

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, **examining** the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 19.

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

CONTENTS

Editorials.1, 11, 21, 31, 41, 49, 59, 71, 81 , 91, 99 , 107	<i>Page</i>
---------------------	--	-------------

THE EPISTLES OF PETER AND JUDE.

The First Epistle of Peter. The true grace of God.		
Faith and its proving	1. 1-12	2
Redeemed and holy	1. 13-25	13
A spiritual house	2. 1 - 1 0	23
Subjection to authority	2. 1 1 - 2 5	32
Submission to one another..	3. 1 - 1 2	42
Suffering	3. 13-22	51
Partakers of Christ's sufferings	4. 1-19.	62
Serving one another	5. 1 - 1 4	72
The Second Epistle of Peter. Contending for the Faith.		
The Truth	1. 1-21.	82
False teaching	2. 1-22	92
The coming judgement	3. 1-18.	100, 108
The Epistle of Jude. Contending for the Faith.		
Apostasy, the lessons of history verses	1 - 2 5	108
Seven E p i s t l e s		1
Simon Peter.		11
The problem of suffering in 1st Epistle of P e t e r		22
Aspects of suffering in 1st Epistle of P e t e r		60
O n e - a n o t h e r		6 8
Questions and Answers	9, 19, 30, 39, 58, 69, 80 , 89 , 97 , 105, 116	
Remarks or C o m m e n t s	10 , 29 , 39, 48, 57 , 68, 79, 89, 104 , 115	
Notice.		106 , 116

BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

JANUARY, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	1
Seven Epistles	1
The First Epistle of Peter:	
Faith and its p r o v i n g	2
Questions and A n s w e r s	9
R e m a r k s	10

EDITORIAL.

We welcome a few more study-corners this month, and it is our sincere desire that our meditations on the epistles of Peter **and** Jude will result in the final instruction of **the** former—" **But** grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"—being realised in us, with the outcome that to **Him** will be the glory both now and unto the **day** of eternity.

We regret our **page** issue is limited. Correspondents will assist much by observing the following:

- (a) Writing on one side of the paper, and leaving a margin;
- (b) expressing their thoughts as concisely as possible, and
- (c) forwarding papers to reach editors in good time.

"Grace to you and peace **be** multiplied. "

Jas. M.

SEVEN EPISTLES.

The structure and correlation of the pastoral epistles other than those written **by** the Apostle **Paul** is worthy of close study and meditation. The seven epistles from **James** to **3 John** occupy a unique position and form a vital link in the pattern of the Scriptures of truth. They were written towards the close of the first century and their ministry is apposite to days of apostasy. Their message is one of unified presentation which covers the whole field of Christian experience.

Faith is that which is before the apostle James in his letter to the Dispersion, not just the expression of faith upon realization of sinner-need and God's offer of eternal life in Christ, but of a practical outworking of that faith in day-to-day experience—" **Be ye** doers of the word and not hearers only. " Patience, which should **be** the proved fruit of faith's labours, will **be** the means whereby a correct attitude of mind and heart is achieved in relation to the Lord's return.

Hope, as will **be** seen in the present studies, is the subject of Peter's discourse to the Dispersion. The words of the Lord to Peter, recorded in John 21., **made** a lasting impression on Peter's mind. How was he to **feed** and tend the flock of God and to establish his brethren? The rock-man finds the answer in the "living hope, " being **made** available **by** the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the **dead**. What precious truths flow out from a true apprehension of the fruits of the work of Christ!—the establishment of a testimony on earth to render service for God, both Godward and manward. The second Epistle brings out the same truth, as is epitomized in chapter 1., verses 10, 11. Surely the hope of receiving worthy mention **by** name in that future **day** should spur us on to fight the good fight of faith, energized **by** the hope of an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Love characterizes the letters of the apostle John. In the Gospel he writes, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14. 23). This subject extends to love for the truth, as seen in his second Epistle, and has a part in uniting together the people of God.

Faith, hope and love are the three vital constituents of our common salvation, and whilst it is appreciated that Jude is not the last, chronologically, it would seem that the Spirit of God is not desirous of giving further stress to this side of things. Jude would fain have written of the "common salvation," but he is constrained otherwise. What is the message for those who would seek to know and carry out the will of God? "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." The future blessings of our heavenly Father will depend on the measure to which we apprehend and carry out the service of God. Jude draws illustrations from the Old Testament to prove that faithfulness will inherit great reward, and by way of remembrance stirs their hearts to maintain the testimony.

Our object in this paper is to take a detached view of these seven epistles and note the completeness of the wonderful framework. Decadence of spiritual life and neglect of the truth are present dangers, but may it be that, in view of the Lord's soon coming, we shall hold fast the faithful word in God's House, being helped by the ministry in these letters.

L. H. Taylor,

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Faith and its proving.

(1 Peter 1. 1-12).

From **Paisley and Barrhead**.—The basic framework on which the letter is built is concerning "... the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (verse 11). The title "Christ" is linked with sacrifice or suffering and "Jesus Christ" with His resurrection and glorification. The purpose of the letter is, no doubt, the establishing and strengthening of the saints in the many trials that lay before them, as summed up well in such verses as 1. 13, 5. 8-10, in fulfilment of the Lord's words—"when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren" (Luke 22. 31, 32).

Peter writes to the "sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus..." What Dispersion? Was it the scattering which arose about Stephen (Acts 8. 1)? but of that we only read—"throughout the region of Judia and Samaria." Or is this Dispersion related to John 7. 35? [1] See also Acts 2. 5-13. Is it possible that men from these states and provinces were saved under Peter's ministry at Pentecost, and later found a place in churches of God planted by Paul.

They are called "... elect... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." These words, considered in conjunction with Ephesians 1. 4-14 and Romans 8. 29, 30, teach us much on a difficult subject. Election, or choosing, is on the basis of divine foreknowledge. The Holy Spirit is sanctifying, or setting us apart, "... unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The obedience is on our part as true bondservants of God. The aspect of election which is seen here is primarily that of election to service, and we suggest that Hebrews 9. 11-22 (chiefly verse 14) considered along with Hebrews 12. 24 would indicate that the sprinkling here spoken of in 1 Peter is conscience-cleansing with a view to divine service. In Hebrews 10. 22, we see this purification in preparation for the highest service we can engage in, namely, divine worship in the Holies. Leviticus 4. was also referred to in connexion with sprinkling and "the whole congregation" (verse 13) was compared to all the saints in an assembly of God, "a ruler" (verse 22) to an elder, and "one of the common people" (verse 27) to an individual saint.

Following the initial paragraph of salutation, we read those majestic words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"—found only in three epistles (2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Peter).

In verse 5 we read ". . . guarded through faith." Most thought this referred to the daily exercise of faith in the Christian life, which faith is proved by the manifold temptations spoken of, and is God-glorifying. (See 1 Peter 4. 12 and Hebrews 11. 32-40). "Receiving the end of your faith. . ." This we considered to be a present experience, the present appreciation and "assurance" (Hebrews 11. 1) of salvation by faith. Salvation is here considered in its fullest aspect. This salvation was the subject study on the part of the prophets. It was suggested that perhaps New Testament prophets were referred to, and that "the sufferings of Christ", which they testified beforehand, were in fact the things which the Christian should suffer in association with the name of Christ. [2]. *J. D. T.*

From Atherton. —Peter addresses this epistle to the sojourners of the Dispersion scattered in five provinces of Asia Minor and not to any particular church of God, although all those addressed were in churches of God, which form the spiritual House of God (1 Peter 2. 5). The object of the epistle was to strengthen the saints.

The living hope (verse 3) is a living expectation connected with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and with the incorruptible inheritance, and includes the anticipation of the Lord's coming again for His saints. The revelation of Jesus Christ (verse 7), it was suggested, was the Lord's coming again, which includes both His return to the air and to the earth.

Several points of view were expressed about the salvation of verses 9 and 10. Some viewed this as salvation from the presence of sin which will be realized when the Lord returns. Others thought that it was the present-day salvation from the power of sin, whilst the third mind was that it was the entire salvation, comprehending all three aspects of the salvation of our souls. [3].

G. Sankey, J. Bullock.

From Kilmarnock. —In contrast to Paul, Peter does not address his epistles to any particular church of God. His readers had heard the Gospel and had exercised faith in Christ as their Saviour and because of that the apostle says they were "elect" or chosen of God the Father, sanctified of the Spirit, and as obedient ones were owning Christ as Lord. [4].

Trials have been the portion of God's people in all ages for it is by these that God proves the faith of His people.

Hebrews 11. gives a list of men of God who were proved, and who overcame by their faith. The apostle points out that the proving of their faith was more precious than that of gold, because it would result in praise, glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We understand this will be at the judgement seat of Christ when works of saints will be tested. Again, our faith may be proved by being prosperous in this world's goods (1 Timothy 6. 17-19). Alas! how many have failed, who were once faithful, through love of the present world! Demas is a striking example (2 Timothy 4. 10). *A. G. S.*

EXTRACTS.

Birkenhead. —Peter and James use the expression "the Dispersion," but James adds "to the twelve tribes," and thus obviously he has believers of the Jewish nation in mind. Peter's epistle contains much to suggest that he was writing to Gentiles. We therefore suggest that he was not referring to the Dispersion of the Jews, but possibly to the dispersion of the disciples caused by persecution. [5].

A prominent thought in this epistle is the "holy nation," and it was suggested that this is the thought brought before us in verses 1 and 2. The election is not unto salvation, but unto obedience, the sanctification of the Spirit being the sanctification of believers unto service [6]. The sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ

is not the blood of redemption, **but** the blood of the covenant. (See Exodus 24.). Some, however, thought that the sanctification of the Spirit took place at the new birth.

The salvation spoken of in this portion is yet to **be** revealed. The knowledge that **we** have yet to experience the full measure of our salvation should strengthen us for the trials we **may** have to suffer because of our faith. Each trial of the believer, when his faith prevails, fits him for further experiences which will bring honour for eternity.

It was thought that the revelation of Jesus Christ was **a** revelation to his saints. It would therefore cover the time when the saints would appear before the judgment seat of Christ, when the trials and faith of the saints would **be** seen in their true light. **We** should draw **a** distinction between the inspiration of the prophets and the inspiration of their writings. Their prophecies were the result of the work of the Spirit of Christ which was in them, but this does not justify the thought that the men were inspired.

That which the angels desire to look into is future, when the saints shall see and share the glories of Christ. [7].

R. H., R. L. S.

From Birmingham. —In considering faith and its proving, it is necessary for us to ascertain what "faith" is. It is "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (Hebrews 11. 1). From this statement we might say then, that, regarding the precious promises of God given to us concerning things yet to be revealed, their reality to us finds its substance in faith.

Each saint has an allotment of faith. This, it would appear, is the faith necessary for salvation, "by grace are ye saved through faith." [8]. Everyone has **a** competence to believe, or exercise faith.

Our faith is tried and purified, as by fire, in the " manifold temptations " we endure. No doubt in all believers to-day are fleshly elements mingled with the divinely given faith. These must be purged by the trials which faith alone can endure. The proving of faith would seem to be necessary in order to reveal purify, strengthen and enrich faith.

There would appear to be a threefold presentation of faith. Verse 5 speaks of our being " guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. " This would appear to be the initial faith which we place in Christ to secure salvation. " The proof of faith " (verse 7) is **day-by-day** faith which we must continually exercise in order that we may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 9 speaks of " the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, " and indicates the **future day** when faith shall give place to sight. [9],

Faith, righteousness and salvation are inseparable and interdependent; all three are **dealt** with in the portion under discussion, and **may be** viewed also, in three aspects.

H. Smith, K. Robertson.

From Bradford, Leeds and Halifax. —This epistle was probably written between A. D. 60 and A. D. 65, to Christian Jews, who were living as "sojourners" in a strange land. The bearer of this letter was probably Silas.

Much of the life of Peter is not recorded, **but** in this letter **we** have sufficient evidence to show that the apostle had continued to **be** exercised with spiritual matters.

The apostle deals here clearly with the doctrine of the new birth (verses 3-5), and shows its purpose in the use of the word " unto " on three occasions, namely, (1) unto **a** living hope, (2) unto an inheritance, and (3) unto **a** salvation ready to **be** revealed. Peter reminds them that they were begotten again **by** the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the **dead**, and that **by** the almighty power of God they were guarded.

F. Cannings.

From **Cardiff**. —The reference to the " sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ " casts us back in thought to Exodus 24.. As at Sinai, the sprinkling of the blood was linked with the avowed obedience of the people, so the sojourners of the Dispersion had been constituted, with others, a covenant people, upon obedience to the word of the Lord, which avowal had been ratified by the " sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. "

These saints had been begotten " again unto a living hope, " their hope finding its anchor in the personal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being absorbed with such a hope, they were also confident of a future inheritance, since they were " joint heirs with Christ. " The adjectives used to describe this inheritance forcibly remind us of 2 Corinthians 5., yet we would not care to limit the extent of the inheritance to the receiving of the spiritual body.

In prospect of this soon approaching salvation, a salvation which shall free us finally from all human limitation and bondage, we greatly rejoice, although for a little while we are beset with sore griefs and trials. Earth is often embittered that heaven may be endeared.

It was in such times of adversity that the proof of their faith would be most apparent. The evidence of their dependence on God would be most manifest in such a crisis, and the genuineness of their faith unmistakable.

In verse 11 the Holy Spirit is referred to as " the Spirit of Christ " because of the specific reference to the work of Christ. It is a profound yet wondrous fact that angels desire to look into this salvation; especially when we consider that they are the highest created intelligences, fully conscious of the worthiness of the One to whom they ascribe their ceaseless paean of praise. *J. C. T.*

From **Cowdenbeath**. —The election of those to whom Peter wrote was according to the foreknowledge of God and had taken place in eternity past. The setting apart of these persons, in time, by the Holy Spirit was an endorsement of that election.

Completing his greeting Peter bursts forth into doxology. How fitting that this persecuted people, who no doubt had lost earthly possessions, should be reminded of the fact that they have an eternal inheritance! It cannot be marred. It will not pass away. The death and resurrection of Christ has secured this inheritance for them. Their entering in to it is unconditional. They are guarded by the power of God through faith unto complete salvation. The proving of their faith by means of the trials that had come upon them would redound to their praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is such a wonderful subject that angels desire to inquire more closely into it. The subject of Christ's sufferings and glories was of absorbing interest to Old Testament prophets although they knew it was unto others they were ministering. *James K. D. Johnston.*

From **Crowborough**. —This letter would be a source of comfort and joy to the scattered saints, some of whom probably were converted on the day of Pentecost. What a glorious reality was the resurrection to Peter 1 To him it had meant new hope, yea, the beginning of a new life consecrated to the service of Christ, and the apostle reminds them that it is a divine power alone which keeps them until that salvation is revealed.

Faith, in its very nature, implies a degree of trial, and trials are sent to prove its sincerity, for as gold loses nothing by the removal of its dross, so faith loses nothing in the fiery trial.

What a privilege is ours to-day, to sound forth the gospel of the glory of God's grace, when we realize that not only did the prophets search diligently for the time when it should be brought to man, but even the angels in heaven desired to look into such a grand and glorious theme! *D. N. B.*

From **Dumbarton**. —The special mission of the apostle Peter, as entrusted to him by the Lord (John 21.), is beautifully portrayed in this epistle.

A dual force is seen at work in verse 5; (1) the power of God, (2) the faith of the individual. Note that this power will never fail us, but will guard us, according to the measure of our faith, right on until the revelation of the salvation in the last time. The value placed by God on the proof of an individual's faith is more precious than furnace-proved or refined gold. To us it means the hope of gaining *' praise and glory and honour. " So we see here the twofold outcome of the dual force; guarded by His power in this life, glorified and honoured in the life to come.

D. G. Miller.

From **Edinburgh**. —Persecution had driven those sojourners forth, but had separated them as a people apart, and for such the apostle now prays, that grace and peace be multiplied.

This work in them is according to God's great mercy. Here we touch the root! It is only, always, by His mercy that we too have been begotten unto a living hope. This new birth and the certainty of this hope are made known to us by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

Our inheritance is sure, because it is vested in the living, glorified Lord, and is reserved for us. Meanwhile we are kept and guarded by the power of God, through faith, unto a salvation to be revealed. Temptation still troubles us and causes grief, but we are assured that God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we can stand, but seeks to prove our faith that it may be purified and refined.

J. Hope.

From **Hayes**. —The living hope, the inheritance incorruptible and the salvation ready to be revealed are three wonderful facts in which we should greatly rejoice. These things are sure and certain, yet during the journey towards the glorious day of redemption, our " holding fast " unto them may slacken and even fail. It is only as by faith we appropriate to ourselves the power of God, with the Holy Spirit's aid, that we are guarded and kept even unto that time when our works will be tried and our faith proved. " Whom not having seen ye love "—could a finer watchword be found? Verses 8 and 9 speak of a faith so strong that future events are deemed as having been accomplished. How perfectly these two verses are in accord with Hebrews 11. 1!

H.

Y.

M.

From **Ilford**. —Peter wrote to sojourners of the Dispersion—strangers, pilgrims, exiles. The marginal reading " trials " for " temptations " in verse 6 seems more appropriate. When put to grief in trials, we may rejoice because they are from God, but temptations are not from God. [10.]

In verse 2 we see the Trinity at work; the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ, in foreknowledge, sanctification, and sprinkling of the blood. What is meant by this expression? [11]. The association in this verse with obedience, however, suggested " the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel, " the blood that was sprinkled on the altar and on the people (Exodus 24. 6-8).

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes hope, *not* new birth, for we were born again by God's mercy [?]. We greatly rejoice, not just in the salvation of verse 5, but in three things consequent upon new birth—a living hope, an inheritance incorruptible, a salvation ready to be revealed. The word " unto " prefacing these three shows their relationship to and dependence upon the new birth.

"When Christ... shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory"—here is the ultimate of faith, the final salvation when " we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. "

Gold is proved **by** fire, **but** faith is proved **by** " trials. " The principle of our works being tried **by** fire is quite different, in which it is not faith that is tested, but wood, hay, and stubble that are burnt to reveal the things of value to God.

C. J. T.

From Liverpool. —What a salutation to those Christian **Jews** of the Dispersion " . . . elect according to foreknowledge... in sanctification... unto obedience and sprinkling"! God **saw** from eternity past. Obedience is of paramount importance to God. " To obey is better than sacrifice. "

Obedience and sprinkling of His blood are linked together, **just as in a day** gone **by** Moses sprinkled Israel with blood when they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken will **we** do and **be** obedient" (Exodus 24. 6-8).

" If ye love **Me**, ye will keep My commandments" (John 14. 15). This **state** of nearness in obedience should characterize **us** here **as** indeed it will in heaven.

The resultant hope not only gilds with glory the erstwhile cheerless portals of the tomb, **but** also embraces the fulness that will **be** found in His eternal presence; namely an inheritance, so opposite to any earthly gain—incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth **not**.

The vehicle through which assurance of these things is brought to **us** is faith. It is the key to **every** blessing, for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11. 6).

Faith is an exercise which God cannot take for granted, **but** which has special value when proved. Gold, when the furnace fire isolates it from the dross, becomes a thing of worth. So the faith which God proves, in the furnace of affliction, is more precious than gold that perisheth, and will invest the patient soul with praise, glory and honour **at** the revelation of **Jesus** Christ.

Boy Roughley, W. H. S.

From London, S. E. —From chapter 5. 13 it **seems** probable that this letter was written from Babylon. Some wondered if there was a church in Babylon. Edersheim in his " Life and Times of **Jesus** the Messiah, " **says**, " This Eastern Jewish community in Babylon was intensely Hebrew. It was among them that **Peter** wrote and laboured amid discouragements of which we can have little conception. "

The Epistle is typical of the author. He writes **as** one who has known the trials and difficulties which are in the journey of faith. It is vigorous, terse and to the point.

" To the Elect, " governs all that follows.

Then follows a wonderful doxology akin to Paul's in Ephesians 1. A glorious stream of praise is **traced** back to the fountain head ever the God and Father of our Lord **Jesus** Christ. The **use** of the word " again " (verse 3) was taken **as** similar to John 3. 3, " Born anew. " Our hope is in a living Man, a Man who has been raised from the **dead** and who now sits on God's eternal throne. The hope is not only living **but** "lively" (A. V.). Our inheritance is in substance "incorruptible, " in purity "undefiled, " in beauty "unfading, " and in **surety** "reserved. " Then, **as** regards ourselves, **we**, too, **by** the power of God, are **guarded** through faith unto a salvation that is also ready to be revealed in the last time.

The apostle presumes therefore that they are rejoicing greatly in this, though they are for a little while being put to grief in manifold temptations. It is well to notice here that " suffering " is one of the keywords of the epistle. **But**, he **says**, these trials are for a purpose. When God **sees** faith he **must see** if it is true and genuine, and it is very precious to Him to find it proved so **by** experience.

This salvation was contrasted with the salvation of verse 5, and verse 5 was thought to **be** salvation from sin penalty and again to the **future** salvation of the life lived here. Some thought it referred only to our eternal salvation [12].

One last word; these things are great, mysterious and wonderful, affecting each believer, bringing him from his degraded state, making a new creature of him and raising him to the heavenly places to dwell with their Saviour in heaven. Whether even the angels knew the full story of the wonderful union of their adored Lord and Master to His Church it is difficult to say (but presumably they did not, according to Ephesians 3. 1-11).
Harold J. Owles.

From **Willington Quay**. —Peter addresses those who are undergoing bitter trials because of their testimony amongst the people of the countries mentioned in verse 1. Their call, both as individuals and as a people collectively, was as a result of the working of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as seen in verse 2, and also 2 Thessalonians 2. 13, 14.

This, it was suggested, meant the election **by** the Father, followed **by** the setting apart and preparing **by** the Holy Spirit and then the obtaining or realizing of salvation **by** the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ [13]. Meanwhile (if need **be**), we may undergo various trials, but this has in view the perfecting and proving of our faith, but we will not **be** tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10. 13).

We wondered if the salvation mentioned in verse 5 was the same as in verses 9 and 10 [14]. Verse 9 would **be** salvation in its entirety with every phase of God's dealing with men, body, soul and spirit, reaching finality.

We thought that for the Church (The Body) " the rapture " would **be** the end of faith, but as this was a mystery first revealed to Paul, the prophets had no part in its foretelling.
C. B.

From Brantford. —We thought of the definition of faith in Hebrews 11. as being appropriate here. What is the point of all this suffering? The apostle puts God's value on it all when he says that it is more precious than refined gold. We can rightly say our early brethren " bought the truth " in a way not experienced by us. It is also beneficial to note that Peter availed himself of this opportunity to uphold the precious heritage of God, affording them through His Spirit-given words, much to encourage and strengthen. We too have felt and are feeling the benefits of his words.

Peter ever sought to magnify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So he magnifies His Master here in verses 10-12. John said ** Grace and Truth. " Peter speaks here about the " Grace " that was brought to us. So great was this salvation that prophets and holy men of God sought it out diligently and their seeking was not unrewarded for it was revealed to them that what they were writing about involved a future day and a future people. Now we have come into those blessings.

According to verse 12 the Gospel is to be preached in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, who transformed Peter from a man who denied His Lord in the high priest's palace, to the bold and powerful preacher of Acts 2. and onward.

Alex Sproul

From Hamilton, **Ont.** —We considered that those referred to as of the " Dispersion " were these early saints who suffered persecution after the death of Stephen [15]. This proving of their faith was more precious than gold that perisheth. Job puts it in these words, " When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold. " This proving by fire brings out the refined, precious, gold.

Faith is not necessarily great in our salvation at the first. But faith is increased through experience and faith is necessary for experiences. The faith of the Thessalonians grew exceedingly.

Faith is but **the** channel through which the power of God works. **But** faith will **be** terminated [?] (**verse 9**) when it gives place to sight, **and** hope to possession, of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away [**16**].

The words " if **need be** " are suggestive of the overruling hands of the all-wise God.

p. Thomas, J. Stewart.

From Toronto, Ont. —We consider that the thought conveyed in the word " Dispersion " carries **us** back to the days following Pentecost, when the Church **in** Jerusalem was scattered. This is borne out by John **7. 35**, as a **name** given to **Jews** who were estranged from their country and domiciled **in** Gentile countries [**17**]. The language also with which the apostle addressed the **saints** would **be** foreign to a stranger to Jewish customs, namely, " the blood of sprinkling, " and the " vain manner of life handed down, " etc.

He then speaks of the trials which have beset them in the studied language of verse 7. Peter seemed to delight in the **use** of that intimate word " precious " in describing the faith which they displayed during the testings, which they were called upon to endure, for " the **name** of Christ " (1 Peter 4. 14).

We have the true wealth of that faith in that it is " more precious than gold that perisheth "; and the **means** of its testing, " proved by fire. " They had counted the cost of the " truth, " knowing it had to **be** bought and knowing also that they would not **be** exempt from suffering. **But** they were to receive (a present possession), the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Surely this was more than a promise ! The **saints** here, however, were in a happy condition, for their ultimate salvation was no less real to them, **in** that they had made it a present possession, having entered into the joy and lived **in** the reality of their eternal life in a remarkable way. Surely the heavenly inheritance was become more real than the fading one of earth.

N. K.

From Melbourne. —At first the tendency of the church of God **was** to keep together, **but** after the death of Stephen, **at** which Saul was first mentioned, persecution scattered the saints far and wide (see Acts **8. 1**). It **is** to these sojourners (R. V.) or travellers **in** a foreign land, that the apostle addresses his first epistle, and calls them " elect, " bound by that unbroken chain of golden links that stretch from eternity to eternity: foreknown, foreordained, called, justified **and** glorified (Romans **8. 29, 30**). Faith **is** first exercised **in** salvation, " receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. " Faith, however, continues to **be** exercised, with a succession of experiences, **in** the life of the believer and varies **in** quantity with different individuals! The spiritual man proves faith experimentally, **in** his regenerated life, **as** he journeys to that city not made with hands. He **is** on a night journey through this dark **scene** of sin. **Jesus** and His disciples were once on a journey by night, during which **He** asked them a very searching question: " **Have** ye not yet faith ? "

Great faith and little faith are recorded **in** scripture. Faith stopped the mouth of lions (Daniel 6. 22). The centurion's faith, coupled with humiliation, brought a high commendation from the Lord **Jesus** (Matthew 8. 10).

Tribulation and manifold trials refine our faith: the Refiner of gold **ceases** not to apply the heat until **He can** see his image, unmarred **by** dross, in the pot of gold.

S. Stoope.

Questions and Answers.

From Birmingham. —Did Adam exercise faith in believing the commandment of God? (Genesis **2. 16, 17**).

Answer. —**Of** course, he **must** have exercised faith **if** he believed God's commandment. Believing is the exercise of faith. **He** believed God till he disobeyed; disobedience signifies that a person refuses to **be** persuaded. —J. M.

(Other questions left over till next month).

REMARKS.

[I] Paisley and Barrhead. —The dispersion here is **that of John 7. 85.** J. M.

[2] Paisley and Barrhead. —" The sufferings of Christ " are His own personal sufferings, not the sufferings of Christ which abound unto **us, as Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 1. 5.** The prophets are Old Testament prophets. J. M.

[3] Atherton. —The salvation mentioned in **1 Peter 1. 9, 10** has to do with " the end of your faith " not with the beginning of it. It is concerning this completed salvation, when saints shall be completely saved from the sorrows, sufferings and sin of this present condition of things to share in the glories of Christ's presence and kingdom that is here spoken of. J. M.

[4] Kilmarnock. —Peter undoubtedly has the picture of Israel before his mind as he writes. If the election of **1 Peter 1. 1, 2** has salvation in view why in **2 Peter 1. 10** does he exhort these **same** people to make their calling and election sure ? Can the election of Ephesians **1. 3-5** be made more sure ? There election is **based** on foreordination, but in **1 Peter 1.** it is according to foreknowledge; the one has the day of adoption in view, when all saved ones will **be** adopted, but in Peter election has service in view, elect—unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This takes us back in thought to what happened at Sinai. J. M.

[5] Birkenhead. —James and Peter refer to the **same** dispersion. J. M.

[6] Birkenhead. —The sanctification of the Spirit is that sanctification which is true of all saved people, not sanctification in the truth. Note **2 Thessalonians 2. 13:** " God chose **us** from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth " J. M.

[7] Birkenhead. —**Yes,** but the angels desired to look into Christ's sufferings as well as the following glories. J. M.

[8] Birmingham. —Faith by which believers **are** saved comes by hearing, but faith, as in **1 Peter 1. 1** is obtained, or obtained by lot, quite a different matter. J. M.

[9] Birmingham. —The faith of verses **5, 7** and **9** is identical. J. M.

[10] Ilford. —The word " temptations " as in verse **6** is that by which the Greek word *Peirasmois* is usually rendered, and the word (*Dokimion* as in verse **7** "proof"). *Dokimazo* as in verse **7** is usually rendered "to try, to test by fire, as in the assaying of metals. " The latter word in the **New Testament...** almost always implies that the proof is gloriously surmounted, the proved is also approved. " The melancholy fact that men so often break down under temptation gives to *Peirazein* a predominant sense of putting to the proof with the intention and the hope that the ' proved ' may not turn out ' approved, ' **but** ' reprobate ' ; may break down under the proof. " J. M.

[11] Ilford. —See Cardiff and other papers. J. M.

[12] London, S. E. —See Atherton's paper. J. M.

[18]. Willington Quay. —It is not salvation here, but obedience which has in view divine service. J. M.

[14] Willington Quay. —Yes, the **same** salvation. J. M.

[15] Hamilton, Ont. —No ! See paper from Paisley and Barrhead. J. M.

[16] Hamilton, Ont. —Peter says, " receiving the end of your faith, " that is the end or issue of their faith, but it is quite another thing, I think, to say that faith, that is the principle of faith, will terminate. Note how it says of the Lord even now, " I will put My trust in Him " (Hebrews **2. 13**). J. M.

[17] Toronto, Ont. —These are two quite different scatterings. The Dispersion (*Diaspora*) were the Jewish people scattered in Gentile countries, not simply saints that were scattered through persecution from Jerusalem. J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

FEBRUARY, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	11
Simon Peter.	11
The First Epistle of Peter:	
Redeemed and Holy.	13
Questions and A n s w e r s	19

EDITORIAL.

Some very welcome letters accompanying the papers from brethren far and near have been received. The general expression is one of increased interest and spiritual joy in the study of Peter's and Jude's epistles. We can visualize our fellow-students gathered together, in the antipodes, in the great North American Continent, and in the British Isles, all intent on digging out the precious things from the inspired Word. Peter loves that word—"precious". By it he describes the price of our redemption,—"precious blood... even the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1. 19). It is the word that defines God's estimation of His beloved Son (1 Peter 2. 4 and 6). We can rejoice with Peter in sharing an equally *precious* faith and in being the possessors of "His *precious* and exceeding great promises" (2 Peter 1. 1 and 4). And although the "need be" of " manifold temptations " be our lot, it is possible for the proof of our faith to be "more *precious* than gold that perisheth" (1 Peter 1. 7). Beloved, "for you therefore which believe is the *preciousness* " that is found in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our God takes note of these study-circles, for therein are brethren eager to apprehend the message contained in His word, and to be found doing His will here on earth. In the dark days of Malachi such a God-fearing company was the subject of the writing of " a book of remembrance " (Malachi 3. 16). Again, before the Master returned to Heaven, after His passion and resurrection, we find Him seeking out another such company and speaking to them sweet peace (John 20. 19).

Amidst a world distraught with fears, such gatherings are havens of rest.

*Jas. Martin**

SIMON PETER.

The world of literature is fast becoming larger and larger. Authors, books, and readers are on the increase. Paradoxical though it may seem, yet how true, that in this age of speed and hurry people are finding more time to read! Readers' tastes vary considerably, but in choosing a book the name of a well-known, highly reputed author satisfies. For the most part it matters nothing what the author's ethics are. His morals, mode of conduct in life, his beliefs and the like are of small account. The readers' approach is for a book to absorb the interest, and above all to be thrilled.

In contrast to all **this we**, as Bible-students, belong to a vastly different literature world. The Holy Scriptures which bear the **unique**, ineffaceable stamp of divine authorship, are the centre of our appeal. These **sacred pages we** must find time to read, study, and meditate upon. Here alone will we get full, satisfying reading for our spiritual appetites. How precious **if** we have allowed the Holy Spirit graciously to operate so that we find the word of God absorbingly interesting—a thriller indeed! It speaks so gloriously of **Him** of whose ineffable **Name** one has written—

*" It thrills with joy the heart of God,
This name of the Incarnate Word. "*

Thus, **as we** engage ourselves in happy, thoughtful, earnest study of Peter's Epistles **we** are immediately **face to face** with the apostolic writer, Simon Peter! The Holy Spirit **has** already introduced **him** to us, and thus **we** treasure the background to Simon Peter's life and service—his words and ways. **We** know the man, **the** humble fisherman who heard the Shepherd's voice and responded gladly thereto. **He** walked with the Lord. **He** talked with Him. Query after query reveal only too well how Simon Peter hung intently on the Lord's words. **We** witness **his** lore, zeal, courage, and devotion to his loved Master.

What of his beliefs? **We** have learned to treasure his considered judgement, and yet spontaneous response to the Lord's pertinent question, " But who say ye, that **I am** ? " " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. " The Lord again questions, " Would ye also go away ? " Again it **is** Simon Peter who replies, " 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. "

We see him too on the sadder **side** of his life. **He**, the recognized leader of **the** twelve, **is** probably one of the chief contenders, as they sought to decide " who **is** accounted to **be** greatest. "

But these unhappy traits are not his for ever. A change has been brought about! How? " *The sufferings of the Christ* " !

Again and again in his epistles this **is** Simon Peter's delightful theme, for he had been **a** witness of the sufferings of Christ. The sight of **His** suffering Saviour, even in the midst of sad circumstances that concerned his major failing, had rooted out those despicable things which Satan was using to mar an otherwise fine, stalwart, and noble character.

Instead of impulsiveness and impetuosity **we see** the staid, sober man, and witness **a** meek, mellowed nature. It **is** not strife, jealousy, and contention, now, but an exhortation to be tender-hearted, and humble-minded, and to fellow-elders to gird themselves with humility. **We** believe that Simon Peter practised what he taught !

The Lord had said to him, " Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you **as** wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, *Stablish thy brethren.* " "

The Chief Shepherd had said, —" Feed My lambs, . . . tend My sheep, . . . feed My Sheep. " Simon Peter obeyed, becoming the faithful under-shepherd. The crown of glory will **be** assuredly his !

Beloved fellow-students, **as** we peruse Peter's epistles together with that of Jude, may it **be** our joyous experience to emulate such **a** noble character, and long indeed to realize yet more and more the wondrous value of Simon Peter's shepherd-hearted desire, expressed in his last inspired words in the Holy Spirit, " But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour **Jesus** Christ. " " To **Him** **be** the glory both' now and for ever, Amen. " (2 Peter 3. 18),

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Redeemed **and** Holy.

(1 Peter 1. 13-25).

From Hamilton, Ont. —It is impossible for mere man to have complete control over every act he commits. This **is** proven by the fact that the only one who ever kept the law, **as** given to Moses, was the Lord Jesus. It is much more difficult to control the thoughts which pass through the mind. In view of this, Peter's words, "Girding up the loins of your mind," contain a very necessary exhortation. A girdle holds the body firm, giving protection and firmness to it for conflict or for hard, heavy labour. How often the thought of our Lord's soon return causes us to take stock of ourselves and consider our walk as Christians! It is in consideration of this wonderful event that Peter writes. When sinful thoughts are driven from a man's mind the works of darkness drop off. As John says, "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He **is** pure." From Romans 12. 2 we note the power of the mind, in transforming a comparatively useless life to one in which great service is rendered to God. When our minds are fixed on our Lord's return our hearts tend to holiness and **the** former lusts have not the same appeal.

Righteousness **is** based on obedience to the law. It has to do with acts. Holiness goes further than this. The Lord Jesus was righteous because He never sinned, but the reason why **He** never sinned was that **He** was holy. **Of** Him it was said, "**He** hated iniquity" (Hebrews 1. 9). A righteous man knows sin is wrong and therefore does not sin. A holy man hates sin and therefore does not sin. Holiness always produces righteousness. *R. D. (Jun.), R. Higgins.*

From Atherton. —In our study this month we have emphasized the conditional walk of the believer before God. The first portion of the chapter deals generally with unconditional blessings and now the apostle exhorts the saints to be holy before God. It **is** interesting to note that the quotation, "**Ye** shall be holy; for I **am** holy", comes from the chapter (Leviticus 11) giving legislation concerning clean and unclean meats. This would suggest that the believer's godliness is to **be seen** in meditating on God's word (chewing the cud), and walking separately (the cloven hoof).

The reference to the "vain manner of life handed down from your fathers," in verse 18, is a definite pointer to the conclusion that the epistle was intended for Jewish believers. There is further corroboration of this **if** the silver or gold mentioned in connexion with redemption refer to the atonement money (Exodus 30. 11-16).

The word "vain" has the sense of being worthless or empty; the tradition of the fathers made void the word of God (Matthews 15. 6), and thus the former **manner** of life which rested on tradition was vain. **We** Gentiles have also known redemption from a vain manner of living, by the precious blood of Christ (Ephesians 4. 17-24).

Unfeigned love of the brethren appears **as** the outcome of the obedience to the truth; seeing our souls have been purified thus we are to love each other fervently.

There **is** a marked contrast between the things which are **seen**, which are temporal, and the things which are not **seen**, which are eternal. Again and again the apostle brings before the saints the **corruptible** things of this life and the **incorruptible** things of eternity. The word of God which we have heard is that which abideth for ever and thus we may with benefit heed the exhortation, "whereunto **ye** do well that ye take heed, **as** unto a lamp shining **in** a dark place" (2 Peter 1. 19). *J. K. Southern, R. C. Jones.*

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —The main themes of this portion of our studies are redemption, holiness and love. Redemption is the work of Christ for us, in order to emancipate us from the thralldom of sin, Satan, and self. Holiness is that wholeness and completeness of Christian character, entailing separation from that which is evil and an exercise of moral purification (1 Peter 1. 22 and Titus 2. 14). The believer thus consecrated to the will of God will manifest his love to all the brethren. This is the hall-mark of Christian discipleship (John 13. 35). There seem to be three fundamental ideas underlying the truth of redemption in the book of Exodus which no doubt is the Old Testament counterpart to the first Epistle of Peter. Firstly, redemption is costly (cp. Psalm 49. 8 and Exodus 30. 12) and thus is beautifully typified the exceeding value of the blood of our blessed Saviour (1 Peter 1. 18).

Secondly, redemption is by blood, which represents the outpoured life given in sacrifice to God on the behalf of sinful men (cp. Leviticus 17. 11; Ephesians 1. 7; 1 Peter 1. 19).

Thirdly, redemption is by power, as evidenced at the Red Sea, and in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (cp. Exodus 14. 30; Romans 5. 10).

In the New Testament aspects of redemption, firstly the sinner is viewed as being held in bondage by sin (Romans 7. 14; 2 Peter 2. 19; John 8. 34). He is in the world's slave market, and he is purchased there by the blood of his Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6. 20, "Bought," Gk. *Agorazo*). Secondly, the Greek word *Exagorazo* translated "Redeemed" in Galatians 3. 13 means to purchase a slave with a view to his freedom, with the further thought that the redeemed are never again to be exposed for sale. Thirdly, this redemption is accomplished by means of a price being paid, possibly to God. This seems to be suggested by the use of the verb *Lutroomai*, translated "Redeemed" in 1 Peter 1. 18. The word literally means to release on receipt of a ransom.

1 Peter 1. 18 says that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed in order to deliver us from an unfruitful life, characterized by empty formality; and possibly from corrupt ecclesiastical associations. In Titus 2. 14 believers are viewed as being redeemed from the bondage of self-will which rejects the will of God. In both instances the death of Christ is stated as the means of redemption. Finally, the Greek word *Antilutron*, translated "Ransom" in 1 Timothy 2. 6, indicates that the ransom price was potentially universal in its scope, but vicarious in its character. Redemption in its final results is based upon the expiatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, and it may be defined as deliverance from the guilt and power of sin (Gk. *Apolutrosis* in Ephesians 1. 7; Romans 8. 23). God designs that the death of Christ should be both the basis and the prelude to a life of holiness because God Himself is holy (1 Peter 1. 15 and 16). We are called upon to be separated in heart and mind, that is in our affections and thoughts from everything that is opposed to the mind and the will of God.

The outward expression of holiness, in all its beauty, is revealed in Galatians 5. 22, 23 and is produced by the Holy Spirit. If we are thus rightly adjusted to the will of God, the outward expression of holiness will be a fervent brotherly love to all the children of God.

William G. Henderson.

EXTRACTS.

From Hayes. —Our earnest longing is to be with our Lord above. God is holy, and to approach Him we must be holy. The price paid to enable us to be made holy must indeed amaze us. The unfathomable love of Him who gave His only Son compels us to fear and love Him.

It is therefore our plain duty to seek to live a life which, in some degree, reflects the One who died to save us. Let us concentrate our minds on the greatness of our calling, keeping them sober, and loving one another fervently.

From Birkenhead.—The Christian's mind **can** easily **be** occupied with **vain** and foolish things, and the thoughts which occupy the **mind** will find expression in character. Peter very appropriately sets before them thoughts of the incarnation, redemption, work, resurrection and glorification of the Lord **Jesus** Christ. Therein they would find great encouragement **as** they sought to live holy lives in the midst of ungodliness.

Redemption here goes further than the thought of forgiveness of sins. It betokens **a** redeemed life. Redemption from the bondage of Egypt was first necessary, but Israel's redemption was also unto **a** life of service for God.

The reference to the Father (verse 17) **as** the righteous Judge, and not to the Son, may indicate the Father's daily dealings with us **as** **His** children, and not **a** future judgement such **as** the judgement-seat of Christ. It was compared with Hebrews 12. **9** where submission to the chastening of our earthly father **is** likened to the subjection expected from us by our heavenly Father.

Some doubt was expressed as to the meaning of the words in verse 20, "at the end of the times." **We** were reminded of similar expressions, in Galatians 4. **4**, "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth **His** Son . . .," and in Hebrews 1. "God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in **His** Son." It was in that **sense** the end of **a** period when Christ **came** to the earth. The words may, however, have some reference to the times of the Jews. [See Q. and A.]

The last three verses of the chapter **are** very helpful **as** an answer to the false doctrine that one may be saved and subsequently lost. **R: McC, R. L. S.**

From Edinburgh.—**We** must keep our minds in subjection, girded and bound, so that our thoughts and our feet stray not. It **is** of importance that each believer is given the choice and the ability to gird his mind, to be sober, and to set his hope perfectly on God's grace. This grace **is** embodied **in** Christ (Titus 2. 11-14). It was seen at the cross; it **is** seen to-day in salvation; it will be **seen** in its fulness when **He** **is** revealed. Abraham **was** told to walk before God **and** be perfect.

Salvation cannot be bought with silver or gold. This carries the mind back to the Paschal Lamb **in** Egypt. The tabernacle, standing **in** the wilderness, was set in redemption silver. The vessels that furnished the House were of gold.

We are not our own. Let us therefore glorify God in our bodies **as** **a** redeemed and holy people. Having therefore tasted **His** sweetness, let us continue **in** **His** word unto obedience **in** **His** House, where **His** redeemed people **can** show forth **His** glories and **His** holy people worship Him. **Jas. Paterson.**

From Dumbarton.—Sobriety of walk is often spoken of in connexion with watchfulness (1 Thessalonians 5. **6**; 1 Peter 4. **7**, **5**, **8**). If the return of our Lord **is** a reality to **us**, we shall be found sober and watchful. Verse **14** gives us the key-word, **in** this portion—obedience. The searching question **is**, Shall **we** discipline our hearts to become obedient to the word of God, or shall we allow the old nature within **us** to **gain** the mastery and thus fashion our lives according to our former lusts? (See Romans 6. **12**; 12. 2). There **is** **a** holiness which **is** imputed to every child of God (1 John 3. **9**; 1 Corinthians 1. 30), **and** which comes through the finished work of Christ. In Hebrews 3. **1** **we** see brethren who have been constituted holy **in** this manner, **and** who are endeavouring to lead holy lives, but who, in verse **12** of the same chapter, are **warned** to take heed lest their holy lives should be wasted by having **in** them **an** evil heart of unbelief.

The matter **is** placed on **a** personal basis **in** verse **18**, **and** the infinite cost of their redemption **is** traced right back to its conception in God's wondrous plan of salvation. In verse **21**, **we** have **a** raised glorified Redeemer, Christ the firstfruits. **Having** this hope burning brightly within us, let **us** sanctify our walk and purify ourselves, living sober and watchful, holy and acceptable, lives which **is** "our reasonable service" (Romans 12. 1). **D. G. Miller.**

From Paisley and Barrhead. —We see four positive, practical and direct injunctions to the saints in this paragraph, around which we may think of the rest as being built.

The first is in verse 13—"be sober and set your hope perfectly in the grace" This is the traveller setting his course. Next in verse 15—"be ye yourselves also holy . . ." Here is the Christian's divine, personal, equipment for the road. Verse 17, "Pass the time of your sojourning in fear: "—his constant and correct relationship with heaven (cp. Proverbs 9. 10). Lastly in verse 22—"Love one another from the heart fervently: " speaks of our relationship with each other on the way.

The expression "girding up the loins of your mind " caused us some consideration. We saw how that, in Scripture, the loins are spoken of both as the seat of physical energy and as the source of the procreative powers. Our powers of thinking and processes of thought must be brought into strictly controlled operation in the Christian life.

Verses 23-25 give rise to the contemplation of a very precious truth, that of divine birth through the word of God. (See also John 1. 12-14 and 3. 6). The incorruptible nature of the seed, of which we are begotten again, sets the seal to the eternally lasting character of our relationship to God as his children. We shall see in chapter 2. how the newborn infant, though his newly acquired life can never be taken from him, has a responsibility with regard to his spiritual growth.

J. D. T.

From Kilmarnock. —The apostle Peter in his epistle reminds the sojourners to whom he was writing, that they were "redeemed, not with . . . silver or gold, . . . but with the precious blood . . . of Christ. " Satan had bound them by the vain manner of life handed down from the fathers, but they had heard the gospel message and were now believers in God (verse 21).

There **is** a sense in which every believer in Christ **is** holy or set apart, **as** we see from Ephesians 1. 4, "He chose **us** in Him . . . that we should be holy and without blemish before Him. " See also Colossians 1. 21, 22, R. V. M. "Ye have been reconciled . . . to present you holy and without blemish. "

In Colossians 3. 12-14 we have described what our manner of life **should be as** "God's elect holy and beloved "; while from Ephesians 5. 3, 4, we learn what our manner of life **should not be**, as becometh saints (or holy ones). If we order our lives accordingly we shall be fulfilling the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5. 16, "Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. " A. G. S.

From London, S. E. —The preciousness of the truths in the opening verses brings Peter to exhortations relative to the Christian life.

(1) To watchfulness and endurance (verse 13).

The condition of being girded signifies preparation for a coming event (Exodus 12. 11; Luke 12. 35). Here it **is** in readiness for the coming of Christ. The state of sobriety covers the whole Christian behaviour.

The Christian **is** of the day, consequently he must shun the practices of the night. Failure to do this will have the same effect as natural drunkenness has upon the mind and body. His thoughts will be corrupted, spiritual discernment will **be** clouded, and inability to grasp the sure hope will be his.

(2) To obedience and holiness (verses 14-21).

The expression "children of obedience " conveys the thought of belonging to obedience as a child belongs to its parents. Obedience must become the ruling nature of the believer.

God's desire **is** for us to conform ourselves after the pattern of Himself, the Holy One, who called us to be His people. Such was His desire for Israel (Leviticus 11. 44).

No effort of ours could save us from the vain life inherited from our forefathers, for sin separates from God. Throughout Christ's earthly life He was surrounded by sin, yet He was separate from it and no spot came upon Him. The precious blood of Christ cleanses from sin, and frees from bondage all who avail themselves of its redeeming power. By Christ's resurrection we have a living hope and an incorruptible inheritance. The fulfilment of our hope will be in our complete redemption at His coming, and in the marriage of the Bride to Christ the Lamb.

(3) To love one another (verses 22-25).

Peter exhorts, "love one another from the heart fervently." The heart is the centre of the affections. From redeemed hearts springs a love for Christ, and from them should flow an earnest love for each other.

A. Reeve.

From Cowdenbeath. —In the portion under review there is a call to personal holiness.

It was thought that the grace mentioned in verse 13 will be the portion of all believers, and that the receiving of such is in no way dependent upon, or conditioned by, meritorious service during our life time. Such grace will be brought to us in a continuous unfolding, in the ages to come (Ephesians 2. 7). The hope of the Lord's coming is a purifying hope (1 John 3. 3) and it seems that the apostle brings this truth before them as his first reason why they should live holy lives. With such a prospect, of meeting their Lord one day, how careful they must needs be, not to be fashioned according to the lusts which ruled them in their unsaved days!

No finite mind can appreciate fully the wonderful truth, revealed in verse 20, that He (Christ) was foreknown before the foundation of the world as the One through whom we should obtain redemption, and that by His own precious blood. As a covenanted people it was necessary that they should appreciate God's purpose in their redemption.

The character and nature of the Word through which they had been born anew were eternal and incorruptible. This gives the character of the life generated in the individual, who receives the word of good tidings—eternal (John 3. 16).

Robert Ross.

From Crowborough. - Three times, in this chapter, Peter brings before us the hope that is founded on the glorious theme of the resurrection. He realizes what it means to belong to the Man in the glory, and thus he calls for a manner of life that is compatible with such a high and holy calling. Our heavenly Father chastises His children that they may be taught how highly He values those whom He has redeemed at such a great price. The things that belong to this creation soon pass away, but those things which are founded on the word of God shall abide for ever.

S. Swift.

From Willington Quay. —The apostle, in these verses, likens the life of the disciple to that of a man on a journey.

Firstly, there is the preparation for such a journey, "girding up the loins of your mind," then our conduct during the journey, "be sober," and finally, the goal to be reached at the journey's end, "the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." It is the disciple's responsibility, in girding up the loins of the mind, to bring all other thoughts into subjection, and the result of this will be seen in its sobering effect upon our walk. The aspect of redemption brought before us here is that of redemption from our vain manner of life.

We have been "called," "redeemed" and "begotten again": called by none other than a holy God whose dealings are ever just and upright, redeemed with nothing less than the precious blood of the holy Lamb of God, even the blood of Christ, and begotten again through the word of God which shall never pass away.

L. R.

From Melbourne.—The expression: "Girding up the loins of your mind" (verse 13) may be illustrated by men, in those eastern countries, preparing for a race. They must gird up their garments so as not to be tripped. Similarly in the spiritual race the believer has to gird up the loins of his mind. This exhortation must be noted by all who would live godly in Christ Jesus. Redemption must of necessity precede holiness.

Christ, observing our slavish condition, paid the ransom price—His own precious blood—and thus loosed us from the chains that bound us. We are therefore His servants for ever. True holiness comes from obeying the Truth. Then we can love one another from the heart fervently. The believer must learn to walk and work in fellowship with others in the Truth, and our guide is the word of the Lord (verse 25). Independency has no place in Scripture. *S. Stoope.*

From Birmingham.—Sanctification and holiness are evidenced by our obedience to the word God.

Holiness will characterize us if we allow the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God to operate on our minds. This demands the subordination and the subjection of every faculty of the mind to the one fixed aim of setting our hope perfectly on the grace to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The athletic posture of mind implied in the words of verse 13 entails the disciplining and harnessing of our thoughts.

"Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" necessitates mental and spiritual effort to cleanse our minds from defilement and from carnality. There was a divergence of opinion as to whether fleshly strife must cease before the Spirit can operate. Some held the view that the strife of the flesh and the Spirit was always present in the mind of a believer [True!].

The word "mind" (verse 13), is translated from the Greek word, "Dianoia." This word embraces every capacity of the mind—memory, intellect, reason, will-power, and intelligence. A ceaseless warfare is taking place in our members and our minds need to be ever renewed, that we may be holy, even as He is holy. Further, our minds need feeding. *A. J. T., D. T. Elson.*

From Cardiff.—Verse 13. Some contend that the grace to be brought us at the revelation of Jesus Christ was at His coming to the air, others when He comes to the earth. The latter view is based on such references as 2 Thessalonians 1. 7 and Luke 17. 30, where His appearance on earth is coupled with the name—Jesus Christ. Peter, mentioning the material things of great price, states that we were not redeemed with such, but with something of infinitely more value—"with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot . . . of Christ." Hence the greater need in view of the infinitely greater cost to conduct ourselves during our sojourn in fear. Another viewpoint on this verse was the silver and gold might refer to the silver of the atonement money, which those over twenty brought to loose themselves from divine judgement, and which formed the foundation in the House of God for the sockets of the veil, together with the gold which comprised the Mercy Seat, both of which were of fundamental importance ere the people could engage in divine service and walk in covenant relationship with God. Is the contrast between the value which the natural man places on these precious metals, and the precious blood of Christ?

Verse 23. A minority asserts that divine birth is not essentially a New Testament experience, and that the Word of God begets under the old and new covenants. Since the Fall, men of God become such, by reception of the Word of God which brings divine life. Lot, for instance, was a saved man, a man with a righteous soul, but in a wrong place. He was born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, but did not continue in the light of divine revelation, as regards his walk and conduct.

A majority maintains that "born-again" is eminently a New Testament experience, dependent upon the Spirit of God indwelling the believer, an experience not the portion of any Old Testament saint [See Q. and A.]. *Austin Jones.*

From Ilford. —In connexion with redemption, as in verses 18 and 19, the thought contained in 1 Corinthians 6. 20 comes to mind, where redeemed ones, whose redemption has been effected at so high a cost, are exhorted to glorify God in their bodies. Also, we are to be holy, that is, set apart for God's pleasure, in order that our relationship to him may be seen in our manner of living.

The model on which we should frame our lives is God Himself.

The daily life of the believer should be regulated by the Holy Spirit of God which is in him. Holiness, as regards life and walk, should characterize him.

S. J. Jarvis.

From Liverpool. —The condition of the mind, as a sort of control tower, is of paramount importance. Prior to their being reached no worth-while purpose dominated these dispersed saints, and their lives were vain—what a sad word!

In contrast they are now exhorted to exercise their minds to high purpose—"set your hope perfectly." This mental focussing on the grace of God revealed in Christ—all that man needs and could hope for—dictates changes in the manner of life. They may now call on God as Father and this relationship admits of no half-measures (see verse 11).

The transition from lives of the complete vanity of lust to the fulness of lives of holiness to the Lord, is brought about by purchase. The price was the precious blood of Christ.

J. Wannop. W. H. S.

Questions and Answers.

From Brantford, **Canada.** —Is the "Spirit of Christ" of chapter 1. 11 the same as the Holy Spirit?

Answer.

—Yes.

J. M.

From Melbourne. —When does the sanctification of the Spirit take place?

Answer. —At the time of regeneration. See 2 Thessalonians 2. 13. J. M.

From Cardiff. —(1) Were the disciples in Jerusalem constituted a covenant people upon the day of Pentecost, and would Acts 2. be the antitype in this dispensation to Exodus 24. in the past?

Answer. —Yes, both Exodus 24. and Acts 2. give us the beginning of two peoples. The fundamental elements of the constitution of the new nation are seen in Acts 2. 41, 42.

J. M.

(2) (a) Why had angels the desire to look into the salvation of the human race? (b) Were they at all interested in the state of fallen angelic beings?

Answer (a) Angels are such as take pleasure in the work of God, both His work in creation (Revelation 4. 9-11) and in His work in redemption (Revelation 5. 8-10). Into the things pertaining to the latter they desire to look. (b) If men are to take up a lamentation for Satan, why not angels? (see Ezekiel 28. 11-19).

J. M.

(3) Is "the revelation of Jesus Christ" the parousia, or the coming of the Lord to the earth, or does the term embrace both stages of the one coming?

Answer. —I take it that "at the revelation of Jesus Christ" is His revelation to His saints, not His revelation to men, when He comes in flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1. 7).

J.

M.

From Edinburgh. —Was each individual in the Church the Body, fore-ordained, as an individual, before the foundation of the world to salvation ?

Answer. —Note the force of the personal plural pronouns in Ephesians 1., " us," verse 3, " us " and " we," verse 4, " us " verse 5; then note verse 7, " in whom we have our redemption through His blood. " There can be no doubt "we" and "our" of this verse are applied (and all scripture corroborates it) to every individual member of Christ's Body, for each one is redeemed individually. I judge that the same is true in regard to our being " blessed, " " chosen " and " foreordained. " If foreordination applied to the Church in a collective sense, it would have been so stated, but the contrary is stated, —" having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself. " " Sons " shows the individual character of our adoption; it is not " the Church. " J. M.

From Willington Quay and Birkenhead. —In what connection does Peter speak of the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ as being " at the end of the times " ?

Answer. —It is said in Hebrews 9. 26 that the Lord appeared " at the end of the ages. " In Hebrews 1. 2 we have " at the end of these days, " that is, the days when God spake in the prophets. Acts 2. 17 speaks of " in the last days. " Peter too speaks of last days (2 Peter 3. 3) and John of the last hour (1 John 2. 18). The word used for end or last in these passages (except Hebrews 9. 26, which is *Sunteleia* = consummation or completion) is *Eschatos* which means the last or latest. Christ appeared at the last of the times (*Chronos* = time in the flow), and a new era opens up to men in the resurrection of Christ. We live at the end of an old dying system which will end in man's rebellion and destruction. J. M.

From Melbourne. —Why is silver mentioned before gold in verse 18 ?

Answer. —The first mention of silver and gold together is in Genesis 13. 2, where it says that Abraham was rich in silver and gold. Peter in Acts 3. 6 said, " Silver and gold have I none. " Paul too says that he " coveted no man's silver, or gold. " It may be that this is generally the way in which these metals were spoken of, though we also read of gold and silver. In Daniel 11. 8, 38 we have silver and gold, and gold and silver. I have read it somewhere that there were times when silver was more esteemed than gold; if this were so, it is quite the reverse now. There is a great difficulty in explaining the purchase of Oman's threshing floor, for 600 shekels of gold in 1 Chronicles 21. 25, but 50 shekels of silver in 2 Samuel 24. 24. J. M.

From Cardiff. —(1) Would you say that the name " Christ Jesus " is one bespeaking the Lord in heavenly character and place ?

Answer (1). —Paul is the only apostle who uses the name Christ Jesus, the other apostles (and Paul too) speak of Jesus Christ or the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus seems to mean that Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is the Man Jesus; whereas Jesus Christ is the matter in reverse, that the Man Jesus is the Christ of God. The preposition " in " is characteristic of Christ Jesus, whereas " through " is the characteristic preposition in connexion with Jesus Christ. J. M.

(2) What was the " vain manner of life " ? (verse 18).

Answer (2). —The vain manner of life is the life sinners live prior to regeneration; it is an empty life in which there is nothing for God or themselves. J. M.

(3) Is the new birth, or being born again, essentially a New Testament experience, or was it possible under the Old Covenant ?

Answer (3). —Those who believed in the promised Messiah obtained a new life and the Lord was their Saviour and Salvation. Such was Jacob; when he was dying he said, " I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah " (Genesis 49. 18). See Isaiah 25. 9 and other scriptures. J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

MARCH, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	21
The problem of suffering in 1st Epistle of P e t e r	22
The First Epistle of Peter:	
A S p i r i t u a l H o u s e	23
C o m m e n t s	29
Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s	30

EDITORIAL.

The Scriptures are rich in their own definitions and interpretations. In other words, we are helped by the Holy Spirit to understand **His** messages as we compare " spiritual things with spiritual, " or even as other translations indicate, " interpreting spiritual things to or with spiritual men, " remembering, too, that the " natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of G o d : . . . and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Corinthians 2. 13, 14 and R. V. M.).

Peter closes his first epistle with these words, " I have written unto you briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God: *stand ye fast therein.* " ¹⁰¹

So then, knowing the import of the epistle, let us, month by month, endeavour to apprehend what phase of the true grace of God the Holy Spirit **is** bringing to our notice. We feel we cannot stress too much the importance of the House of God teaching contained in this month's study. So erroneous are the apprehensions of men outside the Fellowship of God's Son on this truth, that we, first of all, should thank God for revealing to us the fact that there **is** a House for God to-day, and that, by **His** grace, we have been builded together as living stones therein. We should resolve to make this gem of truth illustrious to others, by adorning, through good behaviour, the doctrine of God our Saviour **in all** things (Titus 2. 10).

It **is** necessary that our behaviour should speak. So let us give heed to the uprooting of the weeds that would mar the beauty, and destroy the fertility, of God's tilled land (1 Corinthians 3. 9 and 1 Peter 2. 1).

Condition should never be divorced from position. Practice should align itself with inspired precedent. Let it be said of us,

" As we have heard, *so* have we seen
In the city of the LORD of hosts,
in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever" (Psalm 48. 8).

[Selah.]

And, let us " tell it to the generation following " (Psalm 48. 13).

An analytical division of this first epistle, emanating from a student thereof, shows that Peter had this in mind, too. Briefly, it is as follows: —

Introduction.	Ch. 1. 1—1. 2.
Doctrine.	Ch. 1. 3—1. 12.
Practice.	Ch. 1. 13—2. 3.
Doctrine.	Ch. 2. 4—2. 10.
Practice.	Ch. 2. 11—3. 12.
Doctrine.	Ch. 3. 13—4. 19.
Practice.	Ch. 5. 1—5. 11.
Greetings.	Ch. 5. 12—5. 14.

Thanks for correspondence received from various contributors.

Jas. Martin.

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN 1ST EPISTLE OF PETER.

The problem of human suffering has baffled the greatest minds in all ages. More especially is this the case with righteous men. The psalmist was perplexed with this problem until in fellowship with God he could see at least part of its meaning (Psalm 73. 17). In the epistles of Peter, the Lord is pleased to reveal part of His purpose in allowing his children to pass through heavy trials. In contrast to the Christian's position in Ephesians, as being raised, exalted and seated with Christ in the heavenlies, Peter's epistles view us as being identified with our suffering, and yet glorified Lord. In 1 Peter 1. the Lord Jesus is seen as the true Passover Lamb dying to redeem men and women from their empty and useless manner of life which they received by tradition from their fathers. The Cross is the starting point of our Saviour's atoning work for our salvation, in like manner it is also the gateway to the life of pilgrimage and service for every true child of God. Having started at the Cross (cp. 1 Peter 1. 18, 19 with Exodus 12.), and becoming a sanctified people by the sprinkling of blood (cp. 1 Peter 1. 2 with Exodus 24. 8), we then begin our pilgrimage from the Cross to our real home which is heaven itself.

At the commencement of our pilgrimage we are called upon to renounce the evil of our past lives (typified by leaven in Exodus 12. 15 and 1 Peter 2. 1), and as new-born babes we should feed upon our Saviour as revealed in His written word (cp. Exodus 12. 8, 9 and 15 and 1 Peter 2. 2, 3). In passing through this world, which not only produces no fruit for God, but is definitely hostile in its character towards Him (John 15. 18; 17. 14), the Christian sustains a twofold character. Firstly, he is a stranger or foreigner to the world (1 Peter 2. 11), which means, "Settlers having a house in a city without being citizens in respect to the rights of citizenship; a picture of the Christian's position on earth." Secondly, he is a pilgrim which in the Greek is an adjective signifying "Sojourning in a strange place away from one's own people." The Christian's real citizenship and home is in heaven (Philippians 3. 20). The goal of his life is heaven itself (Hebrews 11. 9, 10), and therefore it is the will of his Heavenly Father that he should act as a citizen of that country while travelling through this foreign land (manner of life) (*Gr. Politeuomai*) (Philippians 1. 27). In order to be able to manifest these heavenly characteristics whilst down here on earth, the Lord Jesus is set forth as his perfect example or pattern, "a copy, as we say, to write from" (1 Peter 2. 21), and we are exhorted to diligently follow His steps. This example was manifested in its fullest measure at the Cross of Calvary (1 Peter 2. 21-24). If the child of God thus follows closely in the steps of his Saviour he will find that three great enemies will oppose his journey to the heavenly city, and will wage war against

him. Firstly, and perhaps this is his greatest enemy, the strong desires of his fallen nature (1 Peter 2. 11). Secondly, he has the world to overcome and if he intends to wage war against the powers of evil his life must be governed by the character of the sufferings that the Lord Jesus endured whilst He was down here on earth. This kind of life being so foreign to the principles and practices of this evil world (1 Peter 4. 3) will bring persecution in its train (3 Timothy 3. 11; Matthew 5. 10), but we are assured that God will finally judge those responsible for our suffering. Moreover, we should not be surprised that we should be called upon to suffer thus, for, as we pass through our fiery trials, the Holy Spirit's presence and power will be manifested in us, and our God will be glorified thereby (1 Peter 4. 12-14). If our sufferings are in accordance with the will of God, and not for our own sins, we should confidently commit our lives to God, as our blessed Lord did on Calvary's Cross (1 Peter 2. 23). Thirdly, our great enemy and adversary, the Devil, will oppose us to the end of our pilgrim journey, and is responsible for much of the suffering of the Lord's people while passing through this hostile scene over which he rules (1 Peter 5. 8, 9; 2 Corinthians 4. 4; John 14. 30).

William G. Henderson.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

A Spiritual House.

(1 Peter 2. 1-10).

From Melbourne (Australia). —A spiritual house on earth wherein is offered up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ is indicated in this study. Here the people of God (not necessarily all of God's redeemed children), are seen as a holy priesthood. Every believer (we judge) is a living stone, but only the built-up living stones comprise a spiritual house, a people for God's own possession. Every living stone in this unique house has willed to do God's will and has received the knowledge of the truth (John 7. 17). This is the right position, but it is possible for built-up living stones to be in a wrong condition. Certain things must be put away, "All malice" (R. V. M.), evil intention to injure others, hidden spite; "all guile," cunning double-mindedness; "hypocrisies," pretending to be what we are not; "envies," lusting after fleshly desires; and "all evil speakings," talebearing (see Leviticus 19. 16), and slandering (see Psalm 101. 5 and Psalm 50. 20). None of these should be found in such as are described as newborn babes. What should be is a longing for the sincere milk of the Word. If we desire to grow unto salvation, then we must long for this spiritual milk. Reading often and meditating upon God's word causes growing saints to offer up acceptable sacrifices. With growth comes strength and ability to go forth as a royal priesthood. Firstly, we are a holy priesthood, keeping the Feast of Remembrance and proclaiming the Lord's death; after that we shew forth, as a royal priesthood, the excellencies of Him. This shewing-forth should be seen in the behaviour of the saints who have purified their souls in obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1. 22). Our daily walk and life as a kingly priesthood should mirror the image of the King of Glory. Paul to the Thessalonians wrote: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (1 Thessalonians 2. 10; see Philippians 2. 15). In Psalm 15. we see the fruit of holiness portraying those lovely characteristics that may be seen in the living stones that are built up, a spiritual house. As sojourners in God's tent, their walk is upright, their work is righteous and their speaking is truth (verse 2). "He that doeth these things shall never be moved" (Psalm 15. 5).

S. Stoope.

From Birkenhead. The natural characteristics **seen in verse 1** are to be put away, not simply guarded against. These things will mar our lives so that we shall not be able to appreciate the truths set before us **in** the following verses. The simple illustration of a house and of its being builded with living stones, **is** in contrast to the material house of the Old Testament. The **New Testament** house **is** spiritual, not material.

The material house was the place where God dwelt, and where **He** met man. It was also the centre of the people's worship. Similarly the spiritual house **is** God's dwelling place and those outside should be able to **see** that God's will **is** being carried out there amongst men. It **is** also the centre of the worship of the people of God. **We** noted, however, that there **is** not an exact parallel with regard to the sanctuary. In the material house the holy place of the sanctuary **was** part of the earthly structure, but the teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews shows clearly that the holy priesthood **as** a worshipping people to-day enter the holy place or holies, into which Christ entered first.

The spiritual house **is** built of living stones. It may be claimed that all believers are living stones, but there are many believers, alas, outside the house. There must be the believer's coming to the Chief Corner Stone, on subjection, to be built up.

An assembly in any place, though it **is as** to character house of God, cannot be described **as the** house of God, **as** this description **is** true only of the entire house which consists of all the assemblies builded together, but what **is** true of the whole **is** also true characteristically of the part, even **as** Paul writing to the Corinthians says, . . . " ye **are** temple of God. " The use of the term in connexion with an assembly may perhaps give a wrong idea that the place where the assembly meets **is** the house of God. This, of course, **is** not correct.

The quotation regarding the stone which the builders rejected provides a link with the parable of the vineyard which the Lord told us, recorded in Matthew 21., from which it **is** clear that Israel's rejection of the Messiah **is** referred to and the bringing in of another people to take their place in this dispensation. This **is** the people Peter speaks of **as** the spiritual house. **He** also refers to the house **as** a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood. These terms involve divine service, the latter implying servants showing forth the excellencies of their Royal Master to their fellow-men, **as** suggested by the words of verse 9. **R. L. S.**

From London, S. E. —"Therefore" **in** the first verse shows that, in the light of all that has gone before, **we** must **be** putting away all the evils mentioned. This putting away **is** continuous and a duty that must be done whenever these evils beset us. The Master said of Nathaniel that he was one in whom there **was** no guile. The Lord was guileless; His very nature **was** that of one who despised deceit in every form.

The exhortation to us **is** to long **as** new-born babes, for spiritual milk. **We** are not exhorted to be **as** new-born babes and stay in that condition, but are to progress to strong meat **as** shown **us** in Hebrews 5. 14. Some **have** asserted that the words " unto salvation " have been inserted so **as** to translate the idiom which could better be translated " unto full growth " or " unto perfection. "

Only the living stones that are builded together can be called a spiritual house. These living stones must therefore " come to Him. " What stories these stones could tell; of the dark days when they were **in** the quarry; of the power of the dynamite of the gospel which blasted them from their original position ! For this they can never cease to praise God.

The two quotations placed alongside each other **show** how the Living Stone **is** regarded. "He that believeth on Him shall not **be** put to shame"—what a promise!—but to them that disbelieve—" a Stone of stumbling "—what dejection !

Verses 8, 9 contrast the believers and rejectors. The latter stumble, but the former are chosen of God. [1].

In Malachi 3. 10, **17 we** have the clue **as** to who are the peculiar treasure. It is the living stones that fear the Lord. K. H. R.

EXTRACTS.

From Liverpool.—" That which is born of the flesh **is** flesh; **and** that which is born of the Spirit **is** spirit " (John 3. 6). A spiritual life needs spiritual food and then will follow spiritual activity.

Spiritual growth will result in the shedding of evil things (verse 1) and in the case of those in God's house in offering spiritual sacrifices (verse 5).

The final note in the portion **is** mercy. How much we owe to the wondrous mercy of God ! What change it has wrought! from darkness into **His** marvellous light; from nobodies to somebodies; in fact " elect, " " holy " and " royal " for God's own possession.

Shall we not then feed on God's word that we may grow ? "I commend you to God, and to the word of **His** grace, which **is** *able* to build you up " (Acts 20. 32).

Alan Sands, Tom Reid, W. H. S.

From Edinburgh.—Those who have been begotten again of the incorruptible seed **are** instructed that, having tasted the goodness of the Lord, they should put away the evils of their former lives. The wholesome food of the word of God will make them grow spiritually. They are further instructed to come to the Chief Corner Stone to be built up a spiritual house where, **as** a holy priesthood, they can offer up spiritual sacrifices to God acceptably. It **is** to **be** noted that the whole structure of a building **is** governed by the corner stone for strength and alignment.

W. Taylor.

From Cardiff.—**We** viewed the thought, in verse 3, **as** that of the sinner tasting of the grace of God's salvation, and then in verse 4, **as** the saved one acknowledging Christ **as** Lord, who **is** " now rejected, and by the world disowned, " but by God **is** highly exalted and crowned with glory and honour. Then the Spirit of God, through the apostle, takes **us** on to the wondrous truths of such ones, redeemed and owning Christ **as** Lord, being gathered **as** a people for God, builded together, "**a** spiritual house. " This gathered-together people **is** a priesthood. The highest function of a spiritual house is our entering the holies **as** a holy priesthood, which takes place **at** the Remembrance on Lord's **Day**, **our** object being " to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. " Thence **we** go out **as** a royal priesthood, to show forth the excellencies of Him who called **us** out of darkness unto His marvellous light.

Cecil Jones.

From Atherton. —**Here** is presented divine order; namely, (1) the spiritual house with its holy priesthood service—Godward; and (2), **the elect race and holy nation, a royal priesthood service—manhood.**

The first mention of **the** house of God in Genesis **28.** affords **us** the basic truth of God's house, in that the ladder which Jacob **saw was** set up on earth and its top reached to heaven, indicating that the house of God **is** located on earth, but **is** related to heaven **in** priestly service. An important function of the spiritual house **is** seen to be its holy priesthood service of offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. This service **is** rendered to God by the holy priesthood when gathered together to worship God in the Spirit on the Lord's Day morning. Another important function of God's house **is** the royal priesthood service which **is** primarily manward. **We** would suggest that the royal priesthood character not only embodies showing forth the excellencies of **Him** who called us out of darkness, but also, other services of God's people, such **as** learning God's will, supplicating His throne, giving of thanks and praise and worship **as** distinct from the Lordly morning.

The spiritual house of God has its foundation on the truths laid down by the apostles and prophets. Christ **is** the Chief Corner Stone of this foundation (Ephesians **2.** 20-22). The chief corner stone **is** the stone which **gives** strength and solidity to the whole structure—so Christ **as** the Chief Corner Stone in God's house binds the whole building together and stabilizes the habitation of God in the Spirit.

G. A. Jones, J. Bullock.

From Willington Quay. —Our portion shews **a** progression in the building up of the spiritual house and indicates the twofold action required in the forming of the house. **We see** that individual conduct and collective position are necessary qualifications and are of equal importance. **Verses 1 and 2** shew the prerequisite of the individual believer, *i. e.,* " Putting away therefore "; **verses 4 and 5** the moving forward of **a** together people acknowledging Jesus Christ **as** Lord. This order cannot be reversed.

We thought that the word " Coming " in verse 4 meant something that **was** to be continuous rather than **a** once-for-all action.

Israel was to be **a** kingdom of priests, but they forfeited this and thus the priesthood was removed to Aaron's family with the tribe of Levi ministering to them. But Christ, the rejected One, **is** now raised and fulfils the office of High Priest with believers of all nations and tongues partaking in priestly service after **a** spiritual order. [2].

Peter outlines the blessings of God's people to-day, *e. g.,* an elect race, **a** royal priesthood, **a** holy nation, **a** people for God's own possession. Thus the circle is completed, " putting away, " " being built up, " and then " showing forth " the excellencies of **Him** who called them.

C. B.

From Cowdenbeath. —The place of high privilege in the house of God demands **a** high standard of behaviour. Holy living and brotherly love should be manifest in God's house. The beauty of Peter's presentation of the truth of the house of God is seen in that it shows the relationship of this truth to the person of Christ. Every divine truth must be seen in its relation to Him in order to **be** properly understood and appreciated. It would be **as** permissible to divorce the

truth of salvation from Christ **as** to do so with the truth of the house of God. Man rejected Christ; they had no room for Him **in** their structure, but God has given **Him** the chief place in His building—**His** house. Only by believers aligning themselves with God's purpose **in** coming to Him **as** the foundation **and being** built into a spiritual house can the rejected One of Calvary be given His true place of exaltation among men. Christ **is** precious to God and **He** has given the privilege to those who believe to appreciate **His** preciousness by giving **Him His** true place through association with **Him** in the house of God.

As a result of such an association with Him, His services are made available to **us in** a very wonderful way, because not only do we form the house of God, but **we** are also **a** holy priesthood within the house to engage in service Godward through Jesus Christ who **is** the High Priest over the house of God.

Underlying the word "race" is the thought of birth. We are of this elect race by the new birth, even as Israel were elect because of descent from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. But we are a royal priesthood, **a** holy nation and **a** people for God's possession by obedience to the claims of God. Briefly, **a** royal priesthood would speak of our service manward, **a** holy nation brings before us the thought of our having a divine constitution **as** such and our being governed by God's law; the outstanding feature associated with our being God's people **is** our manifest obedience to **His** will.

J. Bowman,

From Crowborough. —If **a** babe **is** healthy and taking the right food it *will* grow. The same may be said of the believer. If our spiritual life **is** strong and healthy, clean and pure, and **if** we take the right food, the word of God, we also *will* grow. But we shall need to put away wickedness, the art of deception, the mask of insincerity, envying and evil speakings.

The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ was **a** very precious subject with the apostle Peter, and thus he speaks of **Him as** the Chosen **One** who **is** held in high esteem.

It **is** **a** glorious truth that the churches of God, to-day, are fulfilling God's will on earth. Yet what **a** solemn responsibility this brings to us who have been built into God's spiritual house, to be **a** holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13. 15) to God through Jesus Christ, Himself the Great Priest over God's house (Hebrews 10. 21)! This service of the sanctuary finds its centre in the weekly Remembrance Feast, when we are privileged to worship God through Him.

We are also a royal priesthood, for from God's house flows out the story of redeeming grace to sinners, and the truths concerning the house of God to believers.

The sects of men have no place in the economy of God. Oneness Godward, oneness manward, oneness together!

He who suffered at Calvary for sinners **is** the Chief Corner Stone. Truly we have received mercy from God, we who were once no people, but now are the people of God.

E. Swift.

From Hayes. —We are urged in chapter 2. to cast away those aspects of our lives which are not in keeping with our calling and to long for those things which are so much higher and of greater importance. **We** are likened to new-born babes, innocent and guileless and also immature. But we are not to **remain** so,

we must grow into full-grown men. This can only result **if we** partake of the right body-building and nourishing food. **We must** long for spiritual milk, " that ye **may** grow thereby unto salvation "; so that, although **we** were once for all **saved, yet we** shall achieve that full salvation of our lives which should **be** our **aim** and object.

It is to Christ that **we must** come, the Living Stone, who is **indeed** of no value with men, **but** with God is of great worth, **we** being also likened to living stones built into a spiritual house—each stone essential to the other and the whole, and **yet** subservient to Christ. (See Ephesians 2. 19-22). The part **we** play in this wonderful unity is set down in verse 5, " to **be** a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual **sacrifices** acceptable, to God through **Jesus Christ**. " The force of this is brought home in verse 6, a quotation from Isaiah (28. 16), showing how that to those who believe Christ is the Hope and Answer to all life's problems, while to those who do not believe He is " a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence. "
S. J. Stoner.

From Toronto. —**We** are shown in this portion that **we** hold a very high and privileged position in God's thoughts; according to verse 4, **as** those called of God, both elect and precious. [Does not this description refer to " whom, " *i. e.*, the Lord **Jesus**, and not **us** ?] The primary thought in the word " house " is a dwelling place. **We** are builded together for the unique purpose of offering up spiritual sacrifices through our Lord **Jesus Christ**. **We** have God's order, man's responsibility, and the complete pattern of God's desire for **His** gathered-together people. Firstly, the holy priesthood capacity is our service God-ward. Secondly, in the royal-priesthood **service, we** have our responsibility towards man in the heralding forth of the good tidings. **We** are **redeemed** not to please ourselves nor to do our own will, **but** to serve a living and true God, and to **wait** for **His** Son from heaven (1 Thessalonians 1. 9). **We** view **Him** as the Stone which the builders rejected, raised to **be** the **Head** of the corner, elect and precious; yea, raised from the place of rejection that **men gave Him**, to the highest place where He is Son over **His** house; " whose house are **we, if we** hold **fast** our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end " (Hebrews 3. 6).
N. K. and J. Scott.

From Birmingham. —It **seems** clear from the opening verses of the chapter that the apostle Peter is reminding those to whom he is writing of their responsibilities **as** a spiritual people. The first thing he teaches is the putting away of all wickedness, guile, hypocrisies, envies and all evil speakings. This is a solemn reminder of that which should characterize **us** as the people of God. (See Ephesians 4. 22). In this portion condition and position are clearly and closely linked together in the spiritual house. The Living Stone (verse 4) speaks of the Lord **Jesus** who **was** rejected of men (John 1. 11). **But** when the Lord **was crucified** and **raised** again from the **dead He became** the Chief Corner Stone of the spiritual house. The Lord **Jesus Christ** is the foundation. To John, on the isle of Patmos, **He said**, " Fear not. • I **am** the first and the last and the living One " (Revelation 1. 17, 18). " **Ye** also, **as living stones**, are built **up a spiritual** house. "

It is clear that each believer who is brought in and **added** to a Church of God is built **up** with other " living stones " of the **same** material to **make** a spiritual house, whose function collectively is firstly God-ward, " to **be** a holy priesthood. " We would **suggest** that on the Lord's **Day** morning this is carried out **at** the

Remembrance. We have then brought before us the One, who is precious in the sight of God, and it is this blessed One whom we can bring to God in all His beauty and glory.

We feel our occupation should be to " shew forth the excellencies of Him who called" us "out of darkness into His marvellous light. "

D. E. Watts, T. H. Darke.

From Kilmarnock. —Those addressed had received eternal life from God, and it was His desire that they should grow spiritually unto salvation through feeding on His Word. This is a progressive salvation brought about by giving heed to and obeying the Word of the Lord. (See Philippians 2. 12, 18). Our thoughts were directed to the time when David prepared " timber also and stone " for the building of the temple (see 1 Chronicles 22. 14), but these stones had to be *buildd together* before they formed the temple, God's house. How many children of God there are to-day who can rejoice in Christ as their Saviour, and yet who are not buildd together as God's spiritual house!

How high is the privilege and how great is the responsibility of those who are thus gathered as a " holy priesthood, " to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and, as a " royal priesthood, " to show forth the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness into light " !

From Hebrews 3. 6 we note that being the house of God is conditional. We do well to take heed to the exhortation in verses 12 and 13 of this chapter, and to see that our behaviour is as it ought to be. (See 1 Timothy 3. 15). We understand that the house of God is composed of all the churches of God on earth at any given time (Ephesians 2. 19-22). *A. Q. S.*

From Ilford. —It seems that not only is the milk of the word to be desired to make one grow spiritually, but also, having *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, we realize that His word is able to satisfy, and is therefore to be desired. A new-born baby does not desire the milk because it realizes that its growth depends on it, but because it satisfies a need which it has, that of hunger.

The question of being " built up a spiritual house, " follows on from the question of growth, and of having tasted of the goodness of God. It was thought that immediately a person believes, he becomes a living stone, but by a knowledge of and obedience to God's word further truth is revealed, and eventually he, with other living stones, is built into the house of God.

Two thoughts were suggested as to the meaning of verse 10: —(1) The Jewish race were despised by the nations about. They were looked upon as a small insignificant people, and in this sense they were no people. (2) The prophecy of Hosea indicates quite clearly that God had disowned them. [3].

E. H. Jarvis.

COMMENTS.

[1] (London, S. E.). —It is important to note that in this chapter Peter is dealing with things in a collective way, of a spiritual house, which is also a holy and royal priesthood; with a chosen race, a holy nation and a peculiar people. This must be borne in mind when we read—" for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed " (verse 8). If this were applied to sinners as being disobedient to the message of the gospel, then it would be clear

that some sinners were appointed **by** God to stumble at Christ and **in** consequence to fall into hell, into that place of fiery punishment. The onus of men being lost would lie primarily with God, for **He** had appointed them to such an end. But is this what Peter is telling **us**? It is not! What Peter is saying is this, that the builders, the elders of Israel, such **as** took the lead amongst God's people, rejected the Living, Chief Corner, Stone, and nationally they stumbled **at** Christ who was to them a Stone of stumbling, and to this, **as** the Scriptures clearly show, they were nationally appointed. See Matthew 21. 33-45. But whilst Israel stumbled at Christ, the gospel was available to all Jews, but **if** they individually rejected Christ they would be lost. Peter has two peoples in view; two houses, and two priesthoods are contemplated. That people of the past dispensation stumbled and so made way for God's New Testament people. Peter **is** not dealing in chapter 2. with salvation (he dealt with that in chapter 1.), but with service, the service of God's house and by a holy and royal priesthood. J. M.

[2] Wellington **Quay**. —When and how did Israel forfeit their priesthood which is said to have passed to Aaron's family? It **is** clear enough that the first-born sons of Israel forfeited their place by the sin of the golden calf, and the Levites by taking the Lord's side, going out to Moses to the gate of the camp, and, afterwards, carrying out divine judgement in the camp, gained the place in service that the firstborn sons of Israel lost. But I know of no such event which caused the priesthood to pass from Israel to Aaron's house. The fact **is**, that in the matter of the golden calf Aaron was himself one of the chief sinners, and the Lord would have slain him, but for the intercession of Moses (Deuteronomy 9. 20). Note that the call of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood is in Exodus 28., and the service of Aaron and his sons, the making of their garments and their consecration to the priest's office are integral parts of the whole instructions connected with the building and service of the Tabernacle. The incident of the golden calf **is** not till Exodus 32. I see no justification for the belief that the priesthood of Israel passed to the house of Aaron. J. M.

[3] Ilford. —Note the force of " they " and " ye " in verses 8 and 9, " they stumble, " " **Ye** are an elect race. " " Which " in verse 10 does not refer to the " they " of verse 8, but to the " ye " of verse 9. Those who were no people are God's people of this dispensation. This touches upon a big subject, namely, the use of Old Testament scriptures in the New Testament, an important subject for young men and others to study. Many Old Testament scriptures have a double application, (1) to God's people now, and (2) to Israel restored to divine favour at a **future** time. J. M.

Questions and Answers.

Question **from Cardiff**. —Is the darkness of verse 9 the darkness in which the sinner is, or sectarian darkness in which many believers are?

Answer. —Both, I should say. J. M.

Question from Birkenhead. —How can we understand the words, " Which in time past were no people . . . " in verse 10 of chapter 2., if Peter was writing to Jews, which seems to be implied in the remarks concerning the Dispersion of chapter 1. verse 1, given in the January issue?

Answer. —God's New Testament people were once " no people. " In their unsaved days Jews formed part of God's Old Testament people, and Gentiles (the nations) formed part of their respective nations, but now those that once were not together as a holy nation and a peculiar people, are together as God's people. They had been saved and divinely gathered in response to God's call, consequently it is quite clear that they which in time past were no people, are the people of God. J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

APRIL, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	31
The First Epistle of Peter:	
Subjection to Authority	32
C o m m e n t s	39
Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s	39

EDITORIAL.

The apostle Peter is arraying all his arguments to encourage those scattered saints to " holy-living. " They were sojourners and pilgrims in a world of dead hopes, of withering longings, of wasted desires. Around **was** corruption, a place of dying things, with grubs in the fruit, moths on the garments, rust on the metal, and little foxes nibbling at the vines. Disappointment and disillusionment circled them daily. But Peter had reminded them that they were elect by the foreknowledge of God (1. 2), begotten by the mercy of God (1. 3), kept by the power of God (1. 5), and that there was reserved **in** heaven for them a great inheritance. Therefore it **is** but right that all, who one day would enter into the enjoyment of such enriched ones, should now learn to live in a way becoming their future status.

Then follows the most telling of incentives. The called-ones should be like the One who **has called** them—holy (1. 15). Perhaps this **is** the most potent argument of all. For to be associated with God entails a supreme effort to be like Him. Indeed so difficult of explanation is this abstract quality of " godliness, " that the apostle Paul turns to the tangible, the understandable, to explain it in terms of the revealed Christ of God (1 Timothy 3. 16). We are assured later by Peter that this **same** keeping power, this divine power, " hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of **H i m** " (2 Peter 1. 3).

Every call of God has a purpose. In our last month's study we saw that He who had **called** us out of darkness into **His** marvellous light intended us to show forth **His** excellencies (2. 9). Peter still had **ringing** in **his** ears, **as he** wrote, the words, "His marvellous light. " Psalm 118. 23—"This **is** the LORD'S doing. It is marvellous in our eyes."

Then, somewhat akin to Paul's methods, having reached high heights of teaching and revelation, Peter pauses, reflects, and introducing his detailed instructions to all, to household-servants, to wives, to husbands, and then to all, again by the affectionate term of " dearly beloved, " he presents another incentive, namely " to glorify God. " What balanced instructions are given, requiring, even by us to-day, minute and close attention! "Subjection" **is** a key-word. Here, once more, the wonderful example of the suffering Christ **is** vividly pictured.

The very word " example " is unique to this portion of scripture. It is a technical term, describing a drawing which is set before young artists to copy. Dear Peter, with vivid recollections of His Master's pain and anguish before him draws a picture of patient endurance and suffering for these young artists in the Christian faith to copy and emulate. Here was one more purpose of their *calling* (1 Peter 2. 12). As these slaves were subjected to the whip of harsh masters, the hope was that they would recall the livid wheals that ploughed their Master's back and His uncomplaining subjection. Through all this portion Isaiah's rich 53rd chapter runs like a golden thread. It is significant that Peter has no word here for " masters. "

At the risk of over-running our present section, let us point out that a *calling* by God entails a " blessing, " too (1 Peter 3. 9), and a final glorious consummation when " the God of all grace who *called* you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you. To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. " (1 Peter 5. 10, 11).

Greetings to all, and thanks for papers from new contributors. I hope to reply, personally, soon. *Jas. Martin.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Subjection to Authority.

(1 Peter 2. 11-25).

From Cardiff. —" Sojourners and pilgrims. " The force of this expression was noticed particularly in the case of Abraham and Lot. Reference was made to the sad state of affairs in the history of Lot (Genesis 19.), and to the characteristics of his downward path, in that he first " pitched his tent toward Sodom. " Soon he had passed from the tent of the pilgrim to the " dwelling " in Sodom where he sought civic honours. Abraham, the true pilgrim, continued to move his tent, " looking for the city . . . whose Builder and Maker is God. "

" The day of visitation " was thought by some to refer to the present day of grace, by others it was felt in view of Luke 1. 68, and the Lord's statement in Luke 19. 44, that it had especial reference to the Messianic hope of Israel.

In view of the fact that civil law and administration are under review in verses 13 to 17, it was stressed that " evil doing " is the point at issue, and this passage need have no particular significance attached to it in relation to the armed forces. The inconsistency of a disciple, who is primarily a messenger of peace, being in or attached to an armed force, seemed very obvious.

Bondservice or slavery seemed to be tolerated, and conditions arising therefrom must be "endured, " even looking to the Divine Pattern, who "took upon Himself the form of a servant, " and "endured the cross. " The wondrous Person of the Lord as seen in His walk and work, the Great Example, is set forth, in the closing portion of this chapter, to emphasize afresh the object of His carrying up of our sins in His body to the tree—" that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness. " [1]. *C. Barrett, K. B.*

From Toronto. —We are reminded of Paul's words to the Galatians (5. 16), "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. " We, as sojourners and pilgrims, if walking as exhorted, will put to death the flesh and the lusts thereof, that all may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. It may seem redundant for the apostle to write to the saints to be

subject to the powers that be, but when we remember his own impetuous nature, and the lesson he learned in the garden of Gethsemane, we see the fruit of the Spirit very manifest in his life. It is an easy thing indeed to be guilty of minor infractions of man-made laws, but it becomes us as a holy people to keep our testimony spotless by shunning even the smallest temptation. Let us especially obey the new commandment (John 13. 34 and 35), that we, as brethren, love one another. This in itself is a great testimony.

We are also reminded of a scripture in Matthew 10. 24. "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." What an example we have in the Lord Jesus Christ! He, who was the Son, became the Servant, not of men, though He ministered to their needs, but of God. Taking the form of a bondservant He took the lowly place, and that even to the shameful death at Calvary. We would read verse 18 in the light of the present master-servant relationship. We are to work for our earthly masters, not in the way of eye-service as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Ephesians 6. 6), that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2. 10). It is very interesting to observe that the same Greek word for "subjection" is used in Luke 2. 51 as is found in verse 18. If we govern our service to our earthly masters by the standard set in the scripture we shall not be ashamed as Christians (1 Peter 4. 16) to give our testimony in words that we show in our works.

Edwin Neely.

From Nottingham. —In the verses immediately preceding the portion under consideration, we are reminded that we are nothing less than the people of God. That being so, the apostle goes on to draw attention to the necessity of comporting ourselves in a manner consistent with such a high standing. Firstly, emphasis is placed on the paramount need for a godly and blameless life before men which, **in** the sovereign working of God, may be used by Him to bring about repentance **in** men's hearts.

Next we have defined our position in relation to lawful authority as seen in the king and his governors. To such the Christian is to be subject. Subjection, however, is not the same as obedience, and the Christian may well find himself confronted with commands from an earthly authority which are in conflict with his divinely enlightened conscience. In such case he must seek grace from God to stand firmly with Peter in Acts 5. when he says, "We must obey God rather than men." This may involve having to bear a penalty and possibly some persecution, but we recall the words of the Master in Matthew 5. 10-12 about such as suffer for righteousness' sake.

Servants as well as subjects may be faced with being called upon to obey, which they cannot do. The great Example for all servants is in Jehovah's Servant whom we are exhorted in Isaiah 42. to "BEHOLD" Peter refers us to Isaiah 53. where we have described how that Servant was killed—the Man of Sorrows. In **His** being killed **He** bore our sins in His suffering body on the tree. *J. Miller.*

From Willington Quay. —In these verses Peter turns again from doctrinal teaching to the matter of conduct, and in particular to the conduct of those who are sojourners **and** pilgrims. He was writing to those who, in one sense, were sojourners by reason of the dispersion (chapter 1. 1), and in another sense, sojourners **because** of their heavenly calling.

The **fact** that they were God's people on earth carried with it the responsibility of conduct, and seemingly behaviour among the Gentiles would result in their

glorifying God in the day of visitation. **We** considered the phrase, " In the day of visitation. " The only conclusion **we** were able to reach **was** that **it is a** personal visitation when an individual **is** reached by the Gospel.

The freedom that is ours in Christ does not mean that **we can** throw off restraint but, on the contrary, we must be always on our guard in order that the world may have no opportunity of reviling. The Lord Jesus, **in His** days on earth silenced those who tempted **Him** concerning the matter of giving tribute, with the words, " Render therefore unto Caesar.... Caesar's, and unto God.... God's (Matthew 22. 17-21), and to-day the word to us is, " Honour **all men**. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. "

Subjection **is** an attribute which is entirely foreign to the natural man, but the believing servant **is** exhorted to shew subjection even to those who are against him. The outcome of such subjection may be suffering wrongfully, but **such** suffering, patiently borne, **is** acceptable with God. **K. R.**

EXTRACTS.

From Birkenhead. —Having spoken of the spiritual house **and** its service God-ward, Peter turns to the testimony befitting those who are called a holy nation. **We** are encouraged to persevere in good works among the Gentiles so that the day may come when those who have criticized **will** be compelled to acknowledge their faults **in** doing so.

Subjection **is** to be a characteristic of those **in** the holy nation.... " for the Lord's sake. " There can be no doubt that God expects **His** people to honour and obey earthly rulers. The Lord Jesus Christ **Himself** gave **His** answer to those who questioned **Him** about the tribute money, " Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. " It may be, however, that earthly rulers may exceed their authority and command believers to do that which **is** against the will of God. The apostles had an experience of this, when they were forbidden by the high priest and the council to preach in the name of Jesus (see Acts 5.). They replied, " **We** must obey God rather than men. " They recognized that their responsibility was to God first. The observance of this principle has been brought home to us in recent years by the compulsory military service. **We** can rightly stand aside from the world's political activity and warfare, for the Lord's sake.

Subjection to our earthly masters may involve some suffering, but **we** have the great Example of the Lord Himself, who suffered although **He** was blameless. A place of subjection among the people of the world is better for those of the holy nation than a place of leadership. Lot found himself among the leaders of Sodom, but his testimony was destroyed. **P. K., R. L. S.**

From Crowborough. —The **life** of the individual believer **must** correspond with the collective **life** of a people enjoying divine favour. **As** those who **make** it manifest that we are journeying on to a better land, we should lay **aside** completely **all** those things satisfying the natural man, but harmful to the spiritual man. Subjection to inconsiderate **men is** not easy, but **we** must study and emulate the **life** of our Master, who suffered many things at the hands of men, in doing the will of God. **He** has put away our **sins and made** it possible that we, too, might walk **in** the paths of righteousness. **S. Swift.**

From Birmingham. —Within these verses we find instruction given to the disciple as to his attitude regarding the authority of the world. The portion is divided into three parts. Verses 13-17 deal with subjection to the ordinances of man; verses 18-20 with subjection of servants to masters; and in verses 21-25 we have Christ as our great Example. We suggest that subjection and obedience are not bound to have the same meaning. "Subjection" would indicate an attitude of spirit, and "obedience" a positive action. For example, a Christian, while being subject to the ruling Government, cannot obey the ordinance which would make him a member of the armed forces, for this is contrary to God's will. We must, however, subject ourselves to the authority of whichever power is in force and that, "For the Lord's sake."

In a country of increasing state control we need continually to have enlightened consciences, guided by the Word of God, so that we may know and do the will of God. The key verse of the passage would seem to be verse 21. We are to follow His steps. We see His lamb-like attitude, in the following verses. How jealously ought each one of us to guard his or her testimony!

As servants unto masters, grace should characterize our every action. Consider the Lord Jesus: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not." How the wonderful attributes of our Lord Jesus Christ should be seen in our lives, as citizens and as servants!

K. Robertson. H. Smith.

From Edinburgh. —Knowing our fleshly weaknesses let us, as redeemed ones, abstain from things that war against the soul. If we do not do this, Satan will be the victor and we shall be the losers. This especially applies to our walk, that those without may be left without excuse in the day of their visitation (looking over). On earth, rulers are appointed and set up by God to reward or punish. In spiritual things, however, God is supreme, and obedience to man's ordinance, when the latter is against the will of God, is not required of us.

Servants should serve their masters as serving God. Our position is known to Him, and if we suffer wrongfully and bear it for His sake we do well, and gain for ourselves a real reward. Our example suffered for us, without the camp, and gained, for Him and us, an exceeding weight of glory. This exhortation is also given as an example to shepherds of the assemblies who are God's servants, called to this work.

A. Hope.

From Cowdenbeath. —The theme of subjection is one of vital importance, which runs throughout the Scriptures, even from creation itself, for it was in the purposes of God to place all created things on earth in subjection to man (Genesis 1. 28). The exercise of subjection will entail separation. Our position here is clearly indicated as that of pilgrims and sojourners.

It is not for us to establish ourselves here, nor to seek some high place or portion, but it is ours to behave ourselves honestly among the Gentiles, and to be subject to authority, that in our life we may show forth the virtues of the Lord Jesus. Firstly our mind and will must be in subordination to God's mind and will. The first battle must be fought, and won, over the flesh. Our behaviour before men is to be such, that though evil spoken of, our good works may have the effect of causing men to glorify God in the day of visitation. Our position as subjects of the realm is clearly one of model law-abiding citizens. Men may claim obedience in respect of matters that conflict with God's will, then it may be necessary to say, "We ought to obey God rather than men," and while such a step may appear to men as disobedience, yet rather is it obedience to a higher authority, even God. It is the master's right to direct, and the servant's duty to obey. Recognition of this fact will enable the servant to render hearty, conscientious and faithful service. It may, of course, be difficult to render such

service to masters who are overbearing, but if the position is viewed as being according to God's ordinance, then the service will be carried out as in His sight and for His sake.

Then we are called upon to consider the perfect Example, the One who stands out as Jehovah's perfect Servant, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps. May we indeed endeavour to be imitators of Christ, that our lives may be a power for good and a blessing to all around! *D. McLelland.*

From Winnipeg. —¹The Holy Spirit, through Peter, manifests the truth that those in the Holy Priesthood, who offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" are also a Royal Priesthood to shew forth the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is clear that these priesthoods do not include all "lively stones," but only "lively stones" who will be gathered together to be subject to divine rule and authority. These are built up a Spiritual House, the House of God, within which is to be found order and discipline indicative of God's rule. In verses 11-20 we note some principles, which all in the Royal Priesthood ought to follow.

Fleshly lusts are never a testimony before the unbeliever. Our profession must be in keeping with our habits, otherwise the unbeliever will be swift to note any inconsistencies. We are exhorted to submit ourselves to existing civil laws. Our God sets up kingdoms, and likewise casts them down. It is God who guides in the affairs of men, and who sets them in authority according to His own good will. Therefore any evidence of disrespect against rulers is contrary to God's laws, and is actually pointed against His ministers (Romans 13. 1-7). Separation is imperative, but does not free us from obedience to civil law. Only those who break the law, need fear it; and such offenders should never be found amongst God's people. It is well to recognize that much of our civil law is based on the perfect law of God.

Servants are exhorted to be subject to their masters, whether they be good or bad. It will uphold their holy calling before them, and may serve as a testimony to win them to Christ. The Christian servant or employee should never be guilty of any form of insubordination.

If we are led by the Holy Spirit, our decision to honour and do the will of God will cause us to suffer unjustly many griefs and sorrows. We must always keep a good conscience towards God, in our dealings with those who hold the position of authority over us. And, if we stand out unwavering in the doing of the will of God, the result will perhaps be rather grievous (Acts 5. 29). It is noted, from verse 20, that no profit is earned for patiently accepting buffeting which has been incurred by our own sins. But to suffer patiently for doing the will of God, is acceptable with God. Our thoughts should centre in Christ, who endured such pain and unspeakable anguish, that we might receive life and be perfected through Him. We may assume that if we are not enduring some affliction in defence of His Royal name, then we are failing somewhat to follow Him. If we will stand with Christ, we will share His rejection, bearing His reproach outside the camp (Hebrews 13. 12, 13). What a precious example did Christ set for us, supreme in spotlessness, submission and humility (Hebrews 7. 26)! He had power to save Himself, yet such was not His Father's will. He even submitted Himself to be tried in the courts of men, although of an unjust charge. Let us consider Him, who paid so high a price for us, and unhesitatingly follow His footsteps, that His name be glorified. *Fred Lundwill.*

From London, S. E. —The theme of these verses is the behaviour before men of the Christian, especially the Christian within the House of God who, as a sojourner and pilgrim, ought to differ from the sinner by abstaining from

fleshly lusts and by being in subjection to authority. There are three main types of subjection inferred here: —(1) Subject to the all-authority of God and the Lord **Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 2. 8), and **as a consequence** of this, (2) Subjection to earthly rulers, (3) Subjection to earthly masters.

It is mainly concerning the latter two that Peter writes. Although not of the world, we are in it and are, **as a result** of this, subjects of an earthly ruler to whom it is our duty to be in subjection for the Lord's sake. **On** this point the apostle **Paul** gives guidance in Romans 13. —our subjection is not to be in fear of punishment, but by obedience to the will of God, for the powers that be are ordained of God and it **is His** will that they continue. The only exception to this course of action **is** when the law of the land **is in** opposition to the will of God expressed in **His** Word, in which case " **We** ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5. 29).

The fact that the Christian, for conscience sake, is willing to endure wrong treatment does not carry with it the implication that God condones evil; God **sees** the situation and the conduct **is** acceptable with **Him**. An interesting example of this relationship **is** that of the Christian master Philemon and his dishonest servant Onesimus, who, after his conversion became **a** bondservant, no longer of Philemon but of God. *A. C. Bishop.*

From Atherton. —It **is** clear that this portion stands closely related to verses 9-10. Thus the elect race **is** called upon to maintain **a** worthy standard of behaviour in **an** ungodly world, and the holy nation **is** exhorted to holy living. The term "fleshly lusts" does not refer to lusts **in general**, but the exhortation to seemly behaviour would suggest the moral side. "The day of visitation," verse 12. Two thoughts were at first presented—(1) the day of God's speaking to men in revealing His Son. See for example Luke 1. **77** to **79**; (2) the day of judgement when God will visit the ungodly and **sinner** in righteous wrath. It was generally agreed that "the day of visitation" applied to the former.

Subjection to every ordinance of man **is** governed by the expression—"for the Lord's sake" and also "the will of God," verse 15. "Love the brotherhood." Two points of view were presented: (1) the brotherhood takes in the one common **human** family—the race of mankind **as** distinct from the children of God, born from above. The context bears out this thought [2]; (2) The brotherhood refers to the Jewish race. See chapter 5. **9**—"your brethren (or brotherhood, R. V. M.) who are in the world." Thus we observe that the command **is** primarily to Jewish saints and their treatment in love of their brethren according to the flesh. It was realized that the scope of our love goes beyond the narrow circle of our brethren in the Lord and the bigger circle of our "brethren in Christ," to that immense circle of those who have never known redeeming love in Christ.

Verse **25** proves yet again the Jewish character of the epistle. Israel had gone astray, and in the sense not true of Gentiles since the Israel nation had the revealed will of God. [3]. They had rejected the Messiah—the Shepherd had come to seek out the erring "lost sheep of the house of Israel." They did not respond to **His** loving entreaties, **His** gracious, beckoning voice. Yet, happily now, **these** Jewish believers are seen **returning** to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. These titles applied to the Lord Jesus are intended of the Holy Spirit to give real comfort **and** true solace to the sheep of the little flock.

John Bullock, G. A. Jones.

From Liverpool. —"Beloved" here **is** not just **a figure** of speech: the apostle loved them, **and** indicated that what **he was** about to say **was in** their vital interests. It **is** likely that at this period **the new** religious body **was claiming** the attention of **the** heathen among whom they were strangers. **While** thus

spoken **against** as evil-doers, only their strictest good works would impress the beholders. The day of visitation probably **refers** to God's correction **in** their earthly days when the example of the Christians would emphasize the justice of God. More important, however, than the power of good example to others **is** the fact that "fleshly lusts war against the soul." **War** brings ruin in its train, and it **is** indeed a tragedy when **a** living soul, precious in the eyes of the Lord, **is** devastated by the enemy.

One cardinal factor should control our conduct: **we** are bondservants of God, our purpose **in** life being to serve our great Master. Acknowledgment of that will enable us to be subject to kings and governors and to their ordinances, not for their own sakes, but for the Lord's, whose will it **is** that there should be rule and authority in the earth. Rule **is** Jehovah's prerogative, and although princes privileged by **Him** to reign **in** the earth (Romans 13. 1; Proverbs 8. 15-16) may misuse their delegated authority, the Lord's people should remain in subjection. The question **arises** here of our attitude to military service. From other scriptures, such **as** 2 Corinthians 10. 3-4 and John 18. 36, **we** are persuaded that the bondservants of God ought not to take part **in** carnal warfare, concerned with present earthly kingdoms.

May we then disobey those powers when their directions are opposed to the Lord's expressed will? That **is** the only alternative. Moreover, **we** have scriptural precedents for adopting it. Daniel defied the **king's** decree (Daniel 6.) and Peter and the apostles said, "**We** must obey God rather than **men**" (Acts 5. 28-29). It **is** to God that we must be subject. The sphere of **man's** rule **is** in temporal things and in that connexion we should render what **is** due—tribute, custom, **fear** and honour.

The example of Christ in **His** reactions to both insult and injury **is** held out to us. That, and not the vicarious aspect of the Lord's death, **is** stressed here—that we should follow **His** steps. However precious objectively the Lord may be to our faith, it **is** only experimentally that we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him. Here and now, day by day, even step by step following **Him** **we** can draw nearer in "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3. 10). "If any man would come after Me, let him . . . take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9. 23).

Frank Jones, W. H. S.

From Melbourne.—There **is** a spirit of lawlessness abroad in the world to-day which **is** one of the manifestations of the end of the age; when our long-expected Lord Jesus will come from heaven and call us home.

Verses 11 and 12. The apostle entreats us to be unyielding to inordinate desires, those specific evil habits which had the mastery over **us** in our unsaved days, that are at warfare still, with our redeemed souls. Fleshly lusts, **if** yielded to, will rob us of eternal treasures in heaven. Our secret sins are set in the light of **His** countenance (Psalm 90. 8). The lust for wealth, the desire to become rich **is** a snare; the apostle in his epistle to Timothy writes: "**O** man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

Sinners will be attracted to **Him** when we mirror the reflection of Christ in our life. This entails **a** daily meditation on the word and much time in the sanctuary on our knees. "The day of visitation" was thought by some **as** the time of inspection [*episcopal*], when our work on earth **is** looked over. **We** should be exemplary in all things, rendering tribute to whom tribute **is** due. Jesus gave us examples in Matthew 17. 27 when the shekel was given for Himself and Simon Peter. Pilate, the governor, marvelled greatly when Jesus was silent, when falsely accused by the chief priest and elders. "This righteous man" was governor Pilate's testimony. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow **His** steps: we are not asked by God to follow **IN** **His** steps for none of the ransomed can sound the depths of His humiliation. *S. Stoope.*

From **Hamilton** (Canada). —In considering this subject, " Subjection to Authority, " we feel that the keynote is struck in the thirteenth verse, " for the Lord's sake. " Not only is this true in subjection to authority, but also in suffering, which is touched upon in the portion under consideration. Both subjection and suffering are foreign to our nature, therefore only the grace of God will enable us to carry out Peter's exhortation. No one could write with more authority on this subject than Peter, who, as Acts 4. clearly shows, had experience both with suffering and with the authorities. Christ, Himself, in the matter of paying tribute, said those memorable words, " Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. " This shows clearly that whenever we are confronted with a choice of man's authority or God's, we must also say, like Peter, " We must obey God. " In Matthew 28. the Lord's statement, " All authority, etc. . . . " clearly shows where man's authority originates. Because of this fact, Romans 13. exhorts us to be in subjection to the higher powers, " for there is no power but of God. " It has often been pointed out that the exhortation in chapter 13. to render to all their dues is preceded by the entreaty of Paul, in chapter 12. 1, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

In verses 19 and 20 the word " acceptable " is used in connexion with suffering wrongfully, and the marginal reading is " grace. " Then follows an account of One who suffered wrongfully, One who was " Grace " personified. This word seems to be the keyword of the whole epistle, for Peter closes with the words, " I have written unto you testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein. " *W. Thompson, N. MacKay.*

COMMENTS.

[1] (Cardiff). Christ did not carry up our sins in His body to the tree, but He bore our sins upon the tree, as the passage, both Greek and English, says. —J. M.

[2] (Atherton). No, this is incorrect. See reply to question from London. —J. M.

[3]. (Atherton). There is a wider application of these words to all men. All have gone astray, as well as Israel. The Gentiles were not absolutely in ignorance, as Romans 2. and other scriptures show; God never left Himself without witness to all men. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Willington Quay. —Is there any special significance in the words used here for " servants " and " masters " as we notice they are different from those used in Ephesians 6. 5?

Answer. —The words used in 1 Peter 2. 18 are *oiketes*, which means a domestic or household servant or slave, and *despotes*, a lord, master of slaves, or head of a household. *Despotes* is the word from which the English word "despot" is derived. *Despotes*, master, and *doulos*, slave, are correlatives, though you find *kurios*, lord (a less offensive word than *despotes*), used with *doulos*, as, for instance, in the Lord's words, " A disciple (learned) is not above his master (teacher), nor a servant (*doulos*, slave) above his lord (*kurios*) " (Matthew 10. 24). The same is true of Ephesians 6. 5, where we have *doulos* and *kurios*. Household servants, as in 1 Peter 2. 18, may or may not have been slaves, they may have been slaves who had gained their liberty, though the relationship of *oiketes* with *despotes* in this verse would point rather in the direction that these household servants were slaves. The treatment which might be meted out to them, in that they have to suffer griefs unjustly and even be buffeted, would strengthen the thought that they were slaves rather than freemen. —J. M.

Question **from** Crowborough.—To what does the "day of visitation" (1 Peter 2. 12) refer?

Answer. —It is the day when God visits men in grace. This **is** also so in Luke 19. 44. But the day of visitation may also be a day of judgement, **as** in Isaiah 10. 3. There will be no glorifying God in the time of judgement. Judgement never changes men; see Revelation 16. 10, 11, where **men** blaspheme God in their pains and do not repent of their deeds, though in Revelation 11. 13, because of being affrighted, they glorify the God of heaven, but this is not the spontaneous glorifying of God, but the upsurge of emotion through fear. —**J. M.**

Questions from Edinburgh. —(1) Is "the day of visitation" the Great White Throne ?

Answer. —See answer to question from Crowborough. —**J. M.**

(2) Is there any significance in the order of the commands in 1 Peter 2. 17 ?

Answer. —Plainly there are two couplets here, (1) men and (2) the brotherhood: (3) God and (4) the king. I do not **see** order in the sequence of those mentioned, for had we written the verse, we probably would have put it with God first, then the brotherhood, then the king, and lastly all men. But natural wisdom and selection finds no place in the Scriptures. The emphasis is rather on what is said about each, **fear** God, **love** the brotherhood, then **honour** to the king and to men. Honour to such **as** the king must ever be governed by the fear of God. —**J. M.**

Question from London, S. E. —Who are the brotherhood referred to in verse 17?

Answer. —This word brotherhood is only used by Peter (2. 17; 5. 9). It means a society of brethren, a fraternity. Note verses **5** and **9**, where we read of a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood. Priest, priesthood, brother, brotherhood, the suffix "hood" **is** from the Anglo-Saxon *had*, state or quality. Brotherhood does not include all who are born again, but only **such as** are brothers who are together. Psalm 133. 1 gives the correct conception: —

"Behold, how good **and** how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together **in** unity!"

First, these are all brethren, men of common parentage, then **such are** together, dwelling together, and in unity. —**J. M.**

Questions from Cardiff. —(1) What **is** meant by "fleshly lusts which war against the soul" ?; (2) Are the "soul" and "the inward **man**" synonymous expressions ? (3) Do references to "the inward man" and "the new man" apply to "the soul" ?

Answers. —(1) Fleshly lusts are lusts which emanate from the flesh. This needs no explanation, for the epistles are replete with references to such things. These carnal lusts attack the soul, the object being to kill the life, not the bodily or physical life, but the higher and spiritual life, so that the soul by such wounds **as** carnal lusts may inflict upon it may be so weakened, that instead of the Christian soldier being strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might so **as** to **be** able to take up the whole armour of God, he is weak and effete and in need of nursing **and** care.

(2) A human being **is** a "soul" (1 Peter 3. 20) and has a soul (1 Thessalonians 5. 23, being of spirit, soul and body subsisting), though he may have no "inward man," or "new man", that **is**, he **is** not a regenerated person. When a soul, that **is** a human being, **as** in 1 Peter 3. 20, **is** born again, he may **be** spoken of then **as** having a new or inward man, but not till then, so that "soul" and "inward man" are terms which should not be confused.

(3) It follows, therefore, **as** to question (3), that we should not say that the soul is the "new" or "inward **man**." —**J. M.**

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

MAY, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	41
The First Epistle of Peter:	
Submission to one another	42
Comments..	48

EDITORIAL.

Human society must be regulated by law which defines the relationship between the units that make up that society. Without law, or the embodiment thereof in a ruler (as we read in the last verse of Judges), **each man** does that which **is** right in his own eyes. Along that course lie anarchy and chaos.

Peter's epistle was written to a people whom he describes **as** " sojourners and pilgrims, " **a** rootless people, scattered amongst the provinces. No doubt they were rejoicing " greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory " in **the** liberty that Christ brings to the believing soul, but they are reminded that while on earth they must observe a correct relationship to others—saved and unsaved.

Here, then, we have the almost universal relationships of ruler and subject, of master and servant, of husband and wife. On those relationships almost all social life **is** built. How important, then, it **is** to have divinely inspired instructions thereon! The keyword of these instructions **is** not hard to find. It **is** "SUBJECTION, " primarily a military term, meaning " to rank under. " It involves discipline, whether imposed by others or by self.

In 1 Peter 2. 13, the subjection **is** to men's ordinances, " for the Lord's sake "; in 1 Peter 2. 18 it **is** the servant's subjection to his master, which is " acceptable **if** for conscience toward God "; and in 1 Peter 3. 1 wives are encouraged to subject themselves to their own husbands, that the latter **may** be **gamed** for God. What **a** laudable and desirable purpose **is** this ! Later in the letter (1 Peter 5. 5) the " younger " overseers are encouraged to be subject to the " elder " .

This undoubtedly calls for a girdle of humility. **As** Peter wrote these inspired instructions we feel sure that the memory of his Master in the upper room " during supper " came vividly before him. Let us ponder the seven steps of condescension in John 13. " **J**esus . . . **riseth** from supper, and **layeth** aside His garments; and **He took** a towel, and **girded** Himself. Then **He poureth** water into the bason, and **began to wash** the disciples' feet, and to **wipe** them with the towel wherewith **He was** girded.

SO HE COMETH TO SIMON PETER. "

Such **a** background enhances the Word—" Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. "

Jas. Martin.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Submission to one another.

From Cowdenbeath. —The study-portion resolves itself into three parts: (1) verses 1-6; (2) verse 7; (3) verses 8-12. In (1) we have subjection in the home circle: in (2) a message to wives and husbands. Scriptural teaching is plain on the matter of the subjection of wives to husbands, as, for example, "the head of the woman is the man" (1 Corinthians 11. 3, cp. Ephesians 5. 22 and 23). Here the apostle is considering the case of wives with unbelieving husbands, where good behaviour, an evidence of submission, is a potent factor in leading their husbands to Christ (see also 2. 12). Conversely, wives are warned against things that might hinder the progress of such a work. These hindrances might be considered under the heading of *External Adornment*, as (a) **planting** the hair, (b) wearing of jewels of gold, and (c) putting on apparel.

(a) Long hair is a woman's glory (1 Corinthians 11. 15). Therefore we conclude that it is right and proper for her to take care of it. The force of the word *adorning*, in verse 3, from its root word, *kosmos*, gives the thought of orderly arrangement; decoration may be carrying the matter to excess.

(b) With regard to jewels, it is admitted that for women, rings have their special significance; for instance the marriage ring, yet it seems clear that moderation should be practised in the use of these things.

(c) The scriptural recommendation is modest apparel (1 Timothy 2. 9). Being slaves to fashion cannot be described as chaste behaviour.

What is precious in God's sight might be considered under the heading of *Internal Adornment*. Sisters are exhorted to adorn the heart with that which is not corruptible, a meek and quiet spirit.

Thus did holy women of old behave. Sarah manifested subjection in that she recognised Abraham as her lord. Sisters who emulate Sarah can claim the conditional title of "children of Sarah." Husbands have a responsibility towards their wives. The husband is to recognise that his wife is heir with him of the "grace of life" and to esteem her accordingly. Failure on the husband's part to appreciate his wife's position in relation to himself might lead to prayers being hindered. It was thought that joint-prayers were in view here.

In the third section subjection and suffering seem to be connected (verses 8-9). Subject hearts and minds are necessary if the teaching of verse 9 is to be observed. The formula for a successful and enjoyable life is given in verses 10-12. Failure to comply might involve divine judgement.

From Ilford. —Francis Ridley Havergal wrote that "a true woman's submission is inseparable from deep love." Her favourite name for Christ was "Master." It is possible that a believing wife may have to be subject to an unreasonable husband, just as the slave to his master, whatever the character of the latter. The example is the Lord Jesus, who was subject to His Father even unto death. The theme is also set on a high plane by comparison with the subjection of the Church to Christ. The husband should love his wife as Christ loved the Church, a fact which tends to be overlooked. We should think more of the mutual love and understanding which is necessary, rather than being ready to point a finger at the woman and tell her what she must observe.

The manner of life is capable of bringing others to salvation (verse 1). Romans 1. 19, 20 is another example of something which might lead to salvation without the hearing of the Word [1]. The possibility that a wrong attitude to marital subjection might result in the word of God being blasphemed is seen in Titus 2. 5. The happy converse is seen in the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.

The grace of life may be a joint inheritance. In verse 7 it seems that the prayers of husband and wife together are spoken of. Joint prayer is an important factor in Christian home life, and its neglect would bring sorrow. The thought of mutual blessings led to the realization that there was something in this passage for us all.

Verse 9 brings to mind the words—" When He was reviled, (He) reviled not again, " and verse 10 points us to the passage in James 3, about the devastating effect of rash speaking. We think of Him whose lips were as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh. " And all spoke well of Him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth " (Luke 4. 22, R. S. V.). " Never **man** so spake ! " C. J. T.

From Birmingham. —The words of Genesis 3. 16, " He shall rule over thee, " (spoken to the woman), were compared to those in the portion under consideration, and the thought was expressed that " subjection " differs from " obedience. " " Subjection " indicates an attitude of mind whereas " obedience " is, of necessity, active. The wife is to obey as far as is possible in keeping with a godly walk. Different viewpoints were expressed in connexion with the interpretation of verses 1 and 2 as to whether the " fear " in verse 2 was a godly fear on the part of the wife or fear (terror as in the Greek text) in the heart of the beholding husband. It was mentioned that the word " coupled " is not in the original, and that the verse should read " Beholding your chaste behaviour with fear. " On the other hand the view was held that this verse should be studied in association with the words of the first verse, and that the attitude and character of the wife towards her husband should be that of chaste behaviour coupled with fear.

Though important guidance is given concerning the becoming appearance of the wife, it was emphasized that the factor of prime importance is the condition of the heart and the possession of a meek and a quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God, and which will be automatically reflected in the outward expression and becoming appearance of the godly wife.

Responsibilities of equal significance are enjoined upon the believing husband in his attitude towards his wife. The knowledge shown towards the weaker vessel implies moderation and gentleness, giving honour as showing a just estimation, kind and generous treatment and a chaste association. What a delightful expression of this association is portrayed in the words, " being also joint-heirs of the grace of life " !
David Elson.

From Crowborough. —There is nothing lowering in subjection one to another; indeed, only in heaven will we fully appreciate the glory God gets out of it. Spiritually-minded men have received much help and guidance from godly women, in watching their manner of life. In viewing each other, as God views us, we learn to look for " the hidden man of the heart. " Unlike the tinsel of outward show this truly satisfies. Unity, one objective of our collective testimony, can only be accomplished if our affections and ambitions are centred on Christ.

Love should be the motive of all we do, for without it service is empty and of little value. Let us learn the solemn lesson of verse 12 regarding the eyes and ears of the Lord. Malachi 3, reminds us that He listens with the purpose of writing the book of remembrance. He sees all; He hears all. Having this constantly before us would greatly affect our testimony to His glory and our blessing.
B. V. French.

E X TRACTS.

From Birkenhead. —Peter continues his exhortations to subjection, turning to home life. Three possible sets of circumstances emerge, firstly, where the wife is a believer but the husband is not; secondly, where the husband is a believer but the wife is not; and, thirdly, where both husband and wife are believers. By subjection to her unbelieving husband, a wife may so influence him that he will be led to find salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Similarly, we assume, an unbelieving wife may be won by the conduct of her husband who shows honour unto her as unto the weaker vessel.

There may be occasions when a believing wife would find it impossible to be in subjection to her husband who expects from her that which is clearly against the will of God [2].

If both are believers, no question of suffering arises. These principles observed by both, **can** bring only blessing, the fostering of a spiritual condition **which will cause** them to pray together acceptably. As a general principle it was observed that "subjection" **is** not popular **in** the world to-day. It **is**, nevertheless, a divine exhortation, and one, without which, the assemblies of God cannot function acceptably.

From Edinburgh. —It **is** obvious that subjection enjoined on wives is on those whose husbands are not **in** churches of God, with the object of winning them for Christ [3]. The example of Ruth and Naomi was quoted, where Ruth saw something admirable **in** Naomi's life. Let us not be followers of this world's fashion. A meek and quiet spirit **is** of great price **in** His sight. Nevertheless, we should not go to the other extreme and be slovenly.

The wife and mother **is** the centre of every home, and according to her **example** much may be won or lost for Him **in** her home. Peter, the impetuous, now enumerates the Christian traits that **can** have a place in a believer's heart, and he exhorts **all** to be like-minded. *D. Meldrum.*

From London, S. E. —The condition of "subjection" in this portion **is** similar to passages **in** Ephesians 5. 22 and Colossians 3. 18. The husband, visualized, has not been obedient to the word, but the **wife** has. This obedience causes her to observe the subjection to her husband which is ordained of God. So the wife, by her chaste and godly manner of **life** may gain the husband. God **can** also use, by His blessed Holy Spirit, the wife's pure and godly **life** to bring back her saved husband to a pathway of obedience to God.

The daughters of man display their wares **in** dress. A godly wife will dress with becoming modesty (1 Timothy 2. 9-10). The godly woman attracts by sterling character and godliness. The adorning is **in** "the hidden man of the heart, **in** the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which **is** in the sight of God of great price."

Subjection does not **mean** inferiority. Husbands and wives are "joint-heirs of the grace of life." In union "in the Lord," the term "grace of **life**" has its deeper and fuller expression of oneness, even as Christ and the Church are one. Then the prayers are not hindered.

"A heart of compassion" carries more weight than the marginal rendering "sympathetic." Proverbs 13. 3 tells us, "**He** that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life: But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." In **Psalm** 141. 3, David prays, "Set a watch, **O** LORD, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips." In verse 10 we have quoted Psalm 34. 13, "Keep thy tongue from evil" etc. So let us follow the example set before us, that our lives may be chaste and pure, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

G. A. Reeve

From Atherton. —Submission or subjection does not imply weakness or inferiority, for the Lord **Jesus Himself** was subject to His earthly parents, **and** even **as** the Son will be subject to the Father, **in** eternity. **Hence when** the godly wife **is** submissive to her husband, it **is** unquestionably to the glory of God. The delightful unity **and** harmony of married life depends very largely upon its manifestation. Similarly, on his part, the husband **is** to show care, consideration and thought for his wife. How inspiring then are the lovely examples of such joint characters as Abraham **and** Sarah, Boaz **and** Ruth! **As a** contrast consider Michal's attitude to David (2 Samuel 6. 20-23).

The expressions "behaviour" and "manner of life" have an important place in Peter's writings, occurring eight times. The word *adorning* means "mode, fashion or arrangement." How precious it is to see the believing wife displaying the inward qualities of a heart touched and moved by the Spirit! It was suggested that the expression, "that *your* prayers be not hindered," refers specially to the husbands who had unbelieving wives. Thus joint-prayers are not contemplated. Others thought "your prayers" meant prayers from husband and wife [4]. It was generally agreed that the expression "joint-heirs of the grace of life" would apply to a man and his wife joined in marriage. We wondered if the words "any terror" (verse 6) referred to the fear a Christian wife would experience suffering at the hands of Jewish relatives, or at the hands of an unbelieving husband.

E. Birchall, J. K. Southern.

From Kilmarnock. —While it is the custom of women of the world to be outwardly adorned with jewellery and fancy dress, women professing godliness should see that they have the inward adornment of a meek and quiet spirit which is of great price in God's sight. Abraham's wife Sarah is given as a good example of subjection to her husband, and the wives are exhorted to be like her in this. From Exodus 4. 25, 26 we get an example of insubjection in Zipporah, Moses' wife. In like manner the husbands are exhorted to dwell with their wives, and while they may not have the same knowledge of the Truth, they should honour them, knowing they are the weaker vessels and as being joint-heirs of the grace of life. How sad if there is disagreement between husband and wife, thus hindering blessing in the home and praying in vain! We do well to remember that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil." We wonder what is the significance between the "eyes of the Lord" and the "face of the Lord"? [5].

A. G. S.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —There is a close parallel between Peter's exhortation here and Paul's in his epistle to the Ephesians, "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Paul's teaching in this matter was the same as Peter's, in spite of their different character and upbringing, thus showing the Holy Spirit's guidance. Subjection is an attitude of mind from which springs obedience. Obedience may, however, be shown without subjection, if prompted by fear or other motives.

It should be noted that although Peter was a great gospel preacher, he recognizes that in the case of a wife with an unsaved husband the Christ-like life in the home is a greater testimony than continued preaching. The "fear" mentioned in verse 2 is the fear of God, a reverential fear, a fear which springs from love, the fear of displeasing the Lord. This is in contrast to the use of "fear" in verse 6. Trust and faith will cast out the fear and terror of the world.

Husbands are enjoined to give honour to their wives, and also to love their wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for it (Ephesians 5. 25). This is a standard far above that which even the Christian gives his wife, and refutes the argument of some who, from superficial reading of the Scriptures, would assert that the Bible is out-of-date, because it is untruly said to teach that wives should be cringing, downtrodden servants of men.

Verse 7. Some thought that this verse did not contemplate an unbelieving wife and a believing husband, and that the being "joint-heirs of the grace of life" referred to the husband and wife as believers, having eternal life. Others thought that an unbelieving wife and a believing husband were visualized, and that the grace of life was not eternal life, but the present day-to-day life of the two [6].

In verses 8 and 9 Peter leaves the limited sphere of the home and broadens out into a contemplation of the life of the assembly, and the traits that should characterize saints particularly in their assembly life. Peter recognises the sad possibility of even evil and reviling being present in an assembly. The verses

quoted from Psalm 34. are as applicable to-day **as** when David wrote them. Peter, in quoting them, has in mind our life here on earth, and the **result of a** life of seeking to do good, and peace with God brings constant communion **with** the Lord, which is the highest joy that man can experience. *Frank E. Jarvis.*

From Liverpool. —However important the individual, as such, may be, it has already become clear from our studies that he can only fulfil **his** proper function in so far as he maintains proper relationships with others. The human relationship of fundamental importance **is** that **Of** husband and wife. Two people, sometimes temperamentally different, together form a unit (Mark 10. 7, 8).

Such differences must be balanced **if** harmony **is** to prevail, and God, in vesting authority in the man, has on the other hand accorded honour unto the woman. The man and the woman are joint-heirs of the grace of life (verse 7).

There remains to be considered our relationship to one another. In the midst of evil, and in spite of evil propensities, we may, by the grace of God, confer a blessing on our brethren and sisters **if** we act and react according to our calling. When evil rears its ugly head, how precious is the blessing which defeats it! When reviling would stir up strife and trouble, what an admirable characteristic when brethren refuse to be provoked! The Lord Jesus who finally destroyed the power of the evil one at Calvary, left us an example—"Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not" (1 Peter 2. 23). **We** have been called to be actively tender-hearted, loving and compassionate. Thereby shall we not inherit a blessing? Assuredly, for the Lord's eyes **see** and His ears hear. *J. Richards, W. H. S.*

From Nottingham. —Surely we cannot think of a more beautiful union on earth than that of man and wife where conditions prevail such as those enjoined **in** 1 Peter 3. 1-7; the wife in loving subjection and the husband giving honour unto the woman as unto the weaker vessel—a type of Christ and the Church, the Bride. Could we also learn a lesson here to honour one another in assembly life? What hindrance **in** our prayers may be caused in our assembly activities **if**, instead of submitting one to another, there should arise that hard, unrelenting, uncharitable spirit which strikes at the very root of assembly **life**.

A perusal of Exodus 25. -27. will show that many and varied were the materials that went into the building of the Tabernacle, and that each part had to be made so as to fit together and form the whole. The same thing may be seen in God's house on earth to-day, and such scriptures as 1 Corinthians 12. 4-11 and Romans 12. 3-7 show the diversity of gifts which may be seen in those whose happy portion it is to be found therein.

If God is going to derive full pleasure and glory from His people, we must be all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded (1 Peter 3. 8). *Fred and Dennis Allen.*

From Willington Quay. —Our attention **is** drawn to the domestic sphere here, and **in** particular the subjection of a believing wife to her husband, even if he be unsaved. Later we shall **see** subjection in the churches—the younger being subject to the elder (chapter 5. 5). This subjection **is**, in each instance, undertaken by the individual, but sometimes subjection is enforced by another as in 1 Corinthians 15. 27. Subjection has to be "fitting in the Lord" (Colossians 3. 18). Coupled with this **is** "godly fear."

The part the husband plays in this blessed state, this "grace of **life**," **is** not left unmentioned; **he** exercises care and affection, **mingling** responsibility with kindness and giving the lead in the spiritual exercise of prayer.

In what way **is** the woman "the weaker vessel"? The alleged physical weakness is often disputed medically. Then too, sometimes the wife is the more healthy and the stronger [7].

What life **is** this of which they are said to be "joint-heirs"? Is it natural life or spiritual life? [8].

C. B.

From Melbourne. —The principle of subjection to one another, though wide in its scope, does not imply inferiority. It is a comely trait in the life and walk of the pilgrim, and much commended in the word of God. The lack of it has wrought havoc amongst **His** people down the centuries. Verses 1 and 7 suggest that this submission begins at home. Responsibility on both sides is entailed, and a proper balance maintained. What is involved in "even if any obey not the word"? [9]. There is one way to win the husband, that way is in the hidden man of the heart, the clothing of a meek and quiet spirit, as exemplified by the holy women aforetime, Sarah, Hannah, etc. The outward adorning of the hair-fashions or the dress-fashions of the world may, in a measure, please the unsaved husband, but it is not in the sight of God counted as of great price. "Not out-of-date"—"not up to date," was suggested as a safe rule in outward apparel for both sexes in God's house. The prayers of the husband, be they in private or in the assembly, may be hindered **if** his behaviour does not line up with verse 7 (see Ephesians 4. 26).

"Joint-heirs of the grace of life."—Is this life present or future? [10].

The sum total of verses 8 and 9, when practised individually and collectively in the assembly, must conform with Psalm 133. There the Lord commands the blessing, there His ears hearken unto our supplications. Some could not understand why the quotation of Psalm 34. 16 is rendered different in verse 12. The word "against" in Psalm 34. 16 **is** given in verse 12 "upon" [11].

S. Stoope.

From Bradford, **Halifax and Leeds**. —Human authority, being delegated, in its character should function upon divine principles revealed in the Word of God; failing that it cannot demand *unqualified* obedience to its laws and edicts (e. g., Exodus 1. 17; Daniel 3. 16-18; cp. 1 Peter 2. 13 with Acts 4. 18-20). This same principle applies to all kinds of human authority. The case **is** supposed of a Christian woman who is married to an unsaved husband, presumably a person who has resisted the teaching of the Word of God. She is called upon to walk in an exemplary way before her husband. In seeking to win her husband for the Lord, her life should be characterized not by outward adornment, but by the beautiful manifestation of a godly character. Such a life would be characterized by chastity, modesty, shamefastness, sobriety, meekness, and subjection to her own husband (cp. 1 Timothy 2. 9, 10 with 1 Peter 3. 4-6). By means of these moral qualities, as seen in the believing wife, the Holy Spirit can thus influence the ungodly husband. God, who alone can truly assess the value of our character, esteems very highly a life that **is** marked by such qualities.

The husband also in like manner should manifest a Christ-like love toward his wife (cp. Ephesians 5. 25). This, being sacrificial in its character, would constrain her to manifest a godly reverence and fear toward her husband, in realizing the authority over the family that has been given to him by the Lord (Genesis 3. 16). The husband's love will best be manifested by his appreciating the due relation of the sexes in the design of God, and acting with tenderness and forbearance accordingly. Husband and wife should always act in partnership, for God has bestowed His gift of life to both. In such a partnership, their prayer will become most effective in its working. Finally, in verses 8-12 the believers' attitude towards one another should be marked by unity of purpose, sympathy, love, tender-heartedness, humility, and a non-retaliatory spirit. If the believer desires to appropriate the life which he received at his new birth (Joshua 1. 3; 1 Timothy 6. 19, last clause) his tongue should be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. In the doing of these things, he would become conscious of the providential care of his heavenly Father, and this in its very nature is the essence of true life.

William G. Henderson.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Ilford). —This scripture in Romans 1. 19, **20** has to do with witness to God as Creator in the things of the creation, but salvation is by faith in Christ the Redeemer, and that is to be obtained by the message of the gospel. How God will deal with repentant heathen who never heard the gospel is quite another matter. Note that the word is "gained" (R. V.) or "won" (A. V.) in—"they may without the word be gained. " For a woman to gain her husband, and for God to save the husband are two different things. The wife gains, but God saves, and **He** saves through the gospel only. —*J. M.*

[2] (Birkenhead). —A wife may be **in** subjection to her husband, recognizing and acknowledging his headship, but he may require her to do something which she cannot do, for in doing what he says she would be disobeying God's command. There are some wicked, domineering husbands who would so act, and have so acted in the past. Subjection and obedience are not equivalent terms. —*J. M.*

[3] (Edinburgh). —Subjection is enjoined on a wife to her husband whether she is in a church of God or not. See notes in papers from Ilford and Birkenhead. —*J. M.*

[4] (Atherton). —" Your prayers, " or literally, " the prayers of you "; you being plural shows that the prayers contemplated are the prayers of husband and wife. This beyond question involves that both are saved persons. —*J. M.*

[5] (Kilmarnock). —These are modes of expression, the first may be compared to the eyes of a fond parent contemplating the doings of his children, but in regard to the face of the Lord, it shows the Lord as of **set** countenance against evil doers. See Jeremiah 44. **11**: " Behold, I will set My face against you for evil, even to cut off all Judah. "—*J. M.*

[6] (Kingston). —This statement "joint-heirs of the grace of life" can only apply to husbands and wives who are both born again. An unbeliever is not an heir of grace in any sense. What is the grace of life, but that grace that teaches us (Titus 2. 12) how to live God-glorifying lives? What a man and woman did individually, they do now jointly as man and wife in a sphere that requires added grace and instruction. More grace is needed when we remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7. 28. **Paul's** words are never a deterrent to marriage, or rarely so, but all such as share in this tribulation need to know the practical meaning of what " joint-heirs of the grace of life " experimentally means. —*J. M.*

[7] (Willington Quay). —There are no doubt exceptions to and variations in most rules, and without doubt there are cases in marriage that the wife is stronger mentally, and in character and physique. But this does not alter the rule, proven by inspired scripture and human experience, that the **female** as compared with the **male** is the weaker vessel. Satan knew that the woman was the weaker vessel, consequently he effected his purpose through her. See what is said about the woman being thoroughly deceived in 1 Timothy 2. 14, but **Adam** was not deceived. I am surprised that any medical man of note should question that woman is the weaker vessel. —*J. M.*

[8] See note in paper from Kingston. —*J. M.*

[9] (Melbourne). —"Even if any obey not the word" means that the word of God is not that which governs their life.. To quote scripture to such persons will serve little purpose, so the appeal that is to be made to their conscience is the appeal of a godly life in which the **effects** of the word of God are clearly demonstrated. These may be won by such a life. To be won or gained and to be saved, though interwoven often in life's experiences, are not identical. To win **is** man's work, to save is God's. See note in paper from Ilford. —*J. M.*

[10] See note in paper from Kingston. —*J. M.*

[11] I presume that the differences between **Psalm** 34. **12-16** and 1 Peter 3. **10-12** are because the **Psalm** is translated from the Hebrew, but Peter gives the rendering of the passage from the Septuagint version. I note that the A. V. renders *epi* as " against " in 1 Peter 3. **16**. " On " or " upon " are usually the meanings given to *epi*, but other words are also **used** in English to convey the true meaning involved in **the** text. I think the A. V. " against " would give the correct idea in this case. —*J. M.*

BIBLE STUDIES

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

JUNE, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	49
The First Epistle of Peter:	
Suffering	51
C o m m e n t s	57
Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s	58

EDITORIAL.

A startling change would **be** effected in **the** relationships of man to man and of man to God, if **the** little word **fear** were eliminated from our vocabulary, and the emotion it describes were removed from our beings. In one sense, it would **effect** good results, in another sense, tragic consequences.

Consider for **a** moment the great changes that would **be** effected in man-to-man relationships, if fear were removed. Most kinds of insurances would **cease** to **be** required; police forces, armies and navies would **be reduced** to a minimum. A glimpse of the Millennium would dawn upon this fear-distraught world. On the other hand, if man **ceased** to fear God, the restraint that possible Divine retribution might **exact** would **be** removed and the last dread pre-millennium **days** would **be** upon us. The list of Psalm-quotations in Romans 3., describing fallen man, would then **be** very evident, culminating in, " There **is** **no** **fear** of God before their eyes."

It is evident, then, that the **same** emotion—**fear**—has diverse **effects** on mankind, and **as** in **Hebrew** and in Greek, so also in English, the **same** words are **used** to **express** emotions differing widely in character. **At** one end of the scale **we** read, " the **fear** of the LORD **is** the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9. 10, etc.), and the whole duty of man **is** to **fear** God (Ecclesiastes 12. 13), while **at** the other end **we** read, " **But** for the fearful... their part shall **be** in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which **is** the second death " (Revelation 21. 8).

With the Christian, fear, **in** the lower sense, ought not to exist. For **we** read in 1 John 4. 18 that " there **is** **no** **fear** in love; **but** perfect love casteth out fear, **because** fear hath punishment; and he that feareth **is** not **made** **perfect** in love. " Unfortunately man **fears** nature, where he cannot control her, and his fellow-man, too. The entrance of sin brought this about. When Adam fell he feared, **because** he was naked (Genesis 3. 10). He could not **meet** God **face** to **face**, **as** once he **did**. Cain, too, **because** of being **an** outlawed murderer, **feared** his fellows (Genesis 4. 12-14).

Thus, in **a** natural sense, **fear** **is** the outcome of wrong-doing. Its antidote is faith, **as** the **writer** of **Hebrews** 13. 6 declares, " The Lord **is** my Helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto **me** ? " So **we** find throughout the Scriptures, God speaking these precious words, " **Fear** not. " In Deuteronomy 20., **we** see both sides of the meaning entailed in the emotion. To the people of Israel goes forth the encouragement, " **Let** not your heart faint: fear not, nor tremble, neither **be** ye affrighted **at** them (your enemies)" (verse 3); whereas, later, the cowardly man is **excused** the conflict of battle, "lest his brethren's heart melt **as** his heart" (verse 8).

The nobler aspect of fear has no thought of danger to self, but it has its origin in a sense of nearness to some higher being. Peter, in our study-portion (verses 14, 15) quotes from Isaiah 8. 12, "neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. The LORD of Hosts... let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." "To fear the LORD," a phrase often used in Scripture, means rather to feel awe at who He is, than fear of what He might do. It entails a reverential bowing before His majesty, His dignity and His Deity. True, His power is immeasurable, but it is more His person that demands "fear." "Jehovah" is the name used more frequently, that is His self-revealing personal Name, than "Elohim" in the phrase "to fear the LORD." Jacob had learned to personify the word when, to Laban he said, "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now hadst thou sent me away empty" (Genesis 31. 42, 53).

So far is this nobler fear above craven fear that we read in the prophetic promise (Isaiah 11. 2) that God would endow the "Shoot out of the stock of Jesse," the coming Messiah, with "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD." Of the same Messiah, Paul wrote years later, that He was "heard for His godly fear" (Hebrews 5. 7). So, "to fear the LORD" is the very mainspring of religion, and it signifies "to worship Him."

There still remaineth, however, in New Testament writings the warning sense in the word. The Lord Jesus spake thus, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12. 4).

A brief study of the Greek words in the New Testament may engender more thoughts on this subject.

The following three words are used to express the emotion we term fear: *Deilia Phobos* and *Eulabeia*. "Of these three words," Trench writes, "the first is used always in a bad sense; the second is a middle term, capable of a good interpretation, capable of an evil, and lying pretty evenly between the two, the third is quite predominantly used in a good sense."

Deilia, meaning fearfulness (from *deos* = fright) occurs once in the New Testament (2 Timothy 1. 7). The word denotes cowardice and timidity. Cognate words are used in John 14. 27, Matthew 8. 26, Mark 4. 40 and Revelation 21. 8.

Phobos. This primarily had the meaning of flight, resulting from being scared, then, by metonymy, that which may cause fright, namely fear, or terror. For its use in the lower or bad sense, see Romans 8. 15, 1 John 4. 18, and in the higher or good sense, see Acts 9. 31, Romans 3. 18, Ephesians 6. 5, Philippians 2. 12 and 1 Peter 1. 17.

Eulabeia occurs twice in the New Testament (Hebrews 5. 7 and Hebrews 12. 28 (R. V. M.)). The derivation of the word is interesting. According to Trench, "the image on which the word rests is that of the careful taking hold and cautious handling of some precious yet frail vessel, which with ruder or less anxious handling might easily be broken... It is not wonderful then that fear should have come to be regarded as an essential element of *Eulabeia*, though for the most part no dishonourable fear, but such as a wise and good man might not be ashamed to entertain."

Thus the first meaning is caution, then reverence, then godly-fear. Herein, we have the true blending of fear and love, resulting in the piety of man towards God. Fellow-students, this word is used by the Spirit of Him (Hebrews 5. 7). Let it be used of us... wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with godly-fear and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12. 28, 29 R. V. M.).

Jas. Martin.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.
Suffering.

From **London**, S. E. —In spite of the persecution Peter reminds them that by serving Christ with hearts unfliningly devoted to Him, they can enjoy present happiness and serenity of mind. He doubtless remembers the words of His Master: " Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful " (John 14. 27).

As a result of this supreme confidence their attitude towards their tormentors might easily become arrogant, not in keeping with the exemplary meekness and respect with which the Master treated His antagonists. They are to strive to imitate Him in leading lives beyond reproach, and if need be, to suffer undeservedly for it, as He did. Surely only such suffering can be worthy of reward, as suffering inflicted for evil-doing is the ministration of justice. *D. G. E.*

With regard to verses 18-20 the first point which is apparent is the close juxtaposition of Christ's death and resurrection with the details of the last days prior to the Flood, together with the preaching of Noah. This has misled some into believing that after Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ in " Spirit " visited the spirits of departed persons in Hell or lower Sheol. No such thing occurred. The spirits of the unrighteous dead are with God (Ecclesiastes 12. 7).

The erroneous belief may have been prompted by the words of the Creed, " He descended into Hell "—where hell has been interpreted as the equivalent to lower Sheol. Christ never descended into hell (the place of torment), but went to Paradise (upper Sheol). Christ commended His spirit to God in Heaven (Luke 23. 46). His body was buried in Joseph's tomb (Luke 23. 53).

It was impossible for Christ, in the Spirit, to preach to the souls of the unrighteous dead in lower Sheol.

In our consideration of the matter Genesis 6. 3 gives the correct position: " And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not strive with man. " The imprisoned spirits are the men who heard the preaching of Noah. Through Noah Christ preached to these men. Noah was as an ambassador on behalf of Christ.

After death there is the judgement which allows for no further opportunity of settling with sin. As this truth is clearly taught in the Scriptures it is inconceivable that Christ would give those who were dead another chance.

R. A. Wood.

From Hayes. —The last the world saw of Christ was as He hung on the Cross. We know from Acts 2. that His soul descended into Sheol and, from His utterance on the cross, we know that He committed His spirit to His Father. Can it be reasoned from this that verses 19 and 20 of 1 Peter 3. refer to the Spirit as He preached through Noah before the Flood to those who were imprisoned and chose to disobey the Word of God ? [A].

As the ark, floated by the water, the instrument of God's righteous anger, proved the salvation of those few who believed, so we enjoy salvation through the work of the Cross [B]. We could not be spiritually alive if verse 7 of Psalm 88. did not apply to Christ: " Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. "

In baptism a believer associates himself with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6), but he is not saved by being baptised. Does it mean that we are saved " through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, " of which baptism is the symbol? [C].

The concluding verse of the chapter shows us Christ in heaven at the right hand of God. Although it is not expressly stated here that those who **suffer** with Christ will with Him share His glory, in Romans 8. 16-18 we have the explicit promise. *H. Y. M.*

From Toronto, **Ont.** —We do well to consider the effects of our sanctifying Christ as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter 3. 15). If He does not reign supreme, then our hearts are divided, and our testimony before men is lost; we also become a ready prey for the wiles of the Adversary.

If only we could, like Isaiah, see the Lord, high and lifted up (Isaiah 6. 1), we might the more fully appreciate Him as Lord in our lives. The secret of nearness to Him in our walk is the day by day feeding on the Word of God, and by prayer. Thus are we able to give effect to verse 15; and let us also consider the solemn words of 2 Timothy 2. 11-13.

We must readily admit that as far as our testimony before men to-day is concerned, we are not called upon to suffer physical suffering. As younger ones, we owe much to those who contended for the faith, and the truths which we may too lightly esteem. The early disciples rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer dishonour "for the Name" (Acts 5. 41). What is the idle taunt of to-day to the loss of all things ?

In considering verses 19, 20 we feel that this cannot possibly refer to the Lord's descent into upper Sheol (or Hades). In Ecclesiastes 12. 7 we read that the spirit of man returns to God who gave it. The souls of Old Testament saints were in upper Hades, but not their spirits. Therefore we would conclude that it is not to disembodied spirits the Lord went, as otherwise we would be condoning the pernicious doctrine of the second chance.

The spirits of men were rebellious in the times prior to the Flood, yet we read that God was waiting in longsuffering, while the ark was being prepared. We believe it was during this period that the Lord Jesus preached. We read that Moses wrote of Him; He was known to Enoch, and, we are sure, to the sons of men prior to the Flood.

The ark, a true type of Christ, saved Noah and his family from the deluge of waters; it separated those in the ark from impending doom, which eventually fell on those who rejected the preaching of Noah. The ark was encompassed by the rains from above and the waters from below, and, we read, the waters increased, and bore up the ark. Here we have a true figure of our baptism.

Norman Kernaghan, W. R. Todd.

From Barrhead and Paisley. —For every phase of the disciple's life there is the supreme example of the Master; suffering is no exception. Not only did the Lord suffer for sin, as the "Sin-bearer," but He also suffered for righteousness' sake. He bore the sin of the world, and He bore the punishment of our sins at the hand, of God. On the other hand He suffered at the hands of men for righteousness' sake, because He said that He was the Son of God. The suffering on the Cross, at the hand of God, was during the second three hours; and at the hand of men during the first three hours.

Some difficulty was experienced with verses 18 to 20, and help would be appreciated. A first reading would seem to suggest that, at some time after the death of Christ, while His body, soul and spirit were separated, He proceeded to some place where spirits were imprisoned, and preached to them. This may be the true interpretation, but we found some difficulties with it [D].

At death, separation of man's tripartite being takes place, his body goes to the grave, the soul goes to its destined abode, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. The spirits spoken of in this portion are therefore with God, as indeed also was the spirit of Christ, who, as He expired, commended His spirit to His Father. If then they were all in God's presence there was no need for preaching, nor could they be in anyway described as being "in prison." If they were alive, when preached to, how could it be said that the Spirit of Christ preached to them ?

Perhaps verses 10 and 11 of chapter 1 may help, where it is said that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of old. These spirits are dated as contemporaries of Noah, and it seems reasonable to presume that the Spirit of Christ was in Noah when he preached in his day. The prison as referred to might possibly be a

time limit imposed on these men. The Flood had been foretold, the **date fixed** by God, and these men were bound to it **as** surely **as** within four walls.

Peter clearly indicates that the experience of Noah and his family going through the flood **waters** is a type of believer's baptism. It is spoken of **as** that which **saves**, obviously not the salvation from wrath, but the saving of the life for divine service. Noah and his family emerged from the ark to begin a new life, and commenced **by** an **act** of worship. The newly baptised believer is **raised** to walk in newness of life to worship and to serve.

J. M. Gault.

EXTRACTS.

From Birkenhead. —Peter encourages **us** in suffering **at** men's hands by the example of Christ Himself. Men, without Christ, have no such consolation in their suffering.

Suffering will **be accepted** in a right spirit **if** Christ is sanctified **as** Lord in our hearts. This **is** something more than the acceptance of Christ **as** our Saviour, "Ready always to give answer" involves a dependence upon Christ to teach **us** what to **say**. In speaking to others, whether unbelievers or to those not in the Fellowship, our attitude should **be** one of meekness and fear.

From the context, some thought that the "hope that is in you" referred to hearing the **Master's** "well done"; others to "the living hope" of chapter 1. 3, and to Colossians 1. 27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Two views were expressed with regard to **verses** 19, 20. Firstly, that Christ, in the Spirit, preached through Noah, in the days preceding the Flood, to men who were disobedient, and are described now **as** "**spirits** in prison," which means in **Hades**, awaiting judgement. Secondly, that the preaching took place after the death of Christ, linking "in which also he . . . preached" with "quickened in the spirit" (verse 18), when Christ went down into **Hades** and, in resurrection, led captivity captive. Those holding the second **view** pointed out that those who rejected the gospel in the day of grace would have no further opportunity of hearing and accepting **it** after death [E].

M. H., R. L. S.

From Kingston-upon-Thames. —Our main object in life **is** to sanctify Christ **as** Lord in our hearts; this will effectively govern our lives both Godward and manward. Christ **is** the substance **and** subject of the hope about which **we are** to **give** a reason to every man that asketh us. With regard to the hope of verse 15 one view was that **it** is the hope of worshippers (Hebrews 6. 18-20). Another view was that **it is** the living hope of the living Christ [F].

Two views **were** put forward on verses 19, 20: (1) Whilst Christ **was** in **Hades**, **He** preached to those awaiting the resurrection, those who had resisted the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah, and (2) "In which also" **was** thought to **be** the **Spirit** of Christ (cp. chapter 1. 11). Thus the Holy Spirit **was** preaching through Noah's building of the Ark, and his oral ministry to the disobedient generation before the Flood. "In prison" **was** thought to refer to the inescapable position of that evil generation prior to the Flood. The first explanation has this against **it** that **it** supports the error that the unrighteous **dead** can believe the Gospel and **be** saved. It also makes no distinction between spirit and soul [G].

L. A. White.

From Melbourne. —To suffer for righteousness' sake **is** a blessed privilege for the believer in Christ. **We** thought on Joseph whose brethren conspired to slay him **because** they **saw** their father loved him more than all his brethren. Eventually he **was put** into the prison, and **suffered** for righteousness' sake. **We** also thought of Daniel, who, in a strange land, prayed three **times** a day and **gave** thanks before his God, **as** he **did** aforetime. **He** also **suffered** for righteousness' sake. John the **Baptist**, for righteousness' sake, **was** beheaded in prison. The testimony of **Jesus** concerning him **is** very beautiful. "Verily I say unto you, Among them

that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist " (Matthew 11. 11).

When men say all manner of evil against us falsely, for the Lord's sake, then let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is our reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before us. Many young believers stumble at baptism for fear of what others might say. Read Luke 12. 4, 5. *S. Stoope.*

From Kilmarnock. —The Scriptures teach that " suffering " has been and is the lot of God's people. Our manner of life should be such as will put our revilers to shame. Paul writing to Timothy says, "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." All God's people, who maintain separation from the world's associations, religious and political, shall suffer reproach for the Lord's sake, and it is better for us to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

What a glorious moment it will be when the Lord shall come and He shall " fashion anew the body of our humiliation." Then those who have suffered reproach for His name, will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2. 12) and " God shall wipe away every tear... and death... mourning... crying... pain shall be no more: the first things are passed away " (Revelation 21. 4). *A. G. S.*

From **Willington** Quay. —In conjunction with suffering we linked verse 14 with the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5. 10, " Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "

Suffering for " well-doing " (verse 17) involves action, something done, whereas suffering for righteousness' sake may be the outcome of abstinence, and will not necessarily be something that is seen.

" Fear not their fear. * The ungodly have their own fear which the believer does not experience. The antidote for troubles and fears is the sanctification of Christ in the heart as Lord. We wondered whether the " us " of verse 18 had a comprehensive meaning including all men, or whether, in view of the context, it had a limited application [H]. As to the preaching to the spirits in prison, we would like some help as to who the spirits were, where the prison was, and the time when the preaching took place [J]. *K. R.*

From Nottingham. —The subject of suffering is one that has given rise to much thought and even perplexity on the part of godly men and women of all generations. Asaph could speak of his reactions as he regarded the apparently serene and prosperous path of the wicked: "My steps had well nigh slipped." But when he entered the sanctuary of Jehovah he was able to view things in their true perspective (Psalm 73.).

In this favoured land, we are not usually called upon to suffer physically for our faith and beliefs, but the cold and callous indifference to God and His Word which abounds on all hands causes mental pain.

No follower of the Lord Jesus Christ should ever have to suffer as an evil-doer, as this will bring discredit to His Lord's name and on his brethren. Suffering for well-doing ought to produce a spirit of meekness. When our Master was reviled He reviled not again. His example we ought to follow.

Finally the Lord Jesus is brought before us as seated on the right hand of God, never more to suffer or to die. This realization should mean much to us.

David Berrisford, Galen Butlin.

From Brantford. —The apostle Peter **had experienced** suffering as a result of following, and **being found in the Way** of, his Lord and Master. He had suffered for righteousness' sake.

How effectively, referring to Isaiah 8. 12, 13, **did** he exhort the disciples to be not afraid of their terror, but firstly **and** always to sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts! The importance of their daily walk **and** life is brought before them, in that they should be always ready to **give** answer. Our **minds were directed** to the marvellous life of the Lord **Jesus** Christ, **and** to **His** wonderful example left for us. The Apostle **brings** into full view the great **sufferings** of our Lord **Jesus** Christ, the **Just One**, who suffered for **us**, the **unjust**, to **bring us** nigh unto God.

If we are to go out unto our Lord **Jesus** Christ, to the place that **men** have **given** Him, then **we** must be prepared to **suffer** for Him. In our **suffering** for **Him**, we have all confidence that **we** will not be left alone; for **He** has promised to be with **us** always. Let **us** not lose sight of the eternal glories, but let **us** press on and follow on, that in the coming day we may hear the "Well done—good and faithful servant."

R. Drake, J. Thomas.

From Atherton. —**Suffering** may be brought on by our own **sin**, or it may befall **us**, in the will of God, that ultimately **we** may be blessed **and** benefited thereby, **and** God glorified. **We** are here pointed to the **greatest** example of **suffering**, "Christ", who "suffered for **sins** once, the righteous for the unrighteous." To sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts **means** that the Lord holds complete sway. The outcome would be that **we** would be ready to testify by our lives **in a** spirit of meekness and fear.

Suffering according to the will of God is always for well-doing. It is never God's will that **we** **suffer** for evil-doing, **as is** proved by 1 Peter 2. 19, 20, **and** chapter 4. 15.

The words "in the spirit" would refer to the Holy Spirit **in** which Christ, through Noah, went and preached to the spirits **in** prison. The expression "in prison" bears reference to those who were disobedient and **in** bondage to **sin** **and** Satan.

How does baptism save? Salvation from sin's penalty is not contemplated, **but** from **sin's** power. Baptism is not an outward ceremonial washing. It is the answer of a good conscience before God. Response to the word of God **ensures** a good conscience; disobedience, **an** evil conscience. The emphasis of verse 21 is on the last clause, "through the resurrection of **Jesus** Christ." **We** are reconciled to God through the death of **His** Son and now **being** reconciled **we** are saved by **His** life (Romans 5. 10). Christ **in** resurrection life is that which saves a believer.

I. H. Butler, C. A. Jones.

From Cowdenbeath. **We** feel a distinction **can be** made **between** doing good **and** acting righteously. Righteousness simply **means** doing what is right; this implies conformity to a standard which is the criterion of what is right. **Suffering** is not the natural consequence of doing good, **but** those who are seeking to conform to a **divine** standard may know something of **suffering** for righteousness' sake. Such **an** experience, **if it is** our portion, should not trouble **us** for **it** **brings** with it blessing. Those to whom Peter wrote were **experiencing suffering** for righteousness' sake. **But** wrong-doing cannot be indulged **in** with impunity, for "whatsoever a **man** soweth that shall he also reap" is **an** inexorable law. An exemplary life often silences **critics**.

It was through the Spirit that the **message** was preached **in** the **days** of Noah. **As** a result of that preaching, eight souls were saved through water [K]. Those eight souls were separated by **water** from a corrupt earth **and** placed on a resurrected earth. This **finds its** antitype **in** baptism. The actual ordinance of **baptism** does not make a person better **if** there is no application of the teaching to the life. **Baptism** is the **answer** of a good conscience **in** seeking after God. It is a proclamation by the believer that he is finished with the old life **in** the flesh **and** now lives according to God **in** the Spirit.

James K. D. Johnston.

From Crowborough. —The Apostle's burden in the Epistle is one of subjection, and in this study we find that subjection to the will of God entails suffering. We recall Paul's messages to Timothy, " Suffer hardship with me , " and⁴⁴ " If we endure we shall also reign with Him " (2 Timothy 2. 3, 12).

Men may revile, but He is our only Surety and Friend. But the fact that He supremely reigns entails subjection and this means obedience. Let us examine our hearts as to whether Christ supremely reigns therein. Can men harm us? According to natural things, yes, for we have but to think of John the Baptist, of Stephen, of Paul, of Peter, and of James, men who suffered to the glory of God. We must not be afraid of men, or of the things they can do unto us, for, to cower before them is to *doubt* His faithfulness and His power. But let us cherish in our hearts an abiding sense of His presence and love, and thus, honouring Him inwardly, we will by our fortitude and bearing, glorify Him. Let us endure "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11. 27). In such a condition we will be **READY ALWAYS** to testify to the hope within, ever reverently, respectfully and gently answering " every man that asketh you a reason. "

E. Swift.

From Liverpool. —We can best be fitted to bear the reproach of this world by sanctifying, in our hearts, Christ as Lord. Thus too we can always be ready to demonstrate, with meekness, to those outside of Christ, the blessed assurance we have, both now and for the future.

There is ever the danger of getting away from Christ, and thereby laying ourselves open to dreadful penalties.

To-day, it is our privilege to place ourselves voluntarily in subjection to Christ, but a day is coming when *all* will be made to bow the knee to Him and acknowledge Him as Lord.

In connexion with verse 21, as regards baptism being the answer of a good conscience toward God, we read Galatians 3. 27. *J. Mitchell.*

From Birmingham. —There are two kinds of human suffering, mental and physical. Suffering brings out the character of a person, and in suffering, allowed by God, there is always a wise reason for this. In Lamentations 3. 31-33 we read of the Lord that " He doth not afflict willingly (R. V. M., from His heart) nor grieve the children of men. " " Buffeting " is mentioned, which would speak of physical suffering (1 Peter 2. 20). Both Stephen and Paul endured physical suffering, whereas, in offering up Isaac Abraham suffered mental strain. There is also suffering brought on by our own sin, as when Paul speaks to the Church in Corinth, " For this cause many among you are . . . sickly, and not a few sleep. " Then there is the most important of all suffering, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 18, Who " suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God. " This is our example of suffering for righteousness' sake, especially when the Adversary of our souls is the cause of our trial.

It would seem from verses 19, 20 that the spirits in prison had an opportunity of hearing and accepting the message. On the other hand, from Luke 16. 31, it does not seem possible that anybody after death, would have an opportunity of accepting the good tidings. *D. Miller, T. H. Darke.*

From **Edinburgh**. —The apostle asks a question in verse 13, " Who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good ? " We know of one, " the Adversary, " who is always ready to trip up a child of God, when he is seeking to do God's will. Here we have the promise of a blessing for our suffering, also a word of encouragement. The Lord Jesus said, " Blessed are 'ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for My sake " (Matthew 5. 11). We need not be afraid of persecution. What we have to do is to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts. Those who speak against

us should be able to see by our manner of life, that we have done nothing wrong and that we have a clear conscience. The great example of suffering is the Lord Jesus Himself. He was the truly righteous One who suffered on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God. *William D. Bunting.*

From Hamilton, **Canada.**—The matter of suffering is always one at which the natural man rebels. But suffering wrongfully, or as a Christian, is cause for even more frustration, from the natural point of view. However, from the standpoint of the Christian, the question, "And who is He that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?" gives strong encouragement. Peter goes on to say that, even if ye should suffer, "Blessed are ye." The words recorded of his own experience were, "They . . . departed . . . rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name" (Acts 5. 41). If the Christian, to-day, does not make his stand for Christ, and show that he is a true disciple, he will not suffer persecution. But if, on the other hand, he makes his stand for Christ, then he will, without a doubt, suffer persecution in one way or another (2 Timothy 3. 12).

But we are told to "fear not their fear, neither be troubled." In Luke 12. 4 we read: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." We are not to fear man but fear God.

Suffering also brings patience, as we can learn from 1 Peter 5. 10. See also James 5. 10, 11, "for an example of suffering and of patience." By suffering affliction we learn patience. The Lord said, "Blessed are they which have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5. 10), and Paul says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward" (Romans 8. 18)—suffering on this earth, but glory in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory"—affliction for a moment, but glory for eternity. In this connexion 1 Peter 1. 6 shows that while we are rejoicing in God's salvation, we are sometimes put to grief in manifold trials, but this results in something precious to God, "The proof of your faith," which will be found unto God's praise at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In this life nearly everything of value comes by means of suffering or trial of some sort. In the great work of redemption this was the case. The suffering of Gethsemane and Calvary preceded the glories at God's right hand.

When we suffer for righteousness' sake, it is something foreign to our nature, and can only be endured as a result of the new nature, which has been given to us by way of the cross. Suffering for righteousness' sake is really an outward proof of a work of grace in our hearts. This kind of suffering, rather than being a penalty, will result in an eternal reward and unspeakable joy of hearing the Lord confess us before His Father in heaven, although, just as surely, our denial of Him on earth, while it may mean no suffering here, will also result in a denial of us, by the Lord (Matthew 10. 32, 33).

Verse 22 is an encouragement to us in the matter of suffering; for while our suffering, as Christians, is really because so many in the world are not subject to our Lord, yet here is a scene of absolute subjection to Him by angels, authorities and powers. It is a glimpse into the future, to the time when all things will have been subjected unto Him. *W. Thompson, N. MacKay.*

COMMENTS.

[A] (Hayes).—"Quickened in the Spirit," refers to the Holy Spirit, not the Lord's human spirit, which He commended to His Father before He died. It was in the Holy Spirit that He went and preached to the spirits in prison in the days of Noah, as our friends state.—*J. M.*

[B] (Hayes).—Our friends have got the wrong idea about salvation here. Noah was saved in two senses, (1) by the Ark from the waters of judgement, (2) by the water from a corrupt and wicked world. It is in the latter sense, after a true likeness, that baptism saves us.—*J. M.*

[C] (Hayes). —Of course the believer is not saved from hell by baptism. But baptism rightly understood does save him, as we have pointed out in note **B.** —*J. M.*

[D] (Barrhead **and** Paisley). —See paper from Hayes at "A," also answer to questions from Brantford. —*J. M.*

[E] (Birkenhead). —See answer to questions from Brantford. —*J. M.*

[F] (Kingston). —Christ was the Hope of Israel, for whom Paul was bound by a chain (Acts **28.** 20). He is also our Hope (1 Timothy 1. 1); and in whatever phase hope is presented to us in the Scriptures all springs from Christ. All hope would have perished for men but for Him. It is He enthroned in the heart, of whom the believer speaks and of no other. —*J. M.*

[G] (Kingston). —See answer to questions from Brantford. —*J. M.*

[H] (Willington **Quay**). —"Us" in verse 18 is evidently such as are classed as the unrighteous for whom Christ suffered. But, alas, though Christ tasted death for every man, not all such will benefit from the Lord's atoning death. —*J. M.*

[J] (Willington **Quay**). —See answer to questions from Brantford. —*J. M.*

[K] (Cowdenbeath). —If Noah the preacher of righteousness (2 Peter **2.** 5) was used in this preaching then there would not be eight souls saved through his preaching. —*J. M.*

Questions **and** Answers.

Questions from **Brantford**. —(1) Verse 18. "In the spirit," R. V. spelling with a small s, and Newberry with a capital S. Does this refer to the Holy Spirit?

(2) Can the word "preached" in verse 19 be rendered "heralded" or "proclaimed"?

(3) Where were the spirits in prison? To what period or time does the Apostle refer?

Answer. —As these questions **1,** **2,** and **3,** all relate to the same passage, it may "be well to give one answer to **all.**" In the Spirit "should be as in the A. V. Spirit here is the Holy Spirit. The word "preached" is the aorist verbal form of the noun *Kerux*, a herald. As to question **3** I feel I cannot do better, by way of explanation, than quote a portion of William Kelly's answer to this question, which appeared in the Christian Annotator 95 years ago.

"I think that the Spirit of God would have connected *En Phulake* [in prison] with *Poreutheis* [having gone], or with *Ekeruxen* [preached] (or with both), if His object had been to reveal a preaching of Christ in the unseen world, or Hades. But this is not the force of the passage, which emphatically connects the spirits, not Christ's preaching, with the prison or safe-keeping. . . . It was not a personal going and preaching of Christ, but His Spirit had preached by Noah, as in the prophets (1. 11) it had testified beforehand, etc. It is really less difficult than Ephesians 2. 17, where the words are more capable of applying to His personal preaching, which nevertheless, we know, would be a mistake."

The editor makes the remark regarding W. K. 's contribution, "We ourselves . . . agree with Mr. Kelly."

Spirits here signify persons who were disobedient or refused to be persuaded by the preaching of Noah in his day, during the time the Ark was being prepared. Two views may be expressed as to what is meant by "the spirits in prison," (1) that this is a metaphorical use of prison, as in Isaiah 42. 7, and that the antediluvians were under sentence of death, but Noah, like Jonah, brought to them a message by the Spirit of Christ; (2) that the disobedient spirits or men of Noah's time were in prison in Hades when Peter wrote. The second view may be the correct one in view of the word aforesaid, or formerly, in verse 20. —*J. M.*

(Other questions left over).

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

JULY, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	59
The First Epistle of Peter :	
Aspects of S u f f e r i n g	60
Partakers of Christ's Suffering62
Comments.68
Questions and A n s w e r s	69

EDITORIAL.

" For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to **be** compared with the glory which shall **be** revealed to us-ward. "

Thus wrote the Apostle Paul to the church of God in Rome; **and** the words have re-echoed in our thoughts as we have read the following papers. Surely it is only in the light of eternity that our brief span of life **and** service here **can** be truly seen **and** assessed.

The **meaning** of the broken chip of stained glass is only read when it is fitted into the mosaic in its proper place. The fragment of marble is unintelligible until it is replaced in the statue. So the brief span of our life on this terrestrial ball, with its lights **and** its shadows, its joys **and** its sorrows, finds its true meaning **and** purpose when the Divine Potter will have fashioned the clay as seemeth good for **Him** to make it.

Our life is **but** a preparatory school, not **a** finishing-off course.

It is **a** pilgrimage, **and** not **a** journey's end. It is **a** voyage **and** not **a** harbour. It is **a** race **and** not **a** goal. It is **a** battle **and** not **a** crown. It is **a** sowing **and** **a** harrowing, **and** not **a** reaping **and** **a** harvest.

It is indeed **a** false view of life that accumulates all the objects thereof within the orbit of that life on earth. Life, indeed, is real, **but** it is not complete; it is preparative, **but** not final.

The selected host of Hebrews **11.**, those of whom the world was not **and** is not worthy, testifies **and** witnesses to the power of faith. " Let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author **and** Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising shame, **and** hath sat down **at** the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves, that **ye** wax not weary, fainting in your souls. "

To this **end** we believe that **a** perusal of the following studies on Peter's first epistle will greatly help.

Jas. Martin,

ASPECTS OF SUFFERING IN PETER'S FIRST EPISTLE.

Firstly let us notice how Peter deals with the question of suffering. In chapter 2. 21, " **Because Christ *also* suffered,** " chapter 3. 18, " **Because Christ *also* suffered,** " chapter 4. 1, " **Forasmuch then as Christ suffered.... arm ye yourselves also,** " chapter 4. 13, "partakers of Christ's sufferings," **and,** finally, suffering at the hand of the devil, " **the same sufferings** " chapter 5. 8-9. In the paragraph dealing with servants we have, chapter 2. 18-25, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example. " In the paragraph about " suffering for righteousness' sake. " Christ is presented as **suffering** " for *sins*, " not His own (3. 13-21, particularly verse 18).

In chapter 4. 1-6 we have another aspect of suffering, " **Christ suffered in the flesh** " (verse 1). Following this **in** verses 12-19 **we have suffering in reproach** " for the **name** of Christ" (verse 14). In 5. 8-10 **we have** suffering from direct opposition from the devil (see also Hebrews 2. 18).

These five paragraphs **seem** to present five different aspects of **suffering**, and five ways **in** which Christ **also** suffered. **We** have no part **in** Christ's atoning sufferings, so that the word **also** used **in** three **cases** (i. e., " for you, " " for sins, " and " **in** the flesh ") is wider than the thought of the atonement.

Firstly, then, we have suffering **as** servants, **where** we endure grief, **and** suffer wrongfully, not **because** of any fault **in** our service, but **because** of the perverse nature of others. There **is** nothing harder than to suffer for well-doing. The natural reaction **is** to threaten all sorts of retaliation, but **we** are exhorted to " **take** it patiently " (2. 20), to commit ourselves " to **Him** that judgeth righteously " (verse 23), **and** to maintain a good " conscience toward God " (verse 19). What power this gives to the words, " **because** Christ **also** suffered for you " (verse 21)! In this connexion Matthew 11. **shews** the spirit **in** which **He** suffered. With calm **assurance** and holy dignity **He** lifts up **His** eyes to Heaven and said, " Yea, Father, for so **it was** well-pleasing **in** Thy sight" (verse 26). **What** humble submission with no **chafing** at the yoke (verse 29)! **This** is the example to **which** Peter refers **in** " that ye should follow **His** steps " (1 Peter 2. 21). **His** was a willingness to suffer for the blessing of others. The question may **be** asked why should **we** suffer wrongfully, or because of the perverseness **in** others ? " **Because** Christ **also** suffered for you. " **This** is the way to bring blessing and righteousness and healing to others. No blessing or righteousness or healing will ever come by retaliation. **This** is where **the** practical teaching of the Lord **Jesus** touches our lives **in** such injunctions **as** are found **in** Matthew 5. 38-47. **By** so doing " **Ye** therefore shall **be** perfect, **as** your heavenly Father **is** perfect" (verse 48).

We are also **called** to suffer for righteousness' sake (chapter 3. 14). **When** this happens **we** are not to **be** troubled (verse 14), "but sanctify **in** your hearts Christ as Lord, " **and** **be** "ready always to give an **answer**.... concerning the hope.... with meekness and fear" (verse 15). This lifts our lives far above **men-pleasing** and gives **us** the conscious knowledge of **walking** before **the** Lord. **This** is right-living, or righteousness. Sanctifying **in** the heart Christ **as** Lord results **in** faith that regards **His** will as perfect. Then **we** have practical or personal righteousness, **the** outward manifestation of a living hope working **within**. **This** is **always** associated with a right attitude Godward, that of meekness and fear. The question arises, Why should such a life of manifest righteousness provoke persecution ? **The** answer **is** **because** of its condemning power **and** its **putting** to shame all other ways of life. **Had** the Jews been **in** a good condition, **when** our Lord **Jesus** was here, walking **in** the fear and ways of God, **then** **He** would have reigned **in** glory, but **because** of their evil traditions and their forsaking of the right ways of **the** Lord, **He** was rejected, and had to endure a path of **suffering**, which led to **His** death. **He** suffered for sins once, the **Righteous** for the **unrighteous** (verse 18) The altar of old was of copper, **and** speaks of the **ability** of Christ to **bear** the **suffering** of death (Hebrews 2. 9), that the righteousness of God might **be** established on **an** imperishable foundation. If the righteousness of God has come **in** on the **line** of **suffering**, it can only **be** maintained by **us** on the **same** line. **In**

a world marked by lawlessness, disobedience and self-will, the righteousness of saints will involve suffering. Yet how sweet are the words as we suffer, "Christ *also* suffered." Let us observe the difference Peter makes between Christ's suffering, and our suffering. Christ suffered *for sins once*, i. e., atonement, but we suffer who died *unto* sins, and now live unto righteousness.

The next paragraph deals with suffering in the flesh, in which Christ also suffered (chapter 4. 1). This form of suffering may be difficult to explain. It evidently has to do with the difference between our *former* manner of life and our *present* life, doing the will of God (verse 2). The illustration Peter *uses* about Noah is very helpful. Notice how he says that those in the Ark were saved *through water* (chapter 3. 20), namely, it *was* the water that lifted the Ark out of the old world, which was under judgement, and placed it in the new world, where God smelt the sweet savour of Christ (Genesis 8. 21). This, Peter says, is a true likeness of our baptism (verse 21), from which we rise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6. 4).

Newness of life is not understood as well as it should be. It is, opposed to all that *is* natural to *us*. The Israelites of old had to go *three days' journey* into the wilderness (i. e., the distance of death, burial and resurrection), but they little appreciated what such newness of life would mean. Firstly, they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, but then Moses led them onward from the *sea*, and they *went three days' journey* in the wilderness and found no water, and at Marah the waters were bitter (Exodus 15. 23). To be cut off at one stroke from all that sustained and supported them in Egypt, and to be brought into the wilderness to live in complete dependence upon God, was indeed newness of life.

It was a great trial to the flesh to be deprived of everything that gratified its natural tastes and inclinations. Is not this our own experience? God would teach us that all the pride, vanity, and self-esteem, to say nothing of the grosser things that Peter speaks of in chapter 4. 2-3, which all belong to our former life, are not of Himself.

Many children of God have been caused to stumble by the skill of their right hand, say in sport, fostering their pride and exalting the flesh, instead of cutting it off and casting it from them (Matthew 5. 30). How true are his words, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it" ! Peter says, "Christ suffered in the flesh." That does not mean He had a former manner of life, like us. Yet He also had a wilderness experience. "He *was led* up of the Spirit *into* the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4. 1). Mark 1. 12 says, "the Spirit *driveth* Him forth into the wilderness," but Luke 4. 1 says, "J e s u s . . . was *led* by the Spirit *in* the wilderness." Here was the true man, led by the Spirit, and living in the power of the Spirit, and suffering in the flesh! He hungered, and although tested to the very extreme, showed no self-confidence, nor self-glory, but was wholly dependent upon His God.

The next aspect of suffering is that of reproach. Peter speaks of this as a "fiery trial" (chapter 4. 12), and also of being "partakers of Christ's sufferings" (verse 13). For reproach to be associated with the "name of Christ" but reveals the terrible state of the human heart. This hatred, malice and enmity of the heart was revealed, when God drew near to men in the person of Christ. The hatred is actually against God Himself. "The reproaches of them that reproach Thee are fallen upon Me" (Psalm 69. 9). And thus men hate good men also, and despise holiness and grace. Although He is absent now, having gone into heaven, there are those on earth who still bear His name. His reputation, character, goodness, holiness, and truth are conveyed to their minds through His name. So that the more we are like Him, whose name we bear, the more reproach we will suffer. When Shimei cast stones and dust at David, those on his right hand and on his left came in for some of the stones (2 Samuel 16. 6). The closer they were to David the more dust and stones they received. So it is

with us, the nearer we walk to him in meekness and lowliness, the more we shall be reproached. When the Father sent the Son into the world, He not only came with every divine attribute, but with every virtue of true manhood. He was a Man of truth, obedience, holiness, meekness and lowliness, in whom was no guile. How could proud, insolent, haughty, boastful, deceitful men appreciate such a Man? Herod with his soldiers set Him at naught. And men still despise all who bare His name. That is suffering as a Christian (1 Peter 4. 16), and we should count this a great honour, for it shows that we have in some measure given place to the Spirit in our lives (chapter 4. 14). Never again to all eternity will such a privilege be ours to be reproached for the name of Christ (chapter 4. 13). Finally we suffer from the direct opposition of the devil. The apostle speaks of this as "the same sufferings" (chapter 5. 9), which the Lord uses for our good, by way of discipline, because we have been called to His eternal glory in Christ (verse 10).

Richard Thomson.

Partakers of Christ's Sufferings.

1 Peter 4. 1-19.

From **Edinburgh**. —Peter now faces a great humbling truth, "Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves with the same mind." As we see the day approaching, let us watch earnestly unto prayer, governed by fervent love of the brethren, using hospitality. The literal meaning of hospitality is giving to those who cannot repay. This hospitality is not confined to house entertainment, but includes declaring the gospel message, ministry of the word, teaching in Sunday School, and all to the glory of God [A]. To-day we escape much of the fiery trial which proved the recipients of this letter, but we battle against indifference, a most subtle weapon. Let us rejoice if we suffer as Christians, that our suffering may redound to His glory.

Judgement begins at the house of God. If we enter in a proper spirit into the promises given to sufferers we will appreciate more and more the responsibility laid on **us as** being in God's house.

T. Hope.

From **Bradford, Halifax and Leeds**. —The sufferings of Christ, with the Christian's identification with his suffering Saviour, is one of the main themes of Peter's first epistle. The Saviour suffered at the hands of God, Satan, and men. The atoning sufferings of the Lord Jesus are unique in their character, inasmuch as they could only be experienced by Him alone. Another kind of suffering which our Lord endured is that which came to Him because He lived a perfect, righteous life. Here believers are called upon to identify themselves with their suffering Lord by having the same mind as He manifested in all His sufferings. As our Saviour has passed through His atoning sufferings, and has finished His sacrifice on behalf of our sins, so we, in like manner, should have done with our past lives, and now live a self-surrendered life to God alone. Like our blessed Lord, we shall be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil spoken of. All this is in keeping with our pilgrim character, for we have the end of our pilgrimage in view, namely, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This should have a very practical effect on our lives.

It should deepen our prayer life, stimulate our love to all the brethren, and make us diligent in our service. Our hearts should be turned heavenward, to the God whom we seek to glorify, by whose strength and power alone our ministry will become effective. The children of Israel, in journeying through the wilderness, were known as Hebrews, the people who passed over the Euphrates. Because they were a separated people, they would no doubt have to bear reproach and shame because of the profession of their pilgrim character (cp. 1 Peter 2. 11, 12 with Hebrews 11. 13, 26). But they had the experience of having God's presence, glory, and power manifested among them.

We, in like manner, though we suffer reproach and misrepresentation for the name of Christ, shall enjoy the Spirit's presence and power, which will more than compensate us for all our sufferings. Our sufferings will prove to be a blessing to us, and will enhance His own glorious name. We also felt that the term "Christian" was not synonymous with "child of God" or "believer," but signified the highest title for a disciple, as one of Christ's own. Finally, as our blessed Lord was "perfected through sufferings," so we, in like manner, by this means will become perfectly adjusted to the will of our God and Father.

William G. Henderson.

From Willington Quay. —Twice previously in this epistle have the sufferings of Christ been brought before us, namely, in 2. 21, where such suffering is to be for our example that we should follow in His steps, and in 3. 18, where the purpose of such suffering is that we might be brought to God, being quickened by the Holy Spirit. The mention of the mind of Christ in 4. 1 caused us to think of Philipians 2. 5. The mind of Christ led to His complete submission to God's will, even unto His death.

Two thoughts were suggested concerning the pronoun "he" in verse 1; that "he" referred to the Lord Jesus Christ who alone could be said to have ceased from sin, as to its power over Him, after having suffered in His flesh. It was difficult to see how the believer could cease from sin by suffering in his flesh. The second suggestion was that the "he" was a general term, indicating the same thought as 1 John 3. 9, that spiritually he hath ceased from sin. [B].

The judgement of the quick and dead was thought to be at different times, although the thought may not mean spiritually alive and spiritually dead, but physically so. Verse 6 would also present the same two thoughts, i. e., that those to whom the gospel had been preached were alive at the time of the preaching—physically alive—or alternatively spiritual death might be meant here, too (C).

Love is the greatest of all commandments, and well might the writer say "above all things" (verse 8), because truly there is so much that requires the kindly eye of love.

C. B.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The sufferings of Christ mentioned here would seem to refer us back to the previous chapter (verse 18). The expression "in the flesh" emphasizes His manhood, but embraces body, soul and spirit. Those who are born again have been identified with Christ in His sufferings and crucifixion (the apostle Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2. 20)). Peter exhorts us to abandon all fleshly lusts and devote our lives to fulfilling the will of God.

It was thought that "the time past" refers to the period before we came to Christ when our lives were spent in the pursuit of pleasure and fleshly satisfaction. The word "excess" in verse 4 does not imply that the saints to whom Peter was writing ran with the Gentiles to a certain extent in their riotous living, but is used to emphasize the utter depravity of the world around. Verses 5 and 6 present several difficulties. The Gentiles appear to be in view here, but there is no mention, in Revelation, of those who are to be judged before the Great White Throne actually giving an account of themselves. The judgement of the quick may refer to the judgement of the living nations, in respect of their treatment of the Jew, prior to the millennium [E].

The dead in verse 6 are the spiritually dead who will be judged, unless they obey the gospel. John 3. 18 throws some light on this verse—"He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already." The preaching of the gospel declares to men that judgement has already been passed on them, but its execution is being suspended during this dispensation of grace, and they that obey the gospel escape judgement and live according to God in the Spirit.

L. B.

EXTRACTS.

From Melbourne. —Whilst "these things" (Luke 24. 26) referred specifically to Christ's sufferings at Calvary, **we** judge that that did not embrace **all** of His sufferings **in the flesh**. In Matthew 2. 13 **we read**: " Herod will **seek the young child** (Jesus) to destroy Him. " Once **He** was led to the brow of **a hill to be** thrown down headlong (Luke 4. 29). On another occasion, seeing Jerusalem in the distance, **He** paused, His inward sufferings being reflected in His words in Luke 13. 34. "Acquainted with grief, " wrote the prophet, and in John 11. 35, " Jesus wept. " If **we** are following closely the pathway that **He** trod, then, like Him, we shall get the outside place. Reproach in the name of Christ is good for the believer. The partaker is to be armed with the **same mind as** Christ, and like Him has **ceased** unto sin. Reproach for Christ's sake will earn **a** great reward in heaven (Matthew 5. 11, 12).

As good stewards **we** have **a** responsibility to **use** the gift **we** have received of God; in speaking, in ministry, **as a** ready **scribe**, in hospitality and in private prayers. Verse 15 shows the wrong kind of suffering that brings no present joy nor eternal reward, yet the possibility of committing these things is always before the believer. Judgement, God's strange work, begins first **at us**, the house of God; then let **us see** to it that our works will stand the fire. *S. Stoope.*

From Cowdenbeath. —Being **a** partaker of Christ's sufferings, is to suffer **as a** follower of **a** rejected Christ. Peter emphasizes the danger of the flesh and the lusts thereof. How essential it is then that the Christian gain self-mastery! Paul could **say**, " I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage " (1 Corinthians 9. 27), and buffeting, such mortifying of the flesh, will undoubtedly involve suffering, **but** how necessary if **we** are to magnify Christ in these bodies of our humiliation !

The believer's life should be one of devotion to God and to God's people, manifesting love and hospitality, and working harmoniously with others, that God may **be** glorified thereby.

This present time for the Christian is peculiarly **a** time of suffering. The declaration to Paul, " I will show him how many things he must **suffer** for My **Name's sake**" (Acts 9. 16), **was** accepted **as** the purpose of his life, and the glory of his service. **He** rejoiced in his suffering, being able to write, " I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to **be** compared with the glory which shall **be** revealed in us-ward " (Romans 8. 18). Associated with suffering for Christ's sake, there is joy, the joy of the Lord which cannot be known apart from suffering and reproach; and yet any joy which we experience now through suffering cannot **be** compared with that exceeding joy which shall be ours when **we see** Him, for whose name **we** have borne reproach. Let **us** keep this ever before **us**, "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall **suffer** persecution" (2 Timothy 3. 12). *D. McLelland.*

From Kilmarnock. —The Lord Jesus warned **His** disciples, on the eve of His death, that "if they **persecuted Me**, they will also persecute you" (John 15. 20), so that those who would **be** faithful to Him may expect suffering. **1** Peter 4: The apostle here exhorts the saints to **be** of the **same** mind **as** the Lord, "who, when **He was** reviled, reviled not again; when **He** suffered, threatened not. " They were now **dead** to the works of the flesh, and should now live according to the will of God.

The sojourners **seem** to have been passing through **a** severe trial, but they were not to think it strange **but** rather to rejoice **as** they were partakers of Christ's sufferings and would **be** recompensed in **a** coming time, and therefore they were "blessed" **because** "the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon" them (verse 14).

How sad it is if any be " a meddler in other men's matters " ! much better to suffer as a " Christian, " and not need to be ashamed, but glorify God in this name. Verse 19. Here we get suffering " according to the will of God. " We thought of Job in this connexion. In 1 Corinthians 10. 13 we read, " God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able " ; so that although the suffering we are called to pass through, may seem severe, we know we are in the care of a faithful God and Creator (see Psalm 103. 14). A. G. S.

From Nottingham. —Peter's thoughts in the early verses of this chapter are similar to those expressed by Paul in Romans 6. and in various parts of his writings. The believer is viewed as having died with Christ, whereupon he should no longer live according to men in the flesh, but according to God in the Spirit. Such a life will call forth much ridicule and malice from the worldling, but the apostle shows that this may be amply compensated for in the warm and hearty fellowship which only like-minded ones in Christ can enjoy. Love one towards another is paramount, which sentiment is endorsed by the Master Himself as being an outward sign of discipleship. Hospitality is also commended, and all comings together, whether in the home or in public, should be done unto edifying.

The possibility that we may be partakers of Christ's sufferings is one that should nerve and fortify us for whatever life may hold. It seems clear that we may elect to suffer with Christ or we may not. Sad it is to think that many who are prepared to share in the blessings which accrue from Christ's sufferings, are not prepared to suffer with Him in this His day of world rejection. Such will be great losers at His return.

The words of the apostle Paul, who suffered on behalf of Christ beyond many and knew weakness of body probably as a result, are an inspiration, " Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. " *K. J. Holmes, J. Miller.*

From Portslade. —The emphasis in this portion is on suffering and persecution which we, as Christians, must endure. We are first reminded that Christ suffered in the flesh for us. Indeed, He suffered even unto death. If we suffer persecution we should rejoice to suffer with Christ, for when His glory is revealed we shall still be with Him rejoicing. There is no doubt that we must suffer in some way because the world cannot understand why a Christian will not join in its ways. We must not be ashamed, however, of suffering as Christians, but rather should we glorify God, for what is the suffering of this little while compared with the eternal suffering from which we have been saved! How comforting is the thought that if the end was at hand in Peter's day (verse 7), how very close indeed it must be now ! *Alan Elliott.*

From Atherton. —The subject of suffering is here considered from the aspect of partakers of Christ's suffering. At first the apostle speaks of suffering in the flesh by which saints are made to cease from sin. It is true undoubtedly that when the flesh knows the trial of bodily affliction it finds but little time for its own indulgence and lusts.

The word "arm" in verse 1 shows that this is a warfare in which we are involved. The Lord Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, and through these sufferings He was made perfect. We can by being armed with the same mind, know a ceasing or resting from sin.

As to the meaning of the words "Live according to God in the Spirit " (verse 6), three suggestions were put forward—(1) that this has application to them who were in the grave, although the message was preached unto them while they were still alive; (2) that the preaching "even to the dead " refers to them, who while alive in the flesh, were yet dead in sins; (3) that the message was preached to them while they were alive (although they are now dead), but the day will come when the quickening effect of the Holy Spirit will be felt, which is equally powerful upon the unbeliever as well as the believer [F].

The last paragraph deals with suffering from a fiery trial which was among the saints. This is not so much a case of suffering wrongfully because of a conscience toward God (1 Peter 2. 19), or of suffering for righteousness' sake (1 Peter 3. 16, 17), but of bearing the reproach and contumely of the Stone which the builders rejected. Encouragement can be taken because of Him who champions the cause of the downtrodden, and succours the defenceless. How easy, unfortunately, it is to interfere in other men's matters, through our meddling natures, and instead of seeking that which is good in the saints we often fail to see any good at all (verse 15) !

The following views were expressed with regard to verse 17, that there are two kinds of suffering contemplated in this chapter, suffering as evildoers and being called upon to suffer according to the will of God. We would appreciate help [G].

Is it possible that the last clause of verse 14 may suggest something visible or perceptible, as in Acts 6. 15 ? Because we suffer reproach, the Spirit of Glory and of God is said to rest upon us (Psalm 91. 1).

R. C. Jones, G. Sankey, D. H. Butler.

From London. —" Arm ye yourselves also with the same mind " verily sets before us the need of having a mind like unto Himself, and thus armed the believer can endure with un murmuring grace all that may be his portion to suffer for His honour and glory. This " mind " will bring the necessary resistance to turn from all the old life in the flesh. Doubtless the believers unto whom Peter wrote were thought to be very unusual in their not associating themselves with Gentiles in their sinful pleasures. In this epistle the saints are contemplated as the Holy Nation. Israel's capacity as the Holy Nation was dependent upon their obedience to God's command (Exodus 19. 5, 6), which involved complete separation from the nations. This principle is continued with regard to God's people to-day, who must be obedient to God's will in order to continue in the capacity of God's Holy Nation. In verse 6 the dead unto whom the gospel was preached were such, but in the power of the new life they are to live "according to God, " an exceeding high standard of holiness and purity.

Verse 11 speaks undoubtedly of " spiritual ministry, " and like all other gifts used in His service, must first come from God. " Oracle " comes from Latin *oris*, the " mouth. " The thought must be that one speaking must speak by God-given power, as the mouth of God, such strength being given by the setting aside of all natural ability and by complete relying upon the closest unbroken fellowship with God Himself [H]. What an incentive for the Lord's ministering servants to exercise that great privilege and joy of giving *glory unto Him !*

It is quite obvious that a severe and distressing trial lay upon Christians during the time these words were written. The reproach for the Name of Christ can be humiliating and hard to bear, but there is great and blessed compensation, because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. Verse 15 is full of the most solemn and needful warning. It does not seem possible that a disciple could suffer as a murderer, a thief or an evil-doer, but God knoweth the heart in all its treachery. Among the Lord's people some of the most devastating and regretful results have occurred, resulting in the most promisingly fruitful fields of the Lord's husbandry and service being destroyed.

Verses 17 and 18 are full of warning to **us** all. Judgement to begin at the house of God **is** here given **as** solemn, God-given truth. Oh, how terrible **is** the position of the disobedient and ungodly sinner, heedless of the saving and everlasting shelter provided by the Lord Jesus **as** revealed in the Gospel of God!
G. S. Pain.

From Crowborough. —To be in the **same** mind **as** Christ with regard to suffering in the flesh is no mean thing. Verse 2 explains why, "that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Being partakers of Christ's sufferings reminds us of the words in Mark 8. 34: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Nothing **less** than wholehearted devotion in following Him is required of His disciples. The desire of the apostle Paul **was**: "That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming confirmed unto His death." These sufferings of Christ, which should **be** the lot of the people of God, will **beget** in them something of His likeness. **As** sin **was** His greatest enemy, so is it ours, and should be held in abhorrence by us. The apostle Paul cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" It was neither death from the approaching martyrdom at Rome, nor the fear of eternal death, that drew the cry from him. It was the death of present sin, the body of corruption that he bore about with him.

J. H. B.

From Barrhead and Paisley. —The persecution and ill-treatment which the Lord endured in His life can and will **be** shared by **us** if **we** follow closely the steps of the Master. The apostle says "Think it not strange" when speaking of the fiery trial. If they did it to the Master, they **will** also do it to His disciples. Also, if the flesh has been put to death in **us**, there will **be** no more activity in the desires of the flesh. Enough time has been spent thus, it is now time to cease.

Peter says that the end of all things is **at** hand. The return of Christ for His own will surely mean an end of **all** earthly things for the believer—**all** trials ended, questions answered, problems solved, persecution ceased.

A day of judgement is referred to in verse 5, the judgement of the living and the dead. The Judge is Christ, as is clearly shown in Acts 10. 42. Those who are judged are described **as** the quick and dead. The first expression of divine judgement is seen in the house of God in the form of discipline (1 Corinthians 5. 13). If discipline **is** imposed on the righteous, and offences punished, how much more shall the punishment of the unrighteous **be** [1]! The word "scarcely" might **be** better rendered "with difficulty." Our salvation was no easy matter, costing God and His Son a great price [K]. On the other hand the saving of the life for God **is** no easy matter, **as** the life **is** a struggle between two natures in the one being. Lot **is** an example of a righteous life being saved with difficulty, having to **be** dragged from the ill-fated cities of the plain.

The saints who **suffer** in accordance with the permissive will of God are exhorted to arm themselves with the mind of Christ, which, as shown in Philippians 2., **is** humility, patience and endurance, because the Creator may permit the suffering of **His** creatures, **but** will never fail them.
J. M. Gault.

From Hayes. —Peter, in the first section of this chapter, **is** concerned with the reaction of the world to our belief in Christ. **He** tells **us** that **we** must **be** prepared to undergo some difficulties and trials inflicted by the world, **but** encourages us, by reminding us of the sufferings that our Lord went through for our sake. How much greater was His suffering than ours! **Peter** continues **by** reminding us that prayer is essential, and also tells us to examine our relations

one with another, in that we should always be ready to give aid and comfort to those who are in any need or distress. We should remember that we are each given our gifts from God so that we may use them to serve Him; and what better way can we do this than by using them to the advantage of His people ?

Amongst these words of comfort we find a solemn warning, that, although we must be glad to suffer as a follower of the Lord, we must not be put in any position of shame for any worldly crime against the moral code. *J. E. L.*

" ONE-ANOTHER " (ALLEELON).

The "new commandment" which the Lord gave to His disciples must to us be of more than ordinary significance if only because it was uttered by Him in the upper room immediately prior to His decease. The two words which He then used should also profoundly affect us as we ponder them in the light of the commandments of the old covenant, and of the new order which He was about to inaugurate.

Were ever two words in any language to carry such weight as these, which to the end of time, if obeyed, would gladden His heart? One man at any rate took them as his watchword through life, for tradition records that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (though aged and failing physically), when carried into the assemblies of the saints, invariably uttered the words, "AGAPATE ALLEELOUS." This comprehensive word of fellowship—ALLEELON—seemingly having no single counterpart in Hebrew or English (see Browne's Triglot Dictionary) is taken up by the Lord and wonderfully sanctified. Thrice in the upper room he reiterates it amongst a few pregnant words (John 13. 34, 35) and then, before the evening closes, twice again (John 15. 12, 17). And John takes up this five-fold emphasis and, to "my little children," in his first epistle drives it home again five times !

The New Commandment, ten times repeated ! How solemn, viewed against the ten commandments "written with the finger of God" on tables of stone, shattered at the foot of Sinai! "LOVE ONE ANOTHER." What words to be inscribed on the fleshy tables of our hearts ! and yet, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples."

But if John repeats the words, so also does Paul, three times (Romans 13. 8, 1 Thessalonians 3. 12 and 4. 9), and Peter (1 Peter 1. 22), and John (2 John 5) yet once again—five times more ! Moreover, this New Commandment with its practical outworking is set forth most beautifully by the apostle Paul from Romans 12. to 16. in a ten-fold use of the word, "ALLEELON" having as pivot the words "love one another" (Romans 13. 8). *A. Chamings,*

COMMENTS.

[A] (Edinburgh). —The word hospitality in the original is *philozenoi* (from *philos* = a friend or lover, and *zenos* = a stranger or foreigner), which means friendship of strangers, and signifies showing kindness to strangers. Our friends are too inclusive in their definition of what is meant by hospitality, for one might preach and teach and have a Sunday school class; - yet show little interest in strangers, though it should not be so. —*J. M.*

[B] (Willington Quay). —"For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." "He" is general, not signifying Christ. "Hath ceased" is from the verb *pauein*, which is perfect, indicative, which signifies an act in the past, the effect of which remains to the present, and being passive shows that the suffering one does not cease from sin simply of his own volition or act, but is one who is acted upon, that is, he by his suffering is made to cease

from sin. A somewhat parallel thought is in Romans 6. 18: " Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. " But in the following verse (19) Paul speaks " of the infirmity of your flesh, " and it is from this infirmity that all sinful emotions arise, but the believer himself is freed from, and by his suffering ceases from, sin. This fact is to be the armour of his mind, he is ever to remember the effect of the death and sufferings of Christ upon himself, his life and walk. —*J. M.*

[C] (Willington Quay). —The gospel preached to "the dead" must signify those that are dead in trespasses and sins. —*J. M.*

[E] (Kingston). —Every reasonable soul, in whatever judgement it may be, will give an account of himself to God, the Judge of all judgements being the Lord Jesus. —*J. M.*

[F] (Atherton). —The preaching is to the dead in sins, and through accepting the gospel the believer realizes that both sin in the flesh and the sins he committed have been judged while he is in the flesh in the Person of his Substitute, and for him there is no future judgement (John 5. 24; Romans 8. 1). In consequence he may now live according to God in the Spirit. I judge Spirit here is not the believer's spirit, but the Holy Spirit. —*J. M.*

[G] (Atherton). —There are three kinds of suffering in 1 Peter 4. 12-19— (1) the fiery trial, by which the saints, accounted by God as gold, were being put to the proof, (2) saints who because of loose living and waywardness might suffer as murderers, thieves, evil-doers, busybodies (perish such thoughts !), and (3) the implied sufferings for the unrighteous and ungodly in such words, " And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear ? " Where, but in hell, and eventually to come before the Judge at the Great White Throne and to be cast into the lake of fire ?—*J. M.*

[H] (London). —In the Greek the word for oracles is *logia*=word. —*J. M.*

[I] (Barrhead and Paisley). —But is the judgement of 1 Corinthians 5. the judgement which begins at the house of God ? Is not the judgement the fiery trial, the persecution, by which the saints were being tested ? Note the force of verse 19, "Wherefore let them also that suffer. " I take the view that God was judging and cleansing His house by the sufferings of those days. The godly would stand, but the worldly, carnally-minded believers would go, giving up their separation and compromising to save themselves from the persecution of that time. —*J. M.*

[K] (Barrhead and Paisley). —It is not the salvation of the sinner here, but the salvation of the righteous. No scripture shows that the believing sinner is (Gk *molis*) with difficulty, scarcely, or hardly saved. But what difficulty we find in carrying out Philippians 2. 12, 13 !—*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Toronto. —Are the spirits of Hebrews 12. 23 disembodied ?

Answer. —These are disembodied persons, whom I judge to be Old Testament saints, who were delivered by Christ's death (Hebrews 2. 14, 15), whose sins were redeemed by that same death (Hebrews 9. 15), and they entered upon the enjoyment of the promise of the eternal inheritance, ascending with Christ when He led captivity captive. They are in connexion with the heavenly Jerusalem to which we ourselves have now come. —*J. M.*

Question from Melbourne. —Is the hope of 1 Peter 3. 15 the same as in Hebrews 3. 6 ?

Answer. —Christ our Priest in heaven, as in Hebrews 3. 6, is but one phase of the believer's hope. The Lord Jesus Christ our Hope in every sense is the hope that is in us. —*J. M.*

Question from Atherton. —Is there any scripture to prove that the redeemed will out-number those who are lost ?

Answer. —I know of none. One thing **we** may **be** sure of is, that Christ, whose delights were with the sons of men, shall see of the travail of His soul and shall **be** satisfied. That will mean much. —*J. M.*

Revelation 2. 9. —Was the synagogue of Satan operating inside the assembly in Smyrna, or was it an outside company with Satan in control ?

Answer. —I judge they were a company outside the church in Smyrna. —*J. M.*

Question from Melbourne. —Are the dead in 1 Peter 4. 6" physically dead, " or " dead in trespasses and sins. "

Answer. —These are those who are dead in trespasses and sins. —*J. M.*

Question from Portslade. —Please explain the last clause of verse 1—" For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. "

Answer. —See comment [B] on paper from Willington Quay. —*J. M.*

Question from Atherton. —Please explain—" if the righteous is scarcely saved."

Answer. —See comment [K] on paper from Barrhead and Paisley. —*J. M.*

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Does " the quick and the dead " refer to a spiritual condition or a bodily condition ?

Answer. —See Acts 10. 42; 2 Timothy 4. 1. I judge it is the later condition that is in view in these scriptures. It describes the all-inclusive character of God as Judge, that He is the Judge of all, and all such judgement He has given to the Son. —*J. M.*

Questions from Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —(1) What is the meaning of verse 18, and what does the term " saved " connote in this connexion ?

(2) Could any light be thrown upon the meaning of verse 6 ?

Answer 1. —" Saved " here is the salvation of the righteous, who in the sufferings of this life (by which sufferings God was at that season judging His house (1 Peter 4. 12-17)) are saved with difficulty. This is not the salvation of the sinner who believes in Christ. If the righteous is scarcely saved from the evils of this life, who by suffering in the flesh is made to cease from sin (chapter 4. 1), where does the ungodly, who cares nothing for God, or the sinner who goes on in sin, come in ? Where can he appear ? Alas, he goes down in the very things from which the righteous is saved. —*J. M.*

Answer 2. —See comment [F] on paper from Atherton. —*J. M.*

Questions from Cowdenbeath. —We would welcome some help on the following: —(1) Verse 17: Why does Peter make reference to the judgement on the unbeliever ?

(2) Verse 19: To whom does Peter refer in the " them " ? and why does he allude to God here as the faithful Creator ?

Answer 1. —Because God was judging His house by the proving of the fiery trial through which the Christians in the house of God were passing at that time. See comment [I] on paper from Barrhead and Paisley—*J. M.*

Answer 2. —The " them " are such as were suffering then, but it may be applied in a wider sense to all sufferers who are partakers of Christ's sufferings. God is alluded to as a faithful Creator because saints are viewed as in the world in which they are suffering at men's hands. See Luke 12. in which the Lord is fortifying His disciples in view of such experiences as in 1 Peter 4. 12-19. Note how He speaks of God's, care for the sparrows and the ravens and the grass of the field, yea, the very hairs of our heads are numbered. Such is our faithful Creator. —*J. M.*

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

AUGUST, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	71
Word Studies.	72
The First Epistle by Peter:	
Serving one another (chapter 5.)	72
C o m m e n t s	79
Questions and A n s w e r s	80

EDITORIAL.

We all **use** various **devices** to **test if we have** learned well. The teacher may **set** his **quiz**, or his examination papers, to ascertain what lessons have been appropriated by the scholar. Or yet again **we** may find ourselves in a set of trying circumstances, and happy **is** he who can recall a precedent from the Scriptures as to how to respond or react.

Amongst the band of faithful men who learned their lessons **at** the great Teacher's feet, **Peter is** prominent in this respect. In our current **study we** can **see** the out-workings of his memory on a **few** occasions. The sufferings of Christ (verse 1), witnessed **by** one who loved his Master, could never **be** eradicated from his memory. How they would govern and tone his own attitude towards " the brother for whom Christ **died**" !

Then there **was** the memorable scene **by** the **sea** of Tiberias (John 21.), when Peter had **said** to his fellows, " I go a fishing. " **He** had that leadership capacity that drew from the others the response, " **We** also come with thee. " Later **we** listen to that twice-repeated question from the Lord, " Simon, son of John, lovest thou **Me** . . . ? " which elicited from the **grieved** Peter, " Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. " **We** are not, therefore, surprised that this well-learned lesson, learned in anguish of heart, **is** now being taught in faithful devotion **by** the **same** man to his fellow-elders. . . " Tend the flock of God. "

One more scene comes **up** vividly to Peter's mind (John 13.). " **Jesus**, " the omniscient One, " knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, " and knowing **whence He** had come and **whither He** was going, " girded Himself " with a towel. . . . Hence Peter writes, " Gird yourselves with humility. "

Once more, " **Be** watchful " (verse 8) recalls the words spoken by the Master to Peter, " **What**, could **ye** not watch with **Me** **one** hour ? " (Matthew 26. 40), or, according to Mark (14. 37), " * Simon, sleepest **thou** ? " or according to Luke (22. 46), " **Why** sleep ye ? "

The description of the " Adversary, the Devil, **as a** roaring lion " (verse 8), takes **us** back to one of the most interesting events in Holy Writ. The Lord had just instituted the **Feast** of Remembrance. The disciples were moved with diverse emotions, joy and fear and even jealous ambition, and so the Master **said** to them, " I **am** in the **midst** of you **as** he that **SERVETH** " and, singling out Peter, continued, " Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he

might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Summing up, we would say, the three great conditions of all pastoral work are: positively, willingness, a ready mind and being an ensample, negatively, shunning a reluctant acceptance, a degrading avarice, and a proud ambition. Let us be instructed, then, from the Spirit-given revelation of a true shepherd's heart.

Jas. Martin

WORD STUDIES

(1) Witness (1 Peter 5. 1). *Witness*, Greek *martus*, from which we have our English word "martyr," that is one who bears witness by his death, has the dual thought in it of (a) seeing or hearing or knowing, and of (b) telling forth what has been seen, etc. Peter uses the word here and in Acts 1. 21-22, 3. 32, and 10. 39. He both saw the sufferings of Christ and testified thereto.

Eye-witness (2 Peter 1. 16). Gr. *epoptes* is derived from *epi*=upon, and a form of *horao*—to see. Primarily the noun means an overseer, then a spectator, then an eye-witness. It is used in classical Greek of those who have been initiated into certain mysteries; and it may be that being a noun, used only here in the New Testament, there is implied the thought of the Lord opening up divine mysteries concerning Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter uses the cognate verb twice, translated "behold" in the R. V. in 1 Peter 2. 12 and 3. 2, a much stronger word than "see." The use of such unique words suggests that the believers were special "spectacles" for the unregenerate around (cp. 1 Corinthians 4. 9 and Hebrews 10. 33), and by their "good works" and "easte behaviour" might initiate them into the real joys of Christian living.

(2) "Charge allotted" (verse 3). From the Greek verb *kleroo*, noun, *kleros*. This word has an interesting story. *Kleros* denoted an object for casting or drawing lots, which consisted of bits of wood or stone. These often had a name inscribed thereon and were thrown from a receptacle or garment (e. g., a lap—Proverbs 16. 33). The piece which fell out first was the chosen one. Then it obtained the meaning "the portion assigned by lot." Here, then, the charges (plural) were the saints in each church allotted to the care of the elders.

Thereafter the word has a strange history. From the saints it was transferred to the "presbyters," who were deemed a special heritage of God. Thus was introduced the word *Clerus* as describing these men, and so we get the English word "clergy." It later obtained the meaning of an educated man—as used by Chaucer when he described Homer as a "great clerke." To-day it has a much commoner use in the ordinary word "clerk."

(8) "Gird" (verse 5). Greek *egkombosathe* is derived from the word that signifies "a knot." So it means to tie on a garment with a knot so that it will not slip off. Thus humility, lowliness of mind, was to be bound about one as an over-all cloak, half-concealing, half-sheltering all other virtues. We have a close parallel, though not the same word, in Colossians 3. 12-14, "Put on . . . and above all these things put on love," and a sad, sad contrast in the Psalm that describes Judas Iscariot, Psalm 109. 8, 17, 18.

Jas. Martin.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

Serving one another

(1 Peter 5.).

From Cowdenbeath.—The overseer and his work are given much prominence in the epistles. In 1 Timothy 3. and in Titus 1. there is put on record the qualifications, both moral and doctrinal, which God requires in the man. Then in 1 Thessalonians 5. 14-22 we have the work of the overseer, whereas in 1 Peter 5. we have the manner in which the work is to be done. The words "elders" and "overseers" refer to the same persons.

Peter writes as a fellow-elder. He does not claim a superior place, but recognizes that he is associated with others in the work. Although writing as a witness of the sufferings of Christ, this does not prove that Peter actually witnessed the crucifixion [1]. There is no evidence of this in the Gospels. Had this been so then he would have used the same word as in 2 Peter 1. 16, where he writes of himself as an eye-witness [2]. Peter bore witness of Christ's sufferings in fellowship with those to whom he wrote. We would judge that it is Peter's deep assurance of his participation in the future glory that causes him to write of himself as being a partaker.

The flock, being God's flock, makes the responsibility of tending a very solemn and important matter. The word here translated "exercising the oversight" is rendered in Hebrews 12. 15 as "looking carefully," and means to watch from a distance, giving the picture of a shepherd having his flock under surveillance. Such careful watching is necessary because of the Adversary who is going about and who seeks to devour the sheep.

In describing the manner in which the work should be done, Peter employs three contrasts: (1) not with reluctance but voluntarily, (2) not for base gain or requiring some immediate incentive, but with eagerness, (3) not compelling the saints to do certain things, but by example, inviting them to follow. Whoso thus discharges his responsibilities in oversight work according to this pattern shall receive the never-fading crown of glory.

Young men are not excluded from oversight work, but novices are. It is fitting that younger overseers should be subject unto elder overseers, and it is comely that service within the circle should be done with humility towards one another. Peter could well recall the Lord's example and teaching regarding this given in the upper room, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."

There is no doubt that the discharging of oversight duties will bring anxiety, but the invitation, in such circumstances, is to cast all our anxiety upon Him. They who care for God's flock are themselves cared for by God. The occasion of suffering has oftentimes been the opportunity for Satan to turn many aside from the pathway. It is a time when faith is needed to accept the wise dealing of God and to combat the doubts sown in the mind by the Adversary. Suffering can only be for a little while. God has a grand purpose in view, and in good time we shall enter into the enjoyment of that unto which He has called us, even His own eternal glory in Christ.

It is encouraging to take notice of Mark's name in the closing salutation, for we remember that he turned back in earlier life. His commendation, too, of Silvanus is very high and one which we might well desire to have said of us: "faithful brother."

James Bowman,

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —The main theme of 1 Peter 5. 1 is the work of oversight, also the qualifications and moral characteristics of one called to such a work. Peter is not here addressing overseers as one who is exercising apostolic authority, but as a fellow-elder, acting in fellowship with them. Peter never forgot the scene of his own restoration to fellowship with his blessed Lord after his denial of that Blessed One, where the Lord Jesus drew from him a threefold confession of his devotion and love toward Himself. Such a confession could only be proved to be genuine and sincere by complete obedience to his Master's commands to care for the little flock (cp. John 21. 15 to 17 with 1 Peter 5. 1 to 4). The original word for tend is in the aorist tense, thus making it characteristic. The actual call, or placing in the work, of an overseer is by the sovereign act of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20. 28) and this, in its very nature, must precede recognition by other overseers. Thus the work should be done not by constraint (some thought this meant under pressure; others thought that it meant doing the work merely from the standpoint of duty), nor by reason of

monetary gain (cp. Balaam, 2 Peter 2. 15), but with a willing mind. The overseer should not domineer over his allotted charge (Gk. *katakuriueo*) (cp. Matthew 20. 25, 26). He should rather be a model or pattern to the flock, and thus by the power and influence of his example, he should guide the flock according to the revealed will of God (verse 2), under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast to the shepherds of Israel (Ezekiel 34. 1 to 4), a true shepherd of the flock of God should have a love and care for the sheep (Philippians 2. 19, 20), and should not consider himself first, but tend, visit, nourish, and care for the flock for he should strive to keep the sheep together in unity, guarding them from the enemy, and providing pasture and rest for them like our blessed Lord Himself (Ezekiel 34. 13-15; Psalm 23.; John 10. 9; Revelation 7. 17). We were reminded by 1 Peter 5. 4 of our Lord's threefold relation to His people as Shepherd, namely, that he was THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN DEATH (John 10. 11, 15, 17); THE GREAT SHEPHERD IN RESURRECTION (Hebrews 13. 20); and THE CHIEF SHEPHERD AT HIS SECOND COMING (1 Peter 5. 4). These three aspects of our Lord's character and work seem to be illustrated in Psalms 22., 23. and 24. Concerning verse 5, different opinions were expressed as to who was being referred to. Some thought that younger overseers were being addressed, for they should subject themselves to older and more matured overseers. Others thought that as a young elder has equal authority with an older person (cp. term fellow-elder as used by Peter to bear this out) [3], and probably is as sound in his judgements and as competent in his qualifications (e. g., brethren like Timothy and Titus), younger *brethren must* be the subjects of verse 5. In any case, in all our relationships and dealings one with another, we should clothe ourselves, as it were, with the apron of humility (cp. Dr. Weymouth's note on verse 5) [4].

Satan is so wise in his understanding, and subtle in his working, that he can either corrupt the assembly-life of God's people by transforming himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11. 3-4, also verses 13 and 14), or by violent persecution seek to destroy the testimony of God on earth (2 Timothy 3. 12; 1 Peter 5. 8, 9).

William G. Henderson.

From Hamilton, **Canada**. Verse 5 seems to contain the main theme for our study for this month. We feel sure that Peter went back in thought to the night when his Lord girded Himself and washed his feet. Peter learned a valuable lesson that night about feet-washing, and here we find him exhorting others to "serve one another." It may be that feet-washing to-day is being neglected, because we are not first of all girding ourselves with humility. Humility therefore is necessary, if our service is to be acceptable and effective. Serving one another may be seen in various phases in temporal things, as also in spiritual needs publicly or privately. Whether this service be performed by elders or by younger ones, we always have before us the example of the One who could say with true humility: "I am in the midst of you as lie that serveth."

Perhaps also the picture of John 21. 15 came before Peter as he wrote: "Tend the flock of God which is among you." There the Lord refers to young and old in the expressions, "feed My sheep" and "feed My lambs." Similarly Peter has a word for elders both young and old. He exhorts the elders to be subject to the will of God, and the younger elders to be subject to the elder, "Yea, all of you... serve one another."

In verse 8, once more Peter recalls an experience, that of Luke 22. 31, "Satan asked to have you, etc." By God's grace he is now enabled to turn again and establish his brethren. Lest we too should fall into Satan's hand, and pride should fill our hearts, we solemnly considered 1 Corinthians 10. 12: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The expression "serve one another" caused us to think of the scripture: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these... ye did it unto Me," and also on the promise contained in Proverbs 19. 17: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah, and his good deed will He pay him again." There is a double reward for humility, grace in this life, and, in due time, exaltation. On the other hand, the proud not only lose their rewards but are resisted by the God of heaven. As we thought of all these exhortations which, humanly speaking, are so difficult to carry out, we also considered the subject of the Epistle, "the true grace of God." This surely is the key to it all. It was this grace that enabled Peter to overcome all his natural, haughty tendencies and become a pillar in God's House. And as this is still a necessity to-day, so the exhortation comes again to us, "Stand ye fast therein." N. MacKay.

From Portslade. —Peter, in the portion under consideration, discloses seven requirements of such persons who would serve their brethren in oversight capacity:—

- (1) That they should shepherd ("tend") the flock (verse 2),
- (2) that they should not lord it over the heritages (verse 3),
- (3) that they should make themselves examples to the flock (verse 3),
- (4) that they should humble themselves under God's mighty hand (verse 6),
- (5) that they should cast all their anxiety upon Him (verse 7),
- (6) that they should be sober and vigilant (inseparable requirements) (verse 8),
and
- (7) that they should withstand the devil (verse 9).

These things characterized the Chief Shepherd, and happy indeed would be the flock whose overseers also were possessed of such attributes.

Alan Elliott, A. Chamings.

From Nottingham. —In 1 Peter 5. our minds are directed from the world into the circle of God's house, where elders are exhorted to tend the flock of God which is among them. Verse 5. The younger elders of an assembly are also exhorted to be in subjection to the older elders or overseers. On the one hand we get the call for shepherd-tending which needs much grace and patience, and, on the other hand, the exhortation to subjection.. Each individual in house of God has or should have some service to perform in the maintenance of God's dwelling-place or in the furtherance of His purposes on earth. The service of some saints may seem to them greater or more necessary than that of others. This tends to create pride. Let us remember that in God's sight all service done from a willing heart and for the love of God and His dear Son is looked upon with equal favour. Pride is bad in any man, but in a man in house of God, it is a weapon which Satan can wield very effectively to undermine and weaken God's dwelling-place on earth. It seems evident from reading the chapter under discussion, that pride had crept into the house of God in that early day.

If the individual services of the saints are to achieve what God desires collectively, it is necessary that we should be willing, not only to serve God, but to serve and humble ourselves before one another. What a beautiful picture and example of humility is set before us in the story of our dear Lord washing the disciples' feet in John 13. 4, 5! Peter testifies that "this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein." Verse 10 says, "And the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you." Verse 4 says "And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." What further encouragement is needed? *F. and D. Allen.*

EXTRACTS.

From **Melbourne**.—The study this month is devoted almost entirely to those who have the oversight in the churches of God, both elder and younger. In his exhortations to the elders he introduces the thought of the shepherd, caring for the flock of God. This tending involves more than feeding the flock. The willing elder is guide, protector and ensample to the flock, and he views the fadeless crown of glory that he shall receive from the Chief Shepherd, his Lord and Master whom he has served faithfully and well. This crown of glory, unlike the crown of life (James 1. 12, Revelation 2. 10), or the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4. 8), is peculiar to the elders in the assemblies of God. Be watchful for the lambs of the flock, for " the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand stedfast *in the* faith (R. V. M.). "

The younger overseers are to be subject unto the elder. No progress in an assembly is possible without subjection of one overseer to another. Strong personalities must go and humility must be girded on. A united oversight begets a united assembly. Humility is pride's opposite number. We judge that oversight is not an office but is a work, and to do this work the overseer must prove himself worthy, having a genuine care for each individual saint in the assembly.

S. Stoope.

From **Atherton**.—Verses 1 to 9 of this chapter are taken up with exhorting and comforting the elders of God's people, although such verses as 6 and 7 may have a general application. Humility must be exercised by elders as they care for the saints. In serving others we should seek to see Christ in others, and to manifest Christ in ourselves (Philippians 2.). Feeding and tending the sheep and lambs of the little flock call for an understanding mind and earnest care, together with love, on the part of the shepherds. The latter are not to be overlords though they may be called upon to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching " (2 Timothy 4. 2). There is no place for pride and self-exaltation. Peter would never forget the Lord's example when He washed the disciples' feet. The younger overseer is to be subject to the older overseer, because age, maturity and experience command respect. But the exhortation to humility is applicable to all (verse 5). For difficult and troublous times, verse 7 provides great comfort and cheer, whereas, in the following verse, the shepherd is warned to be on guard against an unscrupulous, restless foe, the devil.

We think that the Lord became known as the Chief Shepherd when under-shepherds were appointed in the Churches. As Chief Shepherd He still instructs the under-shepherds in their care for His sheep. The shepherd character of the Lord is revealed in the Old Testament as follows: Psalm 22. depicting Him as the good Shepherd, Psalm 23. as the great Shepherd, and Psalm 24. as the chief Shepherd. In 1 Peter 5. the terms overseers and elders are almost synonymous, although often the word " elder " describes the status, while overseer describes the work. From verse 10 it may be gathered that there is a limit to the suffering God allows His people to undergo. Elders must ever be watching and waiting, working and praying, for God's dear people with the sympathetic approach of under-shepherds.

G. A. Jones, G. Sankey.

From **Crowborough**.—Peter reminds the elders that they were shepherds, and, as such, responsible to the Chief Shepherd for the safety and welfare of the flock of God. God legislates in His Word for one flock only and one Chief Shepherd, to whom under-shepherds are responsible. In verse 5 we have a divine principle of working, " Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. " Let us beware of the danger evident to-day in many circles, lest we fail in this point. It behoves older elders also so to walk that they may earn the love and respect of younger overseers **and** saints.

Silvanus had a **very** high commendation, " our faithful brother. " The Lord **Jesus desires** men and women, who, having done all, will still **be** found standing together with a **steadfast** adherence to the Faith. *B. V. French.*

From Liverpool. —It could **be** argued that in the opening verses the apostle **is** exhorting the older among them to accept the work of oversight, **but** references elsewhere, particularly Titus **1. 5**, indicate that an elder **is** one with a recognized responsibility of shepherding the flock. **Peter's** exhortation, therefore, is regarding the manner of their carrying out the work which the Lord had committed into their hands. Quality of action is also required, **as** such words **as** "willingly" and "of a ready mind" indicate. Overseers should not feel constraint in their work or have any sense of lordship over the flock. In the hearts of true elders **is** a feeble reflection of the character of the Chief Shepherd. Eventually His appreciation of work done for Him, **in** this way, will **be** shown in **His**-granting to **them** lasting crowns of glory. There **does not seem to be** any obvious support for the **view** that " the younger, " of verse **5**, refers to younger elders [**5**]. **Rather it would seem** that the quality of oversight should **be** matched **by** the flock's subjection, a subjection springing **from** humility begotten in the **fear** of the Lord. Linked with this voluntary humbling of ourselves **is** the wonderful invitation to **cast** all our anxiety upon Him. In our pilgrimage the danger **is** that the Adversary may **use** to our undoing what **is** only common to the flesh. Sober, watchful faith in the God of all grace **is** the antidote. *W. H. Sands,*

From Kilmarnock. —In Mark **10. 35 to 45** we read of an incident that caused the Lord to tell the disciples, ". . . . Whosoever would become great among you, shall **be** your servant: and whosoever **would be first** among **you**, shall **be** bondservant of all " (R. V. M.). Perhaps these **words** would **be** in the apostle **Peter's** mind when he exhorted the sojourners to **** Serve one another.** " The service of the elders (or overseers) **was** to tend, or shepherd, the little flock. There **must be** no wrong motives in doing this service, **such as** he enumerates: " not **by** necessity, " " nor yet for shameful gain, " " nor **yet as** lording it over the allotted portions " (verses **2-3**, Roth.). The natural heart **desires to be** in the forefront, **but** the apostle exhorts all to **be** humble-minded, for " God resisteth the proud, **but** giveth grace to the humble. " If this humble **spirit is** reigning among overseers **and** the flock, then Psalm 133. **1** will **be** fulfilled, " Behold, how good and how pleasant **it is** for brethren to dwell together in unity ! " Although **we** have a great adversary **we** need not **be** afraid, **because** our God careth for **us**, and on **Him** we may **cast** all our anxiety.

Whatever service **we** render to one another will not **be** overlooked by the Lord, if done **as** to **Him**, and overseers shall receive the crown of glory, when the Chief Shepherd shall **be** manifested. *A. G. S.*

From Brantford. —Verses 1 to 12 are to **be** viewed **as directed** to elders. **We submit** some difficulties. **We** wonder **if** the sufferings of Christ, which Peter mentions (verse **1**), were His sufferings all through His life, or were they **His** vicarious sufferings on the Cross ? [**6**]. Does verse **10** refer to what happens in this life or in that which is to come ? [**7**]. **Was** " She that is in Babylon, elect " of verse **13**, an elect lady, or a church of God ? [**8**].

The thought of " girding " (verse 5) brought out the lesson of John **13**, when the Lord girded Himself and **washed His** disciples' feet. The Holy Spirit **uses** different words with regard to tending and feeding, and **we** felt there was something to **be** learnt here. The occasion **in** David's life when he tended his flock and when the lion **came** down and took one of the lambs, **seems to be** illustrated **in verses 7**

and 8. "Your brethren... in the world "were felt to be unsaved Jews, who were also undergoing persecution [9]. An interesting intercourse of workers is seen in Peter's commendation of Mark, who seems to have worked with several of the chief men among the brethren.

George Soper, Alex Sprout

From **Ilford**. —The theme of this portion is grace, grace which is needed by the leaders to discharge their shepherd responsibilities in a Christ-like way. Grace and humility seem to go hand in hand, as is clearly demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ. A true shepherd will have as his chief interest the welfare and safety of the flock. With this responsibility, he needs One who is able to help him, therefore it is an encouragement to have One on whom to cast all anxiety.

Our attention was drawn to Ezekiel 34. where we have some very stern words concerning the shepherds of Israel, whose only interest in the sheep was their own well-being, words that, contain a grave warning to all who seek the office of a bishop. If the work is carried out in love, through grace, called by Peter " true grace, " then the under-shepherds can look forward to receiving from the Chief Shepherd the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

E. H. Jarvis.

From **Willington Quay**. —In seeking to exhort the elders, Peter makes three claims in order to substantiate his exhortation. He was a fellow-elder, a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. It is obvious that the things which Peter saw and heard made such an impression upon him that he never forgot them, but sought to learn by his experience. God's people, whether in an assembly or wider sphere, must always have in their constitution elders among the flock; and the elders' reward for such service will be the unfading crown of glory which shall be theirs at the revelation of the Chief Shepherd. Will the manifestation of the Chief Shepherd take place at the judgement seat of Christ ? [10]. We thought that the time of exaltation (verse 6) must be in eternity, but there is a sense in which the strengthening of verse 10 may be experienced now.

How appropriate is the description of the adversary as a roaring lion in connexion with the flock of God ! Although the devil is powerless so far as the believer's eternal salvation is concerned, he can, nevertheless, cause great havoc amongst the flock of God. We are exhorted to be steadfast in our faith and resist the adversary, who is ever busy.

K. R.

From **Paisley and Barrhead**. —Many of Peter's spiritual experiences seem to have been of a threefold character, as in the experience Peter had when, in a trance and preparatory to the opening up of a way to the Gentiles, beginning with Cornelius, he saw a sheet coming down out of heaven with all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things. This sheet came down three times ere Peter learnt the lesson, that what God had cleansed he was not to make common. He was also asked thrice as to his relation to Christ, prior to the Cross, in the court of the High Priest. Three times also did the Lord question Peter as to his love for Him, after His resurrection. So also here we have a threefold chord as to his credentials: (1) a fellow-elder, (2) a witness of the sufferings of Christ, (3) a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. A threefold chord is not easily broken, and once more this is very evident in the writer's instructions to overseers, to " tend the flock of God . . . " (1) " not of constraint, but willingly . . . " (2) " nor yet for filthy lucre . . . " (3) " neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you . . . "

The crown of glory (verse 4) is promised, presumably, in the light of verse 3, to those overseers who are overcomers. Verse 5, the younger **men** referred to are younger overseers. **Verses 10 and 11** would almost **seem** to bring the letter to a majestic close, apart from a short postscript of encouragement. Altogether this is a very stimulating epistle, calculated to spur **us** on in our endeavour to **be** well-pleasing toward Him, knowing the while that "if **we** suffer with Him **we** shall also reign with Him." *W. Terrell, Jun.*

From London, S. E. —Peter addresses himself to the elders of the churches to whom he writes, elders by office, rather than by age. To give force to his exhortations, he **writes as a fellow-elder**. He **was a witness** of the **sufferings** of Christ in the garden, in the palace of the high priest, and very likely being a spectator of His sufferings on the Cross. **Acts 3. 15** says, "And killed the **Prince** of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof **we are** witnesses." He adds that he **was a partaker** of the glory. How different the behaviour of Peter here from that of his **pretended** successors! He does not style himself head of the churches, or claim sovereignty over them, **but writes as a fellow-elder**. Verse 2: "Tend the flock," which **means to feed** the flock, and rule it, as the word of God prescribes. They **must be** examples to the flock, and practise what they preach, with a willing **mind** that takes pleasure **in** the work, not for any personal profit.

"Flock of God" implies a people **redeemed** to God, **being in** holy love and communion one with another, according to the will of God; chosen to **be** God's own people to enjoy His special favours and to do His special service. They are not, therefore, to **be lorded over at** pleasure, and should **be** treated with love and tenderness for the sake of Him to whom they belong. Christ is the Chief Shepherd. He has bought them, and He rules them, and those who are under-shepherds will have to give **an account to Him**, and those that have **been** faithful shall receive a "crown of glory that fadeth not away." Humility is the great preserver of peace; pride is the great disturber and the **cause** of most dissensions and breaches in the churches. God resisteth the proud; they are like the Devil, **enemies** of Himself and of His kingdom. Wherefore He says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you **in** due time."

The elders are to **cast** all their care upon God, for "He careth for you." Verse 8. The apostle warns them against the great adversary the Devil, who restlessly walks about, seeking whom he may devour. *J. D.*

COMMENTS.

[1] (Cowdenbeath). —Peter was an eye-witness of Christ's suffering. He with John said, "We cannot **but** speak the things which **we saw and heard**" (Acts 4. 20). Peter again says, "We are witnesses of these things" (Acts 5. 32). What things? The **answer must be**, "The God of our fathers raised **up Jesus**, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree" (verse 30). What value would Peter have **been as a witness** if his testimony was only hear-say evidence? Peter spoke of what he **saw**, that the **Jews** by the hand of **men** without law (Acts 2. 23), the Romans, hung the Lord on the tree. I have no doubt whatever that Peter **was at Calvary and saw** the Lord suffer, so to acquire His flock. A thing is valued at what it cost. —*J. M.*

[2] (Cowdenbeath). —It does not follow that **because epoptai**=eye-witnesses is used in 2 Peter 1. 16, that **martus** does not **mean an eye-witness** in 1 Peter 5. 1. Saints who bore witness to Christ's suffering, who had not **seen** the Lord suffer, did so on the **basis** of the testimony of those who **saw** the Lord's suffering. **Our** testimony to Christ is **based** on the evidence of others. **But the witness-bearing** of the apostles **was** first-hand evidence concerning what they **saw and heard**. —*J. M.*

[3] (**Bradford, Halifax and Leeds**). —In verse 5 Peter is still addressing the elders and the verse means, that younger elders were to be subject to the older elders. Subjection does not mean (as we have often said) inferiority, nor yet are subjection and obedience equivalent terms. Subjection here means a correct attitude of mind of younger to the older. —*J. M.*

[4] (**Bradford, Halifax and Leeds**). —The word here does not necessarily mean an apron; it means a garment which is fastened by tying in a knot. —*J. M.*

[5] (**Liverpool**). —This is just what the verse does say. Peter is addressing elders and the younger elder is to **be** subject to the older. —*J. M.*

[6] (**Brantford**). —Both kinds of sufferings, those in His lifetime and on the cross. At the same time we must remember that Christ's vicarious sufferings were, I would judge, during the three hours of darkness into which no eye penetrated, from which came the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" —*J. M.*

[7] (**Brantford**). —It is not clear what our friends wish to know as to verse 10. "His eternal glory in Christ" is yet future to us now, but being perfected, established and strengthened is a present experience. —*J. M.*

[8] (**Brantford**). —Note R. V. marg. "The church, or, the sister," the wording in the Greek may mean either, but the weight of commentators takes "the co-elect, or jointed elected, in Babylon" to signify the church there; I also **am** of that opinion. —*J. M.*

[9] (**Brantford**). —These were not unsaved persons, but brethren, and please note R. V. margin, "Greek, brotherhood" which throws us back to 1 Peter 2. 17. Brotherhood signifies a fraternity, a body of persons who are brothers and who have also common interests. —*J. M.*

[10] (**Willington Quay**). —The Chief Shepherd will appear at His coming to the air (1 Thessalonians 4.); He will have His reward with Him then for every man according to his work (Revelation 22.). —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from Melbourne. —(1) Is the brotherhood (verse 9, R. V. M.) confined to overseers, or is it the same as in 1 Peter 2. 17?

(2) Verse 13. Is this a sister assembly in Babylon, or an unnamed sister (we note that the statement is conjoined with a brother's name—Mark)?

Answer (1). —It is the same brotherhood as in 1 Peter 2. 17. —*J. M.*

Answer (2). —See note [8] on paper from Brantford. —*J. M.*

Questions from Paisley **and** Barrhead. —(1) Verse 1: "A witness of the sufferings of Christ." Does this refer to Christ's suffering prior to or on the Cross? (cp. Acts 5. 32).

(2) Does the latter part of verse 9 as to the sufferings of the "brotherhood" refer to brethren (Jews) according to the flesh or to saints in the Fellowship?

(3) Verse 13. Who is the "she" referred to?

Answer (1). —See note [1] on paper from Cowdenbeath. —*J. M.*

Answer (2). —The brotherhood here refers to saints in the Fellowship, and is the same brotherhood as in 1 Peter 2. 17. —*J. M.*

Answer (3). —See note [8] on paper from Brantford. —*J. M.*

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

SEPTEMBER, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	81
The Second Epistle of Peter:	
The Truth	82
C o m m e n t s	89
Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s	89

EDITORIAL.

The apostle Peter, gifted, **as we have seen**, with a wonderful memory of the things that matter, writes to put them "in remembrance of these things," though " they knew " them, and were " established in the truth. " To be **put in remembrance is** profound psychology. It stirs up the **sincere** mind. **Oh the value** of the Remembrance Feast, " for **as often... ye proclaim the Lord's death** till He come" (1 Corinthians 11. 26). Thus, without any long preamble, Peter directs their minds, firstly, to the foundations, and then goes on to show how they must grow.

If the foundations are not sure, the building will fall. But the foundations had been truly laid (see Ephesians 2. 20 and 1 Peter 2.), and it **is** now the apostle's task to remind them of their sure standing. All this has potent lessons for **us** to-day. Down through the years **man** has tampered with the foundations. Let **us** see to it that we are sure **and** steadfast, there.

Then follows the instructions on **growth**, the theme that runs through the epistle, reaching its crescendo at the end of the last chapter in, " But grow **in** the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour **Jesus** Christ. " Even **in** this matter, certain things are done for **us** (as **in** 2 Peter 1. 3 and 4) and certain things we are called upon to do for ourselves (as **in** 2 Peter 1. 5 to 7). What a magnificent inheritance " divine power has granted unto us, " freely and richly! In addition to the multiplied grace and peace, inestimable treasures **in** themselves, we have " **all** things that pertain unto **life** and godliness... **His** precious and exceeding great promises... the divine nature. "

" Knowledge of **Him** " **is** an important factor in **all** this. Two themes emerge from these scriptures—TO **KNOW** HIM, and TO **BECOME** LIKE HIM. Note the emphasis on this knowledge of **Him** in this epistle (ch. 1. verses 2, 3, and 8, and 2. 20); also by the apostle John (John 17. 3); and by the apostle **Paul** (Colossians 1. 9-13). The order **is** logical. God gives, first of all, the inward capacity which makes everything possible. Having apprehended what has been done for us, which we could not do for ourselves, we can go on to study and practise the instructions of verses 5 to 7.

On our part we are asked to supply, abundantly, certain graces. This word " supply " **is** interesting. It describes the action of one who paid the cost of supplying, or fully furnishing with everything that was necessary, the chorus, a vital part of a Greek play. It **is** not a mechanical adding one virtue upon the preceding one. But it **is** more that each will contribute to a perfectly balanced result.

Briefly, let **us** divide these attributes **as** follows: —(1) The first three have to do with the character of our faith, (2) the next two with our inward natural tendencies, and (3) the last two with our relationships to others.

Faith is a fundamental requisite (Hebrews 11. 1 and 6). " Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him. " " Virtue, " here, means " moral power, " " moral energy, " " activity or vigour of soul. " Thus our faith must be a living, active, vigorous, energetic, manly faith. Languid, lifeless faith will be a deterrent to others. We must not merely recline on beds of ease, and wait; we are called upon to exercise a virile faith, then, to this, to supply knowledge, that is "insight, " "understanding, " "enlightenment. " In other words the active faith must not be based on a false zeal. This energy must be governed and controlled by intelligence, by understanding, and by enlightenment. A knowledge of God and of His Son and of the truth in control, will obtain the best results from energetic faith.

In the group dealing with our inward tendencies we have " temperance " and " patience. " There is ever the flesh to contend with, and thus we must ever remember temperance... " self-control, " " self-discipline. " " Patience " means " patient endurance. " There are also the problems from without as well as those that have their origin in the fleshly nature. Hence the need of patient endurance . . . not a rushing headlong, then a fall, then a slipping back, and a bringing discredit on the Testimony. No, we must go on, not being weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Now with regard to our relationships to others, firstly, supply " godliness, " "God-likeness"; for our relationship to Him is of paramount importance. Then with Him first, we extend to our brethren " brotherly kindness. " Is this a task to us ? Are we displaying the badge of discipleship—" by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another " ? Then, finally, over and above the brethren, love all men. This is the life of perfect balance.

We start with faith and we end with love. This is the correct order for true aggressive work. See to our own condition then send the branches over the wall. Without faith we can do nothing, but given an active practising faith we must come to love, for God, Himself, is Love.

Jas, Martin.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

The Truth.

(2 Peter 1.)

From Cowdenbeath. —Peter's second epistle is addressed to the saints of the Dispersion (2 Peter 3. 1).

His object in writing was similar in both instances, namely, that he might stir them **up** (*Diegeiro* = to wake fully) by reminding them of such divine truths that they might be enabled to serve God more acceptably. His reasons for writing the second letter are contained in subsequent chapters, in which he warns against the wrong doctrine and immoral practices of false teachers. The day of his death was fast approaching (2 Peter 1. 14), and he was desirous of recording his thoughts that, even after death, they might give diligence in the matters which exercised him.

The expression in verse 1 concerning the obtaining of a like precious faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ is difficult to understand. The word " obtained " is derived from a Greek word meaning " to draw lots, " implying something determined or received by lot. [Thus the meaning is that by a divine act of grace this precious faith was allotted to them . . . they did not acquire it for themselves. —Jas. M.]. If the faith of verses 1 and 5 are identical, then a comparison of these, along with verse 10, would indicate that the obtaining of this faith has service in view.

The calling referred to in verse 10 we judge is the call into the Fellowship (1 Corinthians 1. 9; 2 Corinthians 6. 17, 18), and the election, unto service (1 Peter 1. 1, 2). How mightily God has wrought for the believer (verse 3)! All that is necessary to life and godliness is ours through a knowledge of God. Although such has been bestowed, we may fail to appropriate it and to appreciate His Word, wherein are contained His promises, precious and exceeding great.

While it is true that **we** escaped the corrupting influences of this evil world, it is also true that **we can again** become defiled.

What God has accomplished and our responsibility thereto is thus seen in wonderful balance in these Scriptures (verses 2-5).

We are exhorted to enrich our faith by the addition therein of seven excellencies.

(1) **Virtue** gives the thought of resolution or boldness. **We** were not given "the spirit of fearfulness" (2 Timothy 1. 7). This characteristic is essential for witness-bearing [A].

(2) **Knowledge:** this word is prominent in this epistle and occurs four times in the first chapter. **We** require a knowledge of God's word before we can understand it. **Boldness** should be seen yoked with knowledge.

(3) **Temperance** is self-control. Extensive knowledge may puff a man up, if not accompanied by this excellency. **We** should be temperate in all things.

(4) **Patience.** This word bears the thought of cheerful endurance. Impatience is natural to us, hence we are exhorted to "follow a f t e r . . . patience" (1 Timothy 6. 11). **We** become patient through the exercise of self-control. **Patience** is the highway to godliness.

(5) **Godliness** is God-likeness. "Godliness is profitable for all things" (1 Timothy 4. 8), and with contentment, it is great gain. This is surely the high watermark of our Christian experience, that a likeness to God can be discerned in us.

(6) **Love of the brethren.** Peter gives the matter of love its correct place in his letters. Natural men are described as lovers of self (2 Timothy 3. 2). **Love of the brethren** is possible because we have passed out of death into life (1 John 3. 14).

(7) **Love.** It seems that (6) is essential before (7) can be given effect to. **Love**, the greatest of these, the bond of perfectness, all embracing.

If we lack these qualities our spiritual vision is impaired and we have forgotten the purpose of **OUT** being quickened. If these abound it means that **we** are employed in acquiring a knowledge of our Lord Jesus. May it be so with us. One of God's precious promises is seen in verse 11. **We** may not be able fully to appreciate what is meant by **an** "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour." Is the manner of our entrance conditioned by our giving diligence to these matters? [B]. It may be that we too are established in the truth, but a stirring up is necessary betimes.

Having heard the voice of the Living God addressing His Son, Peter's belief in the prophetic word concerning the coming Messiah is confirmed. *Robert Ross.*

From Edmonton.—At the moment of conversion a good work began in us, that of moulding us into vessels unto honour, sanctified and prepared for every good work. The power which carries out this all important work is that of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within every true believer, from the moment of his or her regeneration (John 14. 26). Verses 5-7 are somewhat similar to Galatians 5. 22-25. A rebellious child of God cannot be led of the Spirit. **He** must first cast aside all fleshly lusts or he cannot be a partaker of the divine nature.

Peter feels the imminence of the dissolving of his earthly house of this tabernacle (2 Corinthians 5. 1), and, though rejoicing in the precious hope, he is concerned over the future faithfulness of the flock, and so he desires that they be kept in remembrance of these things after his decease.

He recalls that blessed privilege which he shared with James and John, on the holy mount, when they saw Christ glorified before their eyes. They also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Christ and heard the voice from the overshadowing cloud, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Bearing in mind the words of Hebrews 1. 1, 2, we would note the truth which is conveyed, that God who spoke the law and the prophets was now speaking unto them in His Son. Such is the vital truth clearly expressed in the transfiguration. *Fred Lundwill*

From Melbourne.—Among the "all things" that pertain unto life and godliness is one that God's people must contend for, **even the truth (*Aletheia*)**. This is the truth in opposition to a lie. The truth (*Aletheia*) in our study can be walked in (3 John 4), can be erred from (James 5. 19), can be rejoiced with (1 Corinthians 13. 6), can be withstood (2 Timothy 3. 8), can be held down in unrighteousness (Romans 1. 18), and can be disobeyed (Galatians 5. 7).

We may add seven things in faith. It is somewhat like a building of seven storeys built on a good foundation whose top storey is love. If we *do* these things then we have the cure for stumbling. We cannot be idle and unfruitful when these things activate our life. By these things "shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom,*' with the storms and trial of this life behind us. To increase our knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord ensures us a multiplication of peace. We may have faith yet not grow in knowledge; it is the divine knowledge that we glean from God's Word that enables us to overcome. This overcoming is held ever before us as an object to be attained.

5. *Stoope.*

From Nottingham.—Peter addresses this Epistle to those who had obtained "a like precious faith." His salutation in verse 2 would seem to show us that those to whom he is writing have started aright on their pilgrim journey by acknowledging Jesus as Lord. He next goes on to show that by virtue of divine power there is an abundant source of all things that pertain unto life and godliness. For encouragement, we are reminded of His precious and exceeding great promises which should cause us to strive the more to become partakers of the divine nature in contrast to the old corrupt nature which once held sway. To give effect to this, the apostle sets forth an orderly mode of progress commencing with that which should be unmistakable evidence in all true disciples—virtue, and culminating with that, apart from which all spiritual effort and aspirations are in vain—love. Here is vitality of growth which will result in fruitfulness in "the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4. 13).

The apostle then tells us of the need to make our calling and election sure. This cannot refer to the Christian's call or election to grace as seen in Romans 8. and elsewhere, as nothing he may do, either good or bad, can affect this, but we rather submit that the call is that referred to in 1 Corinthians 1. 9—the call into the Fellowship of God's Son, and the election relates to service.

The cause of all stumbling or turning aside from the Way of Truth can readily be traced to a deficiency in one or more of the virtues or attributes which the apostle so earnestly commends.

J. Miller,

EXTRACTS.

From Birmingham.—Whereas the first epistle by Peter was written to the elect of the dispersion, the second is addressed to these same people as having obtained a like precious faith. It is well to establish clearly who are contemplated in this second epistle. Some felt that the obtaining a like precious faith implied salvation only; others thought that this meant "the faith," which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3) [C].

Because of infinite grace and mercy, God has granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness and also His precious and exceeding great promises.

The scholar who receives a grant to further his education does not fritter it away, saying he has achieved his goal; no, it is the impetus to further works of increased diligence. So it should be with us. Not too much is asked of the disciple of Christ. Firstly supply virtue or goodness, a change from the former manner of life. The standard gradually gets higher and requires more diligence on our part.

"Love of the brethren" brings the new disciple right into the circle of fellowship. Love should be the mainspring and sustaining power in all our dealings one with another.

Verse 8. Spiritual idleness and unfruitfulness are individualistic characteristics. Whereas, in verse 10, **we** are exhorted to give the more diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let **us** ask ourselves, **can we** make our calling **and** election to salvation **the** more sure? Ephesians 2. 8, 9, Galatians 2. 16, Romans 9. 11 **and** many other scriptures give the answer. Then **what** is under reference here? It is, **we** believe, the calling into collective testimony (1 Corinthians 1. 9), and **the** election to service.

It is worth noting that in the matter of personal testimony **and** service **we** are exhorted to **add** on our part "all diligence", whilst in the matter of collective testimony, **and** service, **we** are exhorted to "give the more diligence."

It is possible to stumble in testimony and service, whether it **be** in **an** individual sphere or collective sphere, but if **we** do these things which the apostle **has** outlined we shall never stumble. We do well to meditate on the Lord's words in Luke 6, 46-49, to the end that we remain sure and steadfast, holding tenaciously to truth.

D. Watts, D. G. Miller,

From Atherton.—The date and place of the writing of this letter are uncertain, but there is a clear link with his first letter indicated in 2 Peter 3. 1. The object of both epistles is the same, namely, to stir **up** the minds of the saints, **and** to confirm **the** doctrine, **whether** from Old or New Testament prophets or apostles. It appears from chapter 1. 13-15 to have been **written** when the apostle **was** advanced in age, and near **the** time of his death, which, tradition **states**, took place about A. D. 66. With wonderful composure **and** yet with utmost zeal **and** diligence he pursued his labours **to** the end, because he had faithfully and simply followed his beloved Master and sought His honour **and** glory.

Following the greeting, the chapter may be divided into four parts—(1) **verses** 3-4, divine gifts and divine promises; (2) **verses** 5-11, encouragement to abound in excellencies; (3) **verses** 12-15, the reasons for the apostle's reminder; (4) **verses** 16-21, the truthfulness and reality of apostolic and scriptural witness to **the** Lord **Jesus**.

The excellent characteristics of **verses** 5-7 are the direct result of the work of the blessed Holy Spirit, that we may grow more and more Christ-like, so that Christ may be magnified in us, and so that the glorious unity of **the** Spirit might be maintained. In no other way can we aspire to a full knowledge of Christ, and how very far are **we** behind the apostle in spiritual understanding and discernment, who wrote "that I may know Him"!

The Lord may be clearly understood **and** revealed in vision **and** prophecy, **but** how much more the power of being **an** eye-witness! Such things **Peter** never forgot, and indeed following the **descent** of the Holy Spirit, the apostles Peter, James **and** John were the more impressed by what they had **seen** and heard (see Luke 24. 6-8; John 2. 19-22; 12. 16). The word of God is not a fable, in any part or verse of its construction, for **men** wrote (as no other **men** ever wrote) living oracles inspired by the One who has ever sought to divide light from darkness.

From Paisley and Barrhead.—The key to the chapter, **and** indeed to the whole epistle, would **seem** to be in verse 12. In this epistle **we** have addition to the faith of the **man** of God, who, after having **been** cleansed from all defilement of flesh, **needs** to be furnished unto every good work.

We considered the following questions:—(1) What are the precious **and** exceeding great promises of verse 4? (2) Is there the possibility of failing to make our calling **and** election sure, **due** to lack of attention to the progression of virtues in **verses** 5, 6 **and** 7? **and** (3) What is the eternal kingdom of verse 11?

Our first question **was** answered by 2 Corinthians 6. 16-18 **and** 7. 1. The **answer** to the second question is that while there is no possibility of our calling **and** election (which is God's responsibility) not being sure [D], **we** can satisfy ourselves of the **surety** of our election by adding on our part all diligence. Question

number three **was answered by the** suggestion that this **was** the eternal state: one eternal kingdom, **but** different positions to strive for in this eternal kingdom.

Every born **again** person has divine life, but not every saved person is, through God's promises, becoming a partaker of the divine nature.

The following scriptures, **Numbers 24. 17, Isaiah 11. 1, 2, and Revelation 22. 16,** were cited **as** having a bearing on verse 19. Some of **us** thought of the morning-star aspect of Christ's reappearing **as** referring to the rapture of the saints, **and** the day-star of his coming to earth to reign **in** righteousness, and perhaps, **since the Sun is the** star of the day, the day-star **is the same as the Sun** of righteousness [E]. Others felt that there **was** no direct prophetic word **in** the Old Testament that could be applied to the rapture of the saints. The day-star arising **in** our hearts **was** applied to the sensation that will arise **in** our hearts **at** His coming to the air. *W. Terrell, Jun.*

From Ilford. —In verse **3** we have the secret of successful spiritual life. **It is** by the knowledge of the Lord **Jesus** Christ. This is not the knowledge that **puffs up,** but is the divine power which enables **us** to have such things **as** grace, self-control, humility: things that pertain to life **and** godliness. **It is** useless to ask for will-power: our prayer should **be**—"More about **Jesus** would I know," if **we want** to show His **grace** to others.

Virtue is a positive quality. Of the Lord **it is** not written that He **went** about not doing evil, **but** (He) "**went about** doing good"—a positive thing. "Diligence" **is in** fact a keynote of this chapter, governing the **entire** catalogue of things **in** **verses 5 to 7,** and the outcome of real application to these things **is** zeal and fruitfulness **in** the Lord's things.

Love **is** seen, **as in 1** Corinthians 13. —the final thing. The love which **is** added to "love of the brethren", in verse 7, may **be** a deeper and truer "love which covereth" than that which **we** have for all the saints, or it may be a wider expression—love for all the world. "God so **loved** . . ."

Prophecy, in this chapter, appears to **be** linked with the majesty of the Lord **Jesus** Christ, **and** so, **we** judge, when **men** spake moved by the Holy Spirit the words they spake were not of private (special) interpretation.

"Remembrance" suggests a constant bringing to mind, like the weekly memorial of bread and wine, more than merely "not forgetting." There are deep truths in these terms. It is well to recognise that, for our part, ability to **remember is** largely subconscious, **but we** may rightly **assume** that God, whose **ways** are so much higher than ours, has complete control over what **He** remembers and what **He** forgets. Thus He cannot forget "the wormwood and the gall," **but** our **sins and** iniquities which **were** the cause, **He** will remember no more (Hebrews **10. 17**).

C. J. T.

From Birkenhead. —Peter's exhortations **seem** all the more wonderful when **we** think of him **as** the one for whom the Lord prayed that his faith fail not. **He** speaks several **times** of "knowledge," **but it is** not earthly knowledge to which **he** refers, **but** the knowledge of our Lord **and** Saviour, **Jesus** Christ. Such knowledge **can** make **us** a power for God **in** the world to-day.

It was generally **agreed** that **we** obtained a "divine nature" when **we** are born again, **but** Peter here contemplates our **being** partakers through faith in God's promises.

The condition of verse **8** is not **an** essential to the entering of the kingdom of our Lord **and** Saviour, **Jesus** Christ, **but** it governs rather the manner of **Entrance**—"thus shall **be** richly supplied unto you the entrance." The kingdom has **many** aspects. Here it appears to **be** a general reference to the future glory of the Lord which the saints will share in varying **measures**. *R. B. W., R. L. S.*

From Kilmarnock. —Although our **faith** may **be** little to begin with, **as a grain of mustard seed**, if it is developed, **we will be** enabled to lay hold on God's "precious and exceeding great promises." It is God's will **that** there should **be** growth in the divine life in our hearts, and **verses 5 to 7** give seven stages of spiritual development unto the "knowledge of our Lord **Jesus Christ**."

Knowing from experience how it is possible to stumble, the apostle exhorts that they do these things and thus be kept from stumbling.

Verse 19. The "word of prophecy," we understand, refers to the Old Testament writings, which were written by **men** moved by the Holy Spirit, and are for our learning, "that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15. 4).
A. G. S.

From Willington Quay. —Immediately Peter embraces the saints in affection, and seeks to set before them the qualities of the God who had called them, indicating the common blessings that had been bestowed upon them all. Reviewing all that God has, by divine power, granted unto us, we ask, "What more could our God do for mortal man?"

Does not God require something at the hand of the believer? Yes, indeed, he is to supply virtue, knowledge, etc. It was suggested that verses 5, 6 and 7 are aspects of the outworking of the divine nature.

Peter never forgot the Lord's own words to him concerning the death he should die, and gladly does he anticipate his departure to be with the One whom he knew so well in the flesh.
C. B.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The subject of the first chapter has aptly been stated to be the truth, the body of doctrine which **was** first spoken **by** the Lord to the apostles. The Lord Himself was the theme of those wondrous discourses. John 3. 3-5 makes it clear that the new birth is an essential prerequisite to a deeper knowledge of God. **We** must first have a divine nature, being born from above, before we can ever **see** this spiritual kingdom, for we need the Holy Spirit to open our minds to understand the Scriptures so that our lives and thoughts may be controlled by them.

The Greek words for knowledge are instructive: *Gnosis* and *Epignosis*. *Epignosis* "is a strengthened form of *Gnosis*, expressing a fuller or full knowledge, a greater participation by the knower in the object known, thus more powerfully influencing him." *Epignosis* is used 16 times in the **New** Testament, and is found four times in Peter's second epistle; three times in chapter 1, verses 2, 3 and 8.

Such knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, allied with the succession of the spiritual traits mentioned, is the hall-mark of those who are living in the heavenly joy and peace of the kingdom of God.

(Verse 10). We thought that, giving "diligence to **make** your calling and election sure," was relative to the kingdom of God. **We** are unable to **make** our calling and election to salvation more sure, this **was** entirely through **grace** and is perfect and complete.
L. A. White.

From London, S. E. —**We** participate in the divine nature, since **we** are new creatures **in** Christ Jesus. **Because** of this, **we** must manifest these great qualities, progressing in our faith unto "love," the motivating force. These attributes will **make** our lives abundantly fruitful. Contrasted with this, is the statement "he that lacketh these things is blind," resulting in a barren and idle life.

We, who were called from the world and elected to be His holy nation, must hold fast to the truth. Thus we shall not fall, but we shall enter with glory and honour His eternal kingdom. According to the fruitfulness of our lives, so shall be our entrance to be with Christ. Apparently there was among Peter's readers a certain tendency to ignore the Christian's moral responsibility, in view of the freedom which Christ has purchased with His blood for all believers. This same problem confronted Jude, and Peter must have had it in mind when exhorting his readers not to abuse their freedom (1 Peter 2. 16).

Peter's use of the figure of a tent for his body is in keeping with the transient nature of our lives, and reminds us of Hebrews 11. 8-10.

For the benefit of sceptics who exist to-day, as in Peter's time, Peter asserts that he himself has seen the divine majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus, as they were revealed on the mount of transfiguration. It is fitting that Peter, after exhortations to live and behave in a manner contrary to the fallen nature, should hold up the bright prospect of seeing our Redeemer face to face.

D. G. Evans, A. Reeve.

From **Edinburgh**. —It is stated that the second epistle of Peter was written about six years after the first epistle. The general subject of this epistle is a warning against false teachers who would cast doubt upon the coming again of the Lord.

Peter describes himself as a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, that One who had served, and had seen and had been sent forth by our Lord.

We have received eternal life and there has been granted to us all that pertains to life and godliness, and upon this depends the measure of grace and peace that we enjoy.

Having escaped from natural lusts, we are to become partakers of a divine nature. Let us " put on the new man . . . created in righteousness " (Ephesians 4. 24).

If we would produce fruit, then we must study the Scriptures to discover therein the beauties that are in our Lord and Saviour. A knowledge of the truth will strengthen our faith. If these enumerated virtues be in us we shall not be idle in His service; if not, we are spiritually blind, having forgotten that we have been delivered from the pit. Let us remember that every branch that beareth not fruit is cut down (John 15. 2).

Peter affirms that, while he is in the body, he will not allow his readers to forget those things. He intends so to impress them that after his decease they will remember, and look for the Master's return. This is assured by His glory which they beheld, and by the voice which they received from His lips. He further exhorts a study of the words of prophecy as a support until He comes again.

William Taylor.

From **Crowborough**. —God has called us to leave all that belonged to the old life, and fulfil what He has designed for us. We are prone to forget, and Peter realizes how necessary it is to be reminded of the truth concerning the Lord Jesus. It was no idle tale that they told of what they saw on the mount of transfiguration, and of the witness from the open heaven as to who this One was. Here God was declaring that in this One was being fulfilled what holy men had written so long ago under guidance of the Holy Spirit. To appreciate that in the Lord Jesus many wonderful prophecies had been fulfilled, is a wonderful incentive to look onward and forward to the day when many other things will be fulfilled in Him. It was not given that any one man should receive all the promises, and neither has God granted to any one **man** the wisdom to expound these things.

S. S.

COMMENTS.

[A] (Cowdenbeath). —The Greek word *Arete* (virtue) means goodness, good quality of any kind. The English word virtue is derived from the Latin, and signifies many excellences, of which boldness is one phase. —*J. M.*

[B] (Cowdenbeath). —Entrance into this eternal kingdom is a future experience for the believer., The contrast is between entrance and an entrance richly supplied or ministered abundantly. Some will enter about whom no particular notice is paid, but others will enter whose names the Lord Jesus will mention before His Father and before the angels of God. Here Peter shows how such an abundant entrance may be ours. —*J. M.*

[C] (Birmingham). —It is neither faith in God's grace which has eternal salvation in view, nor is it " the Faith " which was once for all delivered to the saints; but it is faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. —*J. M.*

[D] (Paisley and Barrhead). —But is not the exhortation that we are to give the more diligence to make our calling and election sure ? If these are sure how should we be called to make them sure ? —*J. M.*

[E] (Paisley and Barrhead). —The sun is not the day star. Venus is the day or morning star (also at some seasons of the year the evening star). Christ is the Morning Star (Revelation 22. 16) and the Sun of righteousness (Malachi 4. 2). In the coming of Christ for the Church, Christ the Morning Star rises, not in the sky, but in the hearts of His own, but in His coming as Son of Man to the earth He comes as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings for His people, but judgement on His enemies. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

From Melbourne: (1) 2 Peter 1. 4, the divine nature: Is this the new birth or something beyond ?

Answer. —Born again people are to become partakers of a divine nature. How ? By God's precious and exceeding great promises. This simply means that we live by faith. We hear God speak and believe and await the fulfilment of the promise, as Abraham did. The world lives by lust, by what it feels and sees, desiring this and desiring that, but in contrast, the just live by faith. —*J. M.*

(2) 2 Peter 1. 19: What is the meaning of—" and the day-star arise in your hearts " ?

Answer. —Day-star here should be Morning Star (Greek *Phosphoros*), which in the heavens is Venus. Venus, the morning star, rises in the sky, the harbinger of day, but in contrast to this, Christ, the Morning Star (Revelation 22. 16) shall arise in our hearts in His coming again, ushering in the eternal day for His saints, and in our hearts He shall never set. Then Christ shall come to earth, as the Sun of righteousness at the glorious beginning of the Millennial day. —*J. M.*

(3) Why such reference in the R. V. marg. to 2 Maccabees 7. 22; Ecclesiasticus 11. 8?

Answer. —These are references to verses in books of the apocrypha, Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, etc., books which are regarded by the Roman Catholic church to be canonical, but are rejected from the Canon of Scripture by Greek and protestant churches. Canon means law or rule, and applies to the books of the Holy Scriptures received as genuine by the early churches. The books of the apocrypha were not received by the early churches. It is this ruling and acceptance of the books of Scripture that has given guidance to those worthy men who have given their lives to the study of such matters. The Jewish people accept only these books as divinely given which are found in the Old Testament. Marginal reference to apocryphal books I regard to be a blemish in the compilation of these references in the R. V. —*J. M.*

From Cowdenbeath. —How can we make our calling and election sure ?

Answer. —Making our calling and election sure is the opposite of stumbling, mentioned in this same verse (10). " If ye do these things, " are the things indicated in—"in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge,... temperance, " etc. (verse 5. 7). —**J. M.**

From Paisley and Barrhead. —(1) What is meant by "private interpretation, " in verse 20 ?

Answer. —" Private " here is the word *Idios*, which means " one's own. " The reason given why this is so is, " For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. " If each man who wrote books of Scripture had written of his own will, there had been no connexion between what they wrote. But the Author of the Scriptures is God who by His Spirit caused man to write, consequently all parts of the Scriptures are interwoven into one complete volume, each part shedding light upon the other. There is nothing comparable to this in all the books of men. —**J. M.**

(2) What is the " like precious faith " ? Who obtained it ? Who are the " us " ?

Answer. —The books of 2 Peter and Jude are complementary, the one speaking of " faith, " the other of "the faith. " We may also say the same of 1 Peter and 2 Peter, the former being concerning " the true grace of God, " the latter of " like precious faith. " The true grace of God covers the whole area of Christian life, regeneration, obedience to the truth, the house of God, suffering, elderhood, on to the Lord's coming. Like precious faith is what all the redeemed obtain (by lot). This is not saving faith, as it is called, but faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. When Israel entered Canaan they obtained their portion of land by lot. There is nothing more just than land. If it is cultivated it will yield the life (*Bios*, life or the means of life, see 1 John 3. 17) of the world to the owner. So the Israelite who diligently cultivated his land had wherewith to give to God and to man. We have not obtained land by lot, but faith by lot. We believe in the righteousness of our Lord Jesus that the promises He made, for instance, that if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness *all things* will be added unto us. On this His promise we live by faith, and the just live by faith; though there be no herd, no flock, and nothing in vineyard or field (Habakkuk 3. 17-19). God has said, and shall He not do it? that He will neither fail nor forsake us (Hebrews 13. 5). Though we have been granted all that pertains to life and godliness, and also precious and great promises, we must add all diligence on our part, we must enrich our faith by the additions thereto of virtue, knowledge, etc. Saints, who have a rich faith in a good and just God, can never fail or stumble. —**J. M.**

From Atherton. —(1) What is the difference between " a like precious faith " and " the faith " ?

Answer. —See answer above to question (2) from Paisley and Barrhead. —**J. M.**

(2) What is meant by becoming " partakers of the divine nature. " ?

Answer. —See answer above to question (1) from Melbourne. —**J. M.**

(3) Please explain the balance of godliness and contentment in 1 Timothy 6. 6.

Answer. —Content **means** to be satisfied (Greek *Autarkeia*, a mind contented with its lot, from *Autos*, self, and *Arked*, to afford what is sufficient or enough). Godliness is piety, reverential awe. Note what follows in verses 7 and 8; the latter says, " But having food and covering we shall be therewith content " (*Arked*, satisfied, contented). —**J. M.**

(4) Is the fulfilment of 2 Peter 1. 17 set forth in Hebrews 2. 9?

Answer. —No. —**J. M.**

(5) What is the meaning of "until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts " ?

Answer. —See answer above to question (2) from Melbourne. —**J. M.**

BIBLE STUDIES

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, In that they received the word with til readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

OCTOBER, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	91
The Second Epistle of Peter: False Teaching.	92
Questions and A n s w e r s	97

EDITORIAL.

We tremble as we read this chapter, with its warnings and forebodings of disaster and doom. The dreadful condition as here depicted seems almost impossible to-day. But history has been repeating itself all through the ages, since the entrance of sin into the fair scene of Eden. Thus, towards the close of his sojourn on earth, the Apostle Peter was moved by the Holy Spirit to herald forth these warning notes, so that those in the churches of God might be helped and encouraged and comforted, even down to our day. His method is different from that employed in chapter 1., where the positive virtues of a godly life are encouraged. Here it is solemn warning against evil and a promise of assured victory. The battle between good and evil is still being waged to-day. One subtle source of danger is emphasised, the existence of false teachers among God's people. This is no new line of attack for the Adversary. There were false prophets amongst God's ancient people. These have their counterpart in false teachers, in Peter's day, and down through the history of the churches of God. It is well to be fore-warned against this subtle danger. Such " destructive heresies " are usually taught privily and insidiously. They may become popular, too, for " many shall follow their lascivious doings. " Let us cultivate the ability to differentiate between the True and the False, rejecting the latter and clinging to the former. The false teachers have not been commissioned by the Lord. They differ diametrically from the men of chapter 1. 21, who " spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. " Their message does not ring true, for they teach " destructive heresies " which culminate in " lascivious doings. " Evil doctrine always engenders loose living. How terribly this is stated in the latter portion of chapter 2! Stooping so low, they deny " even the Master that bought them. " Some deny His Deity, some ignore Him entirely, and many deprecate the value of His atoning work on Calvary's Cross. Thus " the way of the truth " is " evil spoken of. "

It is laid on our hearts to direct your attention to the encouragement of verse 9—" the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement. " This verse is the conclusion of an argument commenced in verse 4. It is calculated to stimulate and encourage, to cheer and console us amidst such sad circumstances. It emphasises that " God everywhere hath sway, " and that no condition, however

apparently adverse, can prosper against the people of God. Three solemn events in past history are given as examples of the sovereignty of God. The angels who sinned have been committed "to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement"; the ancient world, in Noah's day, perished under the waters of the flood; and ungodly sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah were condemned with an overthrow. Yes, our God is all mighty. There is no possibility of defeat with Him. Evil may raise its ugly head, being permitted by God. This is a great mystery. But evil, although permitted, is under strict control. How? In diverse ways. Even the powers that be are a terror to evil doers. God's judgement, however, is the most potent deterrent as shown clearly in the casting of the disobedient angels into hell, and in the destruction of the flood, and in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. Also in the history of Israel, pagan nations were used as a scourge to punish God's erring people. God always punishes sin, swiftly or ultimately. His righteousness and justice are absolute. From the human plane we may wonder at the apparent prosperity of the wicked. Asaph in Psalm 73, gives the true perspective to the prosperity of the wicked. Not "until" he "went into the sanctuary of God, and considered their latter end" did he learn the slippery places the wicked were in. Yes, the Lord knoweth how, that is, the Lord is able to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgement. Further, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." Let us get back again to the selected illustrations. God "preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness." And God "delivered righteous Lot" out of the cesspool of iniquity in Sodom. The Genesis account depicts two different types of men, in Noah and in Lot. Here we learn both were righteous. What stands out clearly is that God loved these men, and exercised His almighty power in their deliverance, amidst disaster to others. We must never lose heart or become discouraged, however black the day may be. We are more than conquerors through Him. *Jas. Martin.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

False Teaching.

(2 Peter 2.)

From Cowdenbeath. —Peter wrote with the knowledge that the putting off of his tabernacle was swiftly approaching, but he showed that his anxiety for the people of God was not confined to his own day. By revelation of the Spirit he foretold the rising up of false teachers who would introduce destructive heresies and immoral practices. The sinfulness of the actions of these men would cause the testimony to be dishonoured in the eyes of men. Such a course could not be pursued with impunity. These men would assuredly experience divine judgement. God revealed Himself in the past as a God of judgement. Peter proves this in his historical review; proves too that God knows how to deliver the godly. This knowledge would prove a comfort to godly ones who would live in the days of which Peter wrote.

Much of the character and practices of these men are revealed for us. Masters of the art of oratory, they made use of words of vanity and deceit, and exerted an influence over many. Moral laxity was prevalent, and those who prior to their conversion had lived in such an environment would fall ready victims to this pernicious teaching. Peter does not only tell us that they walked after the flesh, but shows that it was the grosser sins of the flesh that they indulged in. They were daring, self-willed, and railers; like those of whom David wrote—"Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalm 12. 4). These men were not unregenerate, but men that had been bought by the precious blood of Christ, and they still held their place in the assembly ("While they feast with you" (verse 13)). They were following in the way of Balaam. He loved the hire

of wrong-doing, but it was the actual wrong-doing itself that they loved. **Of** them it was said, they could not "cease from sin," the exact antithesis of what the believer's experience should be.

The believer **is** exhorted not to present his members unto sin. It **is** possible for him to disregard this exhortation and to be found committing sin of a worse nature than before his conversion. It was so **in** the case of these men becoming again entangled their latter state was worse than their first.

James K. D. Johnston,

From **Birmingham**.—The matters recorded in chapter 1. are the safeguard against the evil, which forms the theme of chapter 2., false teachers. The aged apostle Peter warns against these false teachers who would arise among them, privily bringing in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. There would be many that would follow their pernicious ways. History has justified the need for these exhortations. The disastrous outcome of false teaching and failure to carry out the Word of God resulted in the cessation of churches of God of early times. The brightness of the flame of testimony **is** dependent upon the degree of the adherence of the saints to the practising of the body of Truth. Hence Jude's words, "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." The danger existed then; and to-day the apostles' warnings are **as** vitally applicable. False teaching has ever been a source of trouble amongst the people of God. **We** see that the children of Israel were led away by false prophets, and caused to serve other gods. In the days of the Judges (Judges 2.) false gods surrounded them and became a snare unto them. Consequently false prophets rose from among them and led the people away. God dealt with His people for this waywardness and disobedience (Judges 2. II and 14). God, being righteous, must ever mete out punishment for wrong-doing (2 Peter 2. 4-6).

The child of God, **in** the Fellowship to-day, **is in** the place of God's choosing. Lot of old was **in** the place of his own choosing. Yet the "Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." In the midst of corruption Lot **is** described as righteous Lot. The Lord delivered him. Also the reference to the preservation of Noah, a "preacher of righteousness," shows that a righteous walk is essential **in** order that the child of God may avoid falling away from the place of God's choosing.

While the saint, fore-ordained to salvation, cannot be lost, yet he can, as to service, through carelessness, go back from God's will for him. **Of** such are they who are led away from their place by pernicious teachings, and are overcome by the pollutions of the world from which they had escaped. Better for these not to have known the way of righteousness—the truth of God—than, having known it, to turn from it. For shall they not be judged at the judgement seat of Christ on this fact?

False teachers wrought from within the Fellowship, not from without. They come **in** from without, as wolves destroying the flock.

K. Robertson, H. Smith.

From **Edinburgh**.—Peter warns his hearers that false teachers will arise amongst themselves; men who would teach according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit; men who for private reasons would preach heresy even

to denying the Lord who bought **them**. It is strange to **read** that many would follow their teaching and the way of truth should in consequence be evil spoken of. This behaviour **shall** not go unpunished. The old world **was** not spared, but Noah, **a** preacher of righteousness, and his sons and their wives were saved.

It is **a** dreadful thing **when** the **flesh** and the lusts thereof gain the mastery over any person. The **lust** for power, **and** pride, were found in that mighty being Satan, whose angels were cast down into hell, and kept in chains of darkness.

The men of Sodom desired that Lot would hand over the **messengers** in his house. They desired to work their ungodly **will** and give reign to their passions, but they were stricken with blindness.

When a person is born again he is **a new** creature, **and** the keystone of this new creation is love, love of God, love of Christ, **and** love of the brethren. If we are in the Spirit, our actions are done in love. If our actions are dictated **by** self-interest, **we** are acting **in** the flesh **and** under its power, **and we** do not know what the outcome will be. Let **us be** warned by what has gone before.

D, Meldrum.

From Kilmarnock. —The apostle has been **bringing** before the saints of the dispersion the **will** of God for them, **as** contained **in** the truth, but now, in chapter **2**, he forewarns them of **false** teachers who would **arise** among them, **even as false** prophets arose among God's people, Israel. This agrees with **Paul's** warning to the **elders** of Ephesus, which **we** get **in** Acts **20, 29, 30**: "from among your own selves shall **men arise**, speaking perverse things." **We** understand these **men** would be **in** and of the churches of God, but by giving up the truth, and bringing **in** "destructive heresies," they would **lead** the saints astray. "Denying even the Master that bought them," means that they were disowning the lordship of Christ. Satan, working through them, caused the way of the truth to be evil spoken of.

We thought of what **we** read **in** chapter **2**, of Revelation regarding the condition of the seven churches of Asia. According to Mr. Newberry's dates, the Revelation given to the apostle John **was** written about **24** years after Peter's epistle. It would appear from the condition of some of these churches that what Peter by the Holy Spirit had foreseen, had actually come to pass. Some held and taught **false** doctrine and we know from **2** Timothy **2**, 17 that, in the church **in** Ephesus, Hymenaeus and Philetus affirmed that the resurrection "**is** past already," overthrowing the faith of some. **As** the judgement of God **fell** upon the **false** prophets and evil doers **in** the past, so would it **fall** on the false teachers **in** the churches, although no doubt **in a** different form.

How thankful we should be **if** we have learned the truth! **We** should seek that our manner of life is in keeping with our position. **A. G. S.**

EXTRACTS.

From Melbourne. —By our own behaviour the world will judge **Him** whom **we** represent. The behaviour of these **false** teachers drew the crowd, who followed their lascivious doings. No wonder the way of the truth **was** evil spoken of. Our God **is a** jealous God, and of old **He** brought swift destruction on **angels** that

sinned, and on the ancient world, except eight souls, and on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, except four souls. False teachers are covetous **men** who wreak havoc among the flock of God and scatter the sheep. To-day, under grace, the judgement of God **is** held back, whereas under law, the judgement **was** swift. This **is** exemplified in the Lord's gracious dealing with the sinning **woman** of John 8.

Lot had no testimony in the cities of the plain. **He** had an eye for material things (Genesis 13. 11). **We** might not have counted him as "righteous" but for 2 Peter 2. 7. If we want an example of a believer who becomes entangled **in** the defilements of the world and overcome, whose last state **is** become worse with them than the first, of whom it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back, we **see** it **in** Lot. **His** wife was preserved from the inferno though afterwards turned into salt. Paul feared to be a castaway; like righteous Lot, saved, yet so as by fire; but **he** gained the victory and the crown of righteousness. *S. Stoope.*

From Willington Quay. —One of the greatest dangers affecting any movement **is** that of disruption from within. Opposition from **an** external force usually engenders a **sense** of unity and determination, but internal dissention can only produce disastrous results.

Having obtained entry into the assembly, these false teachers are able to do their deadly work, and it **is** significant that Paul also warned the elders of Ephesus concerning this danger (Acts 20. 30). The only safeguard must surely be the exercise of great care on the part of those responsible for the reception of a believer into a church of God.

Peter reminds us of those in a past day who came under the judgement of God, and of the deliverance of the righteous, as **in** the case of Lot. The **One** whose judgements are righteous and true shall deal with those who seek, by their insidious doctrines, to divert the feet of **His** people.

We take it that verses 10-19 describe the character and work of the false teachers. The words used to describe the depth of human depravity to which these **men** have sunk are perhaps startling, **but** the fact that they had known the way of righteousness, and had had the holy commandment delivered unto them, would convince us that they were regenerated persons. *K. R.*

From Atherton. —Some may think that false teaching will not easily find a way into the assemblies of God, and that the community **is** proof **against** such things. History has so often repeated itself, and **time** after time, **in** spite of many solemn warnings, such tragic features and their destructive consequences have been **seen in** all the dispensations. The possibility of leaders becoming tools, for the adversary's use, **is** a real menace and a powerful agency **against** "the truth"; so that leaders especially **must** be entirely dependent upon the strength that comes from abiding **in** Christ, and abiding **in His** word (2 Timothy 3. 14-17). By way of contrast, we have the example of the great apostle Paul, who preached the faith of which he once made havoc, but these make havoc of **the** things and doctrine that they once believed.

The interpretation of the latter part of verse 3, appears to come under the category of God's foreknowledge. The judgement **is** compatible with the enormity of their sin, which **is** an example of deliberate rebellion against revealed light.

The Holy Spirit makes a clear and remarkable selection of examples for our guidance and admonition, and to serve **as a** warning to all false teachers and their adherents: —(1) God's judgement of angels, (2) God's judgement of the ancient world, (3) God's judgement of the cities of the plain, and (4) God's judgement of Balaam.

The first of these judgements gave rise to the consideration as to whether angels now in God's presence can or might possibly sin again. It was thought that Satan and those that fell with him having been cast down, **were** the only ones who would not keep their high estate and hence no others remain to rebel against the authority of God. No scripture or prophecy **seems** to contemplate such another occurrence. (Verse 10) The question of the walk of individuals is under consideration here, and these are men of presumption and of fearful railing character, full of carnalities, and self-willed. The dignities appear to be authorities and powers, to which the disciple **is** bidden to be subject such as kings, princes and governors. Verse 14 reveals the state to which these men have fallen, **as** creatures without reason, though professing to have greater light than other **men**, they act with as little reason as the brute creation. The latter clause of verse **17** presented a little difficulty in connexion with this judgement. To understand this declaration we need to consider the context "forsaking the right way, they went astray" (verse 15), and the omission of the words "for ever" in the Revised Version.

D. H. Butler, J. Bullock.

From London. —Peter would warn them that, **as in** the past, false prophets had arisen among the people, so now false teachers would arise, and would lead many astray, bringing **in** destructive heresies.

Through Jeremiah, the Lord said: "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied" (Jeremiah **23**, 21). Already, in Corinth, there were signs of this depravity, for Paul spoke of them **as**: "False apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light."

The word "heresy" **is** sometimes translated in the New Testament as "sect." Just how successful these false teachers have been in causing division **is** evident in the many sects existing to-day. Many deny even the Master who bought them, and the lordship of Christ, whilst God's holiness and the sinfulness of sin and redemption by the blood, are not mentioned in their doctrine. God's judgement would surely fall upon such men, and to prove this, Peter uses Old Testament illustrations.

Verse 9. Over against judgement upon sinful man we **see** God's saving power to them who trust **Him**. The false teachers and the depravity to which they had fallen are described from verse 10 to the end of the chapter. They promise liberty to those who will follow them, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption.

E. C. Leamy.

From Crowborough. —God desires that **His** people shall follow hard after Him, forsaking not **His** commandments, nor heeding the instructions of those that are evil. For God cannot overlook the sins of men, and **He** will and does punish those of the world who walk wickedly. But the saint of God takes courage and **gains** consolation in verse 9, for we realize that God fully understands our difficulties and temptations and **He** alone can deliver **His** own from temptation. Peter goes on to show us the stirring examples of how God, **a** just and righteous God, kept **His** beloved ones (see verse **5** how Noah was preserved, and verse **7** how Lot was delivered). So we can in times of difficulty look to God for his keeping power.

We noticed in our study how that these wicked men were enticing "unstedfast souls" (verse 14), and those "just escaping from them that live in error" (verse 18). We should be exhorted to take heed lest our lives be like these, and lest our feet should wander far from where the Master would have us walk. It is only as we keep close to him, that we shall realize the emptiness of this sinful world.

E. Swift.

From Barrhead **and** Paisley. —Of the apostolic writers, * Peter and Paul seem to give most expression to the fear within them of the inevitable appearance of false teachers in the assemblies of God. Repeated warnings to beware of such are given together with descriptions of their activities and the close similarity of the chapter under study to Jude would seem to corroborate, if such corroboration were necessary, that the Holy Spirit gave these warnings.

The whole of the second chapter is taken up with these false teachers and loose livers, and the question of their identity arises. Were they regenerate men or otherwise? This seems to be important. If we admit that unregenerate men could come in to an assembly of God then it is possible that these false teachers were such. A false confession of faith, plus a feigned subjection to the lordship of Christ, would initially deceive brethren until perhaps a position of confidence or trust had been attained, and then the true character would be revealed.

There are two verses in the chapter which evidently do not apply to the same class of people, and there are two classes of people also in the chapter. The people are the false deceivers and their dupes, and the verses are 17 and 21. Verse 17 speaks of the punishment reserved for certain beings, the blackness of darkness. If this applies to the false teachers, then surely they are unregenerate men, because under no circumstances could heaven be so described. If it does not apply, and it may be that the verse is self contained, to whom does it apply?

It was suggested that verse 21 applied to the dupes of the false teachers who were genuine believers, but had become enmeshed in the net of error, but how could it be stated that it were "better if they had not known the way"? (We would value help on these matters.)

J. Gault.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

From **Kilmarnock**. —Were the false teachers, described by Peter, true believers?

Answer. —Some have tried to explain the words "the Master that bought them" in the sense that the field was bought for the treasure that was in it (Matthew 13. 44), but this in no sense teaches that all men have been bought by the Lord, as 1 Corinthians 6. 20 and other scriptures show that the redeemed have been bought. These false teachers had been bought by the Lord, as all saved people have, but they denied their Master (*despotes*, absolute Lord and Master) in that they taught destructive heresies. —*J. M.*

From Melbourne. —(1) Is Tartarus a special place reserved for angels who sinned? Is it distinct from Sheol or Hades?

Answer. —(1) The word Tartarus is only used here, in 2 Peter 2. 4, and it is difficult to state with exactness what is meant. "Pits" or "dens of darkness" seem to be the equivalent of Tartarus. It is a place utterly remote from the light of God's countenance and presence. It is a gulf where the blackness of

darkness **reigns**. In Hades there is a **gulf** fixed dividing between those **in** comfort and those **in** misery, but Tartarus is altogether a place of horror. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to say whether Tartarus is the abyss or bottomless pit of Revelation 20. 1, etc. —J. M.

(2) Concerning Revelation 2. 23: Are these Jezebel's natural children? If not, who are they?

Answer. —(2) If Jezebel **was** a woman, and the passage calls her " the woman Jezebel, " I cannot conceive what kind of children she had other than naturally born children. —J. M.

From Crowborough. —(1) 2 Peter 2. 4: **We** read of angels cast down to hell, and committed to pits of darkness. How is it that Satan and his hosts of wickedness are abroad to-day?

Answer. —(1) Hell in this verse is Tartarus not Hades. It largely depends on what is the meaning of Tartarus. If these angels are the angels of the devil, then the passage presents great difficulty in the light of what is said regarding the devil and his angels in Revelation 12. 7-12. It is evident that the Bible does not tell **us** everything about such matters, and we should be careful about filling in the blanks, **as** John Milton has tried to do in **his** " Paradise Lost. "—J. M.

(2) According to the text, the words, " for whom the blackness of **darkness** hath been reserved, " would appear to apply to saved people. How **can we** understand this?

Answer (2). —It **seems** clear that **men** got into the Fellowship in the later days of the apostles who were what Paul describes **as** wolves (Acts 20. 29), **men** such **as** Judas **was**, who **was** one of **the** twelve apostles. Jude speaks of **such** men being ungodly men (verse 4), men who should not **have** been inside, but who crept **in** privily or unawares, and when they got inside, they quickly commenced to act according to their unregenerated nature and to work havoc in the flock. It was for such men, I judge, that the blackness of darkness is reserved. They had a knowledge of what was right, but they taught men their evil way, going in the way of Cain, in the error of Balaam, and finally perishing in the gainsaying of Korah. —J. M.

From Cowdenbeath. —(1) Who are **the** dignities in **verse 10**?

Answer. —(1) The original word for dignities is glories, and presumably **means** angelic beings, and probably fallen angelic **beings**. Compare verses 10 and 11 with Jude 8 and 9. —J. M.

(2) **As** these **are** born **again** persons, how are we to understand the statement —" for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved " (verse 17)?

Answer. —(2) **See answer** to question (2) from Crowborough. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

NOVEMBER, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	99
The Second Epistle of Peter:	
The coming judgement	100
C o m m e n t s	104
Questions and Answers	105

EDITORIAL.

Growth is a distinctive vital process, characteristic of all **living** things. It contains in it the fact of life, and as applied to those here addressed, **the** new birth and the partaking of the divine nature. Apart from receiving **life**, there is no growth. This may seem elementary to our fellow-students, but it **is** a most apparent error in Christendom, today, that **men** are trying to add so-called Christian qualities to those dead through trespasses and sins. But where there **has** been the imparting of life there is the possibility of growth. Growth **is** a gradual steady process. In his first letter, Peter had indicated the food for newborn babes, namely, spiritual milk. But there must come a time, **as** there did with regard to the saints in Corinth, when **Paul** deplored that **because** they were carnal he could not pass on to " meat " **as** their diet (1 Corinthians 3, 1-9). The word of God should be our food and drink. It contains nourishment for young and old, but the expectation of God in His children is that they may grow. Some of **the** Hebrew saints seemed to become stunted in growth, resulting in their being dull of hearing, and thus remaining in a state of need of milk and not of solid food. (Hebrews 5. 11-14).

' Children characteristically are " ignorant and unsteadfast " and are easily carried away. To militate against this possible falling from steadfastness, the apostle enjoins growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. This calls for meditation, prayer, communion, selective reading and care as to what we hear. It also involves exercise in His service " for the perfecting of the saints, unto **the** work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ: till **we** all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that **we** may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine,... b u t . . . may grow up in **all** things into Him, which is the Head, even Christ... " (Ephesians 4. 12-16). There must be no complacent self-satisfaction. If I **am** growing thus, I'll desire the world **less** and **less**, and hate sin more and more. Perhaps the best test of growth is, Do I love Him more, and do I **seek** His glory, and not my own ? Are my aspirations **as Paul's**, that God may reveal His Son in **me** ? This involves being " crucified with Christ... and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in **me** " (Galatians 2. 20, R. V. M.).

There is a great need for men of this calibre, to lead God's people, men disinterested in the things of this life, but with a noble view of the life required in a close follower of the Lord Jesus and in a humble leader of His saints.

Jas. Martin.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

The Coming Judgement.

(2 Peter 3.).

From London, S. E.—This chapter is devoted to the correction of errors,

As darkness is only banished by light, so error can only be avoided by the constant recourse to the truth. Accordingly, Peter throws back those to whom he wrote on the Scriptures, " Words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles. " Thus the Old and New Testaments are divinely linked together as they are in verse 16, " his epistles... also the other scriptures. " The word of prophecy is as a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn. There are those who would try to cover their own disobedience by scoffing at the long delay in the appearing of their Judge, but Peter's object was to rekindle hope in the promised appearing of the Lord and to exhort to noble living in preparation for that day of certainty.

The heavens and the earth had their origin by the word of God, by the direct intervention of creative power. " God said "—this was the true cause and their first beginning. The earth was " compacted out of water and amidst water, " or " standing in the water and out of the water. " Out of the water on which the Holy Spirit brooded (Genesis 1. 2) the earth was compacted by the word of God: amidst the waters which were under and above the " atmosphere " respectively, the earth stood, in response to the commanding saying of Elohim. When all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened in the days of Noah, the race of men was deluged with water and perished.

But the future judgement of the heavens and the earth is not one of water, but of fire. And this by the command of the same God—" by the same word " ! Early in his first epistle Peter speaks with joy of the Christian's inheritance " *reserved* in heaven for you. " Late in his second epistle he speaks with gravity of " the earth... *reserved* against the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men. " This world is as a wrecked vessel, doomed to destruction. The Christian's stimulation is not to save the world from its inevitable destruction, but to work with **all** his might that he may save some (1 Corinthians 9. 22). Our aim is to be without spot and blameless in His sight, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Peter argues here for simple reliance on the Almighty God to fulfil His promises. Whether the time is long or short, He is always punctual and prompt. The Apostle does not say that with the Lord one day is a 1, 000 years, but that " one day is with the Lord *as* a 1, 000 years, and a 1, 000 years *as* one day. " This has been referred to as " the dial of the ages, " and it differs fundamentally from the horology of time. God has a different standard of time from men; He is not dilatory, but He is very reluctant to punish. This world has murdered the Son of God and is guilty of His blood. This insult to His matchless love and grace, the Father bears with great forbearance. He patiently stays the day of vengeance, being long-suffering and not willing that any should perish.

Still, the day of the Lord will come. This day is often the subject of prophecy; its scene is earth and it affects the people on the earth. Its arrival will be startlingly sudden. Peter does not suggest that those to whom he was writing would live to see this consummation of dissolution, but they were to look for and hasten " the presence of the day of God. "

A comparison of " the day of the Lord " of verse 10 and " the day of God " of verse 12 is interesting. The former is bound up with judgement; the latter is a day to be looked for and longed for. With the great dissolution, earth's story seems to be concluded and we are brought to the margin of eternity. With the new heavens and the new earth, God's eternal purpose is come to pass. The day of the Lord seems merged into the day of God.

It is no wonder that the apostle dispenses with the usual salutations and benedictions, and finishes his letter with that wonderful phrase " for ever. " The Greek margin has " unto the day of eternity "; one has translated it as " all eternity **as** one day. "

F.

L.

E.

From Atherton.—In the words of **the Lord** to His apostles, He **makes** mention **and** gives promise of His coming in two **aspects**, or stages. **Such** scriptures as John 14. would refer undoubtedly to the rapture, whilst Matthew 24., etc., takes us onward to the day of the Lord.

References to "the fathers," "the day of **the Lord**" and "the day of God" led some to think that only **the** second aspect is contemplated here; **whereas the** challenge of the mockers against **the** glorious hope of the Lord's coming for His saints, led others to think **that** both stages were envisaged. It is to Paul's writings that **we** must go for the fuller enlightenment of the former **aspect**. **We** suggest that the reference of verse **2** is to **the** prophets of the old economy. Note the order "holy prophets," and "your apostles." When **New** Testament prophets are under consideration the order is reversed. (See 1 Corinthians 12. **28**; Ephesians 2. 20).

"The longsuffering to you-ward" (verse 9) **seems** to be a direct reference to the Jewish race, in that it enabled the Jewish disciples to reach out to their brethren in the flesh. (Compare Romans 10. 1 and 9. 3-5). Some thought that verse **9** was of more general application, to Jew and Gentile alike [1].

"The day of Christ" (Philippians 1. 10) refers to the rapture, including the judgement seat of Christ. "The day of the Lord" will commence **at** His coming to earth, and will extend to the dissolution of the heavens and earth. "The **day** of God" is the final and blessed condition of verse 13—"new heavens and a new earth, **wherein** dwelleth righteousness" (1 Corinthians 15. 24-28) [2], This differs from "the great day of God, the Almighty" (Revelation 16. **14**), which has to do with pre-millennial activities.

The R. V. M. of verse **12** was considered with the possibility of our "hastening the coming of the day of God." "*Spendo*" in verse **12** means "to urge on, hasten, quicken, or to forward a thing"; also it means "to seek eagerly, or earnestly desire" [3]. **We** felt it difficult to dogmatize, but we could readily **see** that the effect of indifferent, apathetic service in the gospel might defer the ingathering into the Church which is His Body. Conversely, zealous, selfless efforts, inflamed with love to Christ, could produce fruit to His glory, and hasten the day when the last member will be added [4].

G. A. J., E. B.

Kingston-on-Thames.—Verse **1** shows **us** that this epistle, written by Peter, was addressed to the **same** people **as** his first epistle.

The word "perished" in verse **6** refers to the state of ruin which the world **suffered** at the flood, and it was thought that the word "perish" in verse **9** implies a lost life for some saints. The "longsuffering" is towards the saints, primarily, the Lord delaying the day of judgement so that saints may heed his call to repentance [5], The call to the church in Ephesus to repent was noted in this connexion (Revelation 2. 5).

The phrases, "the day of Christ" (Philippians 1. **10** and 2. 16), "the **day** of **Jesus** Christ" (Philippians 1. 6), "the day of the Lord **Jesus**" (2 Corinthians 1. **14**) and "the day of our Lord **Jesus** Christ" (1 Corinthians 1. 8), were thought to refer to the judgement-seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5. **10** and Romans 14. 10), which will be preceded by the coming of the Lord to the air (1 Thessalonians 4. **16**, 17) [6].

The phrase "the day of the Lord" appears both in the Old and **New** Testaments, and in all these it is a time of judgement, either to the enemies of Israel, or to the people of Israel themselves for disobedience **as** in Isaiah 2. **12** and Amos 5. **18**, and in its final application to the time of the coming to earth of the Son of Man (Joel 2. 31, Matthew 24. 29, Luke 21. **25**, 26, 2 Thessalonians 2. 2-8).

Verse **10** indicates that the "day of the Lord" [7] also embraces the time when the earth is burnt up. **We** wondered whether the millennium, being the intervening period between the coming of the Son of man and the final destruction

of the earth, would be included in the " day of the Lord. " A comparison of Revelation **20**. 11 with verse 10 suggests that the great white throne will be the culmination of the day of the Lord.

⁴⁴ The day of God " (verse 12) was thought to relate to the new heaven and new earth (Revelation **21**. 1, Isaiah 65. 17, and 2 Peter 3. 18) which follow the passing away of the first heaven and first earth (Revelation **20**. 11; **21**. 1). The day of God comes " by reason " of the dissolving of the earth and heaven, and not during this period, the implication being that the day of God could not come until the first earth and heaven, tainted with sin, had been subjected to God's judgement. 1 Corinthians 15. 24-28 was thought to relate to the day of God. It is here stated that the last enemy to be abolished is death, and an Revelation **20**. **14** we see death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, preceding the new heaven and the new earth. We suggest that the day of God commences when Christ delivers the kingdom to God.

Frank E. Jarvis,

EXTRACTS,

From Paisley and Barrhead. —Some thought that the mockers of verses 3—7 were within the Fellowship of that day, otherwise they could provide no practical menace to the Testimony; while others thought they were outside the Fellowship, and that Peter was giving a description of the last days (cp. 2 Timothy 3. 1). While we know from John I. 3 that **all** things were made by Him it was generally agreed that in verse 5 the ⁴⁴ word of God " is the spoken word.

The latter part of verse 9 was thought to refer to the salvation of the life of the mockers, within the Fellowship. Others thought that the possibility of "perishing*" ruled that thought out [8]. According to verse 10, the day of the Lord, coming as a thief, indicates suddenness and unpleasantness. Other scriptures, such as Joel 1. 15; 2. 1-2, show it to be a day of judgement. The day of God, however, is to be looked for and earnestly desired. Is not this the day of eternity ?

In concluding his second epistle, Peter, fully aware of the sin and wickedness which would creep into the churches of God, gives the saints a final exhortation to " grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "

W. Terrell, Jun.

From Willington Quay. —To Peter was given the commandment " Feed My sheep, " and in true affection he writes these two epistles.

It is clear that their pathway was not divorced from hardship and they were called upon to suffer much trial and mocking, but throughout it all they were to set their eyes on the inevitability of God's purposes.

There is great comfort to be found in this chapter. Often the word "**but**" is used, and has especial importance in verses 7, 10, 13, and 18. Even in the early days of the church the saints looked expectantly for the Lord's coming; the days were to them " last days, " but for ourselves this is even more true.

With regard to the dissolving of the elements, mentioned in verse 10, some thought that the elements, changed as to *form* by the action of the fire of God's judgement, would be *used* in the forming of the new heavens and a new earth, but others held that everything relating to this present creation would be completely annihilated.

It is interesting to note the different *4 days " alluded to. In verse 4 the day of creation, verse 7, the day of judgement, verse 8, our day in time, verse 10, the day of the Lord, verse 12, the day of God, verse 18, the day of eternity (R. V. M.).

as.

From Crowborough. —An important word in this chapter is "Remembrance." One of the great failings of human nature is forgetfulness. Many have a knowledge of the truths contained in God's Word, but often need to be reminded of them, that the outcome may result in the manifestation of practical holiness in their lives.

God's longsuffering is towards all men, believers and unbelievers, towards the latter because He is not willing that any should perish; also He longs that His children may measure all life's values by that coming day [9],

"* Grow " in the last verse sums up, in one word, all the teaching of Peter's two epistles. *' Forever" or "unto the day of eternity" (R. V. M.) is the goal of hope in both epistles, for we are reminded that it is our portion to look forward to the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. *D. N. B.*

From Cowdenbeath. —The word of God is very prominently brought before us here. As there were men in Noah's day, so also in the days of Peter were men who mocked at the word of God. Peter realized that the only thing which would enable the saints to stand against these mockers was the word of God. Therefore he brings before them again the words spoken by the prophets, and the commandment of the Lord, as spoken by the apostles, thus bringing before saints the word of God in the Old and New Testaments. We remember how Satan retired defeated before the Lord, as in answer to his temptations, He replied, " It is written. "

Peter emphasizes that the same word which in the beginning brought forth the world out of water, and which later destroyed the world by water, has stored up the earth for fire in that coming day of judgement. God has mercifully withheld that day. But His longsuffering will come to an end; the coming judgement will assuredly fall upon the earth, as God has promised.

In view of this fact the apostle asks, " What manner of persons ought ye to be ?" Therefore those who have been redeemed ought to make it manifest by their manner of life that they desire a better country, that is a heavenly.

Peter also exhorts then to lay hold of a greater knowledge of God's word, and especially to seek to be more like our Lord and Saviour, who was the perfect example. As we grow in His grace and knowledge, we will be the better fitted to repel every attempt to disturb that peace of mind and heart which is the believer's.

David McLelland.

From Kilmarnock. —In this chapter Peter forewarns the saints of the condition that would arise in the world " in the last of the days " (R. V. M.). We have this condition foretold in Daniel's prophecy, chapters 11. and 12., also by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24. and in 2 Timothy 3. The mockers that would arise question the coming of the Lord, and say " that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. "

While we know from other scriptures that the Lord Jesus may come at any moment for His saints (1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18; 1 Corinthians 15. 51-57), we understand there are signs that will take place before the " day of the Lord " arrives. We think this will be a lengthened period including the Great Tribulation and the millennial reign of Christ, at the end of which the heavens and the earth shall be destroyed by fire. (See Revelation 20. 7-9). Therefore we should live holy and godly lives, looking forward to the " new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "

Although we may know these things we need to beware lest we be carried away with the error of the wicked, but by feeding on the Word we shall " grow in the grace **and** knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. " A. G. S.

From Melbourne. —Peter, the true shepherd that he was, sought to stir up the minds of God's elect that they might remember the scriptures, as spoken through the holy prophets, and the commandment of their risen Lord and Saviour through their apostles. We are apt to forget all too easily the things of God if our minds are not centred on Christ, of Whom the holy prophets spake.

Peter, by the Spirit, draws aside the curtain of time and gives us an astounding glimpse into the future, and the righteous execution of God's somewhat strange work—judgement. This kaleidoscopic view of the future takes in the closing days of this age, this day of grace, when mockers shall come with mockery, then the pre-millennial period, when the day of the Lord will come as a thief, later the millennium, under the rule of Christ, the Prince of peace, when man shall live under the finest and happiest conditions, and wars will cease, and finally the destruction of the heavens that now are, and the earth, by fire. These are among the things that John was shewn on the isle of Patmos. He saw a Great White Throne, and before this throne stood the dead to be judged by the Son of man (John 5. 22; Revelation 20. 11, 12). The day of the Lord begins when He that is called Faithful and True emerges from the opened heaven, whose Name is called The Word of God, to judge and smite the nations. This day continues and merges right into the day of God, that long-looked-for day when the heavens, which are not clean in His sight (Job 15. 15), shall be dissolved and new heavens and a new earth shall appear, untainted by sin. Armed with the knowledge of these things we are fortified against being carried away with the error of the wicked, against falling from our own steadfastness. "Beloved" is an excellent word used in verses 14 and 17, by which to address the saints in ministry. Truly the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is inexhaustible, but we *can* grow in it.

5. *Stoope.*

From **Edinburgh**. —Peter's second epistle was written about six years after the first [?], and is of a more general character.

Peter has one main object, to "stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance". Purity must be maintained, in thought and word and deed, if we are to live up to our high calling. What better medium, then, can be used than recalling the words of the prophets and the commandment of the apostles of our Lord and Saviour?

Time, as we understand it, has no such limitations to the Creator, God, to whom "a thousand years are as one day." It is not slackness, but longsuffering mercy that permits the world to continue till the appointed day. It is the great love of John 3. 16 that seeks and waits for repentance of man. But that day shall come, suddenly and unexpectedly. Seeing, therefore, we are assured of those things, let us hold fast our faith, keep bright our hope, and consider carefully our walk. It is our opportunity to prove that the long-suffering of God is man's salvation.

W. Muirhead,

COMMENTS.

[1] (Atherton). "To youward" refers to those who are addressed in chapter 1. 1, who had obtained a like precious faith, "not to the Jewish race. J. M.

[2] (Atherton). It seems to me that "the day of God" begins where "the day of the Lord" ends. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief; *in the which* the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3. 10). Then of the day of God we read, "Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming (*Parousia*) of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent. But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth" (verse 18).

Some talk and **write** of the *Parousia* as though the word referred only to **the** coming of the Lord for **the** Church, but there is also the *Parousia* of the Son of Man (Matthew 24. 39, etc.), and also, **as** above, **we** have the *Parousia* of the **day** of God. *Parousia* signifies presence or arrival. J. M.

[3] (Atherton). Literally *Spendo*, rendered "hasting unto" (A. V.), and "earnestly desiring" (R. V.), and "hastening" (in some other translations), means "to pour out" as a drink offering or libation. It does not **seem** to **me** that **we** can hasten, that is, lessen the time between now and then in any sense in regard to a day which is in the hand of God; **but** **we** can eagerly desire it, and pour out our longing for that eternal day of joy and rest. I would think that the R. V. has **well** enough expressed the thought here. J. M.

[4] (Atherton). The coming of the day of God should not be confused with the Lord's coming for the Church. J. M.

[5] (Kingston). There is a beautiful balance in this verse. It does not imply that the Lord is delaying His coming. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, **as** some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (verse 9). Peter again says in verse 15, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." The Lord will not hasten His coming to meet the murmuring of the impatient, who questioned, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (verse 4), and the **fact** that **He** has not come as soon as the impatient would apparently have wished, is that such might have opportunity to repent and so know that salvation which is proper to saints. J. M.

[6] (Kingston). I judge that the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5. 5; 2 Corinthians 1. 14) is the present day, not the day of Christ. J. M.

[7] (Kingston). The day of the Lord continues for over **1, 000** years until the Great White Throne judgement; **see** note [2] (Atherton). Yes, the Millennium is included in it. J. M.

[8] (Paisley and Barrhead). The word "destroy," in Romans 14. 15 is the same word **as** is rendered "perish" in 2 Peter 3. 9. Perish here applies to saints not sinners. J. M.

[9] (Crowborough). Perishing here does not refer to sinners, but saints. J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from London, S. E. —(1) Does the day of the Lord commence with the coming of the Son of Man and end with the setting up of the eternal kingdom?

(2) In a few references in this chapter (2 Peter 3.), the heavens are spoken of as plural and the earth **as** singular. Are the two heavens—the terrestrial heaven (associated with this earth), and that which is often called "the starry heaven" (including the whole solar system)? Revelation 21. speaks of the first heaven (singular) having passed away, and also of "a new heaven" (also singular).

(3) 2 Peter 3. 10 presents some difficulty: the passing of the earth and the heavens seems to be connected with the coming of the day of the Lord, and takes no account of the intervening period of the millennial reign. Why is this?

Answers. —(1) See note [2] (Atherton). The day of the Lord appears to end in the destruction of the earth, its works and its elements (Liddell & Scott describe the elements, *Stoicheia*, **as** "the first and simplest component parts"), and that time sees the coming of "the day of God," which, I judge, to **be** that time indicated in 1 Corinthians 15. 24-28, when God shall **be** "all in all." The present emergency, when all things (the Godhead **excepted**) have been committed to the

Son, will come to an **end** at the time of the Great White Throne, and then the Son shall hand back the kingdom to God the Father, and the ages shall run on in peace and happiness which have been grievously troubled by the entrance of sin. J. M.

(2) There are evidently three heavens (2 Corinthians 12. 2); the third heaven is the same as Paradise (verse 4), which I take to be that heaven which was prior to the creation of the heaven in association with the earth in Genesis 1. 1, which in turn is evidently different from the firmament, which God made on the second day of Genesis 1 (verses 6, 7). So that I presume Paul counts the heavens upward, (1) the firmament, (2) the heaven of Genesis 1. 1, and the third heaven, " heaven itself " into which the Lord entered (Hebrews 9. 24). Evidently scripture in some places calls the heaven of the stars " the heavens, " as we do, as in Psalm 19. 1. Here " the heavens " and " the firmament " are one and the same. I would with my present light not care to say which heaven is meant by the first heaven, in Revelation 21. 13, whether this is the firmament or the heaven of Genesis 1. 1, or both. J. M.

(3) The day of the Lord begins with the Lord's descent to earth in judgement and continues throughout the millennial reign to the time of the Great White Throne judgement (Revelation 20.). J. M.

From Paisley and Barrhead. —Revelation 1. 10. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Why is the first day of the week called the Lord's day, based as it would seem on this verse? Is it not possible that John was carried forward in the Spirit to the Day of the Lord?

Answer. —The word in Revelation 1. 10 is not Lord's (possessive case), but " lordly, " an adjective describing the day. The same word is used to describe the feast, in 1 Corinthians 11. 20—" the lordly supper. " Yes, the first day of the week, called the Lord's day, is so called from this verse. It is not " I was in the Spirit of the day of the Lord. " It is not " the day of the Lord " at all. J. M.

From Atherton. —Is there any scripture to indicate that the date of the coming of the Lord into the air is rigidly fixed? Are the subsequent days of the Lord and of God dependent upon its flexibility?

Answer. —None that I know of. No one can answer such a question now. Wait and see. J. M.

From Cowdenbeath. —2 Peter 3. 7: Why have the revisers preferred the textual words " stored up for fire " in preference to the marginal reading " stored up with fire " ?

Answer. —The Greek texts of Stephens, Scholtz and that edited by Scrivener put the comma before *Puri*, the word for fire, but the Revisers thought that the comma should be after *Puri*. Following the former readings the passage should read, according to some translators, that the heavens and the earth " are treasured up (or laid up in store), for fire being kept (or kept for fire). " According to the revised punctuation, " stored up for fire " would be the correct rendering. J. M.

NOTICE

Papers should be forwarded in future to:

Mr. John Baird, 4, Craigentiny Crescent, Edinburgh.

Other correspondence should be sent to Mr. Martin.

BIBLE STUDIES

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received th* word with all readiness of mind, examining th* Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11.)

VOLUME 19.

DECEMBER, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial107
The Second Epistle of Peter:	
The coming j u d g e m e n t	108
The Epistle of Jude:	
Contending for the Faith.108
C o m m e n t s	115
Questions and Answers.116
Notice.116

EDITORIAL.

It is a common saying that history repeats itself. Apart from the **great** interest derived from reading what our natural and spiritual forebears said and did, one important lesson evolves from the study of history, namely, how **we** ought to comport ourselves in the **set** of circumstances in which our lot is **cast**. We can **take** in the picture of the **past** in **better** perspective, in that **we** are removed **by** many **decades** or even centuries from their time, and can note their errors and failures, and find instruction from the ensuing results.

Thus **Jude** endeavours **by** illustrations from the apostasy of men and of angels to **stem** the inflowing tide of impurities, in his **day**. **Jude**, self-described as a " bondservant of **Jesus** Christ, and brother of **James**, " **was** well-read in Old Testament history, and, in his general epistle, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, he aptly **uses** his knowledge. Here is a lesson for **us** students, for so many to-day are deprecating the value of the Old Testament **Scriptures**.

One lesson comes with force to the churches of God, namely, " to contend earnestly for the Faith which **was** once for all delivered to the saints. " Perhaps some **may** have asked, " What **is** our paramount function to-day in churches of God ? " **We** admit that there are diversities of gifts and of ministrations. Some **may** evangelize, some **may** teach, and some **may** shepherd. All gifts are needed. **But** **success** in the salvation of numbers of men and women would **appear** to **be** the happy lot of some evangelists who are not holding the Faith. It is not for **us** to question the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit. It is for **us** to hold inviolate the precious truths of God, contained in the Faith, and to hand them on, untarnished, to the generation following.

Jude's positive instruction to **us**, then, after a letter full of poignant illustrations, is three-fold; (having in view the immeasurable source of strength in the Trinity) . . . " Beloved, building **up** yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy **Spirit**, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord **Jesus** Christ unto eternal life. "

We conclude our **year's** study with much gratitude to God. **We** would **express** also our love to all fellow-students, and thanks for their letters from time to time.
Jas. Martin.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

The Coming Judgement.

(2 Peter 3.).

From Hamilton (Ontario.) Judgement is not a pleasant subject at any time and it is one which the human mind naturally tries to forget. Hence the Apostle's words in verse 5: " This they wilfully forget. "

One fact that seems to help men to forget is the unseen aspect of judgement. The same was true in Noah's day. No one had seen rain come down from heaven before, and faith was required to believe Noah's preaching [1]. By faith men to-day can enter the Ark of safety provided by God in the Person of His Son; for just as surely as it came in Noah's day, so is judgement coming on this ungodly world. The staying of God's hand in judgement is actually a proof of His long-suffering mercy. God spoke in judgement at Calvary's Cross, where judgement fell on His only Son instead of on the sinner. The next time God speaks in judgement will be at the end of the dispensation of grace. Thus, in the broad sense, no answer from heaven now, means the hand of mercy is still extended to all, or as Peter puts it: " The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation. " We are given an interesting insight into some details of the judgement on this world, in verse 10. The latest scientific developments of man and the fearful explosions that have taken place, make it increasingly evident how such a thing could happen. As the facts of coming judgement are thus brought to our remembrance, surely the exhortation is most applicable to us to-day, " What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness ? " All that will stand the test will be things of spiritual value.

N. MacKay.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Contending for the Faith.

Apostasy, the lessons of history.

From Barrhead and Paisley. —A striking feature of Jude's epistle is the marked similarity to 2 Peter 2. The apostasy of the time was envisaged by the apostles, and the appearance, in assemblies of God, of evil men fulfilled exactly what they had foretold. It would appear that Jude was the later epistle [? S. B.] and as he wrote he probably recalled the forceful words of Peter.

Judas, as he calls himself, is probably the Lord's brother, although he refrains from saying so; he writes not to any particular church, but to all who are called. This is the call into the fellowship, because although he originally intended to write of the salvation common to all believers, yet he particularly speaks to those in assemblies of God.

The appearance of men in the assemblies, for whose subversive activities conditions were ripe, demanded that the saints be impressed with the need of contending for the faith. Jude warns them that these men had crept in privily, and whatever that may mean, it is clearly in contrast to the divine principle of "adding to a church of God. " Actually, in verse 19, it states that these men had not the Spirit, and by that we understand that they were unregenerate men, and it is a solemn matter that such could be in an assembly.

Jude quotes instances from history to show that these men will not go unpunished. The three notable cases given are, Cain, Baalam and Korah, and all three have this in common, that they disregarded completely the will of God, following the dictates of self-will. Cain, in contrast to Abel who worshipped by faith, followed the way of the evil one. Baalam attempted to incite the people to idolatry, despite the commandment, and Korah actually attempted to introduce his own form of worship in open revolt against God. The individual, the prophet or soothsayer, and the Levite all tried their own way and failed. In Jude's day men sought the gratification of the lusts of the flesh and worldly gain. Sin, in any form, is surely to that end, the satisfaction of self. Retrogression is seen in Jude, as

firstly **they went in the way of Cain**, then **ran** in the error of **Baalam**, and **perished** in the gainsaying of Korah. The importance of Baalam's **type** of sin is stressed by three references, in 2 Peter 2. 15, as the **way of Baalam**, in Jude as the **error of Baalam**, and in Revelation 2. 14 as the **teaching of Baalam**.

When **we** think of the importance which certain religions attach to the bodies of their leaders and founders, erecting imposing tombs and shrines, inaugurating pilgrimages and other ceremonies in honour of their dead heroes, it **was** suggested that Satan **may** have desired Moses' body for some such purpose, knowing the susceptibility of the people to idolatry and how abnoxious the idea would **be** to God.

Enoch and Lamech [of the Cain line], both were the seventh from Adam, but of two different lines, Enoch of the line of faith and Lamech of the flesh; and even in that early date the promise of the ultimate and final supremacy of the former over the latter **was** promised.

The similarity to 2 Peter is carried further, for **as we** noticed how the structure of 2 Peter **was** mainly of threes, so also in **Jude we see** how he quotes incidents, **uses** illustrations and metaphors in threes and groups of three. Critics have long questioned the divine inspiration of this epistle, **but** the language **used**, the forceful statements, and the beautiful closing benediction, undoubtedly contain the true tone of the Word of God.

J. M. Gault,

From Birkenhead. —In the last portion of this **year's** study **we** have a very solemn exhortation and warning from one who **may** have been one of the apostles, but claims only to **be a** bondservant of Christ. Peter, in his second epistle, wrote of the times when men with false teachings would **be** found in the assemblies "among the flock." Jude had seen this prophecy beginning to **be** fulfilled and he was constrained to write the saints. He could have written concerning their salvation, but even more precious to him **was** the upholding in the assemblies of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This could not **be** done unless the evil **men** of whom he wrote were properly **dealt** with. They were unregenerate men who had found their way into the assemblies. The first warning **was** therefore to overseers who had the responsibility of examining those who sought to **be** identified with the saints in any assembly.

Certain characteristics of the evil men are described. They would not **be** subject to divine rule **as** expressed through the overseers of the assemblies and did not hesitate to speak evilly of those who ruled over them. There could **be** no question that rule in the assemblies **was a** divine principle and those who set themselves against it must **suffer** divine judgement. The warning supported by references to divine judgement in the **past was** intended not only for the guilty **men**, but also for those who suffered them to continue in their midst. The apostles had written giving instruction how these men were to **be** dealt with. They **were** to **be put** away from those gathered into the Fellowship of God's Son. The remembrance of the apostles' teaching would not only warn the saints of the possibility of the coming of such evil **men**, **but** also enable them to discern when they came and take the necessary action to guard against them.

There were others in the assemblies who were not walking according to the will of God, for whom the **same** judgement **was** not appropriate. These had, in weakness, been led astray by the false teaching of the evil men and needed to **be** dealt with in mercy, that they might **be** restored. There **was** obvious need for wisdom among the overseers upon whom much of the responsibility **rested** for determining when judgement **was** to **be** limited by mercy.

The whole force of the epistle would **be** lost if **we** were to look upon **it as** having a place only in the historic record of the assemblies. **We must be** alive to the possibility of the present-day Testimony being marred or even destroyed **by** the activities of such **men** and **we** must **be** prepared to follow the apostles' teaching in dealing with them.

So, " **may we lay** hold of the truth expressed in verses **24, 25**, concerning the keeping power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, **a fitting conclusion to our studies of " The Truth. "** L. S.

Prom Atherton. —This Epistle **was** probably written about A. D. **69**, and **at a very** distressing period for the people of God. It is difficult to dogmatize **as** to its authorship; for while some authorities seem to indicate that this refers to Jude, the Lord's brother, writing without any allusion to his relationship, **but as** distinct from the apostles (verse 17; and Matthew 13. 55), others refer his association with **James** the Less and therefore clearly infer that he **was** one of the Twelve (Mark 15. 40; John 14. 22). Certain statements indicate that those who had crept in privily were unregenerate men (**verses** 10-12), conforming to the character of those in John 10. 1. These false teachers may **be described as** follows: —(1) they were ungodly; (2) they were twice **dead**; (3) for them the blackness of darkness **was** reserved for ever, and (4) they had not the Spirit. Apostasy may **be expressed as** a complete refutation of all truths once held firmly. It also means defection or desertion (Acts 21. 21; 2 Thessalonians 2. 3). The three classes, (1) Balaamites, (2) Cainites, and (3) Korahites **as seen** in (1) self indulgent shepherds, (2) rainless clouds, and (3) fruitless trees, are characteristically expressed in the false teachers. Some thought that the expression "twice **dead**" meant (1) **dead in** trespasses and sins, and (2) **spiritually dead**. This would involve the thought that these men were born again, whereas our outline above **seems** to disprove this. Is there **a** reference here to the second death (i. e., the Lake of Fire) ? [2]. Those **described** in verse 8 **seem** to **be** men who had given themselves over to Satan.

The Epistle concludes with the glorious experience of the presentation of the saints before God—a fitting contrast to all the evil practices of the ungodly men referred to earlier. What an inestimable joy it will **be** to live and **abide** in light eternal without a shadow of sin or darkness to mar **its** glory and beauty ! There will **be** nothing of an abstract character in our introduction to the Father, for the Lord **Jesus** Himself **is** the One to undertake this unique responsibility (Colossians 1. 22); **but** Overcomers (Revelation 3. 5) and steadfast ones (Colossians 1. 23) particularly, will hail the **day** with great delight.

George Sankey, John Bullock.

From Cowdenbeath. —The writer of this epistle, it would appear, is the **Judas** mentioned in Mark 6. 3, being the brother of **James**, and **a** brother in the flesh of our Lord (Galatians 1. 19). In declaring his identity **Jude** might have designated himself **as** such, **yet** he claims no such relationship, **but** takes his place **as a** bondservant of **Jesus** Christ.

His first intention **was** to **write** concerning the salvation which they all shared in common with one another, no doubt seeking to lead them on to **a** fuller appreciation of it, and with this his opening salutation agrees. He addresses them **as** being " called, " " beloved " and " kept. " How he might have expanded on those precious truths, **but because** of the danger with which they are about to **be faced** he **is used** by the Spirit to warn them !

The men spoken of in verse 4 ought not to have had **a** place among God's people. Surely this shows that great care **is** needed in the examining of those who apply for fellowship. Those men were unbelievers, " having not the Spirit " (verse 19). Their sole ambition **was** the gratifying of their own fleshly lusts. They lived for self. " Shepherds that without fear **feed** themselves " (verse 12) would **suggest** that they were even in the oversight circle. This is extremely **sad**, though not impossible (Acts 20. 29). The condemnation of such men has been written beforehand. The phrase " of old **set** forth " bears this meaning and **is** the **same** word in the original **as** is translated " written beforehand, " in Romans 15. 4. This condemnation **is** written in the history of God's dealings with men in Old Testament times. **Verses** 6 and 7 give examples of how God punishes wrong-

doing **and** declares with certainty **the** doom of those men, **as** also verses **14** and **15** which record the prophetic words of Enoch, who warned the men of his day of coining judgement, but whose words are **a** warning to men of **all** times that the ungodly will ensure the severity of God's judgement both for what they **say** and for what they do.

The warning in verse **5** is unto the saints and shows the outcome of not contending earnestly for the faith. Here it is the salvation of **a** people that is mentioned. They believed not the word of God and so were destroyed. **We** can never **cease** to **be** God's children, **but we** can forfeit our right to **be** called His people or to have **a** place among His people, through disobedience. The existence of God's people **as** such is dependent upon their conformity to the will of God **as** revealed in His Word.

Not only does the Word of God give warning concerning the rise of mockers and false teachers, **but** it is also the only thing which can enable the saints to withstand the evil influence of such men. The importance of the teaching of the Word of God and prayer **is** emphasized in verse 20.

" Keep yourselves in the love of God " is **a** responsibility enjoined upon **us**. God will never **cease** to love **us**, His love being eternal (Jeremiah **31**. 3). Nothing can separate **us** from **His** love (Romans **8**. **38**, 39), **but we may** fail to live in the enjoyment of such love. The difficulty of interpreting verses **22** and **23** is recognized, **but** on the surface they would **seem** to depict an attitude towards such **as** were **being** affected by the influence of the evil men [3].

James Bowman,

EXTRACTS.

From Edinburgh. —There is **a marked** similarity of expressions and teaching between Jude's epistle and 2 Peter 2. Jude **was** about to **write** of the common salvation (that which is shared by all believers), **but was** constrained to exhort them " to contend earnestly for the faith which **was** once for all delivered unto the saints. " The Faith is the doctrine taught by our Lord to His disciples, and **is** embodied in the Great Commission—" Go ye... **make** disciples... teaching them. " How had certain men crept into the assemblies, privily ? **Was** it **because** of slackness **at** the gate, or **because** of false testimony ? Or **was** Satan seeking to disrupt, by introducing unsaved persons who **were** denying " our only Master and Lord **Jesus** Christ " ? [4]. Verse 11 **sums** up the beginning, the life, and the end of such **as** forsake the ways of the Lord; and what could **make** sadder reading than the picture drawn in verses **12-16** ! Truly this is **a sad** picture of error and apostasy.

The word of God, prayer, the love of God, and the hope of the coming of our Lord, are all needed **if we** are to **be** kept from this evil **age**.

Let **us** take heed to these warnings and exhortations. How sad indeed **must** spiritual apostasy **be** to our Lord and to the believer ! *Jas. C. Paterson.*

From Birmingham. —This epistle **is** **a** solemn warning to those who **at** that time had not become involved in the spiritual landslide which had **taken** place. Comparing Romans 1. **7**, and 1 Corinthians 1. **9** with Jude **1**, **we** would understand that the epistle of Jude is addressed to the people of God who are called out and gathered together. This is clear too in the reference to " **the faith** which **was** once for all delivered unto the saints " (verse 3). This refers to the body of doctrine revealed in the word of God.

Contending earnestly visualizes **a** struggle, or **a** striving with **a** potential enemy. There are times when in the Word **we** are exhorted not to **strive**, such **as**, " The Lord's servant **must** not **strive**, **but be** gentle towards all, apt to teach. " **But** it is clear that when truth is assailed, especially foundational truth, **we must make** **a** stand, and contend or struggle earnestly for the faith.

Jude warns against ungodly men, who **had** crept in, and were doing their deadly work from within. The lessons of history are set forth here, as Jude seeks to **put** them in remembrance of murmurers, complainers and ungodly men walking after their own lusts.

The warning is followed up by the exhortation in verse 20, " But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. " We need to be deeply grounded in the faith and not blown about by every wind of doctrine.

We were inclined to think that the love feasts in verse 12 may have some reference to the Remembrance. We were reminded that Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their conduct, in the first epistle, chapter 11. 20-22. It was evident that there was no fear of God before their eyes, nor were they concerned with warnings that had been given before by Paul. We come to the conclusion that they were deceiving the saints, and that they were false men who should never have **been numbered** with the people of God. *D. E. Watts, T. H. Darke.*

From Melbourne. —The apostle Jude, though originally exercised to write about our common salvation, is constrained by the Spirit to exhort us to agonize for the faith (*Epagonizomai*). The faith is the revealed will of God delivered to the saints through Christ and His apostles. Should we cease to contend earnestly for this once-delivered faith, then the unsavoury result must be apostasy—the forsaking or abandonment of those truths which one has hitherto held precious and adhered to. Note the faithfulness of God: " to them that are called, beloved . . . and kept for Jesus Christ. " Note also, in strong contrast, the unfaithfulness of His earthly people whom He saved out of the land of Egypt. No doubt the mixed multitude (Exodus 12. 38) that went up also with them played no small part in their apostasy.

A solemn note is struck by Jude concerning railing at dignities. Satan, the prince of the power of the air, took Jesus from the wilderness and shewed Him *all* the kingdoms of the world **in a moment of time** (Luke 4. 5). F. A. Banks remarks, " Satan is no mere tool to be handled at our pleasure, and yet it seems as if some Christians have no knowledge whatever of his terrible subtlety and might " (Spiritual Growth, page 151).

The little flock look to these ungodly men, posing as shepherds, for spiritual food, but all that is forthcoming is great swelling words; they were autumn trees without fruit. What a grand exercise for the humble saint!—" praying in the Holy Spirit. " The prayer meeting is the power house of the assembly. Let us above all be praying saints, to pray for each other more sincerely and fervently than hitherto as the age approaches to its close. " God forbid that I should sin against the LORD **in ceasing to pray** for you " (1 Samuel 12. 23). *S. Stoope.*

From London, S. E. —Jude is the last of the catholic epistles, and culminates with sound teaching, appropriate to the closing period of the day of grace. It seems within reason to suppose that Jude is the apostle mentioned in Luke 6. 16, "Judas of James. " Words denoting kindred are often omitted before a possessive genitive, and especially so when they stand in apposition to a proper name [5].

The name " Jude " is of Hebrew origin, and comes from the root " *Yadah*, " which implies the use of the hands (especially in worship). The root is used in translation for: making confession, praise, giving of thanks, and thanksgiving.

If the name therefore reveals the character of the person, we see a man whose hands are used in the service of God, and the epistle is then written by sanctified hands. Since it cannot be accurately ascertained when 2 Peter and Jude were written, no credence is given to the hypothesis than either one referred to the other's epistle.

The only privilege angels could enjoy was in their relationship with God. Their proper occupation entitled them to an habitation (*Oiketerion*), i. e., a dwelling, or abode. Since it is described as " their proper, " and the root, *Oikos*, carries the thought of " family, " might it not be inferred that they left the angelic family, together with its habitation, in heaven ? Perhaps these rebel angels were those who joined in the Satanic revolt.

The root "*Aidios*" for " everlasting, " in verse 6, is very rare, as it only occurs here, and in Romans 1. 20. (It is derived from *Aei* from which we obtain our English word *Aye*). Romans 1. 20 refers to God's everlasting (*Aidios*) power and divinity. Can it be that the " everlasting bonds " are not of necessity chains, as we understand them, but rather the discipline under which the angels are placed ?

Despite the gloom and horror of judgement there is a bright side in the apostle's instruction in verses 20, 21. We can only accomplish this as we realize the truth of verses 24 and 25.

Reginald D. Wood.

From **Willington Quay**. —The evils of apostasy would appear to have been very prevalent at the time of Jude's writing. Not that apostasy was a new thing; on the contrary, history shows that this evil had raised its head in different spheres on previous occasions, each time incurring the judgement of God.

The writer, bold in his description and condemnation of these false teachers, is equally definite in the pronouncement of their final doom. The reference to Michael in verse 9, together with that of Enoch in verse 14, the only mention of this prophecy in scripture, shows that Jude had received these things from the Lord by personal revelation [6].

The final description of the false teachers, as " having not the Spirit " (verse 19), turned our thoughts again to the position of these men. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a true believer is surely of a permanent nature. Whether the believer is always living in the enjoyment of this experience is another matter, for the flesh is always with us. Had these men been so given over to the works of the flesh, to the exclusion of the divine attributes of the Spirit, that the writer describes them in such a manner ? [7]. By continuous fellowship with the Lord and interest in divine things, the saints are enjoined to eschew such evil men and teaching, whilst at the same time exercising needful discernment in order that some may be saved.

K. R.

From **Crowborough**. —To combat false doctrine we have " the faith, " that store of truth, which forms the foundation of all teaching and testimony. By keeping ourselves in the love of God the work and words of ungodly men will have no effect upon the steadfast saint.

The latter part of the epistle deals with the practical teaching regarding our weaker brethren. All are to be shown the mercy of God, albeit, with all humility, watching lest we also fail.

B. V. F.

From **Kilmarnock**. —Jude (or Judas) does not address his epistle to any special church, but to saints who are * called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. " We think this refers to being " called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord " (1 Corinthians 1. 9). We understand the " Faith " (in verse 8) to be the doctrine of the Lord, as taught by the apostles for the churches of God. It is possible for saints who were faithful to the Lord and His doctrine to " fall away from the Faith, " and to make " shipwreck concerning the Faith " (see 1 Timothy 4. 1 and 1. 19). Paul could say, as he drew near his end, " I have kept the Faith "; and this is what the Lord desires of each saint, for He hath

said,, " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life " (Revelation 2. 10).

At that time there was a falling away among the saints and the apostle forewarns them that " in the last time there shall be mockers. " We understand the men described in verses 18, 19, were unconverted men.

If we would be saved from the apostasy in the world now, we need to give heed to the exhortation in verses 20 and 21. What a mercy we have God our Saviour to guard us from stumbling, and He alone is worthy of all glory and honour now and for ever !

A. G. S.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The Holy Spirit does not throw any light upon when or where this epistle was written, but the writer was probably a brother of the Lord. We infer this from his claim to be the brother of James, who was very prominent in Jerusalem and was the Lord's brother.

" Kept for Jesus Christ " seems to be an answer to the Lord's prayer prior to the cross—" Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. " An appreciation of the mercy of God is what will fire us with zeal to endure all for the faith. Acts 6. 7 makes it clear that " the faith " was the body of doctrine which was held and practised by the church of God in Jerusalem and by other churches also. What God requires of us is firstly obedience to the faith, which means to the Lord Jesus, whose sovereign Lordship is its central theme, and secondly to contend earnestly for it.

It is apparent from verse 5, " Ye know all things once for all, " that Jude was writing to Jews, who were well taught in the Old Testament writings, from which Jude was about to glean some instructive examples.

" The angels which kept not their own principality " would appear to be those who supported the devil when he sought to set his throne above the stars of God; but we could not understand why Satan and his angels at present have their freedom, whereas those mentioned in Jude are in everlasting bonds [8]. We presume that " the judgement of the great day " is the Great White Throne, although the judgement of angels is not mentioned in the Revelation account.

Verse 9 gives us a perfect example in Michael, the archangel, of what should be our attitude to those whom God has placed in authority, even though they be evil.

The evil-doers mentioned in verses 14-16, upon whom judgement will be executed, do not seem to our eyes to be worthy of such severe punishment, but the Holy Spirit would teach us that their practices, murmuring, complaining, walking after their lusts and showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage, will have very serious consequences in the church of God. Such sins cause separations and spread havoc among the people of God. L. B.

From Hamilton, Ontario. —" To contend earnestly for the faith " is a solemn subject, especially as our lot is cast in these last times. Let us emulate brethren of a few years ago, who fought and paid dearly for the truth. They bought the truth and sold it not (Proverbs 23. 23).

Apostasy had set in, and through false teachers some were being led away. This is in contrast to a few short years prior, when the house was established " upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets " (Ephesians 2. 20), and many were being saved and added, and " great grace was upon them all " (Acts 2. 41, 42; Acts 4. 33). Warnings had been given of what would happen in " the last days. " Paul had written concerning some who had made " shipwreck " concerning the faith (1 Timothy 1. 19), and had forewarned the elders of Ephesus of " grievous wolves " that should enter in among them (Acts 20. 29). This creeping in (verse 4) must have been with the stealth of a wolf. The solemn question is, **can any-**

thing like these calamities happen in our day? **Jude** states that these **men** had "not the Spirit," **and** "if **any man** hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8. 9).

Jude ends by saying, twice, "and on some have mercy." It **seems** some of the saints were contemplating following these "ungodly **men**," **and** some had already become ensnared in their evil teaching. The exhortation for **us** to-day is, "**But ye**, beloved, building **up** yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the **mercy** of our Lord **Jesus Christ** unto eternal life" (verses 20, 21).

And now, brethren, **we** "commend you to God, **and** to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, **and** to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20. 32).

P. Thomas, W. Thompson.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Hamilton, Ont.). —It is quite evident from the casual reading of Genesis 2. 5 that rain is considered **as a necessity** to water plant life, **and** is the normal **way** of watering the earth (Isaiah 55. 10); **but at** that early period there had **been** no rainfall, so God, to **meet the need** of plant life, **caused a mist to rise** from the earth, which **watered** the whole **face** of the ground. **But to say** that this abnormal **way** of **watering** the earth, which **was** something more than the distillation of **dew**, continued to **be the way** in which God **watered** the earth, for over **1, 500** years, **seems to us to be an** assertion without scriptural proof. —J. M.

It **may be** that the Hebrew word translated "**mist**" is an untranslated Assyrian word indicating the periodical inundation of the land **by** the overflowing of the river. As these early records were probably first **written in** cunieforn on tablets of clay this suggestion is worth keeping **in mind**. —S. B.

[2] (Atherton). "Twice **dead**" is confessedly a difficult **statement** to explain. **But if we** consider what is said of these **men**, it **seems** evident that they were the grievous wolves that Paul spoke about, **in Acts 20**. They were unregenerate **men**. Outwardly **as** sheep, inwardly ravening wolves. Actually they were **dead** in trespasses **and** sins, **but outwardly being in an** assembly of God they were **numbered** with those who were alive in Christ **and** in the place of profession **and** testimony. They were trees without **fruit**, no manifestation of life whatever, **and** were destined to **be plucked up by** the roots. There **is**, the **Scriptures say**, hope for a tree when it **is cut** down that it will sprout **again**, **but there is** no hope when it **is plucked up by** the roots. The Lord said, "Every plant that **My** heavenly Father planted not shall **be rooted up**" (Matthew 15. 13). I would **understand** that "**twice dead**" refers to these **men's** natural **state in sin**, **and** then **as** manifestly **dead**, **as** rooted out of the assembly where they **were and** out of the Fellowship. There **may be** a **better** explanation. —J. M.

[3] (Cowdenbeath). —I judge this is the correct view of these verses. —J. M.

[4] (Edinburgh). —It **is** not explained how these **men entered** the Fellowship or as to where the failure rested, **but in** the falling **away** of some from the Faith (see 1 Timothy 4. 1) a general slackness would ensue. —J. M.

[5] (London). —Other contributors **judge** that **Jude**, the writer of the epistle, **was** the brother of James, the Lord's brother, **and** not one of the twelve. Much has **been written** on the point **by different** writers. The greater weight of evidence **may lie** on the **side** that he **was** the Lord's brother, **but we** cannot **be** dogmatic on the point, I **judge**. —J. M.

[6] (Willington Quay). —At our **time of day** it **is** impossible to know anything of what traditional teaching **may** have existed about these matters in the first **century**. It **is** well to leave where **Jude** got his information from within the realm of the unrevealed, satisfied **in** the knowledge that the epistle **is** inspired. —J. M.

[7] (Willington Quay). —These **men** appear to have **been** unregenerate. —J. M.

[8] (Kingston-on-Thames). —This is a profoundly difficult subject. Peter speaks of chains (A. V., R. V. M.) (or pits, R. V.) of darkness, and Jude of everlasting chains, A. V. (or bonds, R. V.). The words in the Greek for chains are not alike. These fallen angels, though under restraint at present, may have some liberty of movement. If these angels are those of the devil (Revelation 12. 7, 8) which will be cast down from heaven in the middle of the 70th week of Daniel, the question is a difficult one and quite beyond me. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from Edinburgh. —(1) Verse 9. Did Michael contend with the devil about the body of Moses, immediately on the death of Moses, or did the contention take place just prior to the Mount of Transfiguration scene ?

(2) Verse 9. What is the significance of the phrase, " a railing accusation " ?

(3) Verse 13. Are we to understand that those " for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever " were the unsaved in the assemblies ? If not, we have difficulty in applying this description to backsliders.

Answers. —(1) When this took place we are not told. The contention of Michael with the devil does not seem to have been limited to Moses' body; that matter was just one among others which had to do with the nation of Israel. Daniel 12. 1 tells us that Michael is the great prince that stands for Israel. Verse 9 in Jude reads " But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses. " —J. M.

(2) Railing here is blasphemy, which means to speak injuriously. The people and the robbers railed at Christ on the cross. Even to speak what is true may be railing. They said of the Lord, " He saved others, Himself he cannot save. "

(3) I should say that they were unsaved people. —J. M.

Question from Melbourne. —Verse 6. When did the angels leave their proper habitation ?

Answer—" When they sinned " (2 Peter 2. 4).

NOTICE.

All papers for 1952 should be forwarded to:

Mr. John Baird,
4, Craigentenny Crescent,
Edinburgh, Scotland;

to reach him by the 20th of the month, about six weeks before the date of issue.

Please write in ink on one side of the paper only, and leave a margin of 1 to 2 inches.

All other correspondence should be sent to:

Mr. Jas. Martin,
36, Whitley Crescent,
Wigan, Lanes.