate results may appear advantageous, but the after results disastrous in the extreme.*

Indeed, it would appear that in a certain measure Jehoshaphat obtained what he sought after, for he is called the *King* of Israel once (2 Chron. 21. 2), a title shared by one other only after the disruption—namely, Ahaz (2 Chron. 28. 19)—and perhaps for a somewhat similar reason, for we read that "he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel" (2 Chron. 28. 2).

For convenience we might divide his history thus:—

- I. Separation to Jehovah.
- II. Ungodly affinity and compromise.
- III. Revival, humiliation, and victory.
- IV. Lessons dearly bought.

SEPARATION TO JEHOVAH (2 Chron. 17.).

"And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel" (2 Chron. 17. 1). What a remarkable statement is this when we consider the line of procedure which Jehoshaphat adopted shortly afterwards; but such is man—one moment valiant for his God, the next scheming and compromising, feeble, fickle man. Oh, to learn the all-important lesson to "cease from man"!

This clause, "strengthened himself against Israel," will be more instructive if read in the light of the opening verses of chapter 16., where we find Israel the bitterest enemy of those who were the custodians of the truth—namely, the people of Judah. Jehoshaphat did not begin with any half measures. No, it was entire, absolute separation to Jehovah; the opening verses of this chapter are all in the same strain, and most instructive on this point. "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not to the Baalim but sought to the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." Like David, his chief aim in life was a regard for all that attaches to "the Name," and the place connected therewith, "The city of the great King"; albeit in the seeking thereof the ups and downs were many, the failure great, in contrast to the deliberate abandonment of all that which was dear to the heart of God, in the case of Israel, to the choosing of other names and lords (Baalim) (*vv.* 3, 4).

Jehoshaphat's early days would suggest the early days of Ephesus, ere she left her first love; of which time it is written, "Thou didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false" (*Rev.* 2. 2). "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen" (*Rev.* 2. 5) would answer to his subsequent history. This implicit obedience to the commandments of the Lord resulted in much blessing. "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand and he had riches and honour in abundance" (*ver.* 5).

Then we read a very precious statement, "And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord" (*ver.* 6), implying that at this time "I hate every false way" was true of him (*Ps.* 119. 104); consequently it was his happy portion to sing in the ways of the Lord.

The wholeheartedness and enthusiasm with which Jehoshaphat enters into the work reminds us of the time when the "disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." Verses 7-9 show us that the people were not left in ignorance, but were taught the law of the Lord; and in verse 10 we see that all this godly line of things has its effect on the kingdoms that were round about them.

UNGODLY AFFINITY AND COMPROMISE (2 Chron. 18.).

"Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and he joined affinity with Ahab" (2 Chron. 18. 1).

With these startling words the second chapter of his life opens; startling indeed when looked at in the light of the first verse of chapter 17. At any time an alliance with Israel would have been ungodly, when we remember their religious associations; before any such could have been righteously brought about there would need to have been a truly repentant condition of heart evinced by putting away all that was abominable, such as the calves in Bethel and Dan. But the ungodliness of this affinity appears to be aggravated when we remember the character of the man with whom it was made, concerning whom it is written, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up" (1 Kings 21. 25).

Before leaving this verse we would add that times of blessing have always proved to be the times of greatest danger. "Riches and honour are never friends that can be trusted." But we will defer speaking fully on this point till we come to consider the life of Uzziah.

We cannot attempt in this sketch to dwell on the details of this chapter; to do anything like justice to the subject would require too much space.

One point, however, is well worthy of notice in passing, and only found in the Chronicles in keeping with the principle already mentioned. When the captain of the chariots of Syria saw Jehoshaphat (mistaking him for the King of Israel) "Jehoshaphat cried out, and Jehovah helped him; and God moved them to depart from him." The name "Jehovah," implying covenant relationship, is used in the one case, whereas the title "God," which implies creation relationship, is used in the other.

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

(To be continued.)

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 134.—*Is it right for a Christian to exhibit birds, etc., at the world's shows?*

In seeking to reply to this question, we desire on the one hand to give no encouragement to the mere capricious fault-finder, while on the other we would equally abstain from seeming to countenance a worldliness of heart that excuses itself under the plea of expediency. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; and as I am called, being a child of God, to walk in a pathway of very close fellowship with fellow-saints, I must ever seek to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. Nevertheless, I cannot allow the conscience of another to be my guide, apart from the written Word of God, for we must ever bear in mind that conscience is not only no fit guide for man (except in so far as it is educated by God), but that it is that which continually enslaves humanity, bringing it under the power of the priestly deceivers. Therefore says the Apostle, "Why am I judged of another man's conscience?"

There are many Christians who lead a very negative life:

they do nothing for God that is apparent. Such Christians are frequently occupied in pointing out the supposed failures of others—supposed, we say, because they judge others by their own thoughts—while if they themselves are brought to the standard of God's Word, they will be found sadly wanting, and would, if their conscience was allowed to speak, stand condemned. They would find themselves guilty of far worse sins often than those they are so ready to point out in others. "Lest thou also be tempted" is a wholesome exhortation for all who deal with failure in others. For example, such would at once condemn a fellow-saint for going to the house of an unconverted neighbour for a social meal; but what says the Scripture?—"If any that believe not bid thee to a feast and thou be disposed to go" (1 Cor. 10. 27). If I find by so acting I am being led away from God, and into that which I feel is contrary to His mind, then I must remember that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and where I cannot go in faith and act as a child of God, there I should not be; but because another goes to a social gathering with the unsaved, being enabled to act there so as to bring glory to God, and I am unable to go without being led into that which dishonours Him, I have no right to judge my brother, who has more grace than I have. This is the very sort of judgment which is forbidden amongst saints, and yet it is most common with its blighting effects.

Again, as to companying with the world, I may do this continually in my daily calling, and yet in a way that in no wise brings dishonour to my Lord; in fact, the Apostle says, if I do this not, then I must needs go out of the world (1 Cor. 5. 10). All this bears on the question before us. If I am a farmer I take my grain to market and expose it for sale; I do the same with my horses or cattle. With the same object I take them to a show that they may compete with my neighbours', and all this may be done in

the way of business. Am I a corn merchant or a salesman, then I spend much of my life in the world's affairs, and in some measure of truth I am found in association with the world; but what Scripture would hinder this? Diligent in business? No; but let me see that I am fervent in spirit.

We might enumerate many other cases in which a child of God, in pursuit of his earthly calling, would be found competing with the world, and on this account be found frequently mixing with the world, yet never as *of* the world, but always seeking to glorify God in the little details of every-day life. But then there are other social gatherings where men of the world meet, not for the carrying on of business, but to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and the child of God is never to be found countenancing that which is evil. Where then is the line to be drawn? That it must be drawn somewhere we have no doubt, but we believe that it must be left very much to each child of God to act as before Him in the matter. The one who finds he cannot go to dine at an unconverted neighbour's house without being tempted to act in a way that dishonours his Lord and mars his testimony should abstain from so doing; but let him not judge his brother in this matter, who is able to go and witness for the truth as opportunity is given.

The man who can with a clear conscience go to the world's fair and glorify God in his life, let him do so, but let him see to it that he is not led into the world's ways. And if he find that he is losing in spiritual life, let him look to it and see as to the cause. We remember a Christian gentleman who, before conversion, raised prize cattle, but afterwards he gave it up, as he found it a snare to him. Let all who find the same do likewise. One word as to "not expedient." As we have said, we belong to a fellowship, and it is clear this fellowship and the world are not to be yoked together: "Be not unequally yoked," etc.

(2 Cor. 6. 14). I am only permitted of God to marry *in the Lord*, I cannot join in the world's religion. All this is clear. And again, I must consider how my actions may affect the weak brother. Although, as we have already said, we cannot allow the conscience of the weak brother to be our guide, yet grace will ever make me thoughtful of others, and careful not to stumble them by that in my life which appears to them to be inconsistent.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

NO CONDEMNATION.

“No condemnation!—precious word,
 Consider it, my soul;
 Thy sins were all on Jesus laid,
 His stripes have made thee whole.”

CONDEMNED already! Such is God's righteous verdict regarding all who are still in nature's darkness. A few months or years ago it was true of each of us. As sinners, we stood before God condemned; but we heard the wondrous words: “He that heareth My Word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.” These words pointed our eyes to the Cross, where the sinner's doom and condemnation were borne by the Lord Jesus Christ when He was made sin for us. We heard God's Word, we believed God's record, we passed from the place of condemnation, in which, as sinners, we stood, to one of no condemnation through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal life, the gift of God, was ours, and we passed out of death into life.

Blessed moment! Never-to-be-forgotten transformation! when we learned from God's Word that our guilt and condemnation were for ever gone. This is no make-believe; it is an eternal reality, stable and sure as the Throne of God. The faithful Word of the faithful God declares that there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Here the feeblest believer may rest in perfect calm. God's Word can never fail. The work of the Cross can never change.

No condemnation! Let us consider the words well. It is God who thus speaks; and what He says is true of all who are in Christ Jesus. He desires that we should know this, and that we should enjoy to the full deliverance from the judgment due to our sins through the Cross of Christ.

Those who implicitly believe the Word of God cannot continue to be troubled about their past life as sinners. Satan may, at times, suggest the thought that after all their sins may rise up against them; but such thoughts are at once banished by the Word of God. Here is our refuge from doubts and fears, from perplexity and uncertainty: God declares that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. We could not possibly have greater assurance; there is no room for a single shade to enter to mar our joy in the mighty deliverance that God has wrought for us. In the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ it is ours to behold our sins righteously dealt with, and their awful judgment borne by the Son of God when it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. The full penalty has been suffered; nothing has been overlooked; our past, as sinners, has been wiped out of God's remembrance, and there is for us who are in Christ Jesus no condemnation. Let us enjoy our deliverance to the full, then, and glory in the Cross through which it has been effected.

NO ACCUSATION.

“ Who now accuseth them
 For whom the Surety died?
 Or who shall those condemn
 Whom God hath justified?”

“ WHAT then shall we say to these things?” asks the Apostle, and quickly the reply comes: “ If God be for us, who can be against us?” Surely this is an all-round conclusive answer sufficient to set every doubt and fear at rest.

But is it such a clear case that God is for us? Hear the proof: “ He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Then read what follows in Romans 8.: “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “ Shall God that justifieth?” “ Shall Christ Jesus that died?” No, God will never lay anything to the charge of those He has justified. Christ Jesus, who so loved us that He gave Himself to deliver us from the condemnation of sin, will never advance a charge against us. We have been righteously acquitted at the judgment bar of God, and who is he that shall condemn? Boldly the challenge is sounded out, and the accusers of God’s justified ones are called upon to advance and produce their condemnatory evidence. But no one accepts the challenge; the justification of God is universally acknowledged to be righteous and perfect, and no accusation can ever be advanced against those who have been justified by God. The Cross of Christ answers every question that could be asked, and silences every accuser that would dare to condemn.

See, therefore, how perfect is God’s victory over sin; learn how righteously your guilt has been dealt with in the Cross; understand that you are thereby eternally delivered from condemnation, and that you appear before God in Christ a justified one—one against whom no charge can possibly be tabulated.

“It is God that justifieth!” How blessed are these words! With what solace and comfort do they reach the storm-tossed soul! Think of it again; you are justified by God through faith in Christ! It is so, therefore believe it; and press on, knowing that nothing can be laid to your charge. The past has been blotted out by God’s own hand, and a clear, shining pathway stretches out before you. Surely where sin abounded grace has abounded more exceedingly.

NO SEPARATION.

“From God’s love who can separate,
 In earth below, or heaven above?
 What hostile power can operate
 To change His ever-changeless love?”

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Shall the trials and dangers of the way? Shall the failures and short-comings of our lives? Having loved us and given Himself to deliver us from the condemnation of our sins, will He cease to love us when our weaknesses as His children become manifest and we grieve Him by our waywardness and sin?

Sometimes when we are conscious of failure the thought may be suggested that God’s love, at least for the time being, has changed toward us; that He cannot love such erring children—we have sinned so that His love must be turned away from us. Such thoughts, however, are but Satan’s whispers to lead us to a greater distance from the enjoyment of the never-changing love of God; for He changes not and His love is ever the same. Where failure and sin are unjudged the enjoyment of His smile is truly dimmed until these are confessed and His forgiveness known, but He loves His erring child none the less because of failure. It is His love that causes Him to withdraw the shining of His face so that the exceeding sinfulness

of sin may be learned and repentance inwrought in the soul. Ah! this is what bows the heart and recalls the wandering affections to Himself, when we remember that we are loved with a changeless love; for what sin it is to grieve the One who loves us so!

We say to any who have been tempted to doubt God's love toward them, that what you are experimentally proving yourself to be is no new discovery to God. He knew it all when He saved you, and He loved and loves you still in spite of it all.

What then, we ask, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can anything below or above? Can anything present or future? Can anything in life or in death? In triumph we exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

No condemnation! no accusation! no separation! are three blessed verities—old, yet ever new.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

III.

"THIS month shall be unto you the beginning of months" (Exod. 12, 2). These words mark a new era in the history of Israel, associated with circumstances so familiar to our young readers as to require but to refer to them. The final display of Jehovah's power is about to be given. The sentence of judgment has gone forth against Egypt, and every firstborn of man and beast lies under it. Nothing of rank, wealth, or power can avert it; all the firstborn must die, or some one must die in their stead.

Jehovah's word to Israel tells of a way of escape for their firstborn. In the death of a lamb as a substitute the judgment may be averted, and under the shelter of its blood a place of safety and rest may be found. How gracious of God to plan such a way of escape, and how thankful should

they be to Him for the same! Yet this was not all. In order to set at rest every fear as to their safety, He further declared, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and *when I see the blood* I will pass over you." What assurance for their hearts was contained in these gracious words! and in their happy experience they proved that Jehovah was true to His word.

In association with this we find the Lord speaking further in Exodus 13. 13, and saying: "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." Here we find the introduction of the great and glorious theme of redemption, as well as that upon which it is based—namely, the shedding of the blood of the Lamb. Deliverance they had known from the hand of Pharaoh; salvation they had known from the impending judgment; and now they must know that on the ground of redemption Jehovah claims them for Himself, so He says, "Sanctify" (set apart or cause to pass over) "unto Me all the firstborn, both man and beast; it is Mine" (Exod. 13. 2).

We desire to make plain and to impress upon the consciences of young believers the deep significance of all this; and we are forcibly reminded of the words of 1 Corinthians 5. 7: "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." This is the One of whom John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which beareth the sin of the world." Terrible was the judgment that fell upon Him when the sword of Divine justice awoke against Him and the wrath of God descended upon Him; for He appeared to put away sin once for all by the sacrifice of Himself.

What boundless mercy to know Him as our Passover, and, sheltered in Him, to hear God's word of assurance to our hearts, dispelling every fear: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"; and again: "We have redemption through His blood, the for-

givenness of sins." Such should surely cause our hearts to rejoice, and should call from our lips the expression of worship and thanksgiving as we sing with the spirit and the understanding :

"I'm redeemed ! I'm redeemed !
Through the blood of the Lamb that was slain."

Yet, in the appreciation of all that He has done for us, let us not fail to apprehend the further truth these words convey regarding His claims upon His loved and His own. In 1 Corinthians 6. 19 we read, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and ye are not your own?" and Ephesians 1. 13 says, "In whom having believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Sealed on the ground of having been bought; claimed on the ground of belonging to Him who bought us! Of and to such He would now, as of old, speak and say, "Set apart, or cause to pass over unto Me *they are Mine.*" "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly *for Himself.*"

Have you, dear young believer, answered to His call? Have you responded to His claim, and in the spirit of the word said, "I am Thine, O Lord: Thine, wholly Thine"? In the recognition of His claims as Lord, to Whom has been given all authority in Heaven and on earth, it is your further privilege and responsibility to obey Him in all things whatsoever He hath commanded. Such obedience is surely claimed by God, for He hath said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him.*"

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

CHILDREN OF GOD.

Who among us, who have been redeemed realize in its fulness the blessedness of the relationship into which our God has brought us? We rejoice in the knowledge of sins

forgiven, and peace fills our heart when we remember that we have passed from death unto life, and that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. But when we read that we are now the *children of God* (1 John 3. 2) truly our cup runneth over, and we can but adore the One who has loved us with so great a love.

This blessed relationship is not obtained by works of righteousness nor by attainment in knowledge; it is not offered as a reward for faithful service, but is the portion of all who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, for it is written, "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26). Moreover this blessed truth speaks to us of our eternal security, for we have been born into the family of God—as we read in 1 Peter 1. 23, "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth." See also John 1. 12; James 1. 18; 1 John 5. 1. And lest we should be robbed by Satan of the joy this blessed knowledge brings, the Lord would have us know the witness-bearing of the Spirit which witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Let us not, however, lose sight of the fact that as children the responsibility lies upon us to give heed to the word of God, so that we may be sons of God without rebuke (or blemish) in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

To our Lord the Father's will was more than food to the body; more than life itself; for as the shadow of the Cross darkened His pathway His words were, "Not My will, but Thine be done." It was no formal sense of duty which prompted this obedience, but absolute love for the Father. This must be the power which moves us if we would follow in His steps.

“HE LED THEM FORTH BY THE RIGHT WAY.”

(Ps. 107. 7.)

Thine is the Living God! O saint, awake
 And prize thy portion well, fresh courage take;
 Though rough the path, and dark the lonely night,
 Be not dismayed! God leads! His way is right!

Thine is the Living God! His power He showed
 To Israel of old, though strange the road
 By which He led them forth that wondrous night:
 They thought it wrong, but yet His way was right!

Thine is the Living God! then falter not
 Though all around thee fails, and lone thy lot,
 Though in thy sky no star appears nor light;
 By trusting still thou'lt prove His way is right!

Thine is the Living God! here refuge take,
 And sing, though sad thy heart, and music make;
 He lists with gladness to thy song by night,
 Its swelling cadence proves His way is right!

Thine is the Living God! why then dismayed
 Though from thy vision earthly succours fade?
 He'll shield thy head amid the fearsome fight;
 Be stilled thy trembling heart! His way is right!

Thine is the Living God! His wisdom praise
 Who guides thy faltering feet in all thy ways,
 To prove thy heart and make thy garments white;
 He maketh no mistakes! His way is right!

Thine is the Living God! the Lord will come
 And end thy pilgrim path and take thee home!
 Then, at His feet in transports of delight,
 Thou'lt whisper to His praise, “His way was right!”

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

IV. JEHOSEPHAT.

(Concluded from page 109.)

REVIVAL, HUMILIATION, AND VICTORY (2 Chron. 19. 20.).

AFTER the faithful words of Jehu the son of Hanani, expressed in the opening verses, and the severe reproof of verse 2, "Shouldst thou help the wicked, and love them that hate the Lord?" Jehoshaphat appears to have made a fresh start; indeed, the closing words of the seer (ver. 3) would cause us to look for better things, consequently we read (ver. 4), "And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again among the people from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back unto the Lord, the God of their fathers."

We have here, surely, what constitutes a revival in a true sense. It is incorrect to designate a time when sinners are being born again by this name, whereas the expression is strictly true when used in regard to saints. In the former it is life given; in the latter it is life already existing revived.

All through Jehoshaphat's reign we have an echo of the longing of David's heart. "Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. 26. 8). Is it any wonder, then, to find Jehoshaphat so often spoken of as dwelling in Jerusalem? for "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion on the sides of the North, the city of the great King" (Ps. 48. 1, 2).

Jehoshaphat reflected in some small degree the unselfish spirit of the Master who was the great Teacher (see 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15; 8. 9), who Himself left the glory, stooping

so low to bring poor sinners up to God so high. For he went out again to the adjoining tribes of Israel who had departed from the Lord (ensnared by the enemy), in order that they, having been first given repentance and restoration, might enjoy with him the privileges of the House of God, for

“I was glad when they said unto me,
 Let us go unto the House of the Lord.
 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 unto Israel,
 To give thanks unto the name of the Lord,”

(Ps. 122.)

But not only are the privileges of the House great, the responsibilities are great as well,

“For there are set thrones for judgement,
 The thrones of the house of David.”

(Ps. 122. 5.)

“Let mount Zion be glad,
 Let the daughters of Judah rejoice,
 Because of Thy *judgements*.”

(Ps. 48. 11.)

Verse 5. “And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city.” The breaking of the bread unto the remembrance of Him upon the first day of the week is the privilege of all those who are in the House, but is there not rule in connection with the House also? (Please read 1 Cor. 5. and 6.) The Passover was not only to be kept, but kept at the right time by the right people in the right place, consequently rule was then, as now, imperative and necessary.

Four hundred men went out to David to the cave of Adullam (Justice of the people). “He became captain over them,” Adullam speaks of Jerusalem in principle, just as

to-day we have the same principle in "Church of God," for is not the latter expressive of those who have bowed their wills to the authority of Christ as Lord, locally expressive of the House of God, and the same principle that awaits development in a future day, when it shall be said, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between the nations?" (Isa. 2. 4).

The following verses are full of instruction on this point. Jehoshaphat said to the judges, "Consider what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; and He is with you in the judgement; . . . there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts" (verses 5-7). One of the sins of which Judah and Israel were guilty in a later day was the respecting of persons and the like. "The iniquity of the House of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of wresting of judgement" (Ezek. 9. 9).

It would appear that in the post-captivity period this was a special sin too (Mal. 2. 1-9). The one who assays to do oversight work now is charged in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, to observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality. (See 1 Tim. 5. 21. See also Prov. 17. 15; 18. 5; 28. 21.)

In the House of God there is not one law for the rich and another for the poor, neither two ways of reception into fellowship. The writer himself has witnessed cases where Christians, coming from the sects, were allowed to break bread as visitors; and others, who were desiring fellowship, apprehending a measure of separation truth, had to wait for a week or two, taking their seat at the back until they were duly received by the assembly; generally

the former being in good circumstances, while the latter were poor as regards position in this life. Then again, how sad to see some from whom one would have expected better things running away from the place where justice is sought to be carried out, only too clearly evidencing to others, although perhaps blinded to the fact themselves, that their case will not stand the light (see John 3. 20, 21). May all those who seek to carry out rule in the House of God follow in the steps of Him who is God's chosen and the world's coming Ruler, upon whom shall rest the Spirit of the Lord, "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and his delight (scent, R.M.) shall be in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove. (decide, R.M.) after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11. 2, 4). "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord."

The 20th chapter deals in the main with the great multitude of the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and another people. It is significant that Israel suffered much from time to time from these nations. It will be remembered that in the days of Nehemiah, during the building of the wall, they were again conspicuous by their opposition in the persons of Sanballat (hate in disguise), probably a Moabite from Horonaim, a town of that country, and Tobiah the Ammonite.

Light is thrown upon this when we remember the origin of these nations, the father of whom was "Lot," who is described in 2 Peter as "a righteous man." He assumed a position into which he never was called by God, and then, choosing a worldly path, he pitched his tent toward Sodom, into which city he afterwards found his way, becoming a great man there. The subsequent shameful history—the

birth of the founders of these peoples—will be found in the closing verses of Genesis 19. Jehovah, for certain reasons, would not allow these nations to be invaded when Israel came out of Egypt (ver. 10): and an Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord, even to the tenth generation, was a command found written and strictly carried out when in Nehemiah's time they acted according to first principles of assembly of God. In the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament the word "assembly" is translated by the Greek word *ἐκκλησία* (*ecclesia*), which is the word translated church in the New Testament.

The intrigues of these peoples were so successful, as recorded in Nehemiah 13., that the priest Eliashib actually prepared a chamber in the courts of the House of God for Tobiah.

Taking all these things, and more that might be added, into account, it would appear that we have in these nations what answers to an opposition of a religious character, which is the bitterest and most unrelenting, yet differing in principle from that opposition which Judah met with from their brethren, the House of Israel. What follows in this chapter is an exemplification and verification of the promise, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (Isa. 66. 2; see also Isa. 57. 15).

The word "congregation," in verses 5 and 14 of this chapter, is "assembly."

Verse 7 gives us one of the three instances in Scripture where Abraham is called the friend of God, and, if considered in conjunction with the other two, much help is afforded. "Israel My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend" (Isa. 41. 8); and in James 2. 23 the title is connected with faith. How beautiful is all this in its present connection: Jehoshaphat reminding

God of His promises to Abraham, and of His choice of worm Jacob—for all blessings are of God's free favour—"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11. 29), as well, perhaps, as a silent hint of whom their present enemies sprang, Lot being associated with Abraham his uncle, with whom he came out of Ur of the Chaldees, but not at the call of God (read carefully Isa. 51. 2).

The 8th and 9th verses are beautiful to contemplate, and show what a regard Jehoshaphat had for the name and the House connected therewith (please read carefully Matt. 18. 20), the love for which always drew forth the envy of those who were not in the mind of God. "Why look ye askance, ye high mountains, at the mountain which God hath desired for His abode? Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever" (Ps. 68. 16). "Moreover He refused the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved" (Ps. 78. 67).

It was this place that Jehovah chose out of all the tribes to put His name there (Deut. 12. 5). Accordingly, at this time, Jehoshaphat being in the mind of God, the victory was assured; indeed, had not Jehovah given the victory, Judah must have been swallowed up. This fact he fully recognizes, for it is remarkable that in verses 13 and 14 there is no mention whatever made of the fighting men, those numbered from twenty years old and upward, but "All Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children"—truly an expression of their great need and weakness. What hope and encouragement must the words of verse 15 have given to the man of faith, "Fear not ye, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude: for the battle is not yours, but God's"; "The Lord is with you" (verse 17); "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought: He maketh the thoughts of the peoples to be of none effect" (Ps. 33. 10). For the subsequent history of victory and rejoicing the chapter itself will well

suffice. But one word more. "Then they returned to go again to Jerusalem with joy." "And they came to Jerusalem unto the House of the Lord" (verses 27, 28). Have we not here exemplified the going *in* and the going *out*—going in to God, going out to man; going into the sanctuary, going out for service; going in to worship, going out to war?

To-day there is a "holy priesthood" and "a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (see also John 10, 9).

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the high ways to Zion" (Ps. 84. 5).

LESSONS DEARLY BOUGHT.

If the reign of Jehoshaphat had closed here, his life's history would stand out indeed as a brilliant spot on the page of Holy Writ; but God hides nothing that in the cause of truth must be revealed. One would have thought that the failure in the case of the Ahab confederacy, and the blessing recorded in the 20th chapter consequent on a humbled and repentant condition, being entirely cast upon the Lord, would have for ever afterwards kept Jehoshaphat from all such unholy alliances. Yet when we consider persons and things in the light of ourselves, we come to a different conclusion; for have not many of us in the past fallen into as grave errors, and are we not liable to do the same again?

Verse 35. "And *after this* did Jehoshaphat King of Judah join himself with Ahaziah King of Israel; the same did very wickedly." The words "after this" should be well noted. Verses 36 and 37 tell us that they made ships, but that the Lord destroyed his works, and the ships were broken. The narrative in 2 Chronicles ends here, but in 1 Kings 22. 49 we read that Jehoshaphat would not let his servants go with the servants of Ahaziah in the ships. From this it looks as if Jehoshaphat had learnt a lesson at

last, but at what a cost! Truly the school of experience is a good one, but a very costly one.

In summing up this sketch of his life, one cannot help thinking that his motives in this sectarian-bordering (rather than world-bordering) policy were aimed at restoring the whole of Israel unto the place of the Name; but unity, according to God, could only be attained in God's own way. The life of Jehoshaphat is surely a warning to those who would tamper with means and ways outside the Word of God to bring Christians together. Looking at the matter from the very lowest standpoint, the results achieved were meagre in the extreme, when we consider the awful price paid. What was it if he could boast of the title "King of Israel," and pride himself on a sort of unity of the two kingdoms? Weighed over against the calamitous results it is less than nothing, for it was at the prodigious cost ultimately of the murder of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Surely what he did had the very opposite effect to what he desired, sowing seeds which bore an abundant harvest of evil for generations. We find his son united in marriage with the daughter of Ahab. Is it any wonder? for his father was the first to lead him into such ungodly companionships. Let saints beware lest by their ways and companionships (for actions speak louder than words) they lead those whom they love into associations out of which they cannot so easily lead them.

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

THE HUMILITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

TRULY, truly, our hearts are made to rejoice when we muse on the different characters of our Lord Jesus Christ, and trace His footsteps in a world that lieth in wickedness. We are made to think of the great mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh.

Many Christians are satisfied in knowing the truths of baptism and eternal life. Precious they are indeed to our souls; but think of a man in Christ, who was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Cor. 12. 4), desiring after to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings!

Paul's desire was that he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead. He longed for a life of holiness; nothing on earth could make him suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung, or esteem them as that which is thrown to dogs; only the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord could enable him to do this. As a saint of resurrection he lived above the potsherd of an unregenerate world. For him to live was Christ. His glory was in the cross of Christ. And seeing we are beings of like passions as he, let us glory in Christ and not in ourselves.

Self-glorification is the root of all sectarianism and carnality. When we think of that vast sinful thing called Christendom, with its worldly traditions, we cannot marvel at its growth, seeing man is lorded and elevated, and the name of Jesus put nearly into oblivion.

As we read the epistle to the Hebrews our minds are quickly taken from earth into the heavens. There we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,

crowned with glory and honour (Heb. 2. 7). We see *Jesus*, not *the Christ* or *the Lord*. That precious name reminds us of Him who was made flesh and dwelt amongst men. More than four thousand years had run their course since Jehovah spoke those life-giving words in Eden's garden, the seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the calling of sons (Gal. 4. 4, 5). Then, and only then, was the heavenly host heard to rejoice since the fall of man.

Therefore it is refreshing to visit Bethlehem's manger in thought, and think of the humility of the Lord Jesus. For a little while God made Him lower than the angels (Heb. 2. 7, R.V., margin), and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2. 8). Safe is the servant of God who continually humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, realizing that pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16. 18).

Very solemn are the words spoken to the nation of Israel, "And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live" (Deut. 8. 3). In pride and self-will they often walked before Him, and consequently God humbled them and showed them their utter weakness without Himself. The desert wilderness could not be traversed by man's ingenuity or wisdom; Jehovah alone could overcome the many difficulties that were to be grappled with by Israel.

Faith in the living God could help Caleb to say without presumption, "Let us go up and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13. 30). And truly Jehovah

never failed him. The wilderness was strewed with the carcasses of unbelieving ones; they could not enter in because of unbelief. Pride and self-will may help to gain riches and honour in an unholy world; but it will not prosper in spiritual things. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4. 6).

After the Lord Jesus Christ came out of the river Jordan, God's voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17). The Lord Jesus Christ identifies Himself with the humiliation of God's people. "It becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness" (ver. 15). Israel lived as a generation of vipers, and therefore needed repentance, thus showing by baptism their sorrow for sin. Blessed be God, the Lord Jesus Christ needed not to repent for sin; He knew no sin; He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners (Heb. 7. 26). But as the son of Abraham, born of a woman, born under the law (Gal. 4. 4), He lived amongst them under law, and magnified it and made it honourable (Isa. 42. 21). Isaiah saw the Lord; high and lifted-up seraphim cried one to another, with covered face and feet, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6. 3).

"He fills the throne, the throne above;
He fills it without wrong:
The object of His Father's love,
The theme of angels' song."

But He willingly laid aside His glory and came to earth in weakness to finish the work God gave Him to do. Matthew shows us the King of kings in the care of a lowly woman, warned by an angel to flee from Bethlehem into Egypt from an earthly monarch. The poorest Israelite could have no lower birth than His, nor the vilest criminal a baser death. It behoved Him in all things to be made

like unto His brethren. Oh, what a blessed privilege we have in this dark world of sin and failure to rest our souls in Him! "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 18).

When we think of the lowly Son of God stooping to wash His disciples' feet, surely His words ought to re-echo in our hearts, "For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John 13. 15, 16, R.V.). Many Christians have been seen contending for the highest place in assemblies, but very few are seen reasoning amongst themselves for the lowest place; even in small meetings in isolated places gospel work has been blighted and hindered through petty jealousies and envious strife. Human nature naturally seeks an exalted position.

The mother of Zebedee's children was a very considerate parent. Human love is fully displayed in her. She seeks the best place in heaven for her sons (Matt. 20. 21), but her desire was far from the divine will of God.

Samuel exalted his sons into a place that God gave them not, and frightful consequences were the result, through their ungodly rule. Israel rejected God for an earthly king (1 Sam. 8. 6). His sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment (ver. 3). They loved lucre more than the ways of God. Truly "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6. 10, R.V.). Happy is the child of God who walks humbly before God, having food and raiment, and is therewith content.

From the river Jordan we find the Lord Jesus in the

wilderness tempted by the devil (Matt. 4.). Long before Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden there was another terrible crash; the eyes of Jesus beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (Luke 10. 18). Pride and ambition filled his heart, and thereby caused him to try and exalt himself above God (Isa. 14.). Being cast out of heaven, he became the enemy of God and His heritage. Very quickly he found an interested listener in Eve. He first gained her ear, then her heart. She took the poison error from him, and then gave it to her husband; and their eyes were opened. Yes, alas! to behold their nakedness and shame; and, moreover, to see the seed of a transgressor in a vagabond son.

God only could estimate the feelings of the second Adam as He surveyed the glory of a tinselled world; it could find no charm for Him. "All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me," said the tempter.

The Lord Jesus immediately quenched his fiery darts with the written word of God. The Prince of this world could have nothing in him. Job, when under his power, cursed his day (Job 3.); David was led by his subtle influence to doubt the power of God by numbering the people (1 Chron. 21. 2); Peter, without the Lord's prayers, would have been sifted as wheat (Luke 22. 31); the strong man fully armed guarded his own court, and his goods were in peace (Luke 11. 21, R.V.). But a stronger man than he had come to overcome him and bruise his head on the cross of Calvary. Truly the work and words of Jesus stand out in brilliancy from a dark, sinful world. Beloved brethren, is there not enough beauty in Jesus to wean our hearts from a Christ-rejecting world? If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

A. LAWRENCE.

A PLOT OF LENTILS.

(2 SAM. 23. 11, 12.)

AMONG his mighty men there was one whose merits shone with so bright a lustre and with such peculiar brilliance to King David, that he was given the honoured place of third among the captains.

The man who so distinguished himself was Shammah (astonishment), the son of Agee; the place in which he found the opportunity of his life was not where Israel's thousands were assembled, but in a spot of comparative obscurity, for it was a plot of lentils; the foe was a party of Philistine raiders bent on securing spoil.

Here in this lonely spot he proved his fitness; here stood the test of panic (for the people fled from the Philistines), and in face of overwhelming numbers defended it against the enemy.

Only a plot of lentils, yet guarded as faithfully for his absent lord as though it were royal treasure; only a plot of lentils, yet oh! how precious the stand made there to the one upon the throne! Only a few disciples gathered in the Name, yet guarded by the men with shepherds' hearts with such a holy daring, yet withal such wisdom, with steady courage and with unabated zeal, that presently Jehovah turns the tide of battle and gives "a great victory." For this they look forward—for this they pray and wait.

Truly the battle for the lentils is not yet over; and if he who ministers gives himself to his ministry, and he who teaches to his teaching, and he who exhorts to his exhorting, and he who rules does so with diligence, our God may give a great revival.

Only a class of children, yet an earnest teacher's prayers, and words spoken in the Spirit, shall yet be used by God for His glory and their eternal good. Only a mother's

lentil plot of lisping tongues and little feet to teach and train for Him, yet from such a home shall God's men come forth whom He will delight to honour.

But see!

THE DAY HAS COME

for King David to reward his faithful servants. Shammah is present—the wounds and weariness of that hard-fought day are all forgotten by him now. Behold the modest bearing of the man! How poor his service seems to him!

And now the names are read in their order of merit.¹ Jashobeam comes first—chief of the captains; then Eleazar, the son of Dodo, second.

But who will be third? To whom will David the warrior-king—who executes justice and judgment to all his people, and estimates faithfulness and valour at their proper worth—give the third place? Will it be Abishai, Joab's brother?

The interest is intense! But listen. Shammah the son of Agee, stand forth! Hail, warrior! Welcome, faithful heart! Thy lonely stand among the lentils shall never be forgotten! Thou art he whom the king delighteth to honour! Thou shalt be third among my mighty men, and stand high in my favour and share my glory!

What strange, tumultuous joy would fill that soldier's heart as royal David may have thus addressed him—as the one whose words could bow the heart of all the men of Judah as one man² may thus have spoken. But

SWEETER, RICHER FAR

the exceeding joy that will thrill those faithful hearts in the coming day, who now, midst earth's wild scenes, in city, town and village, do valiantly for God; who, though in dark and evil days, defend plots of lentils still in lonely spots for Him, as

¹ 1 Chron. 11. 11, 12.

² 2 Sam. 19. 14.

THAT VOICE,

now rich and melodious as the sound of many waters (that spake in agony on the Cross), will say with so glad a welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant," "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"; as

THOSE EYES

that have noted every weary hour spent for Him, and every hard-fought field, and every journey gone at His command, will beam upon His faithful ones; as

THAT COUNTENANCE

(once marred more than any man's), now fairer than the children of men, will be as the sun shineth in his strength.

"What will it be, O blessed Lord,
Thy gladdening smile to meet?"

Therefore, "watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

EDWIN MATTHEW.

For Young Believers.

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

A MEDITATION.

WHAT am I doing for God? Let me calmly and solemnly in His presence ask myself this question: What am I doing for God? How am I spending my days? How am I filling in those precious moments and hours which are slipping past me into eternity, each bearing my impress upon it? What am I doing with those opportunities which my Master has instructed me to "buy up"?

Do I ever think that each moment as it passes me receives an indelible impress from my hands—an impress that can never be erased, that can never be altered? And those impressions must be either for good, or for evil; either to the “Praise of His Glory,” or to the being “ashamed before Him at His coming.”

Looked at in this light, those hours and moments become of much greater value to me. I have only a certain number at my disposal. How many I know not; but at the most they are very few; and as each day passes they become fewer. Then how, oh! how am I using them?

Oh! the number of precious moments I have let slip, bearing nothing but the impress of idleness, foolishness, neglected opportunity, unworthiness of every description; and oh! how few have been occupied for Him; how few have been bright with His praise!

But something whispers to me: “You cannot always be serving God; you have your business to attend to.” This seems plausible; but the Lord reminds me of the words: “not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”; “not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord; whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; ye serve the Lord Christ.”

Again, something whispers: “That is all very well, but you must have *some* time for yourself, for private duties, recreation, etc.” And again the Word of God comes: “Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.” “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do all to the glory of God.” “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

So that, in spite of all the insinuations of the flesh, I

find the Lord has made provision for me that *whatever* I may be doing, I may do it for Him.

Here then is one way in which I can redeem the time, one way in which I can do something for God: let me consider *whatever* I may be doing, or *however* I may be occupying my time as work to be submitted to the Master for His approval. He has said, whatever it is, do it in My name, do it to My glory. Oh! how this thought bows me down with shame before God. The Lord has committed to my trust a great treasure; He has given to me a wealth of precious moments and golden opportunities: and He has said, "trade ye therewith till I come." What have I done with this treasure? Have I used it all for the Master; have I spent it all in His service; or, like the unjust steward, have I used it for my own purposes, squandered it upon myself, and come with a miserable fragment of it, on a Lord's-day morning perhaps, and offered *that* to my Master?

Oh! the treasure I might have laid up in Heaven, had I spent all my time for Him!

But it is useless to mourn over the past; that is gone and cannot be recovered. Let me rather, like the apostle, "forgetting the things which are behind, stretch forward to the things which are before." Let me come with my time and opportunities and lay *all* my treasure at His feet, saying: "Lord, it is Thine; let it be used for Thy glory."

Let me, then, go forth to spend all my time for Him, in His service, to His praise.

It may mean tribulation and affliction, but, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." It will mean that we have to confess Him before men, but, "every one who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven." It may mean loss in this life, but, "He that loseth his life for

My sake shall find it." It will mean endurance, but, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him."

Let us, then, brothers and sisters, value our precious moments more than we have ever done. Let us each ask ourselves the question, "What am I doing for God?" Let none pass the question by unanswered; and let no one say, "I can do nothing." Look at the treasure God has given you, and begin to spend it for Him; He will tell you how.

We know not how much of it is left us; it may be only a few days, months, or years at the most. Then may we value every moment of it, and use it all for Him.

"Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall set over His household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will set him over all that He hath."

"There are lonely hearts to cherish,
While the days are going by;
There are weary souls who perish,
While the days are going by;
If a smile we can renew,
While our journey we pursue,
Oh! the good we all may do,
While the days are going by."

A. S. McNAIRN.

"HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME."

THE words addressed by God to Cain in Genesis 4. 7, regarding the sin offering crouching at the door (Newberry, margin), seem to bring us face to face with the longing desire of the Lord Jesus for the salvation of guilty men.

That longing is fully told out in His becoming the Humbled One on earth, and the still further Humbled One on the Cross.

Cain appears here as a type of the self-righteous, who have never realized their utter ruin before God or the need of precious blood being shed for their cleansing.

How happy for time and for eternity are all who, like Abel, bow to God's testimony regarding their condition by nature, and, apprehending their dire need, make haste to avail themselves of God's provision. Such are called by God "righteous" (Rom. 4. 6), even as Abel is called by the Lord Jesus "righteous" (Matt. 23. 35).

It has been Satan's desire all down the ages to get man to forget the fall; for if that is once lost sight of, the necessity for atonement vanishes; and the theory that by developing the latent germs of good that lie buried in the human breast men may grow into acceptance with God, is but a denial of the complete ruin that only the Cross of Christ can deal with. Man by wisdom or by religion has never found out or made his way to God; but the Cross does both, for it tells God out and brings man nigh to Him.

That Cross is a humbling sight! There the child of God is taught that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing, and learns to have no confidence in the flesh. Yet is it a sweet resting-place, for there we find all that our utmost need requires in the Lord Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; and there we learn to glory in the Lord.

The desire of the Lord Jesus toward us when we were unsaved was great, and it was gratified when we accepted Him as our Saviour; and now that we are saved we find that He has a further desire that wants satisfying, namely, that we should be occupied with *Himself*. This desire of His heart for companionship with us is beautifully seen in the Song of Songs, and the responsive desire on the part

of the bride for fellowship with her beloved is likewise revealed.

Oh! younger brethren and sisters, are our hearts occupied with the Lord Jesus, even as His is towards us? or is there anything occupying His place, anything sharing the throne?

Who that has tasted the sweetness of fellowship with Him would compare the highest earthly joy to it? How it smooths the rough road of earth and lifts us above circumstances into His own presence where there is fulness of joy! What is going to make our heaven by-and-by but the presence of our Father and our Saviour? and even now within our reach is placed the possibility of experiencing a sweet foretaste of what will be brought to us in the revealing of the Lord Jesus! It is worth having! and all that is needed in order to have it is the broken will that is prepared to obey Him at all costs; and there is enough in the power of occupation with Christ to enable us to be out and out for Him.

If we look for the motive power that energized the Apostle Paul to endure all things and to suffer the loss of all that is prized amongst men, we find it in the words, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"! Oh! to have, like him, a saved life—a life the results of which will remain for ever, because it has been lived in fellowship with the Lord. Have we been content with anything else in the past? Has ours been a miserable experience because half-hearted? Then, let us for the future prove Him whose we are, and His ability to make our life one of rejoicing, as it is lived in the continuous enjoyment of His own presence.

J. McLEOD.

A CALL TO DUTY.

THE Scriptures describe the unsaved as guilty, condemned, and dead ; and in the light of this we may well ask, What are we, who have been saved by the grace of God, doing in order that such should be delivered from this condition and saved from the wrath to come ?

We are left in the world to be ambassadors for Christ, and to plead with men to be reconciled to God through Him. Have we heard the Word of God bidding us not to be afraid, but to speak and hold not our peace, and assuring us that He is with us (Acts 18. 9) ?

It is written in Proverbs that he that is wise winneth souls, and in Daniel, that the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Let us, therefore, endeavour by grace to be wise workers for God, and seek with all the ability He has given us to rescue the perishing. It will be to our own eternal gain if we do.

God is desirous of using us as heralds of the gospel of His glory, and would have each one to be as a polished shaft in His quiver, so that our words might be winged from His own mouth and prove to be "His Word" which shall not return void.

If this desire is to be gratified it is needful that we should constantly hear His voice saying: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"; and that we should purge ourselves from every thing, and every way, displeasing to Him, in order that we may be vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use. If we are clean vessels and polished shafts the Lord will assuredly take us up and use us for His glory.

Oh! that God might beget in our every heart an intense desire to be soul-winners, and that we might travail, as

the apostle did, as in birth pangs in order that souls might be brought to Christ. Many around us are nearing the abyss, many are almost there: brethren, let us reach forth our hands and in the fear and power of God snatch them as brands from the burning. There is no time to lose, a moment's delay may be fatal; let us not be afraid, but let us speak and hold not our peace, and deliver our souls from blood-guiltiness. May we feel more and more the burden of the necessity laid upon us, so that we may in earnestness say: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

We exhort young men to be Timothy-like, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, heeding not the sneer of the world nor fainting beneath the weight of the Cross; and to stand manfully for Christ and make known a Saviour's love and His power to save.

The Lord is willing to give each the grace and the wisdom necessary for such service, and to teach us with what earnestness and tenderness we should plead with our fellows on the momentous question of their eternal destiny. If we realize, in any measure, the gravity of the issues at stake as we preach the gospel, which is still either a savour of life unto life or of death unto death to those who listen, it will deliver us from all lightness, and our words and demeanour will convince our hearers that we are possessed of a due sense of the solemnity of the occasion.

Oh! the sin of being guilty of lightness and frivolity in such ministry with the abyss yawning beneath the feet of the perishing.

Beloved, let us awake to our responsibility to the unsaved, and—

"Go with the name of Jesus to the dying,
 And speak that name in all its living power.
 Why should our fainting hearts grow chill and weary?
 Can we not work for Him one little hour?"

THE TEMPEST'S LORD.

THE day is done—adown the watery west
 The setting sun sinks swiftly to its rest;
 The fiery clouds like flying phantoms go,
 And gleam fantastic in the after-glow.

Such sunsets sure presage a coming storm,
 And tell of toil to mariners forlorn,
 Who to the deep in shade and shine must go,
 And the fell force of tide and tempest know.

Such hap befel the toiling, trembling few,
 Who, at the bidding of the Lord, withdrew
 From scenes so great, to greater wonders see,
 And learn of God on rolling Galilee.

Fierce bursts the storm—whose shrieking voices wake
 A deaf'ning answer o'er the roaring lake—
 And fills their hearts with fear; what human hand
 Can guide their labouring bark to yonder strand?

In vain!—they toil in vain through that dread night
 Till morning dawns, then breaks upon their sight
 The tempest's Lord in triumph treading free
 His unmarked path o'er raging Galilee.

“Behold, 'tis I!” His peerless presence stilled
 The terrors great their trembling hearts that filled;
 Their voyage is o'er, their battered bark they beach
 In harbour calm where storms no more can reach.

The lesson learn, ye toiling saints who cross
 The surging sea of life 'mid gain and loss;
 The morning breaks!—behold the Lord at hand!
 The surges cease!—thy bark is nearing land!

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

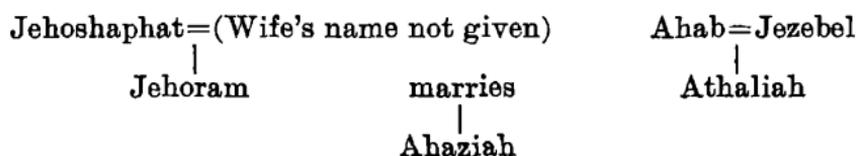
V. JEHORAM (2 Chron. 21. 22.).

WE must not confound Jehoram of Judah with Jehoram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, both reigning about the same time. Indeed, that the names of the two kings should be the same is suggestive of the very close relationships between the two kingdoms, and is by no means a mere coincidence. This Jehoram, king of Israel, sent to Jehoshaphat, seeking his aid against the king of Moab, which characteristically he readily conceded, thus making in all three compromises: first with Ahab, then with Ahaziah, his son, and lastly with Jehoram, the account of which we read in 2 Kings 3.; and, as it did not come under our notice in 2 Chronicles, we passed it over in our last. We have no doubt that there is some wise reason, full of instruction, if the mind of God was fully apprehended, for its omission in Chronicles. As it happens, we touch here upon one of the chapters of the Old Testament which is brimming over with interest to Bible students, by reason of the discovery, so recently as 1868, of what is known as the Moabite Stone. This stone was found by Dr. Klein while travelling east of Jordan, in what was once the Moabite country; but, unfortunately, while the negotiations were proceeding for its purchase for the Berlin Museum another stepped in and offered a large sum of money for it. The Arabs, sooner than give it up to the Pasha, put a fire under the stone, poured cold water over it, and broke it into fragments; fortunately, a cast of the stone had been taken, and subsequently the pieces which had been distributed among the Bedouin Arabs as amulets and charms were recovered and put together as it now

may be seen in the Museum of the Louvre, Paris; but there is a plaster cast in the British Museum. Upon the stone we have in effect the same as we have divinely inspired in 2 Kings 3., how King Mesha rebelled against the king of Israel. Mesha is mentioned several times by name.

How good is our God in a day of scepticism, when so much doubt is cast upon the Old Testament Scriptures, to allow to be unearthed from the buried records of the past that which is practically a contemporaneous history, although not inspired, both agreeing together. The stone dates back about 900 years before the time of God manifest in flesh.

In the chapters which head this paper we see fully the sad results the Ahab confederacy had on the kingdom of Judah. How the two kingdoms became intermixed with one another we can see at a glance from the following:—



It is written of Jehoram, "And he walked in the ways of the king of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chron. 21. 6). We then read a statement which accounts for so much which may seem strange to us, and if it was not for what answers to the same in our case it would fare ill with us. "Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant which He had made with David, and as He promised to give a lamp to him and to his children alway" (ver. 7). "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3. 22, 23).

The remainder of this chapter relates the lamentable ending of this disreputable king ; the measure which he meted out to others (ver. 4) is meted out in turn to him (ver. 17) ; his mischief returned upon his own head, and his violence came down upon his own pate. Surely he was paid back in his own coin. But what other result could be expected, for the compromise with wicked Ahab, whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up, is more than enough to account for all ; and to the door of Jehoshaphat alone is the mischief to be traced. Let Christians beware!!!

To the near-sighted human eye nothing much out of the ordinary might be seen in all this lamentable history which occurs in these chapters ; yet to the eye of one who is in touch with the living God, "for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," there is that which is just what we might expect from Genesis 3. 15—a spirit of bitter hate and relentless persecution evinced in the murder of Abel, and culminating in the murder of the Christ (the seed of the woman destined to bruise the head of the serpent), and which is still exhibited by those born after the flesh persecuting those born after the Spirit (read Gal. 4. 28, 29). The great aim of Satan was the destruction of "the Godly seed" (Mal. 2. 15 ; Isa. 6. 13).

On the other hand, never was the line out of which the Christ sprang stronger than at the moment when it appeared to be weakest to man, being in the preservation of Him who knoweth all things from the beginning—the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God.

VI. AHAZIAH.

Of Ahaziah we read, "His mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri [rather granddaughter ; see margin of R.V.]. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly" (2 Chron.

22. 2-4). We often find the names of the mothers of the kings brought under our notice, not without deep significance, for have not the mothers more especially to do with the early training of the young in the home (the sphere of the woman) when the mind is pliable and impressionable, either for good or for bad, before the home life is left for the more public life, where the influence of the mother is not? Proverbs 6. 20 would seem to suggest the same thought, for it is the "commandment" of the father, whereas it is the "law" of the mother; that is, the daily continual teaching of the latter. We find the happy reverse of what we read in verse 3 in relation to Timothy, who from a babe was taught the sacred writings by those, I doubt not, mentioned in 2 Timothy 1. 5—his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice.

We have much the same sort of ending to this king as to his predecessor, for he was slain when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, consequent upon which Athaliah, his mother (the only queen that ever reigned in Judah), arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of David (ver. 10), Joash, the son of Ahaziah, being stolen away by his aunt from among the king's sons that were slain, and hid in the house of God six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land (ver. 12).

We arrive here at a point in the history of the kings of Judah, expressive of the utmost weakness—rule as most opposed to God. We could not expect to find anything in Athaliah but a reflex of her own mother, "the woman Jezebel," which teacheth and seduceth the servants of God through her husband, Ahab. But 2 Chronicles 18. 1 gives a key to all this "affinity with Ahab."

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

NOTES ON REVELATION.

Chapter 1. Verse 1.

A Revelation of Jesus Christ. Revelation is the translation of a word which you find in other portions of the New Testament translated by various English words, such as Lighten (Luke 2. 32), Manifestation (Rom. 8. 19), Coming (1 Cor. 1. 7), Revealed (2 Thess. 1. 7), Appearing (1 Peter 1. 7). The word means an uncovering, *i.e.*, the revealing or unveiling of that which was hidden or not seen or known. On the very threshold of our study of this book we would like to emphasize this fact, *viz.*, it is a revelation—that is, a revealing of that which was not seen or known. In 1 John 3. 1 we are told that the world does not know that we are the children of God. “It knoweth us not *because* it knew Him not.” We are in the world, children of God; yet our identity is veiled, covered, until the day when God will unveil us, and we shall be manifested the sons of God (Rom. 8. 19)—that will be the Revelation of the sons of God.

Of Jesus Christ. The thought here is not so much the unveiling of the person, if indeed that is in it; but rather belonging to and by Jesus Christ. This is made plain by what follows: “which God gave unto Him to show.” God gave it to Him, therefore it is His to show. So He is the Revealer. May it be yours and mine, dear reader, to know more and more our place at His feet, that He may unveil more and more of the precious teaching of this book to our hearts; that we might be increasingly kept for Him in this apostate night, looking for the star of the morning, the harbinger of our eternal day.

Bondslaves. We are saved through grace, bondslaves of Jesus Christ by the blood of His Cross, yet Romans 6.

16 reveals to us the awful possibility of our refusing His yoke (Matt. 11. 29, 30), and again (though saved from hell we be) becoming by practice bondslaves of sin. Such a life is unto death (Rom. 8. 13), and will find its record to be loss at the Judgment Seat, and whatever is found to be loss there will be eternal.

“Shortly.” Over 1,800 years have passed since this word was penned, and we still read “Shortly.” It speaks of time; but let us not forget that it is not our “Shortly,” but God’s, reminding us of these words—“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3. 8).

Signified, that is, “To make known by signs and symbols.” So that this book is truth, revealed by signs and symbols. Our learning, therefore, necessitates the interpreting of these signs and symbols; and in so doing we must not go outside of the Scriptures. God’s word alone must interpret these signs. There are, in the study of this book, three distinct schools of thought—if we might so speak.

(1st) Those who see the progressive history of the Church from the first century to all time. (2nd) Those who believe that it has almost, if not altogether, been fulfilled in the past. (3rd) That it all, from Chapter 3. awaits its fulfilment.

In Chapter 1. verse 19 we have the key to the periods of the book: God there divides them into three.

(1st) “What thou hast seen,” that is concerning all we have in Chapter 1.

(2nd) “And the things which are,” *i.e.*, the truths of Chapters 2. and 3. which speak of seven Churches of God, and are written for the guidance and upbuilding of the same: God’s testimony for faith during this dispensation. So the things which are, cover the period which lies

between the second of Acts and His coming to the air for His Bride.

(3rd) "The things which shall be hereafter," or, more literally, "after these things," *i.e.*, what will take place on the earth after the saints of this dispensation are gone. A description of which is fully given, commencing Chapter 4. and ending Chapter 19. Throughout this third period the Church is at home with her Lord, looking down on the whole scene, and taking a part in the administration of the fearful Judgments.

Verse 1 ends with "His bondservant John." He truly entered into Christ's claims, and his faithfulness found him in Patmos Isle, possibly in chains in the salt or silver mines which were in that island. Separated from the Lord's work and people for his Master's sake, yet not separated from the Lord Himself. As the Lord was with Joseph, so He was with John, and is with all His faithful ones. Man may deprive us of much, but one blessed fact is here revealed, that all the persecutions of the adversary cannot drive Him from our side, and in His light we see light.

Verse 2 is a tribute from the Lord's lips to His bondservant John, an unfolding of his character. What kind of man was he? Listen!

"Who testified of the word of God." His lip and life testified the word of God. As we read this we at once think of his unfolding in the gospel written by him, and of the epistles written by him. "For the life was made manifest, and we have seen it and bear witness" (1 John 1. 2). And "the testimony of Jesus Christ" I understand to be the testimony of His life as a man among men. We often speak of a believer's testimony, meaning thereby his life and walk. So here, I judge, we have the life and walk of the Son of God, which was such a pleasure to God (Matt. 17. 5).

“All things he saw” would indicate that he kept back nothing. As it was revealed he declared it, in faithfulness to Him who showed him that he might declare it to others. As this was true of John, it can also be true of us as children of God: in these days of increasing darkness, to faithfully up to our measure tell out the word of God and to speak well and ever of His blessed Son. The sufferings which this may entail will be more than recompensed by those words “Well done” which He will speak to those who have earned them.

Verse 3. God has in a most remarkable manner guarded this book. He has opened it with a blessing and closed it with a curse and a blessing. (See Chapter 22. 7, 18-20.) No other book which goes to make up the Faith is so dealt with. We naturally say, Why? In seeking to in some measure answer the question, I would put it in the form of a suggestion rather than a perfect answer. I would suggest that God foresaw that Satan would bring all his devices into operation, so as to cause this book to be sealed to the great bulk of God’s children (how He has succeeded is indeed manifest); so He thus hedged it round with His blessings and curse.

Years ago an old saint was always found reading this book, and being asked on one occasion if she understood it, she replied, “No; but there is a blessing attached to the book, and I am seeking that blessing.” The blessing brought her to it. May it encourage us in our study of it, only let us note that the blessing is bound up in “reading,” hearing, and keeping those things which are written therein.

Readeth, hear, keep. Each of these verbs is in the present tense, implying, as Newberry’s Bible will show, continuation in the present. So that it is a present, continuous blessing as the result of a present, continuous reading, hearing, and keeping.

Note it is reading unto hearing and hearing unto keeping. So if we would keep aright we must hear aright, and if we would hear aright we must read aright. Have we not to confess very great failure in this? We read so very carelessly that we often fail to hear our God speaking in the words which we read. I would seek to emphasize the necessity of a greater reverence for the Word of God; also I think we would derive very much more help and blessing if we sought our God in prayer each time we took up His Word. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" is a cry which, if sincerely uttered, I am sure would bring its blessing.

Satan has a purpose in making every effort at his disposal to make this book a dead letter to God's saints. In all the books which go to make the "Oracles of God" (Heb. 5. 12), there is not one that so thoroughly and completely tells out the character, workings, and destiny of Satan as this book. Satan's masterpiece to-day is imitation, *i.e.*, to counterfeit the real work of God. He well knows that God's saints will more readily accept the counterfeit than the real—and the more like the real he comes, the more deceiving and perfect the counterfeit. Wherever you find a counterfeit it always proves the existence of the real. To-day you do not find any counterfeiting of fourpenny pieces. Why? because the real is not current coin.

You will find this book abounds with his counterfeits. To see how real and terrible they are in their workings, and how perfectly God exposes them in order that we might not be ignorant of his devices, can only prove a blessing and help to the saint. I will satisfy myself in drawing your attention to a few, the study of which I trust may be the help to you that they are to me. If they prove so my penning of them will not be in vain,

GOD'S REALITIES.

SATAN'S COUNTERFEITS.

Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Rev. 1. 4-5).

Trinity of Evil: The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet (Rev. 13. 1-11; 12-17).

Divine Testimony :

God's Assembly (Rev. 2. 8).

Satan's Synagogue (Rev. 2. 9).

Teachers of Christ (Eph. 4. 11).

Satan's (Rev. 2. 14, 15, 20).

God's Deep Things (1 Cor. 2. 10).

Satan's (Rev. 2. 24, *R.V.*).

God's Throne (Rev. 4).

Satan's (Rev. 2. 13, *R.V.*).

God's Lamb (Rev. 5. 6).

Satan's (Rev. 13. 11), lamb-like Beast.

God's Conqueror (Rev. 19. 11).

Satan's (Rev. 6. 2).

God's Miraculous Powers (Rev. 6. 12).

Satan's (Rev. 13. 13; 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10).

God's Sealing (Rev. 7. 2, 3).

Satan's (Rev. 13. 16, 17).

God's Two Witnesses (Rev. 11. 3).

Satan's Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 13).

God has His Christ.

Satan his Anti-Christ (Rev. 13).

A Bride for God's Christ (Rev. 19. 7).

A Bride for Satan's Christ (Rev. 17. 5).

God's City (Rev. 21).

Satan's City (Rev. 17. 5).

Dear reader, these are a few of the divine unveilings in this book, which go to prove the kind of way in which we may expect Satan to be working in these last days. Imitation! Imitation! Imitation! and by deception succeeds in alluring God's saints from the ways of truth into the errors of darkness: and as he succeeds then, so he is succeeding now. What a consummation of guilty Christendom have you in Revelations 17. and 18. Yet in Babylon then, God's saints could be found (Rev. 18. 4). The command then will be the same as it is now: "Come out" (2 Cor. 6. 14-18).

How unlike God is it, for us to speak of this book as a sealed book! You know many do. Why, it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ to show unto His bondservants. Peculiarly precious ought it to be to our hearts. They are the last words He has spoken to us, and He speaks them from His throne. They are the unveilings of the enthroned One.

As we prize and cherish the last words of one we loved on earth, and love to meditate thereon, may we value this book. It is the key to the prophetic word, and apart from it there is no possibility of unlocking the ways and purposes of our God. To have it unveiled in our hearts is to make us men who have an understanding of the times, and who know what Israel ought to do, and thus a comfort, help and blessing to the Israel of God (1 Chron. 12. 32).

J. CHARLETON STEEN.

THIRD EPISTLE BY JOHN.

GAIUS, DEMETRIUS, AND DIOTREPHES.

IN the Epistles by John we note a difference between them and those by Paul, in that the former begins them, "The Elder," etc., in place of as in Paul's epistles, "Paul, an apostle."

John does not write, "John, an apostle," even in Revelation; he says, "I, John, your brother."

When John in this epistle says, "I wrote unto the church," to what church did he write? We think the individual to whom he wrote—Gaius—will help us to discover this, for Paul writes in 1 Cor. 14. "I thank God I baptized none *of you* but Crispus and Gaius." So Gaius belonged to Corinth, for in writing to Corinth the apostle says, "of you," thus making him one of that assembly of God. In the last chapter of Romans we find saints at Rome sending salutations to saints at Corinth, and in verse 23 we read, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you." So that his name again comes in as belonging to Corinth. May we not then conclude that Gaius, Demetrius and Diotrephes all belonged to Corinth, and that the church John wrote to was Corinth?

This being so, Demetrius had a good report of all men in Corinth, and Diotrephes refused to receive the brethren there, for it is written, "He receiveth them not." We may also infer that Diotrephes refused to allow John's epistle to be read there, for John adds, "Receiveth us not."

This epistle is supposed to have been addressed to Gaius in the year 90, or about twenty-four years after Paul's death.

John follows up Paul's work at Corinth, and the now aged Gaius, who received Paul many years before, is still there, and is the suitable one for John to write to: "The well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." Demetrius is also "one of good report," so his name comes in.

Six years after, we have from the pen of the disciple "whom Jesus loved" the book of Revelation, this being written thirty years after Paul's death. John must then have been over ninety years of age, and tradition says of him, (as they carried this aged saint into the meetings in those days), that he was in the habit of saying, "Little children, love one another."

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 135,—*If there is such a thing as human love, when did it come into man's possession? When, where, and by whom is its origin and supply?*

Human love or affection would have existed previous to the Fall, and would then have been pure and untainted by sin. The language of Adam, in Genesis 3. 12, indicates how immediately sin affected his being, and like a stream that has been polluted at its source; man's,

whole nature is defiled, so that the apostle cries out, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18). And as man by nature is in the flesh, he can but bring forth the works of the flesh (Gal. 5. 19). We must remember, in considering this subject, that God's revelation of Himself in Christ has very largely affected a great portion of mankind. If there is that to be found in unregenerate human nature which has the appearance of good, it may be traced back to God's revelation of His Will, either in the earlier revelations to the Patriarchs, and then through His prophets to the nation of Israel, or else, as we have said, His last revelation of Himself in Christ.

Even in the Koran, and the teaching of Mahomet, we shall find he was largely influenced by Judaism and Christianity, see "Mahomet and Islam," by Sir William Nuir, page 50. Again we find in the Greek Church, the Church of Rome, and the various Protestant divisions, they have all been more or less moulded by the influence of Christianity.

Upon examining closely we shall find all through, self, and some advantage to be gained to self, underlies the motives which influence men's lives. There is a form of godliness, but the power is lacking: the motive is to gain something, and therefore a measure of conformity in outward things may be found amongst those who are influenced more or less directly by the doctrines of Christianity. But when we turn to 1 John 4. 19 we find a divinely begotten love going out to an object, and the perfect love of God begetting love in return from regenerate man—a love that has not as its object something to be obtained, but loves because conscious of being loved: this love is connected with the new nature; and undefiled by sin at its source, coming from Him whose greater love than the love of man enabled Him to love His enemies and lay

down His life for them. His love went beyond His friends. He met their needs in death, He laid His life down for them, but He also suffered death on account of His enemies (John 15. 13). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4. 10). Contrast this with what is said in Luke 6. 32 and following verses, for here we have the love of unregenerate man contrasted with the love that is begotten of God. Notice also verse 35.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

PEACE.

ONE reason why many Christians fail to enjoy peace with God is that they look for it from a source whence it can never flow. They turn their eyes inward and look at themselves, and behold much there that appals them, so they bend their every energy to improve their condition. For a time, perhaps, they get along fairly well, and manage, in measure, to keep the flesh under, and become better pleased with themselves. But their triumph is short-lived, for the flesh at length gains the mastery, resulting in darkness of soul. The peace they had previously known in the time of supposed triumph vanishes, and only trouble about failure and sins remains.

Now when God is listened to this condition of turmoil disappears, and a great calm possesses the soul where unrest previously existed. He goes at once to the root of the matter and exposes the error that occasioned all the trouble.

In Ephesians 2. 14 we read, "He is our peace." In these words God points our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ and

shows us that peace is not in ourselves, or our attainments, but in Him who has been exalted to the Throne of God having made peace through the blood of His Cross. "He is our peace!" Ponder the words. Behold the One upon the throne who has made peace and who is our peace! We must not look within, then, for peace but to Him yonder. Look away from self, look up, look off unto Jesus, all is peace and gladness there!

Let us grasp by faith this precious truth, that our peace is associated with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will set us at perfect rest in the presence of God and will save us from self-occupation in every form. Our failures and shortcomings can never mar the peace He has made by the blood of His Cross; our attainments and spirituality can never add to it in the faintest measure. It is eternally perfect and beyond our touch—"He is our peace."

How then can we know experimentally the enjoyment of this peace? In one way: by the Person who "*made peace*," and who "*is our peace*," dwelling in our hearts by faith; by the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts and silencing every question and stilling every fear. Let us, therefore, have done with self in every form, its good and its bad alike, and let us fix our hearts upon Him who in the days of His flesh said to His disciples: "These things have I spoken unto you that *in Me* ye may have peace."

Let us fix our eyes on Christ then! so that the glory of His countenance may dispel our gloom and for ever banish our doubts and fears, for these are weeds that grow in the darkness where His sunlight does not reach. They cannot live where He shines; they are withered in His glorious presence—peace reigns there!

Occupation with self can only lead to sorrow, the endeavour to improve the flesh must ever result in disappointment, but heart occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ will

lead to peace and rejoicing, for it raises us to a sphere where all is light and love, where we find the waters are risen, waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over.

“WELLS OF WATER.”

“TRY to dig wells for yourself in Scripture: they may be dry at first, but water comes into them afterwards.” The one who penned these lines had learned what it takes the young Christian a long time to learn, and, if he be energetic and eager, what causes him a considerable amount of unhappiness before he learns, namely, that there is no royal road to knowledge of any kind, but, on the contrary, that knowledge can only be acquired by hard work and patient plodding.

This is just as true of the knowledge of the things of God as knowledge of anything else.

The young Christian is generally so eager to know things, so anxious to learn all he can; for what he does know, what he has learned, has brought him so much. At first he is satisfied with what he gets from others; but as time goes on he wishes to think for himself and learn for himself. He is surprised, however, to find that his reading of the Word does not bring to him the crowds of beautiful thoughts and great ideas that seem to lie on the surface of Scripture for this or that brother. It would seem to him that these men had only to open their Bibles and beautiful things came out of it by themselves. And as time goes on they think there must be something wrong with them: they are too thick-headed; they can't think properly; they have not got patience for it; they were not meant for that kind of thing; and so sometimes they are on the point of giving up reading and study altogether.

Ah! but this is just where you must not give up. You

have been digging the wells: they may be dry just now, but be assured the water will come.

Wells are not holes let down into huge reservoirs: they are holes sunk to contain the water which gradually trickles into them from the surrounding rocks.

The digging is slow work, but the water is there: down, down, and it will be reached at last; and the supply is inexhaustible. And just as wells differ according to their locality, some bubbling up continually, and others requiring drawing or pumping, so your wells in Scripture may yield you of themselves a constant supply or they may require continual drawing.

Dig them though, and do not weary in the digging, for though they are dry at first the water is sure.

THE LORD JESUS OR THE POOL.

By the sheep gate in Jerusalem there was a pool called Bethesda—which means House of Mercy—having five porches, or entrances. As we look in and around and see each place crowded with suffering ones, old and young, we would think that House of Misery were the more correct name. But this would be judging by sight, for, after all, it was indeed a House of Mercy.

At times the water moves, the surface is rippled; then such a commotion. Every one does his utmost to get into the pool, for the first to get in is healed of whatever disease he has. So, one at a time, and that perhaps at long intervals, one was healed; and then that one was the one who needed it least. He was the best man; for the first to get in was *the best*—little hope indeed for the *worst man*.

There was such an one. He gave up trying to get in; he waits now for some one to put him in, one to do all, for he could do nothing. But, alas! the selfishness of the human heart is too great. Each person is occupied with

his own case; none so bad as theirs. Self and its sorrows and troubles fill up the lives of most; no care for others. And again, those who were healed, taken up with themselves and their joy, had no thought for the impotent man still left saying, "No man careth for my soul." May we lay this to heart in cases where we may help.

Who can tell the love and kindness in the heart of the Lord Jesus who came to where this helpless man was? The One who knew only joy, the joys of heaven, left these for the sorrows of earth, became the Man of Sorrows, and so met the need of this one—none other. All the others were trying and doing something. This man gave up trying and was healed immediately. He had been thirty-eight years in that case—not in that place. Thirty-eight years before this the Lord Jesus was in heaven; but He left heaven and became the Babe, the Boy, and the Man—the Man who was needed. The pool for the best man, but Christ for the worst man, too bad for any other.

It was the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees murmured because the Lord Jesus worked. Was it not well for the poor man that He did work? Yes, He did all the work though two worked. Which two? Not the Lord Jesus and the man. "My Father works and I work"; both are interested in the impotent man, and he got rest through their work. Oh! what a burden was gone. Here was the first *real Sabbath* the man had known; and all through the One who denied Himself both joy and rest.

The mighty saving power of Calvary's Cross is the work of the same Two. It pleased the Father to bruise Him; this, and this only, meets the sinner's need.

Long years ago the pool ceased to move; the water dried up; the porches no longer thronged; all is silent as death. The *best man's remedy* has failed—is no more; but the Lord Jesus, the *worst man's remedy*, ever lives, will never fail, is always near and says to thee, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

G. R. GEDDES.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

IV.

WE have already had Jehovah presented to us, in the various scriptures considered, as Israel's Redeemer and Deliverer; and now we desire to view Him as their Leader. "And the Lord went before them day by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and night" (Exod. 13. 21). It is very instructive to compare with this the words of Psalm 77. 19: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leadest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." In this is seen the way of His choice for them, and His manner of leading them therein. What a blessed Leader; and what gracious leading! They were not driven, they were led!

How beautifully expressive this is of the words of the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep; and who as the Great Shepherd "calls His own sheep by name and leadeth them out," and says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (Jno. 10. 27). He *leads*, they *follow*! Is such leading the actual experience of our reader? Is He leading you in the path in which you now are, or has it been a path of your own choosing or the choosing of others for you? Serious questions, demanding serious answers! for He only leads in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

From the leading of Israel by Jehovah in the past we may learn much as to the Great Shepherd's leading in the present age. Psalm 107. 7 tells us, "He led them forth by the *right way*." This surely implies there is a wrong way, which if they had chosen and followed they would have forfeited His presence and guidance! What, then, was

this right way? "Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea." "Speak unto the children of Israel that they *go forward*; but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea." Truly His way was in the sea, and His word reveals that way so minutely as not to be mistaken; yet they linger and falter and stand still. Have they made a mistake? Have they gone the wrong way? No, it is the way of His choice and leading, and the way of His testing them as to their subjection to His authority!

To sight there is insurmountable difficulty; to faith there is none, for it only considers, Has the Lord commanded? and leaves the consequences with Him. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"; so we read, "*By faith* they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry land."

The divine commentary regarding this is given in 1 Corinthians 10. 12: "All our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The first walk that Israel took with God was into and through the sea; and this marks the first stage in their journeyings.

This reminds us of another scene recorded in the scriptures, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes forth and takes His first walk as Jehovah's perfect Servant into the waters of Jordan to be baptized of John, saying, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to *fulfil all righteousness*"; and demands the divine acknowledgment in the words, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Further would we point out that having accomplished the will of God, and ere He ascended on high, He commanded Apostles whom He had chosen to "Go and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them

into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28. 19). Herein is appointed by His authority the way of His choice for His loved ones; and by the Spirit and the Word, answering to the cloud and commandment of old, He leads them in obedience thereto. To all who are His is the privilege and the responsibility to hear and to heed, and to follow Him, and so take *their first walk with Him* into the waters of baptism as did the believers in early days (Acts 2. 41, 8. 12, 18. 18, etc.).

And now, "why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized!"

DAVID SMITH.

(*To be continued.*)

PRAYER ENDED.

"THE prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended!" So said the writer of the 72nd Psalm, after describing in glowing language the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ over restored Israel and over earth delivered from the curse when all nations shall call Him blessed. The glory of the scene he had been portraying seems to have led the psalmist to such heights of ecstasy and joy that the glory and the grandeur and the peace of that scene stole into his heart and lifted him away from the troubles and sorrows of life.

As he contemplated such a scene, what could he wish for more? The prayers that trembled on his lips are unuttered; every fear is for ever set at rest; every longing is satisfied; the glory of the King enraptures his soul. Like the queen of Sheba in the presence of Solomon, there is no more spirit left in him; he is satisfied, and all his prayers are ended. Many a prayer did the psalmist utter and many a tear did he shed, for well he knew that each prayer was heard on high and every tear was treasured in Jehovah's bottle; but all is forgotten in the presence of the Lord, in whose light every shade vanishes.

Does this not remind us of the scene of John 16.? The Lord had said to His disciples, "A little while and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while and ye shall see Me," and sorrow filled their heart. The little while of His absence is the time of sorrow and the opportunity for prayer! But soon the little while will be for ever past and He shall see us again, and our heart shall rejoice, and our joy none shall take away. "*In that day ye shall ask Me nothing!*" Blessed moment! stealing nearer and nearer us each day, when every longing shall be stilled and not a want remain! In His presence the unanswered questions of a life-time will be explained in the light of God and the need of prayer will vanish.

But need there is to-day, for He is absent still, and His absence makes earth's scene a desert; His presence shall yet clothe it with Eden's bloom. While He is away He would not have His loved ones to be crushed with sorrow, but bids them to pray and not to faint; and cheers their hearts by saying, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

So, during His absence, the praying Christian is the happy Christian; for neglect of prayer is the sure fore-runner of joylessness. Nothing else can give fulness of joy but communion with Himself! Ye who have lost the joy of God's salvation, betake you again to the forsaken closet and the neglected times of prayer! Soon, soon He shall come, and the time for prayer be for ever past; for, says He: A little while and I will see you again and in that day ye shall ask Me nothing.

"GIVE ATTENTION TO READING."

FOR precept must be upon precept, line upon line; here a little and there a little.

This is the only way that knowledge can be acquired. Young Christians are often impatient because they can't

jump into the knowledge of great truths all at once. Children do not learn to divide before they can add, or subtract and multiply. No! there, as everywhere, it is precept upon precept, and they reach the higher branches of knowledge some day. So, dear brother or sister, be content with simple things at first; they are the sure way to the greater and more complex.

If we rush over the first principles of any subject in our impatience to become masters of it we have invariably to go back and plod through them again, regretting much that we had not at first given them the attention they required.

Work at your Bibles in this way and you will get lasting results; just have patience and be content to plod.

BROODING.

WHAT is to be gained by brooding over failure? If it produced godly sorrow it would be productive of some good. It does not, however; it only produces despondency, and this means weakness; and if temptation catches us with our hands hanging and our knees feeble we are sure to fall.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance, and herein it differs from brooding. The one who has repented out of godly sorrow buckles his armour tightly and prepares himself at once for the next onslaught wherever it may come from. He braces himself up so as to be ready for any emergency, and grasping firmly the shield of faith feels himself strong in the unfailing strength of God.

Leave brooding and despondency for those who have no hope. How can we be despondent who have for a helmet the hope of salvation? That is the sure hope: the hope that waits the coming of the Lord, our Saviour from heaven, who shall change this body of weakness—this body of humiliation. It means that the conflict may last only a very little while longer, for He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

CRY OUT AND SHOUT.

SHOUT, O Zion's daughter—shout aloud for joy!
 Lo, thy King is coming soon thy spoilers to destroy!
 Though the night is dreary, and the watches long,
 Shout, O Zion's daughter fair, shout thy conquering song.

Leaping o'er the mountains, skipping o'er the hills,
 Where the verdant valleys lie along the rippling rills,
 Soon He'll come in glory bright, gladsome in His glee;
 Shout, O Zion's daughter fair, shout thy King to see.

Winter's all but over, rains are well nigh past,
 Flowers and bowers are flourishing, figs are forming fast,
 Birds are singing on the boughs, turtle voices say—
 Wake, O Zion's daughter fair, wake thy loudest lay.

Crooked places shall be straight, mountains shall be plain,
 All be right that now is wrong when He comes again;
 Great shall be the Holy One in the midst of thee!
 Shout, O Zion's daughter fair, soon His face thou'lt see.

Shout, O seed of Jacob, thou art ne'er forgot,
 An Eye that never slumbereth guards thy changing lot
 Torn and worn and wandering still, soon thou'lt gathered
 be—

Shout, O Zion's daughter fair, soon thy King thou'lt see.
 Once with twisted thorn-crown thou didst wreath His brow;
 See! the kingly diadem beams brightly on it now!
 Nail-marked hands the reed that held, earth's sceptre soon
 shall sway— .

Shout, O Zion's daughter fair, hail the gladsome day.
 Glimpses of the glorious scene on my vision fall—
 Christ the glory in the midst, Christ the King o'er all;
 When Israel gathered in her strength the Lord's belov'd
 shall be,
 Then the longed-for hour shall come—earth's glad Jubilee.

OUR CRITICS—A REVIEW.

UNDER the Glasgow postmark a booklet of London publication has been sent us entitled, *A Dual Church: Is it Needed Truth or a System of Error?*

We propose in our review thereof to express our conviction, as giving an answer with meekness and fear concerning the hope that is in us.

Although it is scarcely possible to transcribe all that our critic says, we shall seek to give him and the subject fullest justice by granting him a very full hearing.

The opening paragraph calls for no special comment. The second we give in full:—

“It may be remarked, by way of introducing us at once to the subject before us, and without any fear, I think, of contradiction, that ever since the death of Christ, God has had a company on earth who derive their origin from that death. They are the ‘much fruit’ of John 12. 24. The name given to that company in Scripture is ‘The Church of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His Own’ (Acts 20. 18, New Translation.)”¹

We reply that whatever truth there may be in the statement about God having a company upon the earth since the death of Christ, and what that company is: It is idle to the point on hand, and certainly lacks evidence to establish it, while beyond all controversy to such a company the Scriptures do not give the name “Church of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His Own.” This we repeat notwithstanding the fact that Acts 20. 18, New Translation, is added by our critic.²

As for this scripture, even if Griesbach, Lachmann,

¹ N.B.—In quoting from our critic’s publication, we give carefully, yet protestingly, exactly as he has given in his booklet. Even in his quotations there are errors not a few.

² It is verse 28 that is meant. The New Translation, we may point out, is not the Revised Version.

Tischendorf, and Tregelles be rejected, who read "Lord" instead of "God," we contend that the day is past when the word "purchased" can be accepted as representing in English what God says in Greek. It is not purchase. When God speaks of buying He uses words that have no relation to that translated "purchased," yet this is tenaciously clung to by certain as if it were a correct rendering. The word means "to acquire,"¹ as see Translation by Robert Young and Rotherham and R.V. margin. Besides, when all has been said, this abides: Those spoken to were called to note those spoken about, as being persons within their immediate reach and ken, and not saints generally. This is proved by the word "*flock*," and also by the words "among you." These again are confirmed by v. 29.

shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Who hears and fails to understand? Or, indeed, despite John 21. 23, shall any of His loved and own go their way to declare the very opposite of what He has said? Alas! alas! Our critic in translating Acts 2. 47 as the new company, called "*those that were to be saved*," offers a very travesty of the truth—affording, nevertheless, not a little help to the due appreciation of his ability to handle what he does.

Here our friend cites "Paul's Testimony." Thus—

"We are taught [?] in Scripture that the Church is to be regarded under these two aspects:—1. It is the 'House of God.'"

We ask here, Are his inverted commas soberly intended? If so, what words would fittingly expose the dangerous subtlety thereof? He proceeds—

"The House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (see 1 Tim. 3. 15). 2. It is also the 'body of Christ.' 'The church, which is His body' (see Eph. 1. 22-23).

¹ The noun occurs in 1 Thess. 5. 9, as see the word "obtain" there.

Let our reader observe to investigate to the utmost that the word "living" attached to God is radically important, so that church of God and church of living God are as different as are "soul" and "living soul." What language may worthily express the difference thereof; ay, or what tongue tell the awful error that swamps the spirit who reckons these alike and synonymous, as not a few do? Of which and whom we warn and cry aloud that, all Scripture being heard, the difference is as great as difference may be. So indeed is the gulf between what is "church of God" and what is "church of living God."

Our critic adds:—

"In Scripture we also learn that if smaller companies are formed within the company called 'the Church,' they are sects or heresies, by whatever name they may be called, and they are to be condemned (see 1 Cor. 1. 12-13). There is, therefore [he continues], nothing stable as to truth and fellowship for any soul, but that which may be learnt from God and His word."

Could folly be more self-evident than is here set out? Our critic declares that the company called "the Church" embraces all saints. "Company" is singular, "Church" is singular. Were then the churches (plural) of God sects or heresies, and to be condemned? (1 Cor. 11. 16). Did Paul, whose testimony our critic cites, condemn them? Let 2 Thess. 1. 4 make plain. We ourselves glory in you (church of the Thessalonians) IN THE CHURCHES OF GOD. Were these churches not smaller companies than "the Church embracing all saints"? Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? Again our critic remarks:—

"Although the Church is regarded in Scripture under two aspects which we have named [the "we" here should be well-pondered] and as any one may see: yet we are never taught therein that there are two churches. The expressions 'A church' of God, 'An assembly' of God. 'A church,' 'An assembly' are not once found there, although continually found on the lips and in the writings of our dear brethren.

We read in the New Testament the expression '*THE Church*' some forty times, as embracing the whole company on earth, but of '*A Church*' not once. Whereas the expression '*THE Church*,' as embracing all saints, has well-nigh disappeared from their writings and vocabulary. Is this not very significant? If Eph. 5. 27 be quoted in opposition to what I say about '*a church*' (which is the only questionable passage I remember), translators say it should be in that passage also τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (*the Church*), as also the others."

How sorrowful that in such important matters one should trust an evidently treacherous memory! and moreover, to wax bold in strong speech on false premises! He reads Greek apparently. We recommend him to read 1 Tim. 3. 5. He might also consider Heb. 2. 12 in passing. Else he may get on another occasion. To the reader in English let us name that Robert Young and Rotherham read in 1 Tim. 3. 5, "An assembly of God"; and let us add these scholars are right, and well confute the ignorant yet lofty words of our critic as to what is not once found in the Scriptures.¹ Moreover, if the translation be "church" rather than "assembly," then the true and correct reading is "*a church*" and certainly not "*the church*." Wherefore may God forgive such "readers" and pity any accepting listeners of such reading. Further, our critic says:—

"It may be argued in reply that if there are '*churches*' spoken of, there must also have been in any certain locality '*a church*,' and hence the words are allowable: but my impression is, that the use of this expression, not found in Scripture but strongly contended for,

¹ For the sake of some readers it may be well to point out that the indefinite article, the "a" or "an" of English, which is so common in modern European languages, was unknown in languages like Greek or Latin. It is correctly used in English translations from those tongues when the allusion is to a single individual out of many, and is so employed over and over again in all recognised translations of the Scriptures. It can in general only be objected to either when the person or thing is unique or when for some other reason, as that it is of a collective nature, the plural is inadmissible. Therefore we may correctly say "a church of God" because they are many; but not "a Body of Christ," because there is but one.

originates from a deeper source. It is not employed by our brethren to distinguish one LOCAL church from another, but because they teach and distinguish *in this world as a whole* TWO CHURCHES, which Scripture does not. And they distinguish them also in the same locality, namely (1) the Church, which is His body, from (2) the Church of God."

We reply that more grave misrepresentation would not be possible, however studiously attempted. In direct contradiction to his statement—(1) the expression "a church" is used by us to distinguish one local church from another. (2) We do not teach and distinguish in this world as a whole two churches, and (3) we do not distinguish in a locality the church which is His Body because we know better. The Church which is His Body is in no locality. Further, nothing but crass ignorance would allow a man to say that "in this world as a whole there is one Church of God." In fact when a person speaks about "the church of God" we ever wish to ask and know which one is meant? While, so far from there being but one church of God, we have laboured and yet will labour to show that church and churches of God are so very different from "the Church which is His Body," which is only *one*, pure holy together thing; admitting of no plurality; but as adding therewith that "this Church *is in this world as a whole*," we cannot but say we reckon such words nonsense.

Here our critic calls for the Apostle John's testimony.

"The Apostle John speaks also of the Church. With him it is a *fellowship*.¹ The charity of Gaius was spoken of 'before the Church,' that is *before the whole of that company on earth*."

How grandiloquent! But in God's name and fear let us be gravely sober and earnest and ask what "company" was this? Surely we are not asked to believe that it was all the Saints as a company on the earth!!!

¹ It would be interesting to know whence our friend got this "a," for which there is no justification in Scripture, which only recognises one Fellowship.

“Again [says our critic] he [John] wrote unto the Church, that is to the local company where Gaius lived The Church for John, was both the whole company on earth and a local company in a town. A fellowship, wherein God is known, and moral light, truth, righteousness, love, and last, *eternal life*: [why “last,” may we inquire?] and what he has to say about them he introduces to us in his first epistle, as ‘that which was from the beginning.’”

Indeed! indeed! and were those to whom he wrote that “they might have fellowship with him” in that fellowship? Nay, is “wherein” a sound phrase at all in this connection? Or again, is any in or of the Church, which is His Body, by his or her own act? May the after behaviour of such displace them therefrom? On the other hand is any in or of a church (“the” or “any,” we care not for the particle) of God save by their own “seeking to join himself to such”; and when in or of said church of God, may not moral delinquency or doctrinal error cause such to be put out by and from the assembly of God? And yet as these failures are verily possible to those who are in and of the Church which is His Body, shall such, while not in the given church of God (once they were), while out from the same not abide in that which is His Body? Let Phil. 1. 9, have due place here.

Our critic next proposes a “Thesis,” saying,—

“Our dear NEEDED TRUTH brethren have according to their teachers the only right meaning and application of the word ‘Church.’ This lies at the base of their constitution We find then in their writings and re-iterated by them over and over again that the word Church as found in Matthew 16., ‘On this rock I will build My Church,’ has the widest possible significance, but that the same word in Matthew 18., ‘Tell it unto the Church,’ has a much more limited circle in view. So far (though perhaps not exactly) we may be of one mind; but they go further, and explain that the word ‘Church’ in Matthew 16., means the body of Christ, of which every believer forms a part, but the word Church in Matthew 18, is a local company, or ‘a Church of God’ of which every local believer does not necessarily form a part, neither in God’s sight nor in the sight of man.” To this he adds a footnote: “see NEEDED TRUTH, vol. 3, page 60¹ (which reads):

¹ It may not be out of place to call attention to the *date* of this

‘Only those saints who in a given place have been gathered to His name, are called assembly of God therein.’” As to which our critic remarks: “This statement contains the assumption that the church of God always means a correctly gathered local company, and that every Christian not thus gathered is not in the church of God in that place,” which remark he uses to confuse being correctly gathered with correct behaviour after having been so gathered, and this too let us name in immediate connection with a heading: “Prove all things.” He proceeds:

“But if this is the invariable testimony of the word of God as to the matter, we may apply it and shall find it will hold good in other parts of the New Testament. We will apply it to the saints gathered at Corinth. In a place then, *and there only*, wherein the saints are gathered in the light of Matthew 18, exists the Church of God. This is our thesis. First let me say that the point before us is very simple. The Church is the final court of appeal between brother and brother, because¹ this new company on the earth was to take the place of Israel. It was (as Israel had been) to be henceforth where God made known His mind and where He also recorded His name, and hence its importance.² But the Corinthians had evidently given up this light as to the Church when the apostle wrote his first letter to them. He had to say to them, ‘I speak to your shame.’ Brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers (1 Cor. 6. 6).” Then he asks: “Had they ceased to be the ‘Church of God’ there, because they were not in the full light and practice of all that the Church was?” This he answers: “This could not be, since the apostle addresses them *before correcting* them and in the first chapter as ‘The church of God which is at Corinth.’ Hence it is not true that if saints are not walking up to all the light which God has given as to the Church they cease to be owned as the Church of God there.”

We reply: Who ever said so? It is only our critic’s assumption. It has never been taught in NEEDED TRUTH. Moreover, is not our critic’s reasoning but raving? Surely comment were a slur on our readers’ intelligence. If not, reference, viz:—November, 1890. What a flood of light and value with warning are told out by this simple matter!

¹ Our readers will please be careful to note that, this is our critic’s opinion and not revelation. With such a “because” one may well ask “Who told him?”

² Ay, importance indeed, if such words were true, which they are not. Well nigh the very opposite the truth.

suffer us to call attention to "given up *this* light." "Not in the *full* light *and* practice," "not walking up to *all* the light which God has given as to the church." And ask which of NEEDED TRUTH writings or teachings has proposed or named such shifting (shifty) propositions? To us they are veriest aberrations or inventions.

Here our critic says:—

"I may now turn to the *present* application of this scripture by our brethren, in the midst of the confusion of our own day. Their conclusion [says he] is evident." "In every place where there is a company found *gathered* in the NEEDED TRUTH fellowship, and there alone exists ¹ a Church of God according to Matthew 18." To this he adds a footnote,—“This expression, “A Church of God,” is not in Scripture, with regard to *any* place or city as before remarked.”

To which we add, Yes, remarked in error!!!

After such-like words our critic continues:—“Down here it is in the body of Christ that Christ is displayed.” To which assertion he adds these words of God: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” and says “hereafter it (what? we ask) is the vessel for the display of the glory of God.” What a surpassingly strange confusing of things that differ, which in themselves are excellent! Is there really any child of God so deceived that the “Body of Christ” is believed by him to be synonymous with “Christ dwelling in the hearts of saints by faith”? Does anyone fail to perceive the radical difference betwixt being “in Christ” (the Body and thus eternal position) and “Christ being in the heart.” That has ended for myriads still “in Christ” who are out of the mortal body, and thus instead of having “Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith” are themselves at home with the Lord.

Our critic further adds:—“Glory in the church by Christ

¹ How well it had been if our critic had offered, “See NEEDED TRUTH, vol. and page.” But neither he nor other is able to do so. We speak to his shame.

Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3, Rev. 21. 10), which besides being unworthy of a critic, is far, far removed from "rightly dividing the word of truth."

Such misuse of Holy Scripture is the more painful by the fact that the next paragraph begins:—"We must remember that whatever is not found in the word or supported by it, is only human and worse, for it is a denial of the mind of God," which certainly is most solemnly exemplified by our critic. His words about what God sees on the earth may be enticing sentiments or pretty speech, yet they express no ordinary grave errors. If otherwise, let us have the words of God and not the beliefs of a well-meaning but mistaken man.

What, again we ask, should be said of a critic handling Greek who reverts to new translations and yet blunders (doubtless his teachers and school are notorious for such carelessness, but that is no palliation in a champion for the truth) as this one does in John 11. 52. The Lord did not die "to gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Rather did He die that He might gather into one the children of God: it does not say *sinners*, but, *children of God INTO one*. Do ye not hear the truth? But pray what is this "one"? It cannot be "Flock" nor "House" nor "Temple" nor "Building," no, nor "Church," neither can it be "Body"; for although "Body" is neuter, He does not gather, but baptizes in one Spirit thereinto. No! the "one thing" into which He seeks to gather is, His Own peerless Name: Lord Jesus Christ. Although He thus did die, is any one bewitched enough to say that this has come to pass any more than Hebrews 13. 12-13, as having been complied with in its exhortation to God's children. Surely not. Yet perhaps it is even so.

Most pretentious words are used about the "without" and "within" of 1 Corinthians 5. For the present we only deal with this remark by our critic. "The only proof that

the man was a believer at all was in his repentance and restoration in the second epistle." Be it so. But we answer, Did God need such proof? Was the man then, when that proof was absent to man, in or not in the Body of Christ? It is not a question of opinion, or what this or that one could know, or of how the person was to be treated, but a question of fact. Was not the man all the time a member of the Body of Christ? Again, we ask, Was he "without" or "within" the church of God in Corinth when that church of God was *spoken to* about him? Is language of any real service? Here is the *first* person speaking—the Apostle. The *second* persons—that is, the church of God in Corinth—are *spoken to*; and the *third* person, even the repentant, restored-to-God member of the Body of Christ in Corinth, is *spoken about*. Thus the *third* person is shown to be in the same city as were those composing the church of God there; but he, the *third* person, was NOT in the same company (even the church of God in Corinth) as were the second persons. Be entreated, candid reader, to pause and consider these facts of 2 Corinthians' Epistle.

Our critic says: "Therefore from themselves, the within, both as the Church of God and as Christ's body, the man was for the time put away." Thus he distinctly makes the church of God and Body of Christ the same thing. "The man was not put from the 'yourselves' or the 'within' if he was after all still recognised as of the Church of God *or of* the Body of Christ." It is not a question of our recognising him; whether we recognise him or not, he remains in the Body, but not so with regard to church of God. The writer goes on to enforce his most dangerous and unscriptural doctrine, asserting that "within" refers both to the Body and to the church of God, thus, according to his reasoning, placing it in the hands of fallible and oftentimes erring men to cut off, not only from church of

God position, but also from the position into which the grace of God brings a sinner through faith in Christ when such a one becomes a member of the Body of Christ being baptized into that Body in the Holy Spirit; and to support this doctrine he reads 1 Corinthians 12. 27 "Now ye are Christ's body," thus seeking to make the Apostle assert that which would be absolutely untrue, for the church of God in Corinth did not constitute the whole Body of Christ, and could only act in its local responsibility. This teaching is nothing but Romanism, and puts in the hands of man the power to shut his fellow-man out of heaven.

When our critic says "The Church of God, we are told, is an expression tantamount to the house of God," we beg leave to ask, "Told by whom?" and to add, "Certainly not by those whom he is criticising."

Where also, may we ask, does Scripture say that "God dwells by His Spirit in *all* believers"? Assuredly Ephesians 1. 13 and 1 Corinthians 6. 19 (cited by our friend) do not say so, although our critic evidently thinks they do. Our critic, continuing, says: "He dwells in the body of each believer, for each such body is His (whose?) temple." "Then mark," says he, "where this teaching lands our dear brethren. Though God dwells thus¹ by His Spirit in every individual believer in a place" (see Eph. 1. 13, saith he. Well, we have looked, but such doctrine is not there!). "Yet" (he continues) "*He does not dwell in the number of these believers in any place.*" These words he italicizes, as if seeking to magnify his folly, and then says: "God has no house, no dwelling there. In that place (*sic*?) there is no house or 'Church of God,' because the saints are not in and of the NEEDED TRUTH fellowship." In the pity of the love of God, we exclaim, what can such tawdry irrelevancies mean?

¹ The "thus" here were the perfection of grotesque ludicrousness, if such could be suffered amid such holiness. As it is, it is simply awful.

Where in NEEDED TRUTH or its "collateral lines" has he found, and can he quote as uttering such perverse stupidities? Of a truth the race is not extinct who practise Romans 3. 8.

Our critic in citing "When ye come together in assembly," and adding, "This assembly could be '*told*,' could be received '*into*,' and could be *put away* from; but all this has failed, and will never therefore be set up again in its entirety on earth," shows he neither understands what he says nor whereof he affirms. The writer, speaking of his own action, says: "The Lord has identified Himself with this line of things and no other," or, as others, his associates, put it, "We are on Divine ground." Is not this assuming that they and they alone are right, for there can be but one Divine position, and if this be so, where is their great humility in not taking the position of church of God?

Taken as a whole, his "Dual Church" is but the figment of an ill or imperfectly instructed reader; not only of NEEDED TRUTH and its "many collateral lines," but of the very Word of God itself.

For the preceding reasons, and others as weighty, we submit that if NEEDED TRUTH be carefully read and diligently compared with the Word of God it shall be found NOT "a system of error," but rather that manner and measure of truth by which He *leads* outside the camp unto Himself, *gathers* into His own name alone, *fosters* the worshipping of the Father in spirit and truth by true worshippers, *engenders* the desire and endeavour to serve the Lord Christ unto all pleasing, *promotes* the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in the love thereof; unto abounding in the hope of His coming again, Who delayeth not, Whose reward is with Him to give to every man as his work shall be, for Whom be it ours in deed and truth to be so ready that when He cometh we shall not be ashamed before Him. Amen. Yea, O God! Amen.

JOHN BROWN.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

VII. JOASH (2 Chron. 24.).

WE do not intend to enter into the details of the chapter which records the doings of this king, save to point out one or two of the more prominent lessons to be learnt. Verse 2, perhaps, gives us a key to the main facts: "And Joash did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest." Many, who have not courage or ability to stand alone, apparently go on all right as long as they have some one of a stronger mind to lean upon. Well for us if, knowing our own weakness, as well as the unreliability of others, we learn to lean upon His mighty arm—the One who hath His priesthood unchangeable; "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He *ever liveth* to make intercession for them (Heb. 7. 24, 25); "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8).

"There's nought on earth to rest upon,
 All things are changing here—
 The smiles of joy we gaze upon,
 The friends we count most dear.
 One Friend alone is changeless,
 The One too oft forgot,
 Whose love has stood for ages past—
 Christ Jesus changeth not."

The words "change and decay in all around I see" is exemplified in persons as well as things, but

"While all things change, Thou changest not;
 Forgetting ne'er, though oft forgot:
 Thy love, immutably the same,
 Displays the glory of Thy name,"

is true on the other hand.

One fears that many who appear to stand well to-day would lamentably fail if their human prop was taken

away. How often in one's heart, if not orally expressed, is Peter's question asked, "And what shall this man do?" God Himself only knows how much or how little is "Follow thou Me" obeyed from the heart of each one (John 21. 21, 22).

If man is followed when man goes wrong (for it is in the nature of things for man to fail), their followers will go wrong as well. If it is to brethren that one has come out, then when brethren are nice like begets like, but when brethren are nasty then offence is taken, and the one betakes himself to a more congenial soil, where that which is pleasing to the natural man will have more opportunity of development. Consequently, those of a Hymenæus (singing man) and Philetus (kissing man) disposition can often gather great numbers around themselves, which very fact is predicted in the words of Acts 20. 30, "From among your own selves shall men arise to draw away the disciples after them." (The word "the" should be well noted.) On the other hand, anything approaching discourtesy is discountenanced in the Scriptures of truth. It is quite possible to make persons and things appear so pleasing to those who are coming about us, as to cloak over the great attendant difficulties which beset the path of obedience to the truth. This behaviour has a tendency to gather those who will give trouble after, by reason of bitter disappointment caused by their looking to brethren instead of to the Lord. It is well for each one of us to take heed that we are not where we are on account of some favourite speaker or very nice man.

The influence which the princes had on Joash is seen in verses 17, 18: and "the king hearkened unto them, and they forsook the house of the Lord." This is not the only place in Scripture where we find the same thing; we read, "their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord" (Nehemiah 3. 5). Joash lent his ear to hear that instruc-

tion which caused him to err from the words of knowledge, lapsing into gross idolatry, having forsaken the house of the Lord. Jehovah, ever slow to anger, wrought for His name's sake, "sent prophets to bring them again unto the Lord; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear" (ver. 19). Then comes the solemn words of the son of Jehoiada (the guardian of Joash), "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, He hath *also* forsaken you" (ver. 20). "He that hateth reproof shall die" (Prov. 15. 10) was fulfilled in the case of Joash (ver. 25), in contrast to "He is in the way of life that heedeth correction" (Prov. 10. 17), along with showing himself to be a brutish man, without the love of knowledge (see Prov. 12. 1).

The foregoing accounts for the dark deed that follows; for when the Lord forsakes one, what sins is it impossible for such an one to fall into? Human nature under circumstances may be, and often is, amiable and agreeable, but it cannot be trusted, and will, if occasion arise adverse to it, turn upon its benefactor like a viper that has been trodden upon. Naturally one might think that the very remembrance of the kindness shown by the injured man's father would have kept Joash from such an act; but Joash was evidently abandoned to all the powers of evil, a ready tool for Satan's use. God became silent to Joash; the very heavens were as brass: for it is written, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (Prov. 28. 9). This Joash had done, consequently God turns away His ear from such. To Israel it is said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59. 2). David was aware of the solemnity of this. Well he might be, for his predecessor upon the throne was abandoned by the Lord in like

manner. His fervent prayer was, "Hide not Thy face from me, lest I become *like* (not as) them that go down into the Pit" (Ps. **143**. 7). So important is this lesson that twice over we have the same prayer recorded with some variation, "Be not Thou deaf unto me: lest, if Thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the Pit" (Ps. **28**. 1). [A child of God can never go down into the Pit; he has once and for ever been delivered. "Deliver him from going down to the Pit: I have found a ransom" (Job **33**. 24).]

Let not the Christian reader apply these solemn truths to the unregenerate, for verily they are written of and to those who are in covenant relationship with God.

In verse 24 we read that which evidences that "there is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by great strength" (Ps. **33**. 16). God above all working all things after the counsel of His own will. An exact contrast to what we considered in the reigns of Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat, where a great multitude on each occasion comes against Judah, and the Lord discomfits them; here "a small company," "and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hands, because they had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers" (ver. 24). The reason given is, "because they had forsaken the Lord," the result of which was, "the Lord hath also forsaken you." How awfully solemn, FORSAKEN by God!

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

For Young Believers.

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

FEELING AND KNOWING.

No one ever *felt* that they were saved, but thousands have *known* that they were. It is not something within us that causes us to feel that we have passed from death to life, but we know it from the abiding testimony of the Word of God. This is, thank God, a far more stable rock than our feelings, for these change, and come and go, but the Word of God is unchanging, and ever remains the same, whatever doubts or change of feelings may cloud our sky. The language of scripture is: “We *know* that we have passed from death to life.” This has the ring of certainty about it. We don’t feel it; we *know* it from the Word of God.

Now there are many who would never think of consulting their feelings about the matter of eternal salvation, who seem to make these feelings the test of every other thing in their Christian lives. This is a destructive evil; and such Christians, though certain about their conversion, are uncertain about nearly every other thing. If they *feel* happy, they think that all must be well; but feelings are sure to deceive, for they naturally run in a course that is contrary to God. Only the Word of God, that causes us to know that we are saved, can enable us to know that our ways as Christians are well-pleasing to God. Therefore, *we know* that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

We know that every one who is born again should be baptized.

We know that every baptized one should be added to the

Lord, and so be found with others who continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine.

We know that such should be gathered on the first day of the week to remember the Lord, and to proclaim His death till He come.

We know that believers should not remain in association with unbelievers.

We can write regarding these matters with certainty, not because we *feel* they are right, but because we *know* they are from the Word of God. Our feelings have nothing to do with leading us to a decision in these matters, any more than they had in the matter of our conversion. The Word of God settles every question, and is so plain that none need err.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

V.

"THEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord" (Exod. 15. 1). The time, the circumstances, and the subject of their singing are all important and full of instruction. "Israel saw that great work which the Lord did _____ and feared the Lord _____ and believed the Lord." What the eye witnessed, and the heart appreciated, was the cause of their singing. When they saw Jehovah's work they sang His praise; and they sang of what He was to them, as well as of what He had done for them.

Who would not do the same? Who has not done so? When the saved one for the first time apprehends the matchless grace of God, which has reached him through the Lord Jesus Christ, what joy fills his heart, and song his lips! Yet the first burst of praise should be but a prelude

to deeper joy, causing fuller praise, as a greater apprehension of all that God has done dawns upon us. Israel's groans and sighs have given place to the shout of triumph and the song of praise. In Egypt they were a groaning people; now on the banks of the Red Sea they are a praising people. Alas! that with them, as with us, the song should so soon cease, and the murmur begin.

In their further journeyings we read: "So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and found no water" (Exod. 15. 22). In Jehovah's purpose with, and His way for His people, He found it necessary to bring them there. They might have reached Canaan apart from the wilderness experience, but this was His way for them, and it was perfect and right. There are Christians at the present who urge that because they are saved it is not essential for them to be baptized, nor to be found where and as God would have them be; as if He had made known His will for no object, or to be slighted and ignored. Let not our readers so deceive themselves, nor allow themselves to be deceived by others. God has revealed His will so that we might know it, and knowing it that we should do it; and happy all who hear and fear the Lord. As Israel was in the wilderness by Jehovah's definite purpose and appointment, so is the believer in the world, although not of the world. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (Jno. 17. 18). Thus we are in the world for a specific object, with privileges and responsibilities which may be used or misused; so, let us buy up the opportunity, and not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The wilderness is also associated with need and with testing. He who brought the Israelites out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness will prove them, while giving them occasion to prove Him. So the trial of "no water,"

followed by "bitter waters," causes them to know Him in a further character as Jehovah Ropheca—the Lord that healeth thee. But in the time of trial they fail, and the One who heard their groan in Egypt and their praise at the Red Sea now hears their murmur. The hard thought, indicative of their disappointment, finds expression in the murmuring word. How often, alas! it has been so with ourselves, in spite of what we sing:

"He spared not His Son!
 'Tis this that silences each rising fear,
 'Tis this that bids the hard thought disappear—
 He spared not His Son!"

The first trial has often brought disappointment and consequent faltering, followed by turning aside and going back, or, it may be, settling down in ease and indifference concerning the Lord's purpose and will; hence the importance of young believers, in setting out on the pilgrim pathway, being forewarned and forearmed.

In contrast to Israel, we would consider the blessed Son of God. Coming up out of the waters of baptism, He listened to the voice of God, saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4. 1). By the distinct appointment of God He was there to be tempted. In one way and another the temptation came, but He stood firm for God. "It is written" meets the tempter at every point. Here He took His stand, and thus He triumphed; and thus, too, may all who would be imitators of Him.

Dear young believer, make much of the Word of God. Search it! hear it! believe it! obey it! If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, you,

like Israel, will prove the presence and power and blessing of the Lord, no matter what trial or difficulty arises. The Lord Himself has said: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."

Marah was followed by Elim, and there were found rest and strengthening for further journeyings.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

GO FORWARD.

It frequently happens that a soul is cast upon the Lord, and is as utterly dependent upon His help as Israel was when the Red Sea lay before them, and Pharaoh with his army was coming up behind—when there is no other thing than standing still and seeing the salvation of the Lord.

But on other occasions standing still is just what should not be done. In the conflict, which is the lot of every child of God, the word is much more frequently "go forward." The Lord has given us life; He has made us a new creation, and He expects us to use our new powers, to develop our new life and our new energies.

So when the sin which doth so easily beset us comes along again, don't stand still to see the salvation of the Lord, but get out the sling and stone and go out to meet it. You may be but a stripling; the victory may have been to the enemy the last time; but never mind, go out to meet him again, for the chances are he got the vantage ground last time before you were ready.

The secret is in being ready; and there is nothing keeps us ready like prayer and watching thereunto in the Spirit.

MINDING EARTHLY THINGS.

THERE were some in the days of the Apostle Paul of whom he wrote with tears, and said that they minded earthly things. These caused him sorrow, for their hearts were worldly, and their hopes never rose above the perishing things of earth. Of such he warned the saints at Philippi, and called upon them to "mark" such, and pointed to others whose walk was different, and who were worthy of imitation.

What caused the difference between these to be avoided and those to be sought unto and imitated? A different object filled the heart, and different hopes energized the life. The characteristics of the one company are summed up in the words, "who mind earthly things"; in contradistinction to which he says, "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

Our walk as Christians down here will ever reflect the measure in which we are entering into and enjoying our citizenship in heaven. The Apostle had no hopes beneath the sun, no portion or inheritance on earth; the heavenly attractions of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ won his heart, and in the person of Christ his hopes and joys, his inheritance and home were all transferred from earth to heaven. He walked as a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth, and there were such treasures for his heart in Christ that the things of the world were reckoned by him as dung and dross; in the light of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ the charms of earth were spread in vain, and their emptiness was fully exposed.

Worldliness is a disastrous thing for the children of God, and many, Demas-like, fall under its beguiling influence,

and sink in its dark, swelling vortex. Such Christians do not cast overboard their profession of Christianity, nor do they become immoral in their lives, or profane in their talk. Indeed, there may be little manifested in their ways with which one could find fault; and in the world they are respected and well spoken of. They become good citizens of earth; but at what a terrible cost do they purchase the approval of the world, and what sad dishonour to the Lord is involved in their hearts being set upon a scene in which He was, and still is, rejected! All who are in fellowship with God may well weep with the Apostle, as they behold on all hands so many of God's people joining blindly in the frantic rush of the world, after the glittering dust, the vain glory, and the false-named joys of earth.

To the Apostle the dark shade of the Cross overshadowed and blasted for ever his claims and portion in earthly things, and enabled him gladly to say, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He walked here with his heart yonder, for where the treasure is there will the heart be also, and he calls upon us to be imitators together of him. And have we not the same glorified Christ at God's right hand to fill our vision, the same citizenship to occupy our hearts, the same love to stimulate and energize us, and the same coming Lord for whom to wait? We have! and well may our rejoicing spirits lead us to exclaim:

"'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below;
And 'tis there, when I reach Him above,
As I'm known all His fulness I'll know."

THE GOD OF BETHEL.

STRETCHED on cold earth and pillowed on a stone,
 Weary, and worn, a wandering exile sleeps ;
 Safely he rests—for o'er his bed so lone
 The God of Bethel constant vigil keeps.

No human hand protects his form from harm,
 From prowling wolf or roaring lion wild ;
 No tender accents still his heart's alarm,
 The God of Bethel guards His wandering child.

There, in the dead of night, he dreams, and lo !
 A ladder stretching up from earth to heaven ;
 Whilst messengers of God upon it go.
 Oh ! wondrous dream that night at Bethel given.

High in His glory, God, the Eternal, stands,
 And speaks in grace His lonely child to cheer ;
 He who the bright angelic host commands,
 The God of Bethel stills His wanderer's fear.

Ah ! lonely scene, so desolate and drear,
 So cheerless and so bleak to Nature's eye,
 What, though of all bereft, what can he fear,
 Who knows the God of Bethel ever nigh ?

His smile dispels the gloom of darkest night,
 His presence clothes the desert scene in green ;
 And sweetly o'er the winter's withering blight
 He casts a halo—bright with glory's sheen.

O God of Bethel !—Jacob's God, and mine !
 This bliss I crave, to be alone with Thee ;
 Though tempest-tossed, and thorns around me twine,
 I'll rest in calm, if Thou art near to me.

For Thou didst change the Bethel desert lone—
 By words of cheer and wondrous vision given—
 With bed of earth, and pillow hard as stone,
 To house of God, and to the gate of heaven.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

VIII. AMAZIAH (2 Chron. 25.).

IN the main, the life of Amaziah was in the right direction ; but, subsequently, he did turn away from following the Lord (ver. 27). How much the early part of his life was due to the influence of his mother we are not informed. There is something highly suggestive, however, in the words "*Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.*" It seems to denote a breaking off again with the ten tribes with whom his predecessors were so lamentably associated. The very names Jehoram and Ahaziah are significant, indicative of the closest relationships with the kingdom initiated by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin—an expression divinely reiterated about twenty times in the Book of the Kings. It is probable that Jehoiada the priest had not a little part in the selection of a proper wife for Joash ; and verse 3 of chapter 24., which seems to apply to Joash, in no way militates against this thought. The reason for the selection of two wives is not far off, and seems to suggest a weakness of faith, after the same example of Abraham in not waiting God's time for the seed of the promise. This seems clear when we consider how delicate the royal line was at this period, and, to the natural mind, might be snapped at any moment. His mother Jehoaddan of Jerusalem no doubt taught the young child Amaziah many things relative to the city of her birth—"Jerusalem," expressive, as we have already said, of that which is dear to the heart of God. The Syrians have a proverb expressive of the great importance of the training of the young :

"The teaching of children is like engraving on stone.
The teaching of adults like waves on the sea."

This was expressed in other words by a noted religious leader of this century: "Give us the children up to thirteen years of age and we will make you a present of the adults."

"And he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart" (ver. 2). It would seem that the early acts of this king were outwardly correct, for verse 4 tells us that he acted "according to that which is written in the law in the book of Moses as the Lord commanded." Unto the pleasing of the Lord he could not have done otherwise. See Malachi 4. 4. Yet does it not show that there may be an external rightness without a corresponding condition of heart? May God deliver us from the like! God wants an undivided heart from us, like those spoken of in 1 Chronicles 12., "not of double heart." "All these being men of war that could order the battle array, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel. And all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. And they were there with David" (1 Chron. 12. 33, 38).

Notwithstanding the effort which, as we have seen, was likely to have been made by Jehoiada and others to break off the connection with Israel, Amaziah hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver. He fell back upon the bad precedent left by Jehoshaphat. This act brought a stern rebuke from the man of God, but not unmixed with mercy, "O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with the children of Ephraim." Then we read those ironical words, the like of which the prophets of this period so often had recourse to, "But if thou wilt go, do valiantly, be strong for the battle: God shall cast thee down before the enemy, for God hath power to help and to cast down" (vv. 7, 8). Amaziah, like many before and since, was horrified with the thought of

giving up such a large sum of money—it is said that it would be equal to about £50,000 sterling. He exclaims, "But what shall we do for the hundred talents?" This incident is so touching, so like ourselves in general, that there are few thinking Christians, methinks, who have known the path of obedience—which is the path of loss down here—in whom this Scripture will not touch a chord of sympathy, reverberating through their whole being; proving that the man of thousands of years ago had the same difficulties—accompanying distrust in God—as the man of to-day, and common to Jew and Gentile alike. To the question of Amaziah the man of God gives the beautiful reassuring answer, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this" (ver. 9). The king obeyed, but one is forced to the conclusion, taking after circumstances into account, that it was in that unwilling, uncheerful, and fearful spirit that characterized this king's life.

This course of action led to the renewal of hostilities between the two kingdoms, which had ceased since the time that Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab. Amaziah separated the army that was come to him out of Ephraim to go home again. "Wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in fierce anger" (ver. 10). With reason one might ask, Why was their anger kindled against Judah? Was not the loss entirely upon Judah's side, and the gain on theirs? They were saved the trouble and the risk of a battle, as well as going home with a good round sum of money. Yet we see in their malignity and revengeful spirit they fell upon certain cities of Judah, smiting, and taking much spoil.

Ah! is there not a deal here which answers to things to-day? Absolute separation to the truth ever brings the bitterest opposition, being a reflection on those who are not in the mind of God as to what and where they should be, practically showing them up in a wrong position. The

moment, however, that the clear line of demarcation is wiped out (the which Satan is ever watchful to do) the offence ceases. Has not the loss been upon the side of those who separated from an association where the will of God could not be carried out?—where, alas! many years were spent, and much labour bestowed?

Abram would not take from the king of Sodom a thread or a shoe-latchet, nor aught that was his. That may not have been very much, for Abram was rich; but perchance it was the insult offered to the king of Sodom which incurred his displeasure that cost Abram the most. This thought seems to be suggested in the opening verse of Genesis 15., “After *these things*, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying, Fear not [the first ‘fear not’ of Scripture], Abram; I am *thy shield*, and thy exceeding great reward”—the latter having a latent reference to what he refused; the shield, for protection from the anger of an insulted monarch and all else.

How much trouble, disappointment, and grief should we often be spared if we had the same magnanimous spirit displayed by Abram to Lot: “Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left” (Gen. 13. 9). Surely we can afford to lose earthly treasures, the right of our holding, in the light of such a glorious statement, “The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.” In this same line, how full of precious teaching are the words of Mephibosheth to the king, “Let him *take all*, forasmuch as my lord the king is come in peace unto his own house” (2 Sam. 19. 30).

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

READ 1 Peter 2. 21-24. We might notice, as well in this scripture as in the place in Philippians that we have already been reading together (chapter 2.), that what we rightly regard as of paramount importance, as of most surpassing excellence and beauty, appears to be brought in quite by the way—that which our Lord Jesus Christ did when He suffered death on the cross, the depths to which He descended. These appear in the chapter in Philippians (chapter 2.) to be brought in, I will not say as an afterthought, but quite as an appendix to what is being said. I only say it appears so, because from every point of view the Holy Scriptures are perfect. It is the way in which, speaking from the heart of a man to the heart of a man—in this case from the heart of Paul, as in the other case from the heart of Peter—the thing is brought out by the Spirit of God from the man's heart: something else appeared to the front, but that which belonged to the surpassingly excellent One must come out—the heart was full of it.

So here, in Peter, servants seem to be the subject, and their subjection to their earthly masters; yet, right in the midst of this, where he is bringing in the sufferings of Christ as an example for servants to imitate, the Apostle is borne along by the Spirit of God, and cannot contain himself; he cannot keep to this line of thought. He was like the man Elihu, of whom we read in the book of Job—he was bound to speak, and spake perforce that which did not belong to the subject he was writing about; for he goes on to say, "Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree." So that, in the midst of speaking of Christ as

an example, the writer makes what, if we were speaking humanly, we might call a digression, but which is really passing to that which is of the greatest importance, and is shown indeed to have a bearing on the subject itself, for it goes on to say, "that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

I point that out because it is like that which one hath somewhere said of the Lord Jesus Christ, "He could not be hid." So here He could not be hid. And the same might be said of the Philippian scripture, with which, too, this is in agreement, and because of which I read these words, "Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree."

As I apprehend that which God has been pleased to reveal concerning what took place at that central epoch in this world's history, when Calvary was enacted, it is absolutely impossible to exaggerate the physical sufferings undergone by the Lord Jesus Christ; I believe it is absolutely impossible to estimate them fully.

"He bore our griefs, He carried our sorrows": a prophetic word of Isaiah, when he saw these things aforetime, and spoke of them, as in the 53rd chapter we have it. I believe that was literal; there was not a pang nor a woe that the human heart can feel that was not felt by the Son of God in that awful hour of agony that He underwent. I do not think it is possible to exaggerate the measure of His physical sufferings, sufferings which in part we can enter into—distinctly human suffering in its character, which we can understand in its parts, not in its whole, for if we were to suffer like that we should be overwhelmed. That which we may know in little measure He knew in one mighty incomprehensible whole—the fearful sufferings, the awful woe. It is impossible to find words to convey an adequate impression thereof.

Three things I will mention that enhanced the woe, that made that hour an hour of burden to the Son of God. One so often lost sight of is the one particularly mentioned in this scripture that I have read, and therefore I mention it first, though the importance is otherwise. He bare our sins. And that word *bare* refers to something that is carried as a load, a weight, a burden which tends to bring one down; it was something which He carried, which was upon Him; it was something which He sustained. And it is not here presented as a matter of punishment nor wrath; it was our sins, the sins themselves upon Him, not in Him. He knew them not, but He knew their burden, and He knew their woe. Untouched by them as to contamination, there was no defilement—as clean in His hour of Calvary's woe as now when He sits upon the throne of God; as clean and as holy in Himself. But because He was clean, the greater and more intense was His holy abhorrence of sin, and the more did He feel the weight, the woe of bearing those sins, of being the bearer of sins so hateful. Oh! to think that the One who upon the tree in His own body bare our sins was the very One whose nature is the nature of the God upon the throne who was punishing those sins, the God upon the throne who shut His eyes to His well-beloved Son, who forsook Him in that awful hour. The God who forsook Him hated not those sins more strongly than did the Man of Sorrows upon the cross. He bare our sins.

Have any of us been so brought up, through the mercy and goodness of God, that there are sins committed round about us, and in our sight, from which we recoil with horror? How faint, how feeble, can any impression that they may make be, as compared to the horror and the woe that it was to the Son of God when sin was upon Him, when He in His own body bare it, bare it for us! This depth of woe, this sorrow and agony unutterable, is little thought of by us. Yet we in thoughtlessness walk along

the streets of a city like this, and cross the road because we will not pass too near to a drunken man; and there is not a sin nor a crime that you or I have seen but is most awfully hateful to Him. Yet not one but He bare it in His own body on the tree.

And, oh! to think that those very hands that were extended wide, and had the nails thrust through them, only a few short hours before took the loaf and said, "This is My body, which is for you." And to me it seems that when He thus took that bread into those hands that were so shortly to be nailed to that cross, when He thus took that loaf into His hands and said, "This do for a remembrance of Me," it was His very purpose and intention that by so taking that bread into the hand we might be reminded of Him, and of the fact that with that awful agony before Him He could think of us, and of our need, and of our forgetfulness, as we sing sometimes, "He ne'er forgets though oft forgot."

There are many other things one might say touching that time, that eventful hour of the atoning work of Christ, but I would remind you of two only in addition. Whatever otherwise was necessary for Him to suffer, it was not necessary for our salvation that He should bear superadded thereto the malice and the wickedness of those who were His kinsmen according to the flesh—that bearing the cross without the gate, that forsaking by His own people according to the flesh, which bowed Him down in that solemn agony in the garden. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

And then there is that which we all know and speak of, and yet which we can never know. All that of which I have spoken, in some little feeble measure we can enter into: but over and above all that is the wrath He suffered. That, thank God, we can never know, which it was neces-

sary that He should bear. What it means we cannot tell. We hear His cry—we know that it overpowered everything else—“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?) It was for our sin. It was not here a bearing of the sin alone, but it was the bearing of the dread punishment of sin at the hands of a righteous God. What that meant, thank God, you and I shall never know. He bore it for us, and we can only bow and worship the One who suffered for us—the Just One for the unjust—that He might bring us to God.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 136.—*Is a Christian prohibited from eating blood and things strangled?*

In seeking to reply to this question we would remind our readers that the law of God was given to an earthly people—that is, to a people whose abode was to be upon the earth. In Genesis 9. 4, 5 God legislates for man, and this entirely apart from the ceremonial legislation later on delivered to Israel, when abstinence from blood is enjoined, and reason for this abstinence is given. In Leviticus 17. 10, 14, as well as other passages, we have a repetition of the legislation not only for the Jew, but for the stranger. Mark this, and the threatened judgment of God upon those who infringe upon His law. In Acts 15. again we find repeated the will of God, and here coupled with the eating of blood are things offered to idols, things strangled and fornication. We understand that in that which is strangled the blood remains through all the parts of the body. God demands that it should be poured out and covered with dust (Lev. 17. 13). It should be, moreover, remembered that the law of God is good for man as living on earth, and that the Jew, through obedience to it, is exempt from much of the disease from which the Gentile suffers; therefore we understand that things strangled, blood, fornication, are still as much forbidden as in apostolic days.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 137.—*Does the second chapter of Acts teach believers' baptism where it says "for the remission of sins"?*

From the day when the Lord Jesus entered upon His public ministry those who in the grace of God were drawn

to Him were baptized as His disciples; and when He was no longer in the world, this baptism of His disciples continued, and because of its reference to an absent One is in Scripture called "baptism in His name." Thus there is a sense in which water baptism of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ is one whenever it takes place, and whatever the special position may be of the baptized ones. (Of course we refer to baptism that is immersion, and to baptism of disciples, not of the unregenerate or disobedient.)

But the exact relationship of water baptism to all else that makes up the Faith depends necessarily on the previous status of the baptized one and the precise revelation of the will of God in his day and generation. Therefore the believers who were baptized on the Day of Pentecost, being Jews and proselytes, were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the putting away of their sins, and received as a direct consequence the gift of the Holy Spirit. When Samaritans were baptized, on the other hand, as Acts 8. records, they did not receive the Holy Spirit until the hands of the apostles had been laid upon them. In contrast to both of which instructive facts we read that when Gentiles hear the Word of God in Acts 10. that manner of Gospel was spoken to them which is recorded in verse 43, and let it be well noted that it was while Peter was speaking these words that, for the first time since baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus had been instituted, the Holy Spirit was poured out on unbaptized disciples. Hence from this point we date the new order of things. Sins are remitted simply as a result of believing, and the Spirit of God is received on exactly the same ground (see Gal. 3. 2). "Received ye the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Water baptism then follows as a necessary and proper consequence, to be followed in turn by all else that makes up the will of God for His people.

Therefore we conclude that Acts 2. teaches believers' baptism, but it was baptism for Jews and proselytes who believed in that day, and differs from Christian baptism, which is for those whose sins have been put away, and who have received the Holy Spirit.

C. M. L.

See also NEEDED TRUTH, vol. viii., pages 1 to 6.

QUESTION 138.—*Are all the born-again in the Fellowship of the Son of God, or are only those therein who are found in churches of God? Please explain when, and how, and by whom they are received in.*

They to whom the words of 1 Corinthians 1. 9 were spoken were addressed as "the called-out company of God in Corinth together with all that call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the opinion of the present writer this manner of address included at the time it was written practically every born-again person—certainly every born-again person who was within the possibility of these words reaching them. But the very letter itself enjoins those to whom it in the first place came to put one away from among themselves. We understand the Fellowship of God's Son to be at once a reality and a manifested reality, and to correspond to the circle called Within (chapter 5.), where we are called on to judge. Out of this the wicked person was put. With him no kind of fellowship was to have place. He was to be to them, in the words of the Lord Himself, as to a transgressor of another kind, as the heathen man and the publican. He could not have and enjoy aught in common with them. Yea, more—when the second letter was written he was restored to Fellowship with his God, and the apostle knew it; but community with them he had not till he was

received back. This is our reply to the first part of our friend's question.

As to the second question, we reply that in the midst of gathered saints the Lord Christ is, and what they do in His name, according to His Word and will, that is His doing and His act. Accordingly, if, for example, one comes out from unhallowed associations to be separate therefrom, it is the Lord Almighty who receives him into the Fellowship and into the local assembly of God when such an one is received into the assembly in assembly according to the will and way of the Lord.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 139.—*What is the range of the word "we" in Hebrews 3. 6, in the clause "whose house are we"? Does it include only those, or refer to only those together according to the will of God?*

The range of the word "we" is determined by the "if" and the clause that follows. There is a hope and there is a boldness and a glorying springing therefrom. This boldness and this glorying, which are unique and specific, are characteristic of God's House; where they are lacking the House of God is not. But more, they must be held fast, and held fast firm, whatever they may lead to, by such as would have the assurance that they are indeed House of God. Compare 1 Timothy 3. 15. The House of God is the pillar and ground of the truth, a positive doctrine so terribly neglected that one is led at times to despair for what we know to be churches of God, so little can be discerned of that which is Church of living God.

C. M. L.

For Young Believers.

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

NEWNESS OF LIFE.

“WALK in newness of life” (Rom. 6. 4). “Serve in newness of spirit” (Rom. 7. 6). In these two sentences we get the keynote of much practical teaching in the Epistle to Romans. In chapters 3., 4., and 5. we get the groundwork of God’s salvation. The central feature of chapter 3. is propitiation for sin; chapter 4., righteousness imputed through faith; chapter 5., peace with God, and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Chapter 6. goes on to show what is to be the result of the wondrous grace of God so freely bestowed upon us, in that “where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly”; and asks, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” God forbid.

If God’s grace abounded over sin, it was that we might be saved *from our sin*, and not merely from the punishment due thereto. “Sin reigned in death,” and we were dead through our trespasses and sins; but Jesus the sinless One died, and we who believe have died in Him; so we who have died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein, seeing that death has ended the life of sin?

But this is only one side of the truth; for He who was delivered up for our trespasses, was raised for our justification; and we who died in Him have been raised together with Him, so that we have a new life, even life in Christ. “We were also buried with Him, through baptism, into death, that, like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. If we have become united with Him by

the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

Here then we have the practical issue of those glorious truths of the three former chapters. First, we are to show in symbol that we have died, are buried, and raised together with Him; and then go on to manifest our new life, by a newness of walk according to the will of God.

That which characterized us in our past life was "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind," being led on by Satan, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. But the time past of our lives has sufficed to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lust, wine-bibbings, revellings, and abominable idolatries, for old things have passed away and all things are become new. Therefore, the time which remains to us in the body should be occupied in doing the will of another, the will of Him by whom we live, and Who by faith liveth in us.

By doing this we shall manifest a new life which can be seen. "Having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles, that wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." "As ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk, that ye abound more and more." "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Here we have precept and example for our walk.

May we then, as young believers and followers of the Lord Jesus, search the Word that we may know how to walk and to please God; above all, studying the perfect pattern set before us by the Lord Jesus, who in all His walk and words could say, "I do always those things that please Him." So shall we walk in newness of life.

G. T. REEVE.

(To be continued.)

MILK AND SOLID FOOD.

“Of which things we cannot now speak particularly,” said Paul of the Holy Place and the glories it contained. What an endless pity! When they should have been teachers it was actually necessary to teach them the first principles; to be feeding them on milk when they might have been getting solid food.

So Paul could get no further with them than the court and the altar. All the glory of the sanctuary lay beyond that: there were the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; and after the second veil were the golden censer, the ark of the covenant with all it contained, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; and he could not stay to speak particularly about them because his hearers had to be instructed in the simple and elementary things which they ought to have known.

Oh, the pity of it! How much has been, and is, lost to the children of God because they are not fit to be instructed! They are crying for milk when they should be feeding on solid food; and the servant of the Lord has perforce to keep teaching the first principles when he might be declaring the deep things of God.

See to it that the message of the Lord is never hindered through you. He has much to teach us yet if we were only fit to be instructed; and the blessing and the glory increase as we get further into the holy places.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

VI.

MARAH'S trial was followed by Elim's rest, refreshing and strengthening. Such an experience marks the wilderness pathway for individuals or for companies — trials and triumphs, sorrows and joys.

In Acts 8. 1, 3 we read: "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem"; and further: "He [Saul] made havoc of the church." It was, so to speak, their Marah—persecution, imprisonment, scattering; yet this may but have served God's purpose in a twofold manner: first, to test His people, and, to further His work. When this purpose is effected He saves the special instrument in the persecution; and thereafter we read: "Then had the church rest and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." An Elim after Marah indeed.

From Elim Israel was led onward. And they took their journey from Elim into the wilderness of Sin. And the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in My law or no (Exod. 16. 1, 4).

Their further progress in the pilgrim pathway but

brings them to experience deepening need and increasing difficulty; while it gives occasion for God to prove the fulness of His provision and the sufficiency of His power. Yet while they learn what He is they likewise learn more fully what they are. He who had been for them is now with them, and in the consciousness and confidence of this there was enough to make the wilderness to them a very fruitful field, if their heart had been taken up with Himself as He desired it should.

He who had brought them into the wilderness was able to sustain them in it, whatever need might arise or danger threaten. The past might have taught them this; but alas! they soon forgot His works and "limited the Holy One of Israel," and becoming occupied with the instruments instead of Him who held the instruments, and looking at circumstances instead of walking by faith, no wonder they spoke as they did and offended His holy ear with their murmurings, and grieved His heart with their rebellings. Yet they shall know that the Lord, and not Moses and Aaron, has brought them up, and shall further know that He is the Lord their God.

And so daily and continuously, as the need arose, the supply for that need came from His own hand in the manna sent from heaven. "And it came to pass that at even quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing as small as the hoar frost on the ground" (*vs.* 13, 14). What a rebuke to their faithlessness, what an answer to their murmuring was thus given. That small round thing is the provision of God for their wilderness need.

In the Gospel according to John, in the words of the Son of God, we believe we may find the answer and learn the significance of this. "I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers

did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living Bread which came down from heaven." Again, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (chap. 6. 48, 51, 57). He who is the life giver is also the life sustainer. He who is the "Bread of God" is also the "Bread of Life." If in the wilderness "man did eat angels' food," the believer now feeds on the very One who satisfied God, even Him who was ever in His presence as His portion and His delight; Him who, like the manna, came from God; who was found here amongst men holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, uninfluenced and untainted by His surroundings. Not only the provision of God as the answer to the lamb roast with fire (Exod. 12. 8), but the further provision for His people as the manna in the wilderness for their daily and continuous eating unto their strengthening and fitting for the wilderness way, and work, and warfare.

In the manna was full and plentiful supply for one and all; yet the people might be nothing the better of it through lack of gathering it, from laziness, or neglect, or such like cause. It had to be gathered, and that early, for when the sun rose the manna melted away. Even yet there is responsibility to do likewise, that is, to search the Scriptures, for these are they which testify of Christ (John 5. 39). Dear young believer, is it your custom to read daily and early, to meditate upon what you read in order to discern and learn Christ in the Scriptures? Is it your custom to give your spiritual life the first and best attention, to make its need your greatest care; to turn to the Scriptures as the food basket of your soul, and, breathing the prayer, "give me this day my daily bread," to receive therefrom the food you require? Then, nourished by words of faith, and good and healthful teaching, can it be written of you:

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2. 14). Thus will you thrive and grow and prosper.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

MANY Christians we fear come and go to meetings without feeling that they have any responsibility in connection with them. Such usually come for what they can get for themselves, and think not of the blessing of others; and if everything said and done is not according to their desire, they are ready to find fault, and perhaps to blame the preacher.

When God's people in a past dispensation were found together at appointed seasons, they came to present themselves "before the Lord," and not before man, and of course in such circumstances they were never disappointed, nor did they go away unblest.

Do we not sometimes err to-day in going to hear what brother So-and-so is going to say, instead of presenting ourselves with subject hearts before the Lord to hear what He has got to say to us?

This perhaps lies at the root of our disappointment as we listen to ministry, and accounts for the small measure in which we realize our individual responsibility in connection with the Lord's work.

We can come into one another's presence with very little exercise of soul and well satisfied with ourselves, but not so when we realize that we are going into the presence of God. The holy light of His countenance searches us through and

through, and makes us feel how much we need His grace to keep us and His Word to guide us aright in this defiling scene.

“None of us liveth to himself”; so let us not think that it matters little whether we are enjoying the Lord’s presence or not if the preacher is in fellowship with God; for it does matter a very great deal, and we are ever exercising, unconsciously to ourselves, a life-giving or deadening influence on every meeting we attend. This surely shows that, to us individually, the thought of our being so closely identified with God’s separated people should exercise a sobering influence over us, and should lead us to guard our hearts with jealous care lest we get cold and worldly, and mar God’s glory in His house or hinder His voice from being heard by ourselves or others.

Disappointment must for ever be unknown when, in fellowship with God, we present ourselves before Him, however feebly His truth is told out or His will declared. But disappointment is almost certain if we come to get from man, for though we may gather in such circumstances, what we gather may only breed worms and stink in our vessels. The grasping of these truths will deliver from the unworthy idea that unless we can preach we cannot serve, for we shall see that the service of the listener is as important as that of the preacher, and that the one should be a constant help to the other.

Why is it that the preaching of the gospel seems at times to be so powerless, or the teaching so little calculated to help? Of course the preacher is blamed. Let us suggest, however, that he may not be to blame at all, but that the condition of the saints may be such that the Spirit of God is hindered from speaking through him. How often a preacher knows Spirit-given liberty and power in speaking, as he beholds the beaming faces of saints who are enjoying in their souls the sunshine of the Lord’s love, and how

often, again, alas! the blessed truths of God seem to freeze on his lips as he gazes upon the callous indifference and manifest worldly-mindedness of God's people!

This then is clearly a service which brethren and sisters, young and old, can join in; for if we cannot all preach we can all pray, and can see to it that by grace we shall present ourselves before the Lord at every meeting we are privileged to attend, in such condition of soul and with such realization of our responsibility, that our presence shall indeed help and in no way hinder the blessing of God and the liberty of the Spirit.

Oh! to see a deep, real exercise of soul before God with reference to this important matter on the part of every child of His in connection with His assemblies; then might we expect to see and hear a ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit both to a dying world and to His disobedient people, the effects of which would be felt near and far, and our own souls kept in closest touch with Him.

UNBELIEF.

"THE Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." So said Zion in days long gone by ; and such is the language of unbelief still. When God was calling upon the heavens to sing, and the earth to be joyful, and the mountains to break forth into singing, there was no response from the hearts of His people but a groan and the murmur of unbelief. Instead of joy there was only sadness ; and instead of a song there was but a sigh.

How much of our sadness, and how many of our sighs are caused by unbelief ! Nevertheless the Lord comes nigh and seeks to strengthen us by the remembrance of His never-changing love ; and He touches a very tender chord in the human heart when He refers to the mother forgetting her sucking child, and failing to have compassion on the son of her womb. It is possible for depraved human nature to sink so low as to do such a thing, but who would dare to attribute such forgetfulness to Jehovah ? "Behold," He says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands ; thy walls are continually before Me."

Tempted and tried one, go, look on the cross ! learn there afresh the depths of His love ; see thyself graven upon the palms of His hands, and be not faithless but believing. Bid unbelief be gone ; and with it will vanish a very great deal of your sadness and sighing ; the new song will again supplant the sigh, and the sunshine of His face will dispel thy sadness, as the enjoyment of His love causes the desert scene to blossom and bloom.

“QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.”

“STRONG in the Lord!” ye saints, be strong,
 And triumph in His might;
 Press on thy way with conqueror’s song,
 Clad in God’s armour bright.

No weapon formed ’gainst thee can stand,
 Nor stay thy victor’s tread;
 No wingèd shaft from Satan’s hand
 Can pierce thy sheltered head.

Power omnipotent is thine,
 To save from every harm;
 Securely screened by love divine,
 Be calm ’mid dread alarm!

Nor ever falter, though thy way
 Seem dark as blackest night;
 Lo! distant streaks of nearing day
 Herald the dawning light.

Tread in the power of His strength
 Onward, a victor still!
 Triumph shall crown thy path at length,
 And praise thy heart shall fill.

Strong in the Lord! O mighty tower!
 Impregnable retreat!
 Stand fast in Him, and prove His power,
 Thy shield with strength replete.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

IX. UZZIAH (2 Chron. 26.).

WE arrive now at a very interesting period in the history of the kings, inasmuch as we are told that Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos commenced to prophesy during this reign (Micah commencing during the next). Much instruction will be afforded to the prayerful reader if these books are studied as contemporaneous records. These prophets, with the exception of Amos, who prophesied during this reign only, continued their prophecies until the reign of Hezekiah; so that in a certain sense the four reigns mentioned in Isaiah 1, 1 fall into one group.

In a very special sense the reign of Uzziah is intensely solemn; he might be termed, in truth, "Uzziah the presumptuous." Surely we have in this man's history an exemplification of the proverb, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place" (Prov. 27. 8).

It is not a little remarkable that it is in connection with this king's reign that we have recorded a very great and terrible earthquake as having taken place. (See Zech. 14. 5; Amos 1. 1.) Would it be too much to suppose that it was in connection with that unhappy day when Uzziah committed the daring act of usurping to himself the priestly office and entering the holy place? As far as I am aware the dates would about coincide. However, be that as it may be, there was that in the impious act which was enough to cause the very earth to tremble. We know that at times God does call in the forces and upheavals of nature to take part in the immediate accomplishment of His purposes in connection with His creatures upon the earth; for "all things are Thy servants" (Ps. 119. 91).

"Fire, and hail: snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling

His word" (Ps. 148. 8). For further proof we need only cite the earthquake mentioned in Matthew 27. 54; also the memorable earthquake of that happy, happy night in the Philippian jail (Acts 16.). And yet again there will be a great earthquake, when the feet of the Christ as Son of Man stand upon Mount Olives' heights, on His arrival to put down all rule and authority and power opposed to His Father—God. Indeed, it is in connection with this very moment that the earthquake in the days of Uzziah is mentioned (Zech. 14.), illustrative of what will take place then. In that day He will be sanctified in the eyes of all, the which He was not in the eyes of Uzziah.

Yet, again, we have a most instructive and highly suggestive narrative connected with the death of this king (Isa. 6.). It would seem that the opening five chapters of this prophecy were written in reality after what takes place in the sixth chapter recording the conversion and call of Isaiah. Morally they are before. Isaiah identifying himself (as Daniel did afterwards) with the sins of his people. Notice the "woes" of the fifth chapter, and in contrast thereto "Woe is me" (chap. 6. 5). "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the foundations of the thresholds were moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me!" What a reflection is this upon the presumption and profanity of Uzziah against the thrice holy God! The one who uttered those well-known words, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," might well have had Uzziah in mind; for seraphim veil their faces

in the presence of His glorious majesty. And yet it is through this very prophet that God tells us, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57. 15; read also Isa. 66. 2).

Uzziah is one of the many kings who commenced well but ended sadly. It is evident that the God-honouring policy of distinct and absolute separation from the apostate kingdom was still maintained. His father, Amaziah, as Joash had done, married a daughter of Jerusalem (ver. 3).

Amos 7. 12 would likewise serve to show this separation, the which brought a reproach on Judah: "Flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there."

Verse 5 tells us that "he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God," which proves that at first he had a distinct aim and object before him unto the well-pleasing of God. May the like of which, as spoken in 2 Corinthians 5. 9 (R.V.), be true of us. "Wherefore also we make it our aim (*Gr.* are 'ambitious), whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him."

"As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." Such expressions as the following are indicative of his great might, as well as the faithfulness of God: "God helped him against the Philistines" (ver. 7). "And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong" (ver. 8). Verse 10 would suggest that he loved God as seen in nature: "He loved husbandry." Verse 15 tells us he invented a sort of cannon; but then comes the sad part. "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong." "God helps those who help themselves," for He does not en-

courage laziness and idleness. "But when he was strong, 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." It is evident that pride got the upper hand, like the great instigator of all evil, who himself fell through the same. (See Ezek. 28., especially verse 17, and compare 1 Tim. 3. 6.) He stands out as an exemplification and verification of the truth that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16. 18). "When pride cometh, then cometh shame" (Prov. 11. 2). Few indeed, it would seem, can God entrust with riches, or what answers to the blessings with which Uzziah was endowed from God. How good is the God we adore, who has allowed such things to fall out to others in order that we may be benefited thereby! (See Rom. 15. 4.)

May we learn more deeply and fully the lesson which the Apostle Paul learnt: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. In everything and in all things have I learned the secret, both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want" (Phil. 4. 11 and 12). The danger of being full and forgetting the Lord is a truth that is emphasized again and again in Holy Writ. Read very carefully Deuteronomy 8. 10-14; and, again, Deuteronomy 32., part of which we will quote in full: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art becomesleek; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (ver. 15). But please read this with a view to the blessings innumerable recorded in the previous verses. "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: *therefore* have they forgotten Me" (Hosea 13. 5, 6).

Israel was promised temporal earthly blessings. We have seen that even these often proved the contrary to them. We are promised spiritual blessings, but even these—alas, how often!—become merely a flood-gate of spiritual pride. Even a knowledge of the Scriptures, which is unquestionably right, may be a lever used by Satan for the entrance of that hydra-headed pride. How it becomes us, then, to hold the little that God may have taught us with meekness and fear! Has not such pride been at the root of more than half our troubles, which has often led to an unwillingness to yield to the truth in obedience to the will of the Lord? But let not the intensely practical teaching be lost here in connection with riches which so often become a snare. (See 1 Timothy 6. 5-10; Proverbs 23. 4, 5; Psalm 62. 10.)

“Two things have I asked of Thee
 Give me neither poverty nor riches;
 Feed me with the food that is needful for me:
 Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say,
 Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal,
 And use profanely the Name of my God.”

(Prov. 30. 7-9.)

“Better is it to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Prov. 16. 19).

Azariah the priest, with eighty priests of the Lord that were valiant men, withstood Uzziah, and said unto him, “It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed: neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God” (ver. 18). But Uzziah heeded not the expostulation of the priest; if he had, it is evident that such a severe measure would not have been taken; for though he had sinned against a thrice holy God, yet God is ever slow to anger; and Uzziah appears to have got time for

repentance. But Uzziah adding wrath to folly, the Lord Himself takes the case in hand, and smites him with the awful plague of leprosy. This does not take place until milder measures were of no avail. One sin not repented of leads to another. Thus it has been from the beginning. Cain was wroth because his bloodless offering was not accepted by God. Nevertheless verse 7 of Genesis 4. would show that he had time for repentance given. "The sin-offering crouching at the door," ready to hand if he was so minded; but instead thereof he rose up against his brother Abel and slew him.

"He whose spirit is without restraint is like a city that is broken down and hath no wall" (Prov. 25. 28). Thus it was with Uzziah at this time.

This impious act on the part of Uzziah was a marring of God's beautiful order of things in ways that we may but feebly grasp. God loves order; because of this God was angry with David one time because he did not bring up the Ark of God after the due order (2 Sam. 6.). The Lord commanded Gideon to build an altar "in the orderly manner," and he did as the Lord commanded him (Judges 6, 25-27). God has a purpose and reason for everything, and we find that the throne and the priesthood were ever kept distinct and separate in Israel (the only seeming deviation from this rule is Moses), until He came in whom all types and shadows have fulfilment. "He shall be priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13).

One may think lightly of breaking through the Divine order of things to-day, and yet we believe that the judgment-seat of Christ alone will reveal the solemnity and irretrievable loss incurred by those who dare thus to act toward the revealed will of God.

The day in which Uzziah lived was one of material, literal things, through which it pleased God to teach us deeper spiritual truths. 1 Peter 2. 4, 5 will illustrate our

meaning, where we find a contrast. We do not see God's hand to-day in judgment as we saw it against Uzziah, and yet there is most assuredly what answers to the same—a judgment affecting His people. (2 Thess. 1. 4, 5; 1 Cor. 11.) “If any man destroyeth (marreth) the temple of God, him shall God destroy (mar)” (1 Cor. 3. 17); and “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall rest in the congregation of the dead” (Prov. 21. 16), is as true to-day as ever it was. Thus Uzziah was cut off from the House of the Lord, becoming practically as one dead, Jotham probably reigning as regent.

The judgment-seat of Christ will settle once and for ever all matters relative to the believer to-day. It may be that some who apparently went on all right to the end, manifesting perhaps much apparent religious activity, will be found then to have died to God long before they passed away from scenes of earth. It is true that there are some sins for which the sinning one must get the outside place; but it is true likewise that there may be in one an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God—a condition of heart and soul known fully to the omniscient eye of God alone.

“Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment; and some men also they follow after. In like manner also there are good works that are evident; and such as are otherwise cannot be hid” (1 Tim. 5. 24, 25).

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

“IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.”

(1 THESS. 5. 18.)

“I THINK my table richly spread,
And bless the Lord for wholesome bread,
While nothing more appears;
With this I am not left to starve,
This is far more than I deserve,
And better than my fears.

I feared lest discontent should turn,
And cause my appetite to spurn
To eat a meal so dry;
But sanctified by prayer 'tis sweet,
More so than all the sav'ry meat
That dainty sinners buy.

My God, how infinitely kind
Art Thou to reconcile my mind
To all Thy sov'reign will!
Content with nothing I shall be,
If I may but converse with Thee
And have Thy presence still.

No one shall hear my tongue complain,
If Thou my spirit wilt sustain
And fill my soul with peace;
My gratitude will still ascend,
I'll love and praise Thee to the end,
Till all my wants shall cease.

Humbly for those I'd intercede
Who suffer poverty and need,
Without contentment given.

Oh, teach them by their wants to pray,
And then do Thou Thy power display,
And send them Bread from heaven.

In earnest I would bear in mind
The poor, the sick, the long confined—
With such I sympathize.

To such I feel compassion move,
To such I would appear in love,
And wipe their weeping eyes.

Oh, may their sorrows sweetly lead
Their hungry fainting souls to feed
On Christ, the Living Bread.

So shall they patiently endure,
And find their happiness secure
In Him, their Living Head.

Come, O ye helpless and distressed,
Lean on a Saviour's loving breast—
In Him there's sweet repose.

He will support, He will sustain,
He'll bear a part in every pain
And sanctify your woes.

The time is short, you soon shall rise
And bid farewell to weeping eyes,
And reach the heavenly shore;
O pleasing thought! my soul, prepare
To meet thy fellow-sufferers there,
And aid them to adore.

There shall our now complaining souls
Drink of those overflowing bowls
Of God's unchanging love.

There Jesus, our exalted Head,
Shall feed us with delicious bread,
And all our wants remove."

NO SMALL STIR ABOUT THE WAY.

(ACTS 19. 23-41.)

HATRED of, and opposition to, the Way and work of God are by no means of recent date. Yea, it has, in fact, from the first, been a characteristic of professors. Varied indeed have been the tactics and means through which such have been displayed—sometimes in the open, undisguised form of bitter, determined energy, by force and by power, opposing and resisting. Such, indeed, has not been the worst kind of opposition, for it has generally resulted in defeating its own purpose, and instead of hindering or blasting the work has only helped and furthered it.

A much more dangerous, because more subtle and Satanic opposition has been that from professed sympathisers and friends, whose good words and fair speeches catch the unwary and deceive the hearts of the simple. The words of such do not indeed reveal their character nor declare their intentions. They neither say what they mean nor mean what they say, and akin to their words are their ways, which, like those of the strange woman, "are movable, that thou canst not know them."

Honest and straightforward opposition can be met and answered, but hypocrisy and deception it is difficult, if not impossible, to deal with, except as did the Archangel when he answered, "The Lord rebuke thee"; see also Zechariah 3. 2. "Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the Faith; but they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all, as theirs also was" (2 Tim. 3. 8, 9). But why all this resistance and opposition? Can they, or do they, suppose or imagine that they work the work of the Lord in so speaking and writing and acting? Does the work of the Lord need

such manner of means to effect it, or arguments such as these to support it? Nay, verily.

The cause must be weak surely that needs such to preserve or strengthen it. Let all, who so speak and act, take to heart the words and counsel of a wise man of old, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

By so doing they will show themselves to be wiser men than they seem to be, and might do more to impress others that they do possess the grace and the love they so much vaunt about.

But why all this? we again ask. Honesty is after all the best policy; and an honest man is a respected man, although others differ from him. Such a person Demetrius seems to have been (see Acts 19, 23-27). And his very honest acknowledgment furnishes reasons sufficient and conclusive enough to him and others with him for the opposition and resistance to the Way, which was causing no small stir.

What were these reasons? "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth"; and further, "This our craft is in danger to be set at nought." This, from Demetrius' standpoint, can be clearly understood and fully appreciated. It is plainly stated as a matter of £ s. d.; he is afraid that it may diminish the lucrative business of making little Diana shrines for the admirers and worshippers of the goddess.

It is true another reason is assigned, which seems to make it less glaring. He has an evident regard for the temple and worship of the goddess; it is not *altogether* a selfish motive. There is this redeeming feature to the opposition after all.

With all due respect to his honesty, what a sadly mis-

taken and deluded man! yet he is only an example of many in these times, and in this so-called, but miscalled Christian land, who have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; a mistaken zeal, which leads to most disastrous results; for was it not such a zeal that led to the crucifixion of the Lord of glory?

It was truly so, for it was the religious leaders of Israel that put the words in the lips of the people to demand the life of the Christ of God. Blind leaders of the blind. Yet in many cases their followers are willingly ignorant.

There is no reason why they should be thus deceived and misled. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." "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."

Free indeed from the chains and trammels of the traditions of the fathers, or the traditions of brethren. And, while able, from the Scriptures, and ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, having a good conscience, we need neither fear their threats, nor be dismayed by their opposition.

Yet "one sinner truly destroyeth much good"; words vehemently, albeit falsely and mischievously spoken, result in the arousing of wrath, and provoking clamour, some crying one thing, and some another, the more part knowing neither why nor wherefore they were come together. True characteristics indeed of a confused and lawless assembly, presenting a very marked and striking contrast to a "lawful" assembly, or an assembly of God, wherein rule, and order, and discipline obtain; in the exercise and effect of which toward the false and slanderous speaking, as well as toward the immoral and lawless acting, there is maintained the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, characterizing and expressive

of the kingdom of God, which both the unrighteous one and the unrighteous thing inherit not (Rom. 14. 17; 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 19-21; 2 Tim. 2. 19).

DAVID SMITH.

For Young Believers.

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

NEWNESS OF SPIRIT.¹

WE are also to serve in newness of spirit. We noticed the question in chapter 6. 1: “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.” Now in verse 15 it is: “Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.” As sinners law had claims upon us which we could never meet; we were held in bondage because of sin; but now we have been made dead to the law, through the body of Christ, that we should be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were through the law wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden, so that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter (Rom. 7.). “*For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life*” (2 Cor. 3. 6).

Now God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; so that we are not bond-servants, but sons. It may be said that we Gentiles were not under the law at any time. In the sense that the Jews were under law we were not; but we were in a similar position; for, “Not knowing God, we

¹ See page 206.

were in bondage to them who were by nature no gods. Therefore we were not free men, but now by the grace of God we are free men in Christ Jesus; and as free men we are called to serve the Lord Christ; and to serve, not in the oldness of the letter, or as bound down by a rigid law, saying, "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," but as under the law of love to Christ, willingly yielding ourselves as bond-slaves bound by love; the love of Christ constraining us to do the bidding of Him whom we own as both Lord and Christ. We shall thus bring forth fruit unto God; and, as in Romans 6., ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.

God requires fruit in our life's walk, and also in our life's service. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"—fruit which shall bring to ourselves present and eternal blessing, and to God present and eternal glory.

Our new life, then, is manifested, first, by our walking in newness of life, and second, by our serving in newness of the spirit. All of us as young believers are exercised about our walk and behaviour as children of God. We are called like Enoch to walk with God. How blessed to contemplate that three hundred years' walk with God, and to know that before he was translated he had this testimony that he pleased God. In thinking of him, we are reminded of the One who had the testimony from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We also may have this assurance that we are well pleasing to Him if we do those things which are according to His will. Now alongside our walk we, as young Christians, need to be exercised about our service; and not only young men, but young women; for the same principles apply to both, though their spheres of service are different. We should ever ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and also remember the exhortation: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

May we not be idling away our time, waiting for some great thing to do, but just doing those things that come ready to our hand. We shall thus be fully prepared for any greater service to which our God may call us; for, unless we are faithful in the little things, the greater cannot be entrusted to us. We have an example in Moses, who was faithful in all God's house as a servant. What a wonderful testimony this from God—faithful in all that was entrusted to him. Now, Christ is Son over God's house, "whose house are we if we hold fast" God's house is now a household of sons—sons who are called to serve, and to serve together, as members of the one household, for the profit, and building up, and building together of the whole. We are to be labourers together; as in 1 Corinthians 3. Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase." Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one, showing the closest linking together in the service—a fellowship which binds all together in a living, loving service for the Master. But each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour, thus showing our individual responsibility to the Lord to do our allotted portion.

May we never seek to break away from our responsibility one to another, but in closest fellowship to stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel (Phil. 1. 27). Unity in all things is God's will concerning us: may it be more and more manifest in all our ways here below, until we are gathered together into one; and He Himself shall perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle us, and the new life be manifested in new bodies fashioned like unto His body of glory, and our service be unhindered by any strivings of the flesh from within or opposition of men without. May our hearts be more constantly fixed upon "the blessed hope," and in the "little while" may we occupy "till He come."

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

VII.

THE trial of hunger for lack of bread is soon followed by another equally severe, namely, thirst for water (Exod. 17. 1-7). In that dry and parched land their only resource was in Jehovah. He who supplied the former need was able also to supply the latter. Yet how slow they were to acknowledge this! and how often their faith and hope were in the creature instead of God! This caused the disappointment which gave rise to the murmur, and the result was they tempted the Lord instead of trusting Him. Alas, how similarly we often act! Truly,

"His patience beareth much and long
With those who from Him rove,"

and His provision faileth not.

Yet ere that provision can be theirs the rock must be smitten. How strange His way! Yet how true to the antitype, for "that rock was Christ"—He who was smitten of God and afflicted. This is the basis upon which, as well as the channel through which, the wilderness supply comes. How refreshing and invigorating that cool, sparkling water must have been! How invaluable also! An abundant and continuous supply flowed from that once-smitten rock during the whole wilderness journey.

In the light of this we would refer to John 7. 37-39: "On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive." This is what answers to the past in the present experience of the believer. The gift, the indwelling, the ministry, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

As from the smitten rock Israel's supply came, so from Him who was smitten of God unto death and by God raised again and glorified hath come His provision for the need of His people in the wilderness—an unfailing and unlimited supply for the strengthening, reviving, and comforting of His loved and His own. Thus, having been in one Spirit baptized into one Body, it becomes the opportunity of one and all to know the blessedness of the teaching and leading, and thus to enjoy the communion of the blessed Holy Spirit. On the other hand, to know and enjoy this necessitates the continuous living in and walking by the Spirit ungrieved and unquenched.

As the result of our having and holding in common what we have been taught by the one Spirit, and doing that in common as led by the one Spirit, the manifestations of the Spirit will not be lacking, and the unity of the Spirit will be kept. May it indeed be so more and more truly. Massah and Meribah remain to prove how far otherwise it was with Israel as they expressed with their lips the unbelief of their hearts, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Beacons of warning to those upon whom the ends of the ages are come, lest we should commit the like sin.

We have thus considered Israel's wilderness provision, and now come to consider their wilderness foe. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim" (Exod. 17. 8). By comparing the account given in this chapter with that found in Deuteronomy 25. 17, we get some insight into the character and object of this foe. Merciless, cruel, and cowardly, in an unexpected moment he came and attacked the weak and defenceless. Yet He who is for Israel is against Amalek, and in this is their salvation and strength.

Meet this foe, however, they must. No compromise can be made with such a deadly enemy. No quarter can be

given to the sworn foe of God and His people. Joshua's skill and courage are needed in the fight, watchfulness and resistance must be exercised, but something further is necessary. Moses on the mountain top is the one with whom lies the issue of the conflict. In these uplifted hands is the secret of their power and victory.

Is there not, then, a foe answering to Amalek in the experience of God's people to-day? We believe there is. As Satan answers to Pharaoh, the world to Egypt, so we doubt not the flesh answers to Amalek.

The flesh, which is in each believer, whether young or old, is corrupt; in it dwelleth no good thing; it is incapable of doing good; it hates, and is hateful to, God—the inveterate and continual foe of God's people. How often, alas, has it been proved in a moment of unwatchfulness that it is so! It may have been in the foolish thought, the unguarded word, or the ungodly deed that we have yielded to its power and have been overcome thereby. If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh. He who is for us in the presence of God has triumphed and prevailed. His hand is upon the throne. That hand will never grow weary or go down. Is there the looking off unto Jesus? Is there the lifting up of holy hands unto Him in earnest, believing prayer? If so, there must be victory; and, glorying in the Lord, we may well exclaim, "Jehovah-nissi"—the Lord my banner.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.

It is very blessed for young Christians to realize, through believing the Word of God, their identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in death and resurrection; to understand how thoroughly God has been glorified by the death and

resurrection of His Son regarding all that they have done and all that they are. This alone can give the joy and the settled rest and peace which so many Christians never seem to experience.

Israel in Egypt, sheltered from judgment by the sprinkled blood, is all the length that many appear to get, and even there the sense of security which the blood should give is often very dimly discerned. The blood-sprinkled doorposts and lintels tell of judgment executed; of death, in the person of the set-apart lamb, to all the past; of their Egypt history righteously closed once for all, never again to be opened up or looked at save for the sobering purpose of remembering the hole of the pit from which they had been digged. But, so far as God was concerned, it was a past which was never more to be looked at or thought of; neither its words nor its ways could bring into judgment those who had died to it in the person of their substitute.

This speaks of the believer's death with Christ to the past, and the definite and eternal closing up of that dark record by death. "Crucified with Christ." The past has been righteously dealt with, its death and its doom fully borne by Him Who was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, and in Whom we died to it all. Death has no more dominion over Him, nor can it have dominion over those who by faith have become identified with Him in death. Therefore, let each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ reckon with God in this matter when He says that "if one died for all, then all died" (2 Cor. 5. 14).

But, thank God, this is not all, for not only have we, in the person of Christ, borne the extreme judgment of our sins, which can, therefore, never again overtake us, for it is God who justifies, and who dares to condemn? but as new creation in the risen Christ we have been brought to a new state and standing, where "all things are of God," and where all is consequently marked by perfection. Israel,

though sheltered by blood from judgment, were still in Pharaoh's domain so long as they remained in Egypt, and might well stand in awe of his harassing power; but when once they stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea they beheld the waters return to their strength and overwhelm in a mighty and absolute overthrow and lasting defeat the enemy, who in vain boasting attempted to pursue, saying, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them." (Exod. 15. 9). How vain was their boasting! "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2. 4).

So many Christians, because they fail to realize the place in resurrection life which grace has given them in the risen and glorified Christ, and their perfect acceptance in Him before God, spend perhaps years of their lives in fear and dread lest again sin should overwhelm, and the past in some way rise up to condemn them; their condition being somewhat analogous to that of Israel as they looked back and beheld Pharaoh pursuing and the sea barring their onward march. Nothing in such a scene and condition but turmoil and terror, for they were absolutely at the end of Nature's resources, and God alone could open up a way to deliverance. And that He did for them, and has most blessedly done for us, in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. As by faith we look at the Cross, and behold His perfect victory over sin and death, and learn that He has silenced for us every accuser and vanquished every foe, that He has abolished death and paralyzed him that had the power of death, and gone on high, leading captivity captive, a triumphant Conqueror, bearing in His grasp the keys of death and Hades, with Israel we may well burst forth in praise, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

We are "accepted in the Beloved"; we are "complete in Him"; "Christ is all and in all"; and thus by faith are

we brought into a sphere where all is perfection, because all is of God, and where Christ alone, in all the beauty of His person and all the perfect acceptance of His finished work, meets the eye and satisfies the heart of God.

How infinitely blessed, then, it is to know that we are risen with, and accepted in, the Beloved at God's right hand, and to realize that, as He alone is the object which fills the eye and satisfies the heart of God, so is it His desire that Christ should be all in all to our souls, and would have us know that our every blessing and joy are associated with that glorified Man at His right hand.

Let us, therefore, no longer be occupied with our own failing selves, but fix our hearts with increased delight upon Him; for if our eye gets off the Deliverer upon the throne our enjoyment of deliverance must soon vanish.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

THE keynote of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians is found in the words "in Christ." In that chapter many precious things are brought before us. Among others we might mention the following:—God's love; God's grace; God's purpose; God's power; God's love displayed in marking us out as His; God's grace seen in our salvation; God's purpose declared in our position as His inheritance; God's power manifested in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which power is mighty to us-ward who believe.

God's love is an absorbing and soul-stirring theme. When we take into consideration the depths to which we had sunk, how we were ruined and undone, how marvellous does the love of God appear! "God so loved" (John 3. 16). In Eph. 2. 4 we find this love referred to in the melting words, "His great love wherewith He loved us." The greatness of His love can only be estimated by the magni-

tude of the gift which He gave, even His only-begotten and well-beloved Son; and He gave Him to the death of the Cross in order that lost sinners might be saved. "Herein indeed is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

His grace brought salvation (Titus 2. 11); His grace saved us (Eph. 2. 8). Grace came down to our level and raised us up and seated us in Christ in the heavenlies in order that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God's purpose concerning us is that, the eyes of our heart being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them. Is God's hope and purpose in us being realized? That it might be so He would have us know the exceeding greatness of His power.

That mighty power which raised Christ from amongst the dead and set Him at the right hand of God can never be limited. This then is the power which is at our disposal to sustain us in our walk with and our work for God.

ADAM ALLAN.

BELIEVING AND REALIZING.

TALKING with a fellow-saint one day the writer of this article was making frequent use of the word *realize*. He wished we could realize this, that we could realize that, and so on. The one to whom he was talking remarked, quietly, that the results would be the same if we *believed* them.

Now how true this is of everything that has a practical side; and all God's truth has. "Show me your faith," says James, "and I shall show you my faith by my works."

Belief in anything that God has revealed produces works of some kind, and if it does not, then the observer is justified in saying that there is no belief there; or, if there is, it would be better if there was not.

If we believe a thing the result should be the same as if we realized it.

We do not realize what a ghastly thing a lie is. We do not realize what a world of misery a malicious word may produce. Nevertheless, if we simply believe what God says about each, the result will be the same as if we had realized what a lie is, or what a malicious word may be. So again, when God tells us that our calling is a high one and that we have to walk worthy of it, because eternal results depend upon our walk, do not wait to realize the greatness of our calling, nobody will ever do that, but just believe it because God has said it, and see that you are a son of God without rebuke. More or less of realization will come in time. It will certainly be more as you act upon your belief and see that your ways are the ways of the righteous.

So don't worry if you don't "realize" things as some of your fellow-saints seem to do. Believe because God has said it, and act upon His word; believe because God has spoken to you, and let His word keep your heart because it is the faithful God who has spoken to you; believe and shun the unclean thing because the Holy One has said it is unclean. Some day, sooner or later, you will realize it all and be glad you acted on your belief.

"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD."

THE hand of God the pattern weaves
Of each life's changing history,
And in His work there's nought that grieves,
Though shrouded now in mystery.

His work is intricate ! His skill
 Displayed therein more wondrous still !

Behold the threads of varied strength,
 Of every shade and changing hue,
 A jointless mass—we'll learn at length
 His skill their needful mixture knew ;
 All are required to trace, we'll find,
 The pattern of the Master Mind !

Learn of the beauteous tapestry
 Where gilded patterns may be seen,
 Behind is shrouded mystery,
 A strange and shapeless tangled screen ;
 But for the tangled background strung,
 The weaver's praise would ne'er be sung !

A bright design Heaven's Weaver works,
 Beauteous ! in symmetry complete !
 In it no chance thread ever lurks,
 Nor flaw the Weaver's eye can meet ;
 All by His hand has ordered been,
 An alien thread would mar the scene !

Thou only lookest on the waste,
 And uncouth stitches meet thy gaze ;
 God looketh on the pattern chaste,
 Weaving its wealth through weary ways ;
 In patience, then, His purpose bide !
 Thou soon shalt view the other side !

Judge not God's work, yet incomplete,
 But wait till all is done !

For perfect work thy gaze shall greet
 When ends what He begun.

Then, fondly at His feet, I ween,
 Thou'lt praise Him for life's tangled screen !

HYMN.

Tune "HARTS."

7.7.7.7.

As, O Lord, at Calvary's tree,
 Worshipping we think of Thee ;
 In Thy sweet "Forget-me-not,"
 Tell Thy death with blessing fraught.

Dying there for such as we,
 Gladly let us bow the knee ;
 Heart and lips and life to yield,
 Loving, praising, serving Thee.

Till Thou com'st again, blest Lord,
 Be Thy ways by us adored :
 Through the night avoiding sleep,
 Work for Thee, Thy words all keep.

Then the dead in Christ all raised,
 Each from God get meed of praise :
 Fruit of life on earth all past,
 Grace with glory crowned at last.

THE COUPLING TOGETHER OF ASSEMBLIES.

WE have been called into a Fellowship—a Community. It is no new thing for God to have an elect people on this earth. It has been His way from the beginning to have a company of His own down here. But in every age those whom He has brought together have been brought under a system of rule—have been governed at His bidding. Whether it were the patriarchal despotism of Noah or Abraham; or the more elaborate jurisdiction established by Moses at Mount Sinai, and yet further developed under the reign of David and of Solomon; or, again, the modified and restricted form of government adapted for His people when subject to a foreign power: in no case has God allowed His heritage to erect the standard of democracy, nor countenanced the hideous nightmare, “Government of the people, for the people, by the people.” Thus, when the Eternal Word became flesh, and tabernacled Himself a man amongst men, He set the example of submission alike in yielding to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar’s, and in hearkening to the teaching of those that sat in Moses’ seat.

It is into His worthy Name that we have been gathered. It is His authority we are called upon to own. It is but a few years since, in the midst of the labyrinth of open brethrenism, the Community seemed to us to be an object for faith and hope rather than of sight. But the God through Whom we have been called thereinto has proved Himself faithful, and now indeed works in us and with us in order that there may be a manifestation of that Community worthy of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in order that it may find an embodiment in what beyond controversy shall be House of God, namely, Church of Living God, Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

That can only be as we learn and do God's Will as to the manner and order of our being together.

What at God's bidding was done by the overseers and the flock in the primitive churches is our model, it is God's word to us, as if saying, "See, this is the Law of the House, this is the Administration thereof; this do and ye shall live."

In the primitive churches then, always and everywhere, there was rule and government. This found expression in each assembly in the circle of overseers of that assembly. The men set by God in the assembly collectively to care for it and shepherd it were also those by whom, in the Divine order, that assembly was linked to other assemblies in which were other saints who had likewise been called into the Community, and other overseers on whom God had likewise laid responsibility as shepherds of the flock. All this being seen, it remains to ask, What was the manner, and also especially, what was the order in which overseers and flock were linked together? The reply to which is illustrated by the uniting of the curtains to form tabernacle and tent in Exodus 26.

Thus to make out of ten curtains one tabernacle:—

First, five make one and five make one.

Last, two make one.

Of eleven curtains one tent:—

First, five make one and six make one.

Last, two make one.

This, we believe, is the particular matter that now wants attention: that when God would join many into one, He joins first a few together in this place into one, a few in that place into one; then, again, these ones into one. It is not haphazard massing together of units. It is an orderly arrangement of assemblies each in its place joined to its neighbours and thus joined to the whole.

That this was so in the primitive churches is proved by the scriptures referred to in the diagram which follows.

EVERYWHERE

UNITY OF THE FLOCK AND OF THE CIRCLE OF OVERSEERS
IN PROVINCES AND IN ADJOINING

PROVINCES

COUNTRIES AND PROVINCES
OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

CITIES, TOWNS,
VILLAGES

JUDEEA

JERU SALEM

Acts 1. 15-26 2. 1-14, 44-47 4. 4. 23-25
6. 1-6 8. 1-7 9. 24-30 12. 1-13 22
16. 4 18. 22 21. 17-28, and elsewhere

1 Thess.
2. 13-16
Gal. 1. 22

SAMARIA

SAMARIA
CESAREA
Many Villages

Acts 8. 14-24
" 9. 31, 32

GALILEE

NAZARETH
CESAREA PHILIPPI

Acts 11. 22

PHENICIA

TYRE
SIDON
PTOLEMAIS

Acts 21. 4

SYRIA

ANTIOCH
SELEUCIA
DAMASCUS

Acts 11. 20-29 13. 1-3 14. 26-27

Acts 18.
2, 3, 22

ISLAND OF CYPRUS

SALAMIS
PAPHOS

CILICIA

TARSUS

PAMPHYLIA AND LYCIA

PERGA

GALATIA

LYCAONIA

LYSTRA
DERBE
ICONIUM

Acts 14. 23
" 14. 23
" 14. 23

Acts 16. 1, 2

1 Cor. 16. 7
Gal. 1. 2 6. 12,
and
throughout

PISIDIA

ANTIOCHE

James 1. 1
1 Pet. 1. 1, 2
" 2. 1-10
" 3. 1-14

John 10. 16
21. 11, 20-24
Acts 16. 1-35
1 Cor. 16. 7
Eph. 2. 21
" 3. 10
" 3. 13-14

CAPPADOCIA

PONTUS

BITHYNIA

ASIA

EPHESUS Acts 20. 17-38 Eph. 2. 22 Rev. 1. 4 2. 1
 SMYRNA Rev. 1. 4. 11 2. 8-11
 PERGAMUM 1. 4. 11 2. 12-17
 THYATIRA 1. 4. 11 2. 18-20
 SARDIS 1. 4. 11 3. 1-6
 PHILADELPHIA 1. 4. 11 3. 7-11
 LAODICEA 1. 4. 11 3. 14-16

PHRYGIA

Colossians

COLOSSE
 HIERAPOLIS

MYSIA

TROAS

ISLAND OF CRETE

MACEDONIA

PHILIPPI Phil. 1. 1, 2, and throughout
 AMPHIPOLIS
 APOLLONIA
 THESSALONICA
 BERGEE

ACHAIA, THAT IS GREECE

ATHENS
 CORINTH 1 Cor. throughout
 CENCHREAE Rom. 16. 1

ILLYRICUM
 DALMATIA

ITALY

Rome 1. 7 15. 17, and elsewhere

PUTEOLI

John 10. 16
 17. 11. 20-24
 Acts 16. 1-35
 1 Cor. 1. 2,
 and elsewhere
 Eph. 2. 21
 3. 10
 2 Tim. 2.

James 1. 1
 1 Pet. 1. 1, 2
 2. 1-10
 5. 1-14

1 Cor. 16. 19
 Rev. 1. 11,
 20 22. 16

Col. 4. 16

Titus 1. 5, and
 throughout

2 Cor. 8. 1,
 9. 2

Rom. 15. 33

2 Cor. 1. 1-
 8. 6-24
 9. 1-15

The diagram gives in the left-hand column the names of the principal provinces and other divisions of the Roman Empire which are of importance in reference to the administration of the primitive churches. The thick lines are intended to mark the divisions between the provinces of the Roman Empire as these existed A.D. 117. But it is somewhat doubtful whether Lycaonia and Pisidia (and perhaps part of Phrygia) should be included under Galatia, and whether Phrygia (part thereof) and Mysia are to be regarded as included in Asia.

In the second column are given some of the towns named in Scripture, especially, but not exclusively, those in which there probably was an assembly.

In the next column are inserted references to Scripture evidencing the unity of the assembly in the town against which the reference stands. These are chiefly texts well known now to all.

Further to the right, the unity of assemblies, etc., is represented on the diagram by braces ({}), indicating by their vertical length and position what assemblies or groups of assemblies are included, and having on the right hand of each a scriptural reference substantiating them.

First we have two cases of intimate fellowship between neighbouring towns, namely, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium in one case, Laodicea and Colosse (and Hierapolis) in the other.

Then come manifestations of definite unity within such well-marked areas as Judæa, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia.

Next may be noted the care with which at the first Samaria was linked on to Judæa (Acts 8. 14-24).

Of like importance is Barnabas' errand to Antioch, linking it, and thus all that follows, with Judæa and Jerusalem (Acts 11. 22).

Other important groupings are:—That of most of the

provinces of Asia Minor, as shown in Peter's first letter and perhaps in James 1. 1; that of Macedonia and Achaia in their contribution for Jerusalem and Judæan saints.

On the extreme right of the diagram is given a brace extending the whole length, intended to indicate the world-wide nature of the unity, with scriptural references substantiating the same.

With a view to directing further attention to the unity in the district to which Peter's first letter was sent, we reprint the following notes from the introduction to the booklet on *The True Grace of God*, by our esteemed friend and brother, Mr. John Brown,¹ and the sketch map of Asia Minor, that appears therein. Peter's first letter is addressed "To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These five provinces or countries are situated in the peninsula now called Asia Minor, which forms the most westerly portion of the continent of Asia. This peninsula may be described as to its general outlines as of a somewhat oblong shape. The northern, western, and southern sides are washed by the Black, the Ægean, and the Mediterranean Seas respectively, and on the east, where it adjoins the mainland of Asia, the river Euphrates forms part of its boundary. Almost in the centre was

GALATIA, a tract of country which, as shown on most of the maps, was about two-thirds the size of Scotland. It is said to have been conquered and peopled by a Keltic race. It seems likely that, at the time of Peter's letter, the Roman province of Galatia included Lycaonia, a country inhabited by an aboriginal race of warlike and wild habits,² but having within its borders the towns of Iconium and Derbe and Lystra, with all those hallowed associations that endear them to every lover of Scripture. It appears prob-

¹ NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE. One penny.

² Smith's *Ancient Geography*.

able, at any rate, from the language used both in the Book of Acts and in Paul's Letters, that, whether Lycaonia was or was not included therein, the towns and cities of Galatia in which were assemblies of God were fairly numerous.

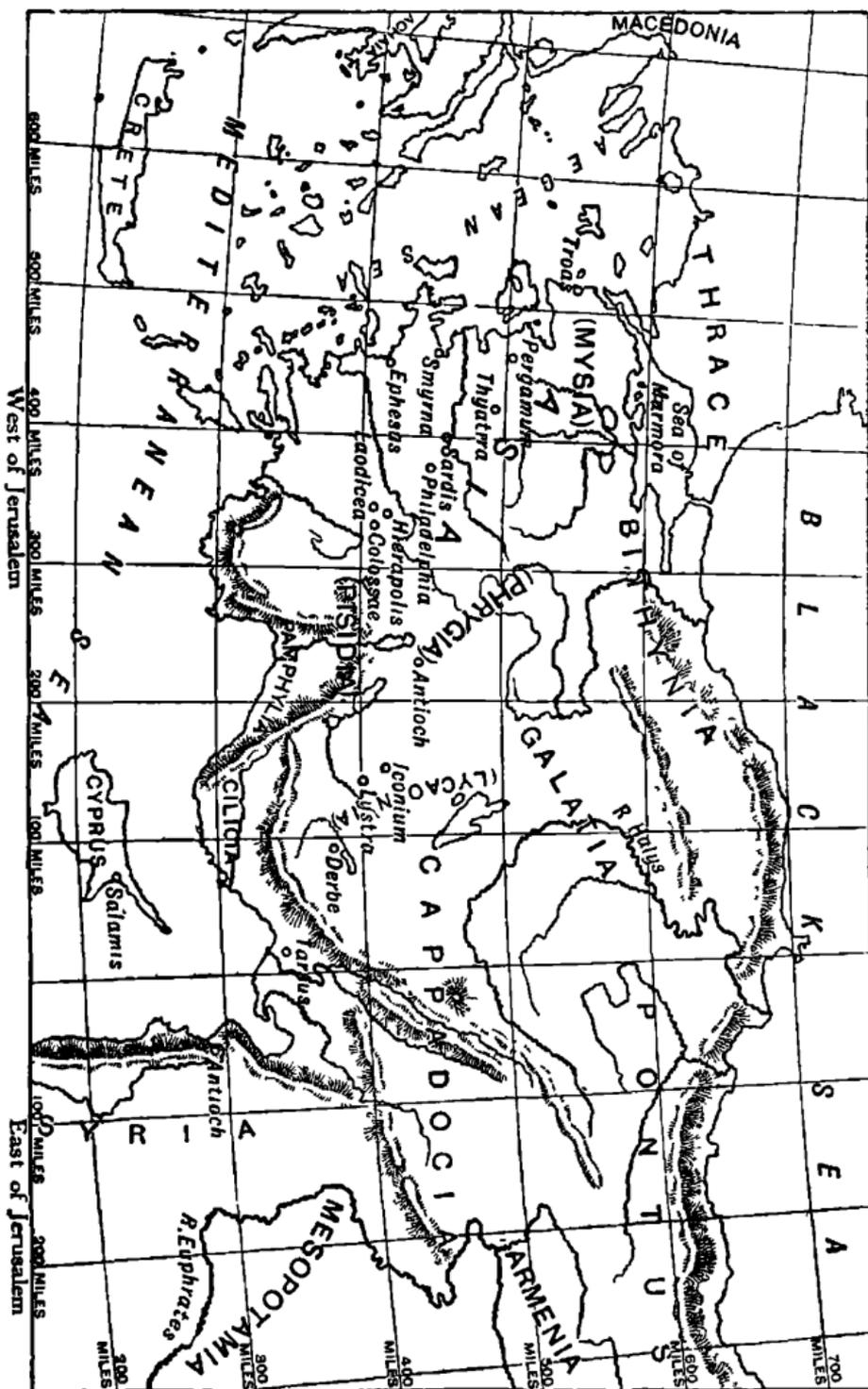
CAPPADOCIA.—East of Galatia lies the province of Cappadocia, the area of which is considerably greater than that of Scotland. A range of mountains in the north divides it from Pontus, and another in the south from the province of Cilicia, where the great apostle of the Gentiles was born. It is separated from Armenia on the east by the river Euphrates, and on the west a lake of considerable size forms part of the boundary between Cappadocia and Lycaonia.

PONTUS lies to the north-east of Galatia and north of Cappadocia. It is said that Darius Hystaspes¹ detached this kingdom from the Persian Empire in order to present it to one of his lords. A munificent gift certainly, as Pontus had a coast-line along the southern and eastern shores of the Black Sea of probably three hundred English miles in length, extending from the mouth of the river Halys on the west to the country of Colchis on the north-east. It takes its name from the old designation of the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus).

BITHYNIA lies on the north-west of the peninsula, having, like Pontus, an extensive coast-line, not only on the Black Sea but also on the Sea of Marmora, which joins the Black Sea to the Ægean Sea.

ASIA was the name of a Roman province of considerable extent on the west coast of the peninsula of Asia Minor. Whether the Asia of Peter's letter and the Asia to which John sent the Book of Revelation are identical with the Roman province raises questions which it is neither possible nor convenient to enter into here. It will be sufficient to allude to some of the seven cities mentioned by John.

¹ The Darius of Ezra 5., 6.



North of Jerusalem

Rollin, in his interesting work on Ancient History, explains how, in early times, various tribes of Greeks passed across the *Ægean* Sea, which is thickly studded with islands, and colonized the western part of the peninsula, and he mentions Smyrna and Ephesus amongst the towns founded by these early settlers. To Scripture readers, of course, the main interest centres around Ephesus, which was the principal of these cities in New Testament times. The thrilling account of Paul's days in that ancient city is read again and again with almost breathless interest. We almost seem to hear that crowd shouting itself hoarse for Artemis, or Diana, as our English lips have taught us to call her. How like the human heart to prefer a statue said to have fallen from heaven—that was fashioned likely enough by human workmen—to Him who ascended up into heaven, and without whom not one thing was made that hath been made! Smyrna is one of the few towns of ancient history that still retain some of their old importance. It lies on the coast about forty English miles north of Ephesus. Sardis is an inland town lying about fifty miles distant from both Ephesus and Smyrna. It was for many years the seat of government of the kings of Lydia, till Cræsus, the last and greatest of these, whose riches have become proverbial, was overthrown by the great Cyrus, when the Lydian kingdom came to an end. Pergamum, which is the most northerly of the seven cities, was at one time the royal city of this part of the peninsula, having been selected by a general of Alexander the Great as his treasure city. The kings of Pergamum, like all others, fell before the mighty Roman Empire.

It is perhaps superfluous to mention that all the elect sojourners of the Dispersion were within the dominion of this great Power; it is, however, well worth consideration how much testimony the New Testament Scripture bears to the general equity and fairness of Roman rule. We

may cite in this particular chapter 3. verse 13 of this very letter of Peter's. Nevertheless, so it was, the representative of one of the most equitable of all human governments conspired with those in eminent place in God's own chosen people, even with those who sat in Moses' seat, to enact the most stupendous and inexcusable crime that ever has been perpetrated on this bloodstained earth (Acts 4. 24-28).

In the light of this fact, the letter of Peter is most significant. How marvellously fair he is to the powers that be!—he, the man who cut off the ear of Malchus! But how faithful to the rejected Lord he is!—he who had denied the Lord three times in one night! Therefore he writes to sojourners, for they are in an enemy's land, and dispersed therein, and good behaviour towards all he specially enjoins. But specially note that, though they were in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, they were not of these places. They were no natural-born subjects of a human emperor; not they, indeed: an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession. And therefore again, while Peter was not the steward of the Dispensation, and therefore in no way usurped the functions of the apostle of the Gentiles, who had planted these many assemblies and linked them together according to God, yet he in this letter fully recognises as Divine the way in which they were united together; as see, for instance, "Ye also are built a spiritual house," the word house being in the singular though the Dispersion was of so wide an area. Need we add that, had all the habitable world been contemplated, it would still have been house and not houses? For here is Peter's testimony to the truth, given both in Paul's letter to Timothy, "How one ought to behave oneself in house of God," and also in the letter to Hebrews, "Whose house (not houses) are we," and again, "A great priest over the house of

God"—scriptures to which we allude in order to direct the reader's attention to them in their context.

But then Peter not only acknowledges the Divine unity of a spiritual house on earth; he also recognises the provision made in the will of God for its rule and for its shepherding. In chapter 5. verses 1-3, that is to say, the apostle addresses "the elders among you," and bids them tend the little flock—one little flock, be it remarked, though many hundreds of miles separated the sheep one from another; and this little flock is defined as being among them—as though they were a cordon of faithful watch-dogs about and around it. But the unity of elders is not only to be inferred, clearly inferred, from verses 1 and 2; words of exhortation in verse 3 straitly warn the shepherds from acting as lords in the charges allotted to them; they are the rather enjoined to let their unity be a very example to the one little flock, an example of what, in the will of God, the unity of the one little flock should be.

The sketch map on page 249 will give a general idea of the relative situation of the places named by Peter, whilst in order to indicate their probable dimensions, horizontal and vertical lines (parallels of latitude and meridians) are drawn at a distance apart corresponding to about one hundred English miles, and so arranged as to show how far any place is north of Jerusalem, as well as east or west, as the case may be. A halfpenny covers on this map an area of some 27,000 square miles, which is not far short of that of Scotland.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

PSALM 132. VERSES 5 AND 8-9.

OH! for the joy, to share the grace
 Of saints redeem'd to do Thy will,
 In finding for the Lord a place
 Wrought out by God's determin'd skill.

The God of grace reveal'd the plan
 To creature charge and faithful care,
 The pattern of His house gave man
 For rule and worship, service, prayer.

Into The Name is still His choice,
 Material places there are none;
 Outside the camp His saints rejoice,
 And Christ is Lord, e'en God's own Son.

In fellowship the Father shares
 With those who seek His honour now;
 As great High Priest the Saviour bears
 With those who to His Lordship bow.

Eternal crowns proclaim His power,
 The man sat down on glory's throne;
 He soon will come, we haste the hour,
 To claim the kingdom for His own.

To you whom Satan hath ensnar'd
 In sects and parties, not of God,
 For judgment scenes get now prepar'd,
 No preparation 'neath the sod.

Awake to righteousness and life,
 In pleasure's path are found the dead;
 Purge out from evil men and strife,
 But follow faith and peace instead.

If man the proffer'd prize would win,
 For mast'ry strive the crown to wear;

In House of God kept clean from sin,
Obedience' path 'tis service there.

“Behold, I come rewards to give,
My servants do not work in vain;
The life that now by faith they live,
Though loss will prove eternal gain.”

R. I.

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 140.—*Please explain what we are to understand by such scriptures as 1 Timothy 4. 1-7, and 1 Corinthians 10. 25-27.*

This question has been forwarded to us, and we have no doubt that an answer concerning the eating of blood and things strangled (page 202) will have given rise to it. If, in seeking to come to a conclusion as to what is the mind of God upon any special scripture, we find that the understanding we have arrived at is not in harmony with some other portion of the Word, or if we are obliged to force other passages to agree with our conclusion, we may be sure that there is something wrong somewhere. A mere intellectual study of the Word of God will not suffice; the truths that lie under the surface must be searched for with a subject mind, and the Holy Spirit ungrieved—that is, the Spirit of God dwelling in us not grieved by anything in our hearts—for be it remembered that the Spirit of God is not at our beck to unfold according to our wills the things concerning Himself. It is only when walking in fellowship with God, and in the light

of His presence, that we may expect Him to reveal to us the things concerning Himself.

In the passage referred to (1 Cor. 10. 25) the Lord makes provision for His children. As in the world, although not of it, I am not bound to inquire on every occasion in what manner a creature has been put to death; but if I am told that it has died of itself, or has been strangled, then, as the Lord's child, I should abstain from eating thereof. In these very verses we see this principle. The child of God is not to be a hermit. Sanctity of life does not consist in isolation; on the contrary, the child of God should seek to carry the light amongst those around him, yet ever remembering that he is an ambassador of Christ. If bidden to a feast he is at liberty to go; he is not bound to ask his host in what way that of which he partakes has met its death, whether bird or beast; and if he were in a heathen country, and were there invited to partake of a feast, he would not be bound to inquire whether that which was set before him had been offered to idols. Nevertheless, should he be told that the meat had been offered to idols, or that it had been strangled, or that the dish contained that which was made with blood, then, in the one case or the other, he would be called upon to act as directed by the Word of God.

With regard to 1 Timothy 4. The fact that forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats are coupled together is sufficient to show the line of teaching of those spoken of as having departed from the Faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. No one could suppose that abstaining from blood or things strangled was a demoniacal doctrine; and the fact that every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused must be taken in a limited sense; that is to say, it can only apply to those creatures that are given to man for food; for, apart from the Mosaic clean and unclean animals, there are many birds and beasts that civilized men would never think of eating,

and yet these are creatures of God. We do not, therefore, judge that these texts referred to set aside or abrogate the command to abstain from blood and from things strangled.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

THE LORD'S COMING AND CONSEQUENT EVENTS.

I.

THE event for which the Christian waits is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It formed a very special part of the subject of ministry amongst the Apostles and their fellow-workers in the early days of the present dispensation, and resulted in the converts to Christianity looking with earnest expectation for the immediate return of the Lord to take them to be with Himself. It is evident that the long interval which has elapsed between the Ascension of the Lord and His return was quite unexpected by the early saints.

Now, the coming of the Lord is not death, nor is it what is erroneously termed “the end of the world.” The death of saints is spoken of in the Word of God as sleep—they are put to sleep through Jesus (1 *Thess.* 4. 13, 14); and His coming, instead of bringing death, is a life-giving event; for the dead in Christ shall rise when the Lord's voice shall be heard with the Trump of God (1 *Thess.* 4. 16). What is generally referred to by the expression, “the end of the world”—the final judgment of the dead at the Great White Throne—does not take place for more than a thousand years after the Lord comes (*Rev.* 20. 4; 11. 12).

The coming of the Lord, then, is a reality; it is that blessed hope for which we look (*Titus* 2. 13), and is no

figurative language referring to death or any other thing. A real person—the Lord Jesus Christ—is in reality to come to the air; and, with a real shout, is to wake all who have been put to sleep through Him, causing them to put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15. 52); and is to change all the living in Christ upon the earth, causing them to put on immortality, and together they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”; and thousands shall be gathered unto Him in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without tasting death (1 Cor. 15. 51–58). “The Lord Himself,” we read, “shall descend from heaven”; “this same Jesus shall come again” (1 Thess. 4. 16; Acts 1. 11).

When this event takes place none of the dead shall hear the shout or arise, save those who are dead in Christ, and none of the living shall hear the shout or be changed, except such as are in Christ. The unsaved dead, as well as the saved dead who are not in Christ, shall still remain in their graves, and the living unsaved shall be left on earth unchanged. All who have believed that Jesus is the Christ, and in one Spirit have been baptized into the one Body, whether asleep through Jesus or alive upon the earth, shall go to meet the Lord, and to be for ever with Him.

This is the blessed event, and the glorious moment for which we wait; and it draws nearer and nearer as the days go by. We wait for the Lord from Heaven; we look for that blessed hope!

“Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying—
No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying—
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives His own.”

“Our citizenship,” says the Apostle, “is in Heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”

(Phil. 3. 20). Our home is yonder; and He will come soon to take us to that place which He has prepared for us (John 14. 3); and though there may be much in connection therewith regarding which we desire fuller knowledge, this much we do know, that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is (1 John 3. 2).

The blessed hope, then, that the Word of God gives us is the coming of the Lord; toward that moment our hearts are set; it is *the event* for which we wait; there is nothing in Scripture placed between us and it, so it may take place at any moment.

(To be continued.)

LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

VIII.

IN the third month after their departure from Egypt, the children of Israel camped before Mount Sinai. And Moses went up unto God, and God bade him say to the people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto *Myself*" (Exod. 19. 4).

In these words Jehovah calls upon them to remember and to review His way and His work. How helpful and blissful at all times to do so! What He did to the Egyptians displayed His power and His judgments. How He bare Israel on eagles' wings displayed His tenderness and His care. The purpose He had in all this is here made known—"I brought you unto *Myself*." We might well call for a "Selah" here, so that we might pause and learn and appreciate rightly the importance of these words. Much—yea, very much—that short yet weighty sentence

conveys. Unto Himself He could not have His people when they were in Egypt. There Pharaoh had them for himself, and he used them for the accomplishment of his purposes. Now Jehovah has them for Himself, having brought them to Himself—the church in the wilderness called out and brought together by God.

He had looked upon their bondage, and come down to deliver them in the past; and now He comes down in majesty upon Mount Sinai in the character of their Ruler. Out from the midst of the thunderings He makes known His will, and the people answer, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Herein is the basis and condition upon which such a relationship is established—subjection to His authority, and obedience to His word. Herein also will the desires and expectations of His heart be realized, as it is written, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be unto Me a peculiar treasure, and a kingdom of priests."

In the light of this we would now ask our readers to turn to Matthew 17. 1-9 in order to learn God's purposes in present times. There another mountain scene is brought before us, where greater majesty and glory were witnessed. A greater than Moses is here! God speaks and proclaims who that One is! Hear, also, what He claims for Him! "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him.*" Oh, the impressiveness of that scene! Oh, the value of those never-to-be-forgotten words! How important to know Him as here presented, having our hearts bowed in the presence of His majesty, and our will subject to His authority. This causes us to stand in awe of His words. He speaks—listen! "Verily *I say* unto you"; "Again *I say* unto you" (Matt. 18. 18, 19). To whom does He speak? To the church, in the midst of which He is; "for where two or three are gathered together into My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

Does not the scene in Matthew 17. make all this plain? There Jesus taketh and bringeth those three disciples to where they are. There they acknowledge it is good for them to be, yea, and to abide. There they see no one save Jesus only. In the glory and majesty of His person, in the authority of His place, they own and reverence Him. Another mountain scene, spoken of in Matthew 28. 16-20, claims notice also. There, after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the disciples go to Him, and He comes to them. There again He speaks—they listen; He commands—they obey.

In Jerusalem, the scene of His rejection, He is first proclaimed as the One "Whom God hath made both Lord and Christ." At these and other words hearts quake, and lips cry out, "What shall we do?" Many repent, are baptized, and added together, of whom the words are spoken, "The church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 8. 1); and again, "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (Gal. 1. 13). Further we read of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus, of whom the Thessalonians became imitators (1 Thess. 2. 14).

What church should I join? is often asked by many earnest inquirers after the ways which be in Christ. Does this question burden your heart, dear young Christian? Then we entreat, measure the pattern, and measure all by the pattern! Let no sophistry or human reasoning on the one hand, or feigned humility on the other, deter you from being found together with those who have been gathered together into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are therefore found in churches of God.

DAVID SMITH.

“THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH.”

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN BROWN.)

“This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep.

Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for *the joy of the Lord is your strength.*”—*Neh. 8. 9, 10.*

WHAT the time referred to in the above words was to the remnant of Israel, is that for which we find ourselves together in the name and around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, when gathered together on the first day of the week; and happy it is for us if, in the spirit that possessed Abraham, we know for what intent the Lord is found in our midst, and for what intent God, the Father, hath drawn near seeking worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, as also for what intent we ourselves are together. If that be so, we shall have exercised ourselves to have all the weeping and all the mourning passed before God in private; we shall have examined ourselves and availed ourselves of the provision He hath made for us, so that none shall be found in church defiled or empty; but that each one shall be clean and full, come together not for cleansing, not for blessing, but come to bless, come clean to give to God—come as those who are called, not to weep or mourn, but to know that the joy of the Lord is our strength to fulfil all that He expects from our hearts and at our hands.

This joy is not that which any may have except as they laugh with Him that laugheth. This joy that is our strength is a joy that He has, is a delight that fills His heart to find His people together at such a time. Why weep when God is glad? Why mourn when God is rejoicing? Why be sorry when laughter is filling His heart? He is glad, He has found His rest, and has come in the joy

of His heart to get from His people—to be blessed by them, to be exalted by them. Does He get His portion from us? that for which He draws nigh to us, and which He is so worthy to get. In the loaf what see we? That the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself entirely *for* us. In the cup, the counterpart of the loaf, what see we? That He hath given Himself unreservedly *to* us. Why are we not, therefore, glad? Why are not our hearts made to dance and our souls to exult in God our Saviour? Remember that cup is the cup of the New Covenant in His blood. What that meaneth we may well draw near with uncovered head and unshod feet to learn. Until we understand what that is, we have but feebly learned what a debt of love we owe to Him who hath wrought for us in the person of His Son. Young ones in Christ, learn what that covenant position of God meaneth! Inquire if you do not know; ask if you do not understand. As from Him to you, to us, it is the cup of the New Testament whereby are conveyed to us, as our own present and inalienable portion, all the sure mercies and indescribable blessings of that new, everlasting Covenant. What a debt of love we owe Him! Well may we sing, Lord Jesus, I love Thee; I will love Thee, and that more and more.

Weep not; mourn not; go your way; eat the fat and drink the sweet. Share in that which is God's alone; for the fat is Jehovah's portion. Rise from occupancy with your poor self to occupation with Him. Thank God for Him as the trespass offering; thank God for Him as the sin offering; thank God for Him as the peace offering; thank God for Him as the meat offering. Come higher, my soul! Rise, my soul; behold Him as the burnt offering, that which is almost¹ all for God, that which God has found in Him, that the outer skin of which God takes and

¹ The skin of the burnt offering was given to the priest who offered the burnt offering.

says, "Let Me wrap it round about you." Eat the fat, share God's joy in Him, for in Him God rests. Think of what God has got in Him, and rise beyond ourselves and hold communion sweet with God, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. Thus shall there be fitness to be sending portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, and there shall sound out from us as from the church in Thessalonica the Word of the Lord, so that none need testify of us, for our day-by-day life will manifest that we are seeking to serve the living and true God, and that we are waiting for His Son from heaven.

Thus also shall we know what it is to come together as the priestly ones of old, who gathered in the feasting time *in the light*, taking care that not only sons of Aaron were there, but that even Aaron's sons if defiled would not partake, but would be put outside the camp. Their first duty was to take the frankincense and offer it, so that God would have His portion, and then they could eat and drink at His bidding, as witness the bride in the Song of Songs, "Let my beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits." Immediately He answers, "I am come into My garden, I have eaten and I have drunk"; and then He says, "Eat, O friend: drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." But woe is me, as woe is us, if God getteth not, first of all, His portion from us.

THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH.

ON wings of the morning—glad morning of light,
 Came the dayspring of gladness, dispelling our night;
 It broke in its glory—bright ray from the throne,
 When the Saviour descended for sin to atone.

As gently as dewdrops distil on the blade,
 From the throne to the manger His journey He made
 Unknown the great crisis to earth-dwellers all—
 Great mystery veiled in the Babe in the stall!

The Father of Ages! the Monarch of all!
 He sought not an entrance in palace or hall;
 In humble guise girded—unknowing, unknown,
 He trod as a stranger the path to the throne!

“Obedient to death!” lo! the dark waters roll,
 And, sullenly surging, encompass His soul;
 Oh! moment of mystery—dumb with amaze,
 Transfixed by the vision I wondering gaze.

Ah! tremble, my spirit, appalled at the sight;
 Never more shall creation behold such a fight:
 Great issues, momentous, accrue from that strife!
 'Tis light or 'tis darkness! 'tis death or 'tis life!

He triumphs! He triumphs! lo! witness Him break
 The dark bands of death: see the Victor awake!
 Appalled every foeman lies vanquished and slain,
 From death's dread dominion He liveth again.

Begone every phantom and spell of the night,
 Fade, fade at the gleam of this ravishing sight;
 He has won my heart's homage—Oh! union Divine!
 Amazed I adore Him—I'm His—He is mine.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

X. JOTHAM (2 Chron. 27.).

ONE short chapter of nine verses, as in our Bibles, suffices to record the life of this king, absolutely the only one of whom not one bad thing is mentioned. For "the people doing yet corruptly" (ver. 2) could not be laid to his charge.

"And he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord. And the people did yet corruptly" (ver. 2). This statement makes the life of his father the sadder to contemplate, as it shows that Uzziah was a good king, but cut off suddenly from all his usefulness by one rash act actuated by that dread monster, Pride.

It seems to me that, for many reasons, the reign of Jotham is pre-eminently helpful to consider, and calculated, it may be, to inspire weary workers for God to-day with courage. Jotham went on steadily with and for God in a most difficult day, under most adverse circumstances (the people being in a bad condition), the converse of Proverbs 20. 4, "The slothful will not plough by reason of the winter; therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing." The opening chapters of Isaiah bring before us in detail what is mentioned briefly here: the truly lamentable state of Judah at this time. Hear the words of the Lord: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me." "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that deal corruptly: they have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 1. 2, 4). In verse 10 of Isaiah 1, and chapter 3. 9, they are likened in

wickedness to Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet there was much outward show of religion, their sacrifices being numerous.

Verse 23 gives us a sad picture of that which we had occasion to consider before: "loving gifts and following after rewards" to pervert the cause of the righteous—the marginal reading of Isaiah 3. 9 seems to give the right thought, "their respecting of persons." The women, it would appear, were as bad as the men, if not worse. We have a graphic description of their manners and ways from the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter to verse 24, which on reading one might almost forget that it is a description of the ladies of Jotham's day and not of our own, the only thing that betrays the difference being that the fashions prevailing in the East have always been different from those prevailing in the Western lands. It is evident that the woman thought of little more than dress and toilet, each one vieing with her neighbour in this respect.

Isaiah 5. gives us a further description of the corruption—the paragraph commencing at verse 22 is especially striking: "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." And yet the Lord had not abandoned His people, though dealing with them in judgment: "Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint" (Is. 1. 5). "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (ver. 19). Surely we have in all this a description of what we might truly call "winter."

We find nothing very wonderful as having taken place

during Jotham's reign—nothing that would be calculated to produce enthusiasm or inspire the natural man; the brief record of his life would likewise suggest and confirm this thought. It is not always those who make much noise and talk much who are the greatest workers, as has been said: "Usually the greatest boasters are the smallest workers; the deep rivers pay a larger tribute to the sea than shallow brooks, and yet empty themselves with less noise." He comes before us suggestive of that steady, plodding worker and waiter on God so much needed to-day—for "they also serve who only stand and wait"—who does not work so much for immediate results (albeit looking for such, too, and thankful when seen), as in the light of God's presence seeking His approval, patiently waiting for full results only to be known at the judgment-seat of Christ, and not the least His smile that will recompense all the sorrows of the way. It needs one to lay hold of the Living God in the energy of living faith to endure such a state of things so distasteful to the natural man.

Then, again, this reign would teach that matters cannot be set right in a day or two. It has taken many a long day to retrieve in even a little measure from the calamitous results consequent upon Jehoshaphat's failure; it will take many a long day yet (methinks Jotham knew this). How long has it taken Christians to-day to come to even a measure of knowledge in the will of God? When we consider the appalling darkness in which these countries were enveloped, and even still are, it ought to make us truly thankful to our God for the measure in which oneness of mind on many things has been attained. But there is yet much land to be possessed. May God deliver us from being satisfied with present attainment.

The following words of a well-known man of the present century are weighty, and though spoken in an entirely

different connection are not without point for us: "There were always a number of persons, many of them young and ardent, who thought that all evils might be cured by some reorganization of society, quite oblivious of the fact that all history taught them that such things worked slowly and by degrees."

Jotham "built" (ver. 3), "fought" (ver. 5). Unlike the man of Proverbs 18, 9: "He also that is slack in his work is brother to him that is a destroyer." In the time of Nehemiah likewise: "They that builded the wall, and they that bare burdens, laded themselves; every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon; and the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded" (Neh. 4, 17, 18).

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2, 15). "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2, 3).

Verse 6: "So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God." There was progress made in the life of Jotham as suggested here. How, the latter part of verse reveals. Methinks he had to suffer his share from the people who did yet corruptly, but, as Paul, long after, he ordered his ways "not as pleasing men, but God, which proveth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2, 4). May it be ours also to walk thus before our God, as was enjoined to Abram (Gen. 17, 1), "I am God Almighty (all-sufficient); walk before Me, and be thou perfect"; the which he did, as witness "The Lord, before Whom I walk" (Gen. 24, 40), in contrast to Ishmael (suggestive of the flesh), who dwelt in the presence of all his brethren (Gen. 16, 12).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
And lean not upon thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3, 5, 6.)

How much the glorious revival in Hezekiah's time may be traceable to the God-honouring, plodding life of this king one cannot exactly say; however, one thing is certain, that the work for God done during this reign was not without lasting results. For as sure as evil bears its abundant and abiding fruits—as we saw so amply demonstrated from the reign of Jehoshaphat, and perpetuated by the acts of other kings since—so sure will the good bear its abundant and abiding fruit likewise. It is not for Jotham and his like to beg in harvest and have nothing.

The sixteen years of the evil reign of Ahaz appear like the bitter blast of winter, the seed remaining in the cold ground ere it bursts and springs forth, eventually bringing forth its fruit to perfection, and then the song may be sung:—

“Lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom,
They give forth their fragrance.”

(Song of Songs 2. 11, 13.)

How this ought to encourage the weary labourer in the field to-day!

In this connection let us look at a few scriptures:—

“The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits” (2 Tim. 2. 6).

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain” (James 5. 7).

“Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for

in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (read Gal. 6. 6-10).

"For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10. 36).

"The patient in spirit (Jotham-like) is better than the proud in spirit (Uzziah-like)" (Eccles. 7. 8).

On the other hand, "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and the idle soul shall suffer hunger" (Prov. 19. 15).

If Uzziah sought great things for himself, Jotham sought them not.

Let us ever bear in mind that ours is a work not merely for time, but for ETERNITY.

XI. AHAZ. (2 Chron. 28. and Isa. 7.).

"I HAVE laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity," were words uttered through Isaiah the prophet some seven centuries before the One came of whom Isaiah spoke. "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matt 26. 56). And yet it is again written of Him, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53. 11). Surely the Lord's own words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12. 24), have been abundantly fulfilled.

The devoted life of Jotham (Jehovah is upright) considered in the light of this sad page of inspired history would seem to be a faint foreshadowing of Him who was the unwearied worker for God—the perfect servant of Jehovah—even He who has left us an example to follow His steps. But let it not be the fatal mistake of any who may read to seek to follow in His steps, as thousands are trying to do, before first having the sin question once and

for ever settled by resting upon Him, the Christ of God who suffered in the sinner's stead.

During the reign of Ahaz, Judah is brought into immediate contact with that great power, "Assyria." It is evident from a study of the book of Isaiah that at this time there were many parties in Judah even within the capital. One party who favoured help from Egypt (Isa. 30. and 31.). Another party that leant to Assyria: and a third, of whom was Isaiah, who urged a policy of quietness and waiting upon God. "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not. But ye said, No, for we will flee on horses: therefore shall ye flee" (Isa. 30. 15). It must be borne in mind that at this time Judah lay, as has been termed, a sort of buffer state between Egypt and Assyria—Assyria growing more formidable every day, whilst the great ancient power of Egypt was fast crumbling to decay. There is something very touching in the account given us in Isaiah 7. of events happening at this time.

Not only were there these great difficulties to contend with from without, but there appears to have been a disaffected people within. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind" (Isa. 7. 1, 2). One object of this alliance is told us in v. 6 of this chapter. "Let us go up against Judah and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal." Isaiah 8. 6 appears to allude

to traitors within who were seeking to prepare the way for the son of Tabeal. Has not this class of difficulty been one of the greatest to God's people at all times? a discontented traitorous people—a people within, and yet not within, because of principle, the New Testament counterpart of which we read: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us" (1 John 2. 19). "Even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things" (Acts 20., see also 1 Cor. 11. 19):

A class who grasp the time of greatest weakness, danger, and difficulty for the promotion of their own selfish ends (see Rom. 16. 17, 18). Instead thereof may we be shoulder to shoulder as one man (Ezra 3. 1, Neh. 8. 8), showing an unbroken front to the enemy.

But there seems to have been something underlying this, more perhaps than is seen on the surface. Satan had ever in view the destruction of the Royal line, "the seed of David"; again and again he attempts the same, again and again he is foiled. It is pretty evident from correlative history that the line of David was slender in the extreme just now. What was the murder of the innocents (Matt. 2.) but Satan seeking to accomplish his devices? And Herod no more knew that he was a tool in Satan's hands than did Peter, many years after, when he began to rebuke the Lord. "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee" (Matt. 16. 22).

About this time a great monarch arose in Assyria, called Pul or Tiglath Pileser III., sometimes called "the Roman of the East," the founder of the second Assyrian Empire, the first to establish an organized Empire with centralization of power. From this time onwards for about 150 years it was by far the greatest power in the

East, and the terror of all smaller States. The names of the Kings of Assyria in order from this time are as follows :—

Tiglath Pileser III. (2 Kings 15. 29, 16. 7, 10).

Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17. 3, 18. 9).

Sargon (Isaiah 20. 1).

Sennacherib (mentioned several times in Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah).

Esar-haddon (2 Kings 19. 37, Ezra 4. 2).

Assur-bani-pal (not mentioned by name).

Assur-ebilikim (ditto).

The word of the Lord through Isaiah to Ahaz at this time was, "Take heed and be quiet: fear not, neither let thine heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah" (Isaiah 7. 4).

Ahaz, instead of obeying the words of the Lord through the prophet and maintaining a policy of quietness, made a league with Tiglath Pileser (2 Chron. 28. 16.)

In the unearthed fragmentary records of this time, Ahaz is called "Jehoahaj," signifying "the Lord has laid hold." It would appear that in the inspired records the Divine element, "Jeho," is eliminated from the name, Ahaz having so profaned it.

Isaiah 7. 10 and 11 shows out the hypocritical character of this king, feigning himself to be most devout and reverent. "And the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." He had made up his mind, notwithstanding this mock modesty, what course he was about to pursue: consequently the words of prophetic denunciation from the prophet Isaiah which follow. All this too plainly shows that there may be (as often is the case) a most profuse sanctimonious-

ness, which is far from being a guarantee of true spirituality or godliness, and rather cloaks a most wicked and perverse mind against the will of God. In connection with this, one calls to mind Micah's mother (Judges 17.), "which didst utter a curse," and also almost in the same breath exclaims, "Blessed be my son of the Lord," "out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing" (James 3. 10).

It would occupy too much space to dwell fully on the details of this chapter (2 Chron. 28.), but from verse 16 we see the lamentable results consequent on the policy pursued, not giving heed to the Word of the Lord through His messengers. He did not sanctify the Lord of Hosts; He was not his fear, neither his dread (see Isaiah 8. 13); but rather put man in the place of the Lord, man becoming his fear, and man becoming his dread. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Prov. 29. 25).

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

Question and Answer.

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

QUESTION 141.—*What is the meaning of the holy kiss in 1 Corinthians 16, 20?*

The mode of salutation in different countries varies. Some of these modes are very strange among half-civilized nations. Among the Israelites we find that the manner of greeting was by kissing (1 Sam. 10. 1; 2 Sam. 15. 5, and 20, 9; Prov. 27. 6). Judas met his Lord with the kiss, but not a holy kiss; it was the kiss of a traitor. Were one whose life was bringing dishonour on the Lord's name saluting

with a kiss, it could not be a holy kiss; and probably the Corinthians, who had been brought out of heathenism, with all its debasing practices, had been abusing this friendly act, as we find they had abused the weekly feast, making it a time of feasting and drinking, so losing sight of the object for which they had come together. In France and Switzerland, when men meet, they kiss one another first on one cheek, then on the other; but to introduce such a custom into this land, where we salute one another by shaking hands, would be absurd. We can shake hands in the Lord.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 142.—*If a sister knows that one, who is absenting himself from the weekly feast, is so doing because he has taken offence at some brother, and yet this brother who has offended is not aware of having done so, would it be wrong for her to write and inform the one who has offended?*

Would not the right and godly thing be to seek to awaken the conscience of the one thus setting aside the command of God, and acting in the flesh, not only sinning by putting himself in the place of judgment, "for he that is without God judgeth" (1 Cor. 5. 13), but also by setting aside the Word of God, as seen in Heb. 10. 25, and Matt. 18. 15? In the Old Testament dispensation the one who sinned was to leave his gift at the altar and to go and be reconciled to his brother before he offered his gift, but in the Scripture referred to (Matt. 18. 15) the one who is sinned against is to go to his brother, and tell him of his fault alone first—not to neglect his own duty to the Lord in assembling with His saints.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

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

THE LORD'S COMING AND CONSEQUENT EVENTS.

II.

As the result of Israel's rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King, God's direct dealings with them as a nation were interrupted; and, turning from them, He disclosed a hidden purpose which before times eternal He determined to accomplish. This purpose is termed in Scripture "The Mystery," and was specially revealed to the Apostle Paul. The details of this can be learned from the epistles written by him (see Eph. 3. 3; Rom. 16. 25, 26, etc).

This is the direct work that God has been performing since His rejection of the Israel nation; and this is the work that He will continue to do until the Church, which is the Body of Christ, shall be completed and removed from the earth at the Coming of the Lord, to which we referred in our last paper.

During the time when this mystery is running its course Israel is scattered from their land; and to human eyes it would appear that God had forgotten all His wondrous promises to that people, and that His purposes with them, declared through the Prophets, could never be accomplished. The Word of God, however, shows clearly that the present condition of Israel is not accidental or final, but that it has been arranged in the counsels of divine wisdom. The present interval of Israel's blindness is God's opportunity for reaching out to the Gentile; and Israel's present condition must continue until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (see Rom. 11. 13 to end).

They continued not in God's goodness, and rejected the promised Messiah when He appeared in their midst, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us; crucify Him! crucify Him!" and through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles (Rom. 11. 11). The Gentile world, on which the sun of God's sovereign grace has been shining so brightly for well-nigh two thousand years, is also surely turning its back on God's goodness; and the severity which He manifested toward Israel for their like sin will be visited on the Gentiles, and God's dealings with Israel thereafter taken up again. "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," and so all Israel shall be saved.

Let no one, therefore, be ignorant of "this mystery" (Rom. 11. 25), that a hardening in part only hath happened to Israel; that they have not been finally cast off by God; that they are still beloved for the fathers' sake; and that God shall yet gather them from the ends of the earth to which they have been scattered and shall restore them to their own land. Ere this can be accomplished the cup of the Gentiles' iniquity in their rejection of God and His goodness must brim over; and Israel must be made to realize, by means of unparalleled tribulation, the enormity of their sin in crucifying the Lord's Anointed: How the iniquity of the Gentile reaches its climax, and how the veil is removed from the heart of Israel, must furnish subjects for future papers.

(To be continued.)

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

IX.

“ALL that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exod. 24. 7). So spake Israel in answer to Jehovah’s purpose, as expressed in chapter 19, 5, 6, and elsewhere. Then we read, “Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”

Here is a covenant relationship entered into, and ratified by the blood of sprinkling; not, as in chapter 12., connected with the salvation of the people, but with the claims of Jehovah upon them. This is a relationship based upon obedience to His will. In the light of this, please read the following scriptures: Acts 20. 28; Titus 2. 14; Hebrews 13. 12; 1 Peter 1. 2. The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Here it is sanctification, which is “through the blood of Jesus”; and “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” How important that we should apprehend the purpose for which He died, and that we should answer to it! Let us mean what we say when, like Israel, we declare, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.”

Soon the opportunity was given for Israel to give effect to their words. In Exodus 25. the Lord speaks unto Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take My offering. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” What unspeakable condescension and grace! To have Jehovah in their midst is indeed a privilege and an

honour beyond compare; yet it brings with it responsibilities great and grave. "Let them bring; let them make." Thus Jehovah appeals to their appreciation of His greatness, and to their subjection to His will. "See that ye make all things according to the pattern" is His definite word. No alterations, no modifications, no additions. Only what the Lord commanded; nothing more, nothing less. In chapter 40. we read, "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he." Then a cloud covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. This tells of Jehovah's approval of the work, and His acceptance of the tent as His dwelling-place.

In a later day Jehovah dwelt in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem, but to-day "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7. 48). Has God, therefore, no house? Indeed He has! "Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3. 6). What and where, then, is this house? First, the individual believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6. 19). Further, such believers, when builded together according to the pattern, are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3. 16). Further still, the many buildings fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2. 21). The Lord Himself is the centre, and around Him all find their place. "Unto Whom, coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2. 4, 5). "Let them measure the pattern," said God to His people of old through Ezekiel, and we would exhort His people to-day to do likewise. Let them measure themselves and their ecclesiastical associations by the pattern, and let them accept all that answers thereto, and reject all that does not.

In the *first day* of the first month of the second year the tabernacle was set up (Exod. 40. 17); and Jehovah takes

His place therein and speaks therefrom, and legislates as to their drawing near to offer unto Him (Lev. 1.). This answers to what we find in 1 Peter 2. 5 and Hebrews 13. 15, which please read. In the *fourteenth day* of the first month the feast of the passover was kept (Num. 9. 5). First the house, then the feast! This also is God's order to-day. The feast of remembrance is the privilege of those who compose the House of God.

In the first day of the second month (Num. 1. 1) the people are numbered by Jehovah's command. They are not together as a promiscuous crowd. There is Divine order—each is known, and all are numbered. The individuals, the families, the tribes, the camps—all forming *the camp*. In the midst Jehovah dwells. There is a definite "within," and a definite "without." They are commanded to put some "without the camp." This proclaims the discipline of the House of God. (See Matthew 18. 15-17, 1 Corinthians 5., Titus 3. 10 for kindred truths.) With the House of God are associated most hallowed privileges and most solemn responsibilities. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued.)

THE WORD.

"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."

As we read these words our minds naturally picture some glorious being, into whose presence we hardly dare come, a being before whom Solomon and all his glory would fade into utter insignificance, a being before whom all the earth would fall in adoring worship. Yet how different was the

reality! That poor, weary wanderer Who had not where to lay His head, the One of Whom it was scoffingly asked, "Is not this one the son of the carpenter?" the One Who was oftentimes an hungered and faint and weary, is He of Whom the Apostle John says, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

"Confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness — He Who was manifest in flesh."

As we ponder this mystery we call to mind the word which declares that we have entrance into the Holiest through the veil—that is, His flesh; and it is helpful to bear in mind that the flesh of the Lord Jesus was truly a veil, which, like the veil in the tabernacle of old, hid the glories within from the gaze of all, save those who were privileged to enter. And as men gazed upon the Lord Jesus as He walked about among them, the many saw nothing but the veil, the son of the carpenter.

But there were a few who were much with Him, a few to whom it had been revealed that this was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God; and although their faith was much tried, and many of those who had followed with them at first had turned back because of His "hard sayings," yet they continued true to Him; and when asked if they also would go away replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God." And their faith was rewarded. To them it was given to see within the veil, to behold the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In that upper room, the night in which He was betrayed, His loved and His own were privileged to enter into the very Holy of Holies, and to hear from the lips of the Holy One Himself those wondrous truths recorded in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of the Gospel according to John. And to the request of Philip that they might be

shown the Father the reply of our Lord was, "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." For this One was the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very image of His substance, being the very image and glory of God—the Word made flesh.

Do we not sometimes think, Oh, had I been there, had I only seen the Lord, how different it would have been? Let us remember the word of the Lord to Moses as he stood at the bush of fire, "What is that in thine hand?" Let us ask ourselves, brethren and sisters, "What is that book in our hands? Is it not the God-breathed Scriptures through which God reveals Himself as truly as He did in the Living Word? Can we not still hear the gentle rebuke of the Lord, "Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known Me?"?

Alas! how long it has been with some of us, and how little do we know of the Father; how often it gets leave to lie neglected on the shelf, and how often when we do take it down we fail to see beyond the veil, beyond the mere letter. It seems full of hard sayings, and we are oftentimes weary, and our faith is much tried; and some, it may be, like those of old, even turn back and walk no longer with the Word.

But let us remember that the letter of Scripture is like the body which our Lord took—the veil, that is, His flesh, a veil which hides from the eye of the flesh the glories which are therein revealed. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." And just as men saw nothing more in the Lord than in any other man, and said of Him, "Is not this one the son of the carpenter?" so many men see little more in the Bible than in any other book, although forced at times to admit, as they were of Him, "Never man

so spake." And they point to the human origin of the Bible as they did to that of the Lord, and so prove in themselves the truth of the Scripture which says, "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them."

But just as it was with those who followed with Him to the last, so will it be with us if we continue to hold fast the faithful Word. If, in spite of the many things which would tend to drive or entice us from the Word, we stick to it, follow it closely, and be much in its company, we will see more and more beyond the letter to the Lord Jesus Christ Who is therein revealed; and with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord we shall be transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

It will no longer be, "Is not this the son of the carpenter?" but, "We know that Thou art the Holy One of God." And as we grow more familiar with it we shall see shining from every page the very glory of God, as we learn therein to see and to know the Father.

Let us seek to have our "ears wakened morning by morning as they that are taught"—taught by the Living Word Himself Who has said:—

Blessed is the man that heareth Me,
 Watching daily at My gates,
 Waiting at the posts of My doors.
 For whoso findeth Me findeth life"—

even the life which is eternal, as we thus learn to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom He has sent.

ARTHUR S. McNAIRN.

THE RESURRECTION MORN.

WHY weepst thou? why mourning and forlorn?

Leave, leave the weakling tear to those by Satan led!
Go, greet the dawn of resurrection morn,
'Tis not a time to weep! He lives—Who once was dead!

See break the golden sunrise calm and clear,
Gilding with glory grand Mount Olive's shaggy brow;
The ling'ring shadows slowly disappear,
And pearly dewdrops gleam from every verdant bough.

Far wafts the fragrance on the morning's breath
Adown the vale by Kedron's limpid, rippling rill;
An ideal dawn! rejoicing Nature saith,
And hails her risen Lord—whilst thou art weeping still!

Be hushed the groan that rends thy sorrowing heart;
The Lord is risen indeed! the night away has passed;
That night beheld thy hopes and joys depart,
But brightly breaks the morn on which no shade is cast.

Nigh, nigh thee stands unknown thy risen Lord;
He lives to wipe those tears for ever from thine eyes!
In piercèd hands and feet and wound of sword
Go, learn His love for thee—a love that never dies!

Though now ascended to the throne above,
His God and Father thine, go, singing, journey on;
Whilst on thy vision bursts the land of love,
And nerves thee to the path where thy blest Guide
has gone.

“Why weepst thou?”—thus saith the Master still,
And speaks to thee, O heart, by sorrow's tempest torn;
Soon in the glory joy thy heart shall fill—
On darkest night of woe there dawns the brightest
morn!