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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"WHAT HAST THOU THAT THOU DIDST NOT RECEIVE? NOW IF THOU DIDST RECEIVE, WHY DOST THOU GLORY, AS IF THOU HADST NOT RECEIVED?" (1 Cor. 4. 8).
"NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST." (Eph. 2. 9).

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a joy, by the grace of God, to send forth again these pages. Our desire is that each one may be used to bring some of His dear children more definitely into the true liberty of spiritual OBEDIENCE, and the real freedom of the law of Christ. Moreover, we long that the result may be the glory of God in the meeting together of those who are exercised to please Him, and who are troubled by the general departure from His will, and the saddening growth of worldliness. Thus everything is with a view to pleasing the Lord: oh that this may be kept in our hearts and minds, and that the flesh may not assert itself in the writing or the reading!

SOME CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE SEALS AND TRUMPETS ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE VIALS ON THE OTHER.

AS the Holy Spirit has been pleased to give unto us precious parallels, throughout Scripture, for example in—
(a) The gospel narratives of the Lord Jesus,
(b) The books of Kings and Chronicles,
(c) The chapters of Daniel, e.g. 2 and 7,
so is it, again and again, in the closing book, even the Revelation, not of "St John the Divine," but "OF JESUS CHRIST" (1. 1).

And these help us much in prayerful study, and guard against a human lengthening of the precious revealed short time up to His Coming.

Not *all* the parallels, however, concern the same period. It has been pointed out that the trumpets and vials illustrate a "correspondence." Yet, as we shall see, NOT concerning the same events, BUT RATHER God's repetition in history:—

TRUMPETS.	VIALS.
1. Earth (8. 7).	Earth (16. 2).
2. Sea (8. 8).	Sea (16. 3).
3. Rivers and fountains of waters (8. 10).	Rivers and fountains of waters (16. 4).
4. Sun (8. 12).	Sun (16. 8).
5. Pit—king—Abaddon (8. 1-11).	Kingdom of the beast (16. 10).
6. Euphrates (9. 14).	Euphrates (16. 12).
7. A completeness (10. 7) and voices in heaven (11. 15).	Air, voice, "It is done" (16. 17).

Thus all shows the wondrous balance of Scripture, and its structure, and that God is a God of order: this has a practical bearing on our daily life. It is well known that often we find contrasts together with parallels, as it is in

(a) The Types in the Hebrew Scriptures:

(b) The Parables of Christ.

And these (e.g. Jonah under the waves through *his* own sins, the unjust judge and the widow *contrasted* with the Righteous Judge, and the one espoused) are full of help, instruction, warning, comfort, and edification.

Thus the Holy Spirit teaches here. It is worthy of definite, prayerful notice that *neither* in the seals (till the sixth, 6. 17), *nor* in the trumpets (till the seventh, 11. 18), *nor* indeed during the *period of the tribulation* of which Matt. 24. 29 speaks, do we have the coming of the *wrath of God*. The tribulation is man's wrath at the climax of *man's day* (1 Cor. 4. 3, *marg.*), the *distinct* "hour of temptation" (3. 10) is *God's* wrath in *His* day.* Accordingly, we may call attention to a few contrasts, which help.

Trumpets (*cf.* Seals).

Introduced by angels before God, and the *prayers of saints* (8. 3).

No statement of a sudden climax at the beginning.

Vials.

Introduced by angels before God, and saints no longer praying but *personally* present to praise (15. 2, 3).

"The seven *last* plagues" (15. 1); the Holy Spirit's word "last" has a definite meaning, *cf.* 21. 9.

* Leaflets on this deeply important subject can be gladly sent. The word "hour" is *repeated* to guide our steps.

The word "wrath" definitely omitted, *cf.* the wrath climax not reached till 6. 12-17.

The "third" part emphasized (8. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12): sparing even a "third" speaks of mercy to a remnant (Zech. 13. 9): sparing "two thirds" of wider mercy, yet of *warning*.

Periods of time (9. 5, 15).

Trumpets tell of a coming battle (1 Cor. 14. 8).

The word "wrath" or "indignation" definitely repeated at the *outset* (15. 1, 7, 16. 1).

No reference to a "third": the sea, *as a whole* judged, and *every* living scul, &c., (16. 3)

No suggestion of a period, but of suddenness, (*cf.* the thought of a flat vial, *quickly* poured out).

The gathering to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" actually before us (16. 4).

We have not mentioned the seals at length, but it is evident that the first 4, *as* the first four trumpets, are marked off; the "second," in each case mentions death definitely, and the third concerns food. The fifth seal contrasts the position of redeemed ones, under the (golden) altar, (awaiting resurrection), with those brought forth from the pit in the fifth trumpet. But the general aspect, as already mentioned, is this:—the seals and trumpets are *preparatory* for wrath, but the vials are Divinely called the *last* plagues, for in them is *filled up* (ended) the wrath of God (15. 7). This definite distinction is *inspired*, and very important. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS ARE NOT IN THE LAST SEAL: the chapter-break should be after 8. 1,* thus we have a largely concurrent view in seals and trumpets. Will anything else explain the longer periods of *time* in the trumpets, in the light of 6. 17? Thus the Holy Spirit helps by *repetition*, giving varied views of the *same* period, and *adds vials* to complete, when the seven trumpet warnings are unheeded.†

It is sad to see that the words "repented not," found in *both* series are *intensified*, and mentioned *earlier* in the vials, i.e. men persist and progress in their evil (9. 20, 16. 9, 11): the climax stress on blasphemy in 16. 9, 11, 21, reminds us that judgments do not save. Man is ruined, utterly ruined. Amid all our studies, let us not forget the *solemnity*:—a call to prayer, and lowliness.

As Rev. 16. 15 interjects a practical appeal, let our hearts be

* Explanatory leaflets readily forwarded. This is a very necessary clue to right interpretation.

† Hence the *parallelism* of sphere in trumpets and vials: God's answer to men's heedlessness! All is deeply heart-searching. How prayerfully humble redeemed ones should be. May we thus live unto the Lord!

ever concerned to use truth aright, through its humbling realization. The coming judgments should, indeed, affect the daily attitude of those who are delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1. 10). "What manner of persons ought *we* to be, in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3. 11). The darkness is lit up for those who are "in Christ Jesus," but to others, the day of the Lord is only darkness, and no light (Amos 5. 20). If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, how earnestly should we live for Him, as those, who are *His* representatives, to *show* by life, as well as declare by lips, the *one* way of hope and joy and salvation, through Christ's precious atonement, in which our own hearts, stimulated by the Holy Spirit, can thankfully delight!

"I AM WILLING TO DO THE LORD'S WILL TO-DAY AT ALL COSTS."

SO WE say, and so we think, but let us be humbly concerned, lest we overstate, *unintentionally* overstate, our willingness. Do we *know* ourselves? The dear man of Luke 18. 18 thought he was willing to do anything, and yet he failed in loving the One Whom he called "Good Teacher." He did not love enough to obey: he did not love others enough to give up that which had become his idol, for them. Peter thought he was willing to do anything for the Lord (Luke 22. 33, John 13. 37), "Likewise also *said* they all" (Mark 14. 31). But "they all forsook Him, and fled" (Mark 14. 50), and Peter followed afar off, and even denied his Lord. *We think* we are able (Matt. 20. 22). *We wish* to be faithful. *Nor does the Lord overlook love*: "The Spirit indeed is willing." But it is also true, "the flesh is weak." It is easier to promise giving up a thousand pounds, if we had it, than to give up a pound, which we have. It is easier to say, "Not a mite would I withhold," than to act thus. It is easier to offer to give up error, than to search our ways now, and to see the apparently "little" mistakes, which mar our consistent life,—mistakes of doctrine, and mistakes of practice! We are not *conscious* of our weakness, we do not realize our *indecision*, *till the test comes*, and then we, still unconsciously, in large measure, reason ourselves away from the simple will of the Lord. How men have *allowed* others to persuade them against the *simple* words of Christ in Matthew 5, and have dared to "resist," instead of to suffer! How many have put aside the Lord's simple "*This do*," as to the breaking of bread, with plausible arguments, which *at first* troubled the conscience: but, persuading themselves that godly men, who used leavened bread, could not *all* be wrong, and that the difficulties of any other action would be *too many*, and that they must, in any case, keep the Lord's Supper,—these

dear ones have lost the exercise of conscience, in this matter, and entwined with a love, which the Lord accepts, a *forgetfulness*, and a *new cart*, which *He does not accept*. And in order to break bread, they have altered His word "this."

And thus have we all failed. *We meant* to please Him, but, when He convicted us, we *put aside* His loving call (Song 2. 13, 14): although we *spoke* well of Him (Song 2. 16, 17), we waited until, perhaps, we lost a large measure of communion (3. 1), and the call "arise," was heard at last (3. 2), but *so late*, and with so many added difficulties. *We meant* to please Him, but we have omitted prompt obedience, and now, it may be, we think we are right in that which *once* exercised us. We have *become* dull of hearing (Heb. 5. 11, *lit.*). We persuade ourselves that His Own simple Word is hair-splitting, and that our very *disregard of its literal, loving obedience* is spirituality. But we *meant* to please: and in heart we mean to please Him still, but we have led ourselves to believe the repeated arguments, which *at first* did not satisfy our consciences, and would not satisfy our awakened consciences now. We have become partly asleep.

But, possibly, the Lord has granted a victory in this, and we have sought to obey Him. *Satan's temptation now changes its aspect*. He shows us that our willingness is faulty, and *he occupies us with our failures*. We are "not better" than our fathers (1 Kings 19. 4). We have not done all the Lord has said. Hence Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and as he stood to resist Joshua (Zech. 3. 1), so he *seems* to emphasize *holiness*—to our shame. Why? He wants us to be discouraged, and to lose *the joy* of the Lord, which is our strength (Neh. 8. 10). Here grace steps in! And the Lord's answer is His Own electing love (Zech. 3. 2). If we are occupied with our failures, we leave the power, in the Holy Spirit, to obtain victory. Hence, if Satan cannot make us careless, he would make us despondent, and the two conditions may exist together, but his object is one,—
TO TAKE OUR MINDS OFF CHRIST. But shall *the tempter* have the victory? Shall not we trust in the Stronger than Satan? and rejoice in the precious thought—

"Thanks be to God, Which giveth us the
victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The importance of the morning cannot be easily over-estimated. Many a believing life has many clouds cast over it, because a rushed morning often ushered in a day without communion. A half-hour in bed was the cause of much failure: but the cause, if unjudged, was often repeated. Good intentions were made, but the bed conquered, and the whole life was weak. Shall we not seek power from the Lord? Then the half-hour's victory may become a half-hour doubled. He is able.

FEEDING ON THE WORDS OF TRUTH,
AND
"WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH."

IF one can sum up much of his own need, and desire (for the encouragement of others to united prayer), it is this:—More likeness to Christ and communion with Him! But can I be vigorous in the Lord if I am not feeding on His Words? Will the physical frame work hard without *assimilated, digested food*? Do not let us make *our own idea* of "miracles" an attack on our Lord's command to pray for *daily bread*. We need this spiritually. 'Tis not bare reading of Scripture, although if this also is neglected, grave perils are soon manifested. The child of God who rises late, and reads "two verses" of Scripture and then rushes to daily work, is a chronic invalid—spiritually. We must have daily manna, and we must gather it. The hope that God will bless an irregular meditation *here*, and a passing meditation *there*, is *presuming* on God's grace. We must feed on God's Words, if we would be strong (Jer. 15. 16, Ps. 119. 103, 1 John 2. 14). Intelligent *verbal* knowledge will not do instead of food, any more than writing an essay on bread will take the place of a meal. Moreover, the food must be digested. Digestion in a rush is almost an impossibility. Lack of delight hinders digestion. Worry causes undigested food, and *that* may become more trouble than the absence of food. Seek to enjoy His Words.

And this must be in the Spirit. The living power of the words of truth is thus known. "What the Spirit *saith*"—observe the present tense. That which the Holy Spirit caused to be written years ago He lives to apply, with living tones of living power! The force of Scripture is realized, *as we hear* "what the Spirit saith." All the apparatus of Bible study—the possession of "Helps"—the use of Concordances—these are like to electric fittings without the current, unless the Holy Spirit works. If we would use Scripture aright, we must be *taught of God*. We must *behold* with spiritual eyesight, with eyes which *He* has opened: the parallel with the Urim and Thummim must, as it were, become brilliant before our waiting eyes. We must rejoice in Prov. 6. 22. We must hear what God the Lord will speak. Thus will there be spiritual fellowship, strength, accuracy, and activity, as we wait for our Soon-Coming Lord.

PRAYER.

It is a wonderful thing to be able to draw near to GOD as *Father* in prayer. By nature we were far off, and such prayer was, in every way, impossible, but by grace we can *now* say "Abba, Father." Oh what mercy has abounded. Oh let us pray more, with thanksgiving (Phil. 4. 6).

GOD'S PURPOSE IN SCRIPTURE—Part 1.
"THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE."

John 20. 31.

THE gospel according to John declares that it was written for a purpose. Unbelief is a denial of God's truthfulness, and thus a grievous sin. Hence, when He has been pleased to give precious books, which He uses to lead to faith, is it not a privilege
(a) *to pass these on,** and further,
(b) *to realize*, that the very writings, whereby He works at the *beginning*, strengthen *faith* afterwards. Surely, His people wish to *grow* in faith.

If, in mercy, we see the way in which God has emphasized that He will bring to faith, shall we not be concerned, when contrasted methods are emphasized? The gospel is *still* His power unto salvation. We are not sent to amuse the world. And are we not helped as to *mode* of Christian preaching? How many dear children of God remember the verse in this gospel, which came with power to their soul's eternal joy, in Christ Jesus?

It is important to see God's stress on *belief*. John the Baptist came that men of all conditions might *believe* (1. 7). The miracles were with a view to *faith* (10. 38, 14. 11, cf. 2. 11, 3. 12 †). The gift of the Lord Jesus, and His manifest death, are the ground of *faith* (3. 15, 16), and, in His love, we see here not only an *external* witness, which may be despised, but the cause of an *internal* work, for Christ *shall* see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied!—"Shall not perish!"

Let us ever emphasize that unbelief is *not* "a cautious prudence," *but* making God a liar,—a denial of His testimony (3. 33), and faith is *not* a credulity, *but* it is the only wise attitude. Yet, "no man receiveth" the testimony (3. 32, 5. 40) Where sin abounded, grace has overflowed, and God uses, in sovereignty and might, His Own witness, *combining with* the good seed, the work of the Holy Spirit, which makes *the good ground*,—for it is only when there is this *twofold* work, that there can be true and abiding fruit! Thus man's accountability, and the duty to believe God's truth are set forth: but *also* God's electing love shines out, and the *gift* of a spiritual, heavenly appropriating faith, which is "*into Christ*." This is the *beginning* of a new experience (2 Cor. 5. 17), with *constant acts of living* faith, which glorify His Name, and should be our daily joy, if we are His people!

* The circulation of the gospel of John among men of all nations is one of our delightful opportunities for Him.

† This explains 6. 29. Undoubtedly spiritual faith is *God's work* (Eph. 2. 8, Phil. 1. 29), but here the Lord's argument seems to be, that "this" work, the miracle just wrought, was a call to faith, yet men resist *everything* (12. 37), except irresistible quickening! Thanks be unto Him for *such* grace, to save *such* sinners

IF THE LORD WILL,

FURTHER HELP IN GREEK TESTAMENT STUDY, UNTO GOD'S GLORY.

MANY know how the writer desires to encourage in any way God enables, with a view to the more accurate translation of Scriptures. Hence it would be a joy to aid those in foreign lands as to the study of Greek:—though we would not forget others. Indeed, *all* believers are welcome to all assistance the Lord makes possible. Apart from a general welcome to any in distant parts to correspond concerning any passages, it is probable some would be near enough to take *regular* study, and *especially would this meet the need of those on furlough*. By the grace of God, and through the co-operation of a beloved brother in correction of exercises, *etc.*, amid a strain of "time" (the prayer of God's praying people is much valued as to this), we would propose:—a definite course in connexion with Nunn's "Elements of New Testament Greek."

- (a) Exercises would be marked.
- (b) Homework set.
- (c) Difficulties answered.
- (d) Any further help given to suit special needs.

Those having *some* knowledge already could do a fortnight's work in a week, if desiring this. Thus all would be encouraged. Further, if some desire to work through the translation of certain books of Scripture, this might be arranged.

But amid all—and before all—let there be prayerful dependence on God: for except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it. We want His good pleasure, and His glory *alone*, and it is for His honour that these suggestions are made.

And may two thoughts be added:—

- (a) We should like to hear **SOON** from any exercised before the LORD as to this.
- (b) It will always be a joy to have further particulars of existing translations, and translation-labours, among men and women of all languages, from whom God is graciously drawing out a people for Himself. How refreshing are the words "out of every language": the blood of Christ is indeed precious.

The glory of a child of God is not his mental intelligence, not his natural capacity, but his relationship to God, his position in Christ, his spiritual dignity. How often we undervalue what grace has wrought.

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"TO SHEW THAT THE LORD IS UPRIGHT: HE IS MY ROCK,
AND THERE IS NO UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIM." Psalm 92. 15.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to tell of His so great love. And if we LOVE Him, shall we not KEEP His commandments, and DELIGHT to do His will? The PRIVILEGE of a walk with God is greater than we realize. To help in a fuller knowledge of His precious, unchanged will, and in a prayerful, simple-hear.ed obedience, are these pages sent forth. The glory of men, or of systems of men is not sought, but that God in all things may be glorified, and that His dear blood-bought people may serve, with gladness of heart, in the hope of the Coming of the Lord Jesus. We shall rejoice to hear from any who want to please Him more!

GOD'S PURPOSE IN SCRIPTURE—Part 2.

"THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL."

1 John 1. 4.

WE have seen that God has a *purpose* in Scripture, and it is evident that *all* Scripture is inspired by God and profitable in many ways (2 Tim. 3. 16) according as the Holy Spirit daily applies it in living power to suit all needs. There are also *special* revealed aspects of different books, and the first epistle of John is *linked* to the gospel. The *beginning*, and the stress on certain words as "love," "light," "truth," beautifully illustrate, and encourage the comparing of spiritual things with spiritual.

And so those who believe (John 20. 31) are next urged to *joy*. "Joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15. 13). Unbelief robs us of our joy, and brings in the leaven of grumbling or

despondency: our Father delights in the joy of His people. The book of Psalms and the address on the mount begin with the word "Happy," and we remember Ps. 32. 1, 119. 1, Rev. 1. 3. Well-founded joy is a privilege. The Scripture is written that those who have fellowship (1 John 1. 3) may have "joy." In the light of the Lord there is a joy (*cf.* Est. 8. 16): outside there is darkness with weeping: or a false joy in a false light (Isa. 50. 11). "Joy" (a) through that which the Scripture sets forth, and (b) through the prayerful use of the Scripture—*food for joy* (Jer. 15. 16). A "miserable believer" is a starved believer.

And the epistle emphasizes, further, the object of avoiding sin (1 John 2. 1, Ps. 119. 11), and chapter 5. 13 must not be forgotten, "That ye may *know*." Uncertainty and excusing of any sin go together. A holy restfulness is our Father's appointment for His dear children, in a life of victory. If we look to human opinions, and read hundreds of books, and become "engrossed" by "business," and crowd out spiritual devotedness, we need not be surprised if we lose appetite for the Words of Truth, and if, in losing this appetite, we become mechanical and unhappy. The man who persistently neglects his food and sleep, and then is surprised that he is dull and morbid is not more unwise than the one who hopes by an occasional meeting to put right a world-rushed life. We need a corrective course of spiritual training. The Lord *can* heal in a moment, but, usually, He does not permit a sudden return to health from neglected sleep, &c. In like manner, if a believer forgot the things of God, and, on confessing sin, felt immediately the full vigour of strength, there would sometimes be an undervaluing of the Father's chastisement. But *forgiveness* is full, though the *experience* of coming back to spiritual usefulness may be a painful one. Yet is it not worth everything to *please* the Lord? And is not the appointed *joy* of the Lord worth more than the prayerful strain of victory over *habits* of putting His will second? Many dear children of God are robbing themselves of joy by a measure of likeness to the world. They rise in time to *rush*, instead of to *commune*: they allow other things to take away the "good part" which Mary chose, and then wonder their lives lack power. Sometimes they wait for a *sudden* putting straight, instead of seeking grace to deal with the roots of the evil, and *determination* to put aside the actions which sap the strength. If I pray, "Lead me not into temptation," and then "make" too much work to arrive early at a devotional meeting, and ask the Lord to revive me by a remarkable miracle, am I not misusing prayer? "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." What is the Lord's remedy?—"Rise and pray" (Luke 22. 46). "Ah," you say "I cannot." When He healed the withered hand He did not say "I heal," but "Stretch forth thine hand." And *thus* He gave grace for the impossible, and this was the healing. Thus may we, too, enjoy *the purpose of Scripture*, that our JOY may be FULL.

"PITY THYSELF."

THE simple margin rendering of Matt. 16. 22 impresses the heart. "Pity Thyself, Lord." May we not assume Peter meant it kindly? But love must be guided, love must be on the line of the Lord's will. The statement was brief, but it was sufficient. He only said "Pity Thyself, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee," but he contradicted the Lord (21). Apparent love may contradict. The fact that he had been privileged to utter words of spiritual force just previously (16) did not protect from this mistake: do not trust to yesterday's blessings and godliness. The same sin of *speaking* without authority was manifest again in 17. 4 (*cf.* Mark 9. 6 "he wist not what to say"), and yet again in 17. 25. "They waited not for His counsel": have not we a reproof here?

The words seemed but *few*, so were those of Moses in Num. 20. 10, yet how great was the result. And, by contrast, an *appointed* word may have a great result in *another* way. Do not measure with earth's measure: live from the Lord's standpoint. Swiftly the answer came, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art My stumblingblock." The Lord Jesus would not stumble, but these words were a stumblingblock, a stone on the ground,—and often *we* stumble upon it. The pitying kindness of a relative takes us unawares, and we stumble. 'Tis not only in physical matters, when we go to bed when we ought to press forward, or when we give way when we ought to continue trustfully,—the context tells of Christ's rejection by men, and often a would-be friend smooths the path, but the smoothing of compromise is, in God's sight, a stumblingblock.

Yet more remarkably the words stand out after verse 18—"Thou art Peter,"—"thou art My stumbling." Two names—two natures. When caused to see the Father's will, a "Peter":—when savouring the things of men, a "Stumblingblock." And "Peter" means a stone. Which am I?—a stone *resting on Christ* in the building, or, as it were, a stumblingblock before Him? The *two* thoughts are worked out in yet another aspect in 1 Pet. 2.

And what shall we say as to the word "Satan"? Satan is the devil, "the one that casts across"—the one who *blocks up* the appointed path. It is then that we, too often, go into by-meadows. And *once* is too often. Were it not for forgiveness, how sad would be our condition. But is it not sad to have sinned? Oh for godly repentance! Moreover, Zech. 3. 1 shows the meaning of the word "Satan"—one who is hostile, and accusing. Mistaken love is hostility. How often love is misunderstood. Is it love that urges to mere compromise? A "comfortable" Christian life, of settling down in the world, is not the will of God. Do we pity ourselves, or do we simply seek the purpose of the Father? Psalm 40. 8 sums up the life of Christ.

Thus we have a deeply precious practical aspect, but in the

case of Christ, the thought goes far further. The sufferings were before the glories, yea, the suffering of *death* was essential to our salvation. "Pity Thyself": one word for "merciful," and the word "appease" and thus the word "atonement" are from this root. If Christ had saved Himself physically, He could not have saved others (Matt. 26. 42).

"A LITTLE SLEEP."

Prov. 6. 10 ; 24. 33.

THE Holy Spirit repeats the words: let our hearts echo the warning. Who has not "determined to be determined," and then yielded to the wish for "a little more sleep"—only to be troubled and weakened by remorse after?

Can we not obtain victory?

This is a deep concern for us; all writer and readers alike own hesitation when there ought to be spiritual firmness in little things. Therein is the source of so much spiritual stumbling, but "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9). "Thanks be unto God Which *giveth* us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 57). Victory is meant for *to-day*, that we may be STEDFAST, as the very next verse shows (1 Cor. 15. 58). In each epistle of Rev: 2 and 3 we have a promise to the *victorious* believer. Now is the opportunity *amid* the strain. The Holy Spirit's enabling is real.

"A little sleep": we did not mean to stay in bed *long*. "A little folding of the hands, *for lying down*." Ah, here is the key to explain *much* failure. We put ourselves in the position of lying down, and wondered why we fell asleep for a half hour more. The *body* is the battle ground, and to present the *body* unto the Lord is holiness. We cannot expect *victory* while we persist in the actions which invite failure.

The flesh sometimes urges *spiritual* meditations. Why? Only to hinder them! You ask, How? It *suggests* a few minutes of meditation "*before*" getting up, and the lying down leads to sleep, *not* meditation. The Holy Spirit enables definiteness, not procrastination.

How grateful should those be who *can* "get up". When we remember those whose bodies are strained, why should we aimlessly lie in bed so long? Let us take and use the privileges which we have received in such abundant measure, and seek from *to-morrow morning*, consistent victory over a little sleep, and LIKEWISE over the actions which lead up to a willingness thus to be shorn of our spiritual strength. "God is able to make all grace to abound" (2 Cor. 9. 8). When Delilah wished to ensnare Samson, we read, "She made him sleep," Judg. 16. 19. He awoke and said, I will go *as at other times!* But his power was gone. In every sense of the word he had *slept at the wrong time!*

"WHICH ALSO SAT."

Luke 10. 39.

EVERY word in Scripture is precious. Sometimes one word sometimes another would seem to stand out, and to sound in the ears, and to affect the life. Thus the Holy Spirit deigns to apply. It is a joy to ponder the *whole* narrative. The Lord's stress on the spiritual aspect, beyond the physical preparation of food &c., would remind us that He checked an undue physical hospitality *toward Himself*. Yet some dear children of God, with *love* to others, think *too much, proportionately*, of their bodies. And the spiritual life of those who *receive* so much bodily care may be damaged. They may become apt to pamper the body, and to avoid parts of the pilgrim life, and to be irritated if surroundings are not "beautifully comfortable." Moreover, the way in which we all may be "cumbered," even when having a *real* desire to do right, and in our very energy, which "seems" so needful a contrast with laziness, is clear. How often a believer in the privilege of "activity" has become changed to "a rush," and thus has *undone* the witness against the dulness of another. *But there is no evidence here that Mary was lazy*. We are *not* to think of her as dreamy, allowing of a carelessness in earthly necessities. True, many things called "necessities" are *only* indulgencies, and should be omitted. But the charge of lethargy here is *without any basis*. Mary "*also sat*" i.e., she did something else as well.* Evidently she "welcomed" the Lord, together with Martha (38), and this word may indicate a humble joy at receiving Him. The Holy Spirit seems to have used it to suggest (by derivation) godly submission, and here Martha failed *afterwards*.† She did not leave the arrangements to His will: she tried to please Him in her own way, and commanded Him (40). Moreover, other passages seem to make clear the provision of necessities,‡ and Mary had evidently *co-operated*. But she knew when *to stop doing, and to start sitting*. Herein we see our need, *viz.* godly proportion. Mary was very active at the *Lord's* bidding. Notice in John 11 how she sat in verse 20, THEN at one word (28) she arose quickly (29, 31). The same thought is found in John 20. 11 and 18. We are apt to forget the *need* for standing in His counsel, and sitting to receive of His Words (Deut. 33. 3). And another sad aspect of it is that many will almost complain of others having leisure for the Lord, when they themselves take *another hour* in bed, or a twenty minutes daily on the newspaper, or something else,—even ten minutes of grumbling, it may be, where there might have been ten minutes of communion—not to mention

*Martha acknowledges this:—"My sister hath left me to serve (go on serving), alone" (40).

† "Afterwards," for she, too, began by *thus* welcoming.

‡ The same word in Luke 19. 6, Acts 17. 7, Jas. 2. 25.

the slowing down effect of a spirit of grumbling on all subsequent activities.

"Mary also sat." She learnt *when* to act and when to wait. Jeremiah, in chapter 32, did not pray for the Lord's *guidance* when it *had* been given, nor did he keep Hanameel waiting. But *after* obeying, he quickly betook himself to prayer. Not only as to physical things, but as to Christian work, we may continue till our spiritual energy is *spent*, and we "toil" on, but "serve" *no longer*. "Mary also sat." The Lord does not come to His people only to *receive* their gifts, but to give that they may receive. Are we *ready* for Him?

Thus the word "also" implies that sitting must be in true and appointed surroundings. Thus, if we, by grace, "make time" for hearing His words, we shall profit. And, in some connexions, the aspect of hearing *first* must be noticed:—in the morning for example. A number of "other" things before communion may drive out communion: have we not all felt this?

How thankfully would we have written "Mary also" to indicate that Mary sat *as well as* Martha, but the words of the Holy Spirit are arranged to *prevent* this inference. Martha had "no time" to sit. Nor do we learn that she was brought to this attitude. The Holy Spirit's silence is remarkable, but the next chapter begins very forcibly as to "waiting" on God. If we have no time, there is something wrong with our spiritual life. We shall *always* find "something to do," if we neglect "hearing" His voice. "Things" will go wrong, and need putting straight. In like manner, we shall always find "something to spend," on ourselves, if we do not give to the Lord, for He will cause a *bag with holes*. But if we are determined, in the Holy Spirit, that there must be time, and money definitely unto Him, how blessedly will He arrange our lives! Oh that it may be so in our experience, enabled by the Holy Spirit.

OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE RETURNED.

THESE words, in Hebrews 11. 15, have impressed me. Do they not impress you? When Abraham went from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, he went because of the Lord's call. When there was a going down to Egypt, God, in mercy, showed him the failure, and brought him back to the place of the altar and *tent* (Gen. 13 3, 4). But "Lot went with him" at the outset: we are not told he heard *any* "call," or was thus subject to the Lord's *separating* will. He loved the Lord, but did not realize the *definiteness* of faith. What was the result? The plain of Jordan—toward Sodom—Sodom—a Mountain Cave, and Failure. He had gone up from Ur, but "returned" to an equally evil Sodom. He had opportunity to return, and chose it. How is it with us? *Why* did we come out from certain arrangements,

which are quite popular among some who profess the Name of the Lord? Was it that we were living near a "more Scriptural meeting place," and therefore "attended."? Ah, dear reader, have we *attended to the VOICE of the Lord*? Is our "giving up" a result of "circumstances," or of conviction before the Lord? If only the fruit of circumstances, can we be surprised if there is much spiritual stagnation since? If we are not responsive, if we are not those who *have an ear* (in the *present tense*), naturally we are disappointed. *Circumstances* brought us out, and *circumstances* may lead us back, or existing *circumstances* may make us variable, and depressed. But if we realize *Him* Who calleth, what are "circumstances"? If we endure, as seeing Him Who is Invisible, "opportunity" to return to Christendom's attractive buildings, and social organizations, and "pleasant" evenings, is not a call to us. *A mightier call has been heard*. The Lord Himself invites us to His kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2. 12).

We have opportunity to go back: possibly we go back, yet not the whole way: we can turn back in heart to Egypt (Acts 7. 39). Yea, we can *look* back, as Lot's wife, to that which is forbidden. "Opportunity" for failure is *ever* present. We are not held by *chains* in the path of obedience. There is no compulsion. *We have "opportunity" to return to-day!*

But *shall* we return? Have we not proved that the Lord is gracious? Have we not been taught something of His will by *Himself*? Do we not hear the words, "Faint *not*"? "Let us *not* be weary in well-doing." There *are* perplexing problems: but there is greater grace, and our hearts are drawn to trust our Heavenly Father, that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, from our hearts we may say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 27, 28).

CHOKING THE WORD, OR, ARE THERE ANY THORNS IN OUR LIVES?

LUKE 8. 14 is very definite.—Cares, riches and pleasures of this life are thorns. You may *not* be wealthy,—you worry. A thorn! You may have some wealth,—beware of un pilgrim-likeness. You may think "pleasures" are a necessary "change,"—be careful, lest the Lord's pleasures (Ps. 16. 11) are forgotten. Mark gives a wondrous sidelight:—

(a) "Cares of *this age*."

(b) "Deceitfulness of riches."

(c) "Desires of other things."

Observe (a) that *any* conformity to this age is dangerous (Rom

12. 2): what is the implied remedy?—a living consciousness of the Coming of Christ, a living realization of Gal. 1. 4, and deliverance from this age. Why need you worry? (b) "Riches" are more powerful than we think—though small. We are more influenced by what we *have* than we are aware. Often we *overestimate* our willingness to give up, as the one who said "All these have I kept from my youth up,"* (c) Anything desired instead of the Lord's will is a wrong pleasure: "other things" or, as we might render, "*left things*." Sometimes we put aside something for Christ, and then hanker after it: for example, we dress more pilgrimlike, and then go back to some fashion. Have we any thorns?

Notice too, the word "entering in": the work of Satan is to *insinuate*, and thus there is the "*keeping on*" of this "entering in"; a *little* influence here, a *small* drawing there. Temptation does not come labelled "Temptation." Sin does not say, "I am sin." Gradually, gradually, a thorn grows.

Matthew gives us a similar witness. Shall the Holy Spirit's threefold repetition of a threefold temptation be in vain? *Thorns have no fruit*. There is no fruit from worry. There is *nothing for Christ* in "settling down." There is no spiritual gain in worldly pleasures. Thorns have *no fruit*. Ah, business-engrossed believer, without time for Him, where is the fruit? Are you to have a pile of thorns—to be burnt? Worrying child of God, discontented with your circumstances, why do you put aside fruit? *Fruit* is needed—much fruit (John 15. 5). Let the words of Luke 8. 14 ring out, "Go forth, and are choked." You go on your way: will you not *stand* in the Lord's counsel? Will you not wait before Him? YOU are being *choked*, because THE WORD is being choked. These two thoughts are wondrously impressive. You are being choked: you are so unkind to yourself, so ungrateful to the Lord.

We may know the reference to Gen. 3. 18, where the "desire" of other things came in, and see a reference to an unsaved professor and that the ground is *not good*. But do not forget that believers also have the flesh, and sow to *the flesh* (Gal. 6. 8); even though grace prevents the climax of *utter* choking. Do we not become *like* the unsaved *whenever* we leave our Lord's will? Let us not blunt the edge of His truth. We are often choking ourselves because we *choke the Word* by other things. Oh that God may speak to all our hearts: let us not choke His Word. Every *thorn* is against His Word. Shall we not seek victory in the Holy Spirit?

* A leaflet, "I am Willing to Do the Lord's Will To-day at All Costs," will be gladly sent if the Lord permit, most of the writings of *this* issue, too, will be reprinted.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"O LORD, THOU ART MY GOD; I WILL EXALT THEE, I WILL PRAISE THY NAME; FOR THOU HAST DONE WONDERFUL THINGS; THY COUNSELS OF OLD ARE FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH."
ISAIAH 25. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

IN the mercy of our God, and by His enabling, we can again send forth a testimony concerning Himself and His love. It is a joy to have a salvation which does not vanish away, which cannot be abolished. But every emphasis rightly laid on the sufficiency of the gospel involves further emphasis on the responsibility of THOSE WHO ARE HIGHLY FAVOURED. If we have received a full release from the wrath of God, and have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, what manner of persons we CAN be, and SHOULD be, to the glory of God's grace!

SOUNDING BRASS

OR

BELLS OF PURE GOLD. WHICH?

IT is delightful to be saved,—delightful to say, "Judgment is past for me." But to *talk* of salvation is not the goal. We wish to *please* God. Knowledge, apparent faith, activity, outward giving up and giving away are but as *sounding brass* if they are not done "in the Name of the Lord Jesus." God invites His children to enjoy their privilege of a contrast with this. Joined to their Heavenly High Priest, there should be the *music* of their loving actions before Him, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Pomegranates" speak of *exalted* faithfulness—not of pride's exaltation, but a *true* height of devotion. Pomegranates and bells

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alternated, for God is the God of order, and everything in His work is beautifully arranged. That which is in the Name of the Lord Jesus is as fruit and music! Fruit speaks of actions, and music of words: happy are they whose feet and mouths alike glorify God (Rom. 10. 15). It is a wondrous privilege to emphasize the love of the Lord enabling "golden bells" before Himself; spiritual worship is His rejoicing (John 4. 24). Priestly praise (1 Pet. 2. 9) is a great opportunity. Let us not seek the glories of men, but that which delights the Father. Ah, beloved readers, let us with love's devotedness, *for* "sounding brass" but be enthusiastic for the privilege of drawing near, and of being heard by the Lord Whose voice we hear (Num. 7. 89), and Whose wondrous words of preserving from death (Ex. 28. 35), still apply to His dear people.

"MUST."

MANY are afraid of the precious compelling of love. They seem to think that love must be jerky and uncontrolled. This is the reverse of the truth. *Uncommanded* love is not the love that pleases God (John 13. 34, 14. 15). Far from commandments involving a slavery, there is a sad self-slavery unless we are thus in the precious will of the Lord. It is enjoyable to see some of the precious "musts" of His life, for there was no mere "form of duty" in the abounding love He felt and showed!

"I *must* be about My Father's business." Luke 2. 49.

"I *must* preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also." Luke 4. 43.

"He *must* needs go through Samaria." John 4. 4.

"I *must* walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following." Luke 13. 33.

"I *must* work the works of Him That sent Me while it is day." John 9. 4.

"To-day I *must* abide at Thy house." Luke 19. 5.

"He *must* go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things." Matt. 16. 21.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up." John 3. 14.

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I *must* bring, and they shall hear My voice." John 10. 16.

"Opening and alleging that Christ *must* needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus Whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Acts 17. 3.

"*Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" Luke 24. 26.

THE PASSOVER.

AN OFT-FORGOTTEN ASPECT— GOD PAUSED OVER THE BLOOD-SPRINKLED DOORS.

WE frequently call to mind the typical deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and what it sets forth of the grace of God, shining forth in the precious redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus. We remember "the *first* month," *i.e.* the new beginning, the safety, the girded loins, the joyous partaking of food, the bringing out, the setting aside of that which typified "malice and wickedness," and so forth. But do we always apply the words aright,—*"The Lord will pass over the door!"* Many have the thought that "pass through" and "pass over" are *related*, but the aspect is quite distinct, and the Holy Spirit has used entirely different words.

God passed through the land, and with Him the destroyer. But when He saw the blood, He stayed there, and would "not suffer the destroyer" to go in (Ex. 12. 23). This added statement helps us: God is pleased to describe Himself as remaining *in front* of the blood-marked doors,—a Personal Protector!

If this is the beautiful meaning, we realize anew that,—

(a) He delights in the antitypical redemption through the blood of His Beloved Son, and if that blood is sprinkled on *us*, He dwells with *us*.

(b) In between those within the houses and the smiting, the Lord Himself stood!

(c) The wrath could not reach them, without, as it were, reaching Him first!

How much helpful teaching, therefore, is linked with the answer to a deeply important question:—"What is the meaning of the word rendered 'pass over'?" The simple verb occurs 5 times,—three occurrences are in Exodus 12:—

"I will pass over you." (13).

"The Lord will pass over the door." (23).

"The Lord's passover, Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt." (27).

Isa. 31. 5 contains the same word with a definite allusion, and also an explanation. First we have swiftness,—as bird's flying. Then we have preserving. But how is this? How does a bird protect? By passing on? Surely not! By pausing over. "He shall cover thee *with His feathers, and under His wings* shalt thou trust" (Ps. 91. 4). This seems decisive. And what shall we say as to the only other verse?—There it is rightly rendered "*halt*": "How long *halt* ye between two opinions?"—1 Kings 18. 21. Here is a fundamental thought, so definitely found that the common word for "*lame*," whether in Lev. 21. 18,

2 Sam. 5. 6, Isa. 35. 6, Jer. 31. 8, or Mal. 1. 8 is from this root. The lame man is *not* the one who passes by, but who *pauses*. Thus the Lord said:—"I will PAUSE over you" (Ex. 12. 13).*

There are two more complex forms of the verb, one in 2 Sam. 4. 4, "He fell and became lame." Surely the evidence accumulates. The other, in 1 Kings 18. 26 seems to be a human interpretation rather than a translation. Verse 26 prepares for 28, "They cried aloud, and *cut themselves*":—already in the earlier verse we see how they *lamed themselves* in their intensity. It may be that they leaped up and down, but the Holy Spirit calls attention to the fact that they *lamed themselves*. Thus they were wearied out, and yet perished: how precious is the contrast of a believer with our prayer-hearing God!

There are no other occurrences! And the only other Hebrew derivative is the word "Passover."† Can we doubt the Holy Spirit's teaching? He Himself has graciously granted us sufficient explanatory verses to show us how lovingly the Lord Himself remained in front of the doors wherever the blood was. How remarkable is the contrast with Gen: 3. There we have—

The sword in between the man and the Lord.

Here we have, as it were—

The Lord in between the sword and the man.

Moreover, we are reminded that on another pivotal day of Israel's year, the blood was put on the mercy seat, and where the blood was put, the Lord put His Name: that was His dwelling place. "Passover" shews the bringing OUT: the Day of Atonement sets forth the bringing IN, but the same aspect is found:

(a) No hope without the blood!

(b) Where the blood is, there the Lord is!

Ah, dear believing readers, let us not lose this precious teaching. "The Sacrifice of the Lord's Pause-over" reminds us how our heavenly Father delights in the precious blood, and has claimed us as His very own. And how can wrath touch those thus sheltered? The grace of God is not a bare "charity"—given and forgotten. The Lord dwells with those whom He redeems! He guarantees their salvation with personal interest. Nothing can change His covenant love. The precious blood may well be to us for a token. Many years previously Abraham, whom God Himself calls a prophet, declared that the Lord would SEE the work of His Beloved Son, THE Lamb! And so it is written "I have seen THE blood." Yes, THE Blood is the one token and it is a sure token, and now there is a full salvation for those sheltered in Christ. On that memorable day when He was crucified the sword awoke against Him (Matt. 26. 31), and His people were covered. No wrath *could* destroy them, no wrath *can* destroy them, no wrath *will* destroy them.

* In THIS verse the Sept: is correct, σκεπασω.

† The term used by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is, very remarkably, the very Hebrew word: hence this corroborates.

REHOBOAM.

WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime were written for our learning, and we do well to be exercised before God. Each character in Scripture history has a message for us. Rehoboam was privileged in that his father was beyond others, and the book of Proverbs shows instruction for the king's son. But home example and failure are powerful beyond words and meetings, and all else; and Rehoboam lacked stability (2 Chron. 11. 17), he reproduced the failures of the home (2 Chron. 11. 21). His mother was an Ammonitess (2 Chron. 12. 13). After a period of concern, he left the *law* of the Lord,* and our mind turns to the solemn and painful words of 1 Kings 11. 4,— "When Solomon was old," and again, "His heart was not perfect." Oh for an undividedness of heart! "UNITE my heart to fear Thy Name!"

The king's *first* answer to the people was unwise, and illustrates the "failure" which showed itself more after the three years, which should have been years of training. But there was no *fixity* of godly determination (2 Chron. 12. 14 see margin). Contrast Ezra (7. 10). And if what the people (and Rehoboam himself) said of Solomon be true, we see how *his* failure to carry out the principles of government he *knew* so well, (as the book of Proverbs shows), was *reproduced* in the son. Let godly parents have godly concern to *walk with God* more *each* day they live: thus will they influence their children by the atmosphere of love unto the Lord in the home.

The beacon has gleams of light (2 Chron. 11. 4, 12. 6), and we praise God for these, but they only emphasize the *unfixed* heart the more. May it be ours, in the Holy Spirit, to be determined unto the Lord! Ps. 108 is precious: "O God my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise." And we call to mind 1 Chron. 29. 18, "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and PREPARE (STABLISH, *marg.:*) THEIR HEART UNTO THEE"

"AS THOU HAST BELIEVED,
BE IT DONE UNTO THEE."

ALL the Lord's statements concerning faith might well be *put together*: not that we can view His words as distinct from those of the Holy Spirit in other Scriptures, but there is an intended unity in His testimony during the pilgrim life, in which He sets His own an example of *loving confidence* (Heb. 12. 2, 3). The words could be classified thus—Faith *into* Him as John 3. 15, 16—*Commands* to faith, e.g., Mark 11. 22—*Promises* to

* We are not told here that he openly left the Lord in all things: many would acknowledge Him awhile, *without His* commands, but see John 14. 15, 21, 23.

Faith, as Matt. 17. 20, 21. 21—*Commendations* of Faith, e.g., Matt. 8. 10, 15. 28—*Rebukes* of unbelief, Matt. 14. 31, Mark 4. 40,—and so forth. The repeated stress on "Thy faith hath made thee whole, or saved thee," with respect to His gift of blessings, cannot be overlooked; and the words "*according to your faith*" in Matt. 9. 29 encourage continual heart-exercise, and also restfulness. Thus the exhortation rings out, "Be not afraid, ONLY believe" (Mark 5. 36). If we are in a *condition* to enjoy the triumphs of faith we may indeed rejoice. Disobedience has power to rob us of privileges, but if we see this, shall we not claim victory over the disobedience, in the power of the Holy Spirit?

It is helpful to notice that the leper in Matt: 8. 2 lays stress on the *Person* of Christ, the centurion on the *Word* of Christ (8). The *Word* depends on the *Person*, but the ORDER is very beautiful. The Lord's answer in verse 13 implies three things very manifestly:—

- (1) According to the *fact* of our faith we shall receive.
- (2) According to the *extent* and measure of our faith we shall be encouraged.
- (3) Along the *line* of our faith we shall obtain that which we definitely seek.

In other words "As" suggests "Because thou hast believed," "In the manner thou hast believed," "As to the matter, for which thou hast believed." May our hearts enjoy this exhortation—and live accordingly!

"With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."
 "In him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
 "These are wells without water."

Isa. 12. 3, John 4. 14, 2 Pet. 2. 17.

STRIKING contrast! If by God's grace, we value salvation, and long to please the Lord, let our hearts—and minds too 1 Cor. 1. 10—be drawn nearer together. With this object—and God's glory in this object—are these pages humbly and expectantly sent forth. Of one of old we read that God's Words were found and he did EAT them (Jer. 15. 16), of others a prophet was told, "THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY DO THEM NOT" (Ezek. 33. 32). To whom are we like? Amid the strife of tongues, amid the surroundings of a comparatively comfortable nominal Christianity, let there be

A PLEA FOR REALITY,

that God's dear people, in this, and other lands, may truly enjoy His truth, and walk in His way, "as becometh" saints, pleasing Him. Redemption is meant to be a death blow to WORLDLINESS. A HALTING obedience is not the joy of running in the way of the Lord's commandments, by the power of the Holy Spirit! Why do we hold back?

THE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURE, A PLEA AND A PRAYERFUL DESIRE.

OUR gracious God caused Scripture to be written for His dear people, that it might be applied in the power of the Holy Spirit "Let him HEAR what the Spirit SAITH" (Rev. 2. 7). Far from holding back, God has approved Timothy's acquaintance with it *from a babe* (2 Tim. 3. 15), and the stress on reading to *all* the brethren, is illustrated by 1 Thess. 5. 27. The Bible is *not* merely a book for the "learned."

But since Babel showed man's sad, sad attempt at defiant unity, God has used different languages as a standing witness of ruin. Yet where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and therefore in Acts 2. 11 we have an encouraging emphasis on the Lord's approval of witness to men from all lands, that they were then able to say, "We do hear them speak, in our tongues, the wonderful works of God."

Moreover, the Holy Spirit *often* uses *the overruled* Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures in New Testament quotations, though varying therefrom when it was *not* overruled for the purpose of this use.* Thus we are encouraged to see that *vernacular* translation is approved. This is a *wonderful* condescension; for God is willing to use weak instruments.

The history of the Septuagint is little known, but *enough* is handed down to cause believers now a restfulness in some use of translations made by those who themselves have not learnt much of many parts of the truth. The English 1611 version, or revision, was made by men who were unacquainted with God's teaching as to separation. How wondrously the *Jews* handed down the Old Testament against themselves,† and Romanism guarded many manuscripts of the New Testament rejecting Romanism. Thus those who knew not God's lessons, in many ways, were the means of making those lessons known to others.

But we would not willingly approve any error, or misrepresent any part of God's will, and, therefore, MUCH PRAYER is needed for those now translating, or revising translations, of the Scripture in the hundreds of earthly languages. Do we pray sufficiently for them? Some may have made but little acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew. Possibly, too, they know only a little of His truth as to electing grace, Scriptural earnestness, the Coming

* This point is important. Man tends to "generalize." The Holy Spirit employs the Septuagint sometimes, but *not* always. Hence do not say that the *whole* translation is approved: but do not infer that to-day we should *always* leave the authorized version and re-translate in English. It is delightful to see how God can overrule translators in many passages, and thus make His testimony clearer, and yet *prevent* any putting aside of the original, and any confidence in man, by *limiting* this control.

† This also is remarkable. Romanism's boast that it gave the Church the Bible is unfounded. Did Judaism give part? Should we not rather say that God, Who works as He wills, (*cf.* Dan. 4. 17), can employ unlikely ones, as the ravens to Elijah?

of the Lord, and so forth. And the language into which they render may know nothing of such words as "grace" and "humility," in their fragrant Christian power. Nor are natives always able to make clear to us what they really mean. Such will often flatter, others will say "Yes" to everything. The work is not easy. Should we not have more DEFINITE PRAYER? The greatest hindrance is *distance from the Lord*. Oh that He may raise up spiritual translators, and the overruling of all to *His glory*.

— — —
 "TO HER." Matt. 15. 28.

HOW often one overlooks the little words of Scripture, and those added in one verse but Divinely omitted in another. Before verse 28 we have the repeated, "But He answered and said" (24 and 26). Wondrous principles were clearly stated. The Lord Jesus was *sent to Israel*. How would the woman's faith meet this difficulty?—"Then *came she*." If He did not come to her, she would come to Him, and would leave out the words, "Son of David," and approach Him *not* as a Man, but as *the Lord*; not only *Sent*, but the mighty Saviour. This precious lesson is brought out yet more by the words "*and worshipped Him*." Every syllable emphasizes, and shows, the perfect fulness of the inspired Scriptures.

Yet another difficulty is graciously put: "It is not good to have *taken* the children's bread." True, *but* what if the children *drop* it? "And to have *cast* it to the *little dogs*." Nay, it is not to be merely "*cast*." Further, the LITTLE dogs were in the fellahheen's houses. There is *hope!* The word "*little dogs*" holds out Divinely appointed hope: it is not the stiff word "dogs," but a term that sometimes suggests endearment as many *diminutives*. Faith grasps a hint,—a hint from Christ is not a mere straw. In humility and confidence, she replies, "YES, LORD" "For"—the *linking* word is stronger than "yet." "*Even the little dogs eat*." "Then Jesus answered and said UNTO HER." The negatives of verses 24 and 26 are replaced: the *first* word in *each* previous answer was, "Not." Her faith had replied with faith's *affirmative*, and now the Lord's answer leaves the "not," and *leaves the plural*, and expresses more fully that *positive* love to needy sinners *which He had all the while* "O woman." This is "*to her*."* No more have we a *general* principle, but a personal blessing. "O" is, indeed, a change from "No": it is an exclamation of His own precious admiration and approval. Yes, our beloved Lord admires faith. *And faith is honoured*. Ah, beloved readers, the Lord does not test in order to cast to the ground, but that *faith* may be exercised in the line of His will, and that we may be prepared to *hold* the *weighty* blessing He delights to bestow!

* Contrast the *other* aspect of the *negative* which yet more *intensifies* the two of verses 24 and 26—in verse 23 "But He answered her NOT a word!"

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

THE LORD JESUS SAID:—

"I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS, AND ABIDE IN HIS LOVE. THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL . . . YE ARE MY FRIENDS, IF YE DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU."

JOHN 15. 10, 11, 14.

A Word of Introduction.

AS the Lord enables, we would send forth these pages. They are NOT the effort of man to improve men. They are NOT intended to encourage an "emotionalism" nor to help a "reunion" on lines of man's wisdom. They are sent forth with a simple desire to emphasize that the mighty work of God is the ground and cause of a FREE-grace salvation, and to plead that the Words of God may be held sufficient to guide His blood-bought people in EVERYTHING, when applied in the Holy Spirit. Any "other" path, however plausibly recommended and "successful," has no claim on "His own." The simplicity of following ONE Lord brings HIS people OUT FROM "other things," and UNTO "one another." But the SIMPLICITY of following Him is not only in WORD: oh that we may have a DAILY REALITY, and a heart-loving care for God's glory in little things.

FAITH.

We are all apt to regard "faith" as a "gift" of which the Lord bestows "quantities" in bulk, and we have a *bare* receiving of the goods. But is there not a real contrast between the gift of a few apples, and the gift of a *living* tree which will bear many pounds of precious fruit, as it is rightly tended? And is not faith rather of the latter description? A *living faith* is God's gift.

- (i). "His Lord's Money."
 (ii). "He that had received five talents came and *brought* other five talents."
 (iii). "Faithful . . . the Joy of thy Lord."
 Matt. 25. 18, 20, 21.

IT is a privilege to study prayerfully the *whole* of a parable, and in its wondrous *context*. The solemn, and precious, parable of the talents is a stimulus to believers in view of "the Judgment Seat of Christ." Oh that we may be *found* faithful in that Day!

Just now, God seems to bring before the writer the gracious way in which He *not only* teaches by the whole, but also through the underlying *principles* and *lessons* of individual expressions. For example, the words "*His Lord's money*" may well ring in our ears. We are not our own, and *whatsoever* we possess is not our own, but a trusteeship. How are we treating *our Lord's money*? Do we spend it for self? Do we decide? Or are we *gladly* subject to Him? And, let us remember, *without forgetting money itself*, that time also is an income. How are we using our time? Do we have an undue proportion in *bed* and in the affairs of this life? How are we using, or omitting to use, or *misusing*, our Lord's money, in this connexion? Nor can we forget "opportunities," and "influence," and "abilities"; they, too, are "our Lord's money."

There is a beautiful ring of simplicity, love, and gladness, in the attitude of the faithful servants. And we notice how there was the happy *bringing* or *presenting* of all the gained talents. Do we enter into this aspect *now*? *All* our encouragements should be *presented to the Lord!* If, through the right use of what He gives, we gain more, let us quickly bring everything to Him. We bring our five loaves when we feel our insufficiency, for the words, "Bring them hither to Me," sound forth to refresh us (Matt. 14. 18). Let us also bring our blessings: they are by grace, and to His glory!

And how delightfully has the Lord linked *faithfulness* and *joy*. Why do we often rob ourselves of joy? Because we rob Him of faithfulness! We hold back, or merely give because we "must": we make our privileges burdens, and then complain of *them* instead of *our own condition!* The philosopher's stone to make things of earth to become gold has not been found, but the Lord's love is better: it makes common duties to become "spiritual." But there is the alternative! A complaining, half-hearted heart may make spiritual things a burden, and take all the joy out of the Lord's commandments. Oh that we may, henceforth, in the power of the Holy Spirit, enter more fully into the joy of Him Who said, "I delight to do Thy will." Likeness to Christ is impossible apart from delighting in the will of the Father.

WHY the SCRIPTURES were WRITTEN, OR God's Forethought for His Beloved People.

Behold another sidelight on the wondrous love of God:—

- (a) "Now it was *not written for his sake alone*, that it was imputed to him; *but for us also.*" Rom. 4. 23, 24.
 (b) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15. 4.
 (c) "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." Ps. 102. 18, cf. 22. 31.
 (d) "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." 1 Cor. 9. 10.
 (e) "They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (ages) are come." 1 Cor. 10. 11.
 (f) "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." 1 Pet. 1. 12.
 (g) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.
 (h) "Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Mic. 2. 7.

What wonderful love is here manifested. Oh that we may possess our possessions. (Obad. 17).

I found a tendency to ask for more blessings, as if for distinct gifts, to be received in bulk, instead of asking for grace to *use* the blessings which the Lord *had* given. And I found a readiness to look on blessings as for myself, instead of opportunities to show love to others unto His glory. And again I found it easy to wish for *more* to be granted to me, whereas the need was that I might be *enlarged* to receive, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, that which was *already* addressed to me, and *waiting* for delivery.

Beloved friends, if we become in a wrong *condition* everything looks wrong, and we begin to surmise and complain. Only as we *walk* with God can we have the right attitude toward His chastening, toward all our "circumstances," and toward our brethren. Do we not all feel our need for heart-humbling?

“WHEN SOLOMON WAS OLD.”

1 Kings 11. 4.

THESE solemn words are a definite call to us. Nehemiah *felt* their power (Neh. 13. 26). Solomon was “beloved of his God,” and *yet* he wandered. “Success” is a peril, a greater peril than we think.

It is often thought that age brings more willingness to “give up” the things of earth, but is it so? This should be the joy of God’s people (Ps. 92. 14), but is it ALWAYS so? Who was the more devoted:—Asa in his young manhood, or aged Asa? In whom do we see more concern for God’s will:—in youthful Josiah, or when he went at his own bidding against the king of Egypt? Are there not hints in the Epistles that many *became* spiritually slothful (Heb. 5. 11, *lit.*), and that, when iniquity abounds, it is “natural” for love to grow cold? There must be a continued communion with God, that there may be a continued warmth. We have need of *patience*, and patient continuance,—we must not settle down. 2 Tim. 4 is among the very painful chapters of Scripture, yet full of the Lord’s encouragement. The angel of the church of Ephesus, is the Lord’s beacon. And “when Solomon was old,” he turned aside. We are not *told* here about the extent of his repentance, though we rejoice in grace, but Scripture silence is powerful. It leads to heart-examination, that, in the Holy Spirit, we may seek to walk worthily, and not to be *gradually*, and imperceptibly **SIDE-TRACKED**.

The amazing fact is this, that wisdom and knowledge do not prevent the *greater* power of erring “love” to draw along a wrong path. “He clave . . . in love” (1 Kings 11. 2). Oh that we may cleave unto the Lord in love (Acts 11. 23, John 21. 15). One may be wise, and yet act unwisely, through *affections*. WISHES often rule: how important is Gal. 5. 24. “Knowledge” of God’s will is not sufficient, let us seek grace to *will* to do it, (John 7. 17), to love it more and more, because of loving Him. There is a great difference in Scripture between “the KNOWLEDGE of the truth” (Heb. 10. 26), and “the LOVE of the truth,” (2 Thess. 2. 10).

Furthermore, Solomon’s saddening experience reminds us, that “youthful lusts” are not the only ones. Sometimes it has been thought that, whereas in matters of “love,” and also as to godly discretion in relation to others, a younger child of God *needs* the exhortation of 1 Tim. 5. 2, but that older ones are free from such a need, and can be more unrestricted in their manner. Solomon’s experience negatives this. May we always be careful!

Again, let us not misuse past acquaintance with the Lord, for twenty or thirty, or more years, to take our mind off present dependence, in the Holy Spirit. We are *not* stable to-day **BECAUSE** of last year’s spirituality. The flesh is **STILL** real, the

world is **STILL** existing, the tempter is **STILL** subtle. We *need* daily manna. We *need* daily communion. We *need* daily,—hourly fellowship, and strength “in the Lord.”

CHRIST’S EMPHASIS ON HIS OWN WORDS IN JOHN 14 AND 15.

“If ye love *Me*—keep *My* commandments.”

“He that hath *My* commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth *ME*.”

“If a man love *Me*, he will keep *My* Words.”

“He that loveth *Me* not keepeth not *My* sayings.”

“In *My* Name . . . whatsoever *I* have said unto you.”

“The *Word* which I have spoken unto you . . . Abide in *Me*.”

“If ye abide in *Me* and *My* Words abide in you, ye shall ask.”

“Ye are *My* friends, if ye do whatsoever *I* command you.”

“*I* have chosen you . . . remember *the* *Word*.”

(John 14. 15, 21, 23, 24, 26 : 15. 3, 4, 7, 14, 19, 20).

Surely the people of God are encouraged to the appointed attitude, in the power of the Holy Spirit!

“WHICH ALSO SAT.”

Luke 10. 39.

THE precious teaching of the Lord in His words always awaken, or should awaken, our praise. Each syllable of His is beyond value, but how little we all realize, and how little can we explain His fulness. Yet we would praise more for all He has enabled.

As some dear children of God may not quite follow one thought on page 13 of February’s issue, it may be to the glory of God to add a note. “Which also sat” might suggest, in English, “Mary *also*” or “Sat *also*,” but the Holy Spirit’s wording* is much more definite, and *signifies* the latter. That is, Mary is the *one* here before us, in her *two* actions: in other words, she did *something else*, as well as sit. Martha explains:—“Hath *left* me.” Thus she was not idle, nor careless of loving welcome, but *did* all that was necessary, *from the Lord’s standpoint*, as to the body, at the right time, and also enjoyed the “NEEDFUL” *sitting and hearing of His Word*. May we have a similar proportion in our life—unto the Lord!

To trust the Lord is delightful: faith is happy, not merely forced

* In the Greek.

“IMPOSSIBLE.”

THIS word, or its equivalent, is oft in our lips, or, at least, in our *mind*, and we “limit God” more frequently than we think (Ps. 78. 41). A *verbal* victory is not sufficient: we may say, “Our God is able” and *act* as though He were not able. We may *sing* of His might, and go forth to *murmur* and *complain*. We may *remind* others of the words “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?”—and then ourselves become *irritable*, because of wisely permitted trials, intended for our refining and training. We may *talk* of the uniting power of the Spirit of God, and then hastily *suggest* that we cannot all be of one mind (see 1 Cor. 1. 10). We may *rejoice* in the miracles of saving grace, and then become *discouraged* in Christian work, because men seem so hard, and hardened. It is important to *live up* to our belief, and to be prayerfully concerned that it may be a *spiritual experience* and not only a *mental conception*.

Matt. 19. 26 impresses every soul born from above. “With men this is IMPOSSIBLE.” The dead CANNOT quicken themselves. The preacher CANNOT create (2 Cor. 5. 17). “It is the Spirit That quickeneth.” But these facts which shut us up to fulness of self-distrust are the very background for fulness of confidence and joy in Him. There is *more than a ray* of hope. If salvation depended on “probabilities,” and human preparations, we might reason, and become discouraged as to many, but God can *easily*, and more than easily, *save the most unlikely*. “It is the Spirit That quickeneth.” “*The things which are impossible with men are possible with God*” is Christ’s own answer to the question, “*Who then can be saved?*” It should be impressed on the heart of every true Christian worker, (a) eliminating *human methods* of trying to save men, and to do the impossible, and (b) eliminating discouraged despondency as well! There are these TWO ASPECTS. If it is, as we know, IMPOSSIBLE to please God without faith (Heb. 11. 6).—“the grace of our Lord was (and is) *exceeding abundant WITH FAITH*” (1 Tim. 1. 14). Ephesians 2. 8 is *not* a dead letter. The Words of God stand: and we do well to stand upon them.

Again, when we look at the “physical” frame, and ordinary things, we feel our “helplessness.” Anxiety creeps in: this is sin. It is in this connexion that the *same* thought comes with sanctifying power,—“for with God nothing shall be impossible.” Why should we speak so commonly after the manner of men respecting the *future*—“I shall not be able to get about again for two or three days,” and so forth? The Lord is greater than the body, and knows our needs, and is not limited!

And now we come to a humbling, but graciously crushing, reply to our fears. Our real difficulties are not through our *weakness*, but through our *unbelief*. “If ye have faith as a grain of

mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you!”—Matt. 17. 20. Ah, beloved reader, mark the earlier words of the verse. The disciples had asked “Why COULD NOT we?” And the answer was, “Because of your unbelief.” Here is a call to confession of sin. ‘Tis not that *faith* can alter God’s purposes, but faith, on the lines of His will, is mighty. We dare not complain of our circumstances, or our need. But this verse does not encourage having *human* faith (see Mark 11. 22 margin) for whatever we “fancy,” but it stimulates earnest seeking to know the voice of God, and definite expectation therein unto His glory. Thus will there be living power, in the Holy Spirit, and instead of being occupied with our “I cannot,” we shall be simply concerned to abide in the line of HIS will, knowing that *there* the only limitation is precious, for His will is the one boundary. Nothing else! Truth knows *no other restriction*! Here is true comfort: here is real joy: here is spiritual victory! May it be the comfort and joy and victory of His people increasingly.

“LEST THOU SHOULDEST SAY.”

Gen. 14. 23.

IT is important to be zealous for the glory of God, and that the tongues which dishonour God may be stopped, as far as we can, by godly consistency in our lives (Dan. 6. 4, 5). *The glory of God* is a sacred trust. The honour of His Name is no small privilege for His people. We do not want the ungodly to say words which are against Him. We would provide things honest and good, not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of men (2 Cor. 8. 21). Abraham lived to God’s glory before the king of Sodom. He would not take a thread or a shoe-latchet (mark how he dreaded being *tied* to this world), lest anything should be said against the Lord’s Name. He wanted the Lord to have *all the glory*. There are these who have remarked, “I do not care what people say,” and this attitude is right with regard to *obedience* unto the Lord at all costs: we must never shrink from obedience because men speak foolishly. But as to the *manner* of the Lord’s people in obeying, and as to the giving up of advantages and comforts, it is *important* to care what people do say, lest *our wrong* manner be the cause of their wrong words, and we make them to sin. Our zeal for the Lord, and our sorrow over the sins of sinners, should be real.

If we ought to “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2. 15), we must walk circumspectly. And, not only so, not only would we give no occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12. 14, 1 Tim. 3. 7), lest we increase their weight of wrath in “that Day,” but we need also to be prayerfully concerned lest those who own the Name of Christ should do or

speaking wrongly through us. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; *lest any should say that I had baptized into mine own name*" (1 Cor. 1. 14, 15).* The apostle did not disparage *baptism* at all, but he would not exalt a *baptizer*. We must often abstain from actions which Satan might use long afterwards!

God Himself has emphasized *His own* perfect attitude as to men in this connexion:—"I said, I would scatter . . . were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy . . . *lest they should say, Our hand is high*" (Deut. 32. 26, 27). How often He withholds, for the glory of His Name!

Another aspect of these words is found in Job 32. 13. "*Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom.*" God allowed the failure of Job's friends, lest they should boast. Often we falter in Christian service, because we are not spiritually minded enough to avoid the strain of *pride after encouragement*.

To return:—It is fitting that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we should not *fear* what men will do or say, when God has commanded, but likewise it is fitting that we should walk with God and be kept from actions, which though they may not be forbidden, in general, would, on certain occasions, be used afterwards by the evil one to damage testimony for the Lord, and dishonour His Name. How solemn is the Christian life. Every detail is precious. We cannot tell all the effects of an action to-day. Therefore it is needful to pray for grace, simply to do God's will in the *right* way and *to leave results with Him*, asking His definite hindrance of that which would be misused in the future! Human skill and *scheming* will not secure this, but He, Who knows ALL the future, will work, as He is trusted! Dear fellow-believers, let us seek to please God in all, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Possibly we thought we should like the manna *without* any preparing, but the Lord shows us that we must first *go forth* to obtain, aye, and go forth early; and then, secondly, we must bring home, and *make ready* (Ex. 16. 5, Num 11. 8). The *double* spiritual exercise is for our good. The grace of God does not encourage idleness. Do not expect all blessings to come "*ready made*" for partaking of them. Gather, grind in mills, and bake in pans, and make cakes,—and the taste shall be as the taste of fresh oil, unto the glory of Him Who gives both the manna, and the power to use and enjoy aright.

* Other "lests" in this epistle are helpful: 1. 17. 8. 13. 9. 12.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE." GAL. 5. 1.

"HOLDING FAITH, AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE; WHICH SOME HAVING PUT AWAY CONCERNING FAITH HAVE MADE SHIPWRECK." 1 TIM. 1. 19.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the mercy of God again enabled, we would issue a little messenger concerning His great love, and the great things of His truth. Truth is one: the word "*doctrine*" is never SCRIPTORALLY in the plural with regard to His will (a Concordance will show this). His people do well to realize the UNION of all parts of His truth, and to plead for growing up unto Christ in ALL things,—*doctrine, practice and devotion joined*,—while they humbly and expectantly wait, enabled by the Holy Spirit, for their soon coming Lord. We shall rejoice if He blesses these pages to such, and uses them to the salvation of sinners, to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1. 6, 2 Cor. 4. 5, 6).

THE PERIL of an ELASTIC CONSCIENCE.

"A CONSCIENCE belonging to God," such is the beautiful expression of 1 Peter 2. 19. The natural man knows nothing of this in the spiritual aspect of the words. True, he may be troubled: God may show to any one, in his own personal knowledge of himself, the failure which marks everything of man, and, as nature also teaches, men are without excuse or defence. They can, and should repent, as those in Nineveh.

But the human conscience is by no means an infallible guide,

as some have taught. It can be seared and defiled (1 Tim. 4. 2, Tit. 1. 15); the *pure* conscience is always connected with believers only. Yet, the words used by the Holy Spirit show that the conscience of the ungodly can be damaged: in other words, there are degrees of more and more intense rebellion. The term "conscience" literally signifies "*Knowledge with oneself*," and thus refers *first* to *impressions* received, rather than *decisions* made.* Hence "knowledge" may be *good*, but used in an *evil* way, or put aside. Thus conscience, as inner knowledge, may be the *result* of God's voice of warning, and the "searing" dulls and prevents "impression."

When any are, in grace, brought out of death unto life, they are led to an entirely new position (2 Cor. 5. 17), and are encouraged to enjoy an inner knowledge of completed salvation (Heb. 10. 2), followed by a good conscience, which is *susceptible* to the Lord's gracious teaching, and *conscious* of His disapproval,—pleased with what pleases Him.

It is possible to have a *weak* conscience, though saved, and we need *all* the encouragement God gives to retain, in the Holy Spirit, with a very definite prayerfulness, *the treasure of a good conscience* (1 Tim. 1. 19, 1 Pet. 3. 16). *Our* conscience *belongs* to God, and therefore we are willing for His will, seeking His standpoint alone.

And, therefore, we would be concerned that there may be the godly *application* of godly *principles*. It is so easy to do many things, because we *have* done them, or to omit them, because of a "rut,"—or, on the other hand, with the swing of the pendulum, through a "*natural*" fear of bare doing. Our longing should be the enjoyment of a healthy conscience which is ashamed of sin:—*sin being quickly perceived*,—even as the palate has a taste. Sometimes, if a verse does not seem to apply to *us*, we perceive its force at once: if it cuts at the root of one of our own actions, we are "dull." This is not right. Moreover, "individuality" often makes us less receptive, if *another* is privileged to point out how the Lord's will circumscribes *our* actions, to His glory. It is possible to have one aspect of conscience for ourselves, and another for our brethren. It is easy to have an *elastic* conscience when we *want* to do certain actions which appear "doubtful." We *persuade* ourselves that they are, or may be, "right," but we have no authority or enabling from God. We wish to shut our eyes. This is a real peril. As soon as there is a willingness to excuse one sin, or to avoid and check the Lord's reproof, we are in danger. Oh that, with confession of sin, we may live near unto Himself.

* This is overlooked. Conscience is often viewed as an arbitrator, and, as if it were God's own light in every man, instead of, as the EFFECT of His providential and other dealings. True LIGHT within is not natural conscience, but a quickening (2 Cor. 4. 6).

BINDING THE STRONG MAN.

Mark 3. 27.

THIS brief, but full, parable shows *how* wondrously the Lord acts. The context makes clear a reference to His work of grace and might in casting out demons. Satan was strong, but *his* strength was held back, he was defeated by *the Stronger*!

Two thoughts arise:—

- (a) The work of mercy in releasing those sold under sin is now *individual*; for the binding of Satan, *as to his work generally*, is still future (Rev. 20. 2).
- (b) The tendency of some to speak lightly of Satan, and to assume they can deal with him in their own strength is a dangerous mistake. The enemy is mighty: only in the Lord is there victory (1 Cor. 15. 57, Isa. 45. 24).

But the words go further. The kingdom and house of Mark 3. 24, 25 seem to hint *two* aspects, even as we have both in Rom. 6 & 7. And there we learn that *sin* was not indwelling, but reigning, *until* Paul was saved. After salvation the conflict begins, in order that indwelling sin may *not* reign. Thus we think of the flesh, through which Satan has been working, *as a strong man*. He is not *personally* present in each sinner. But Eph. 2. 2 shows *how* he operates. When there is a glorious rescue from "the authority of darkness" (Col. 1. 13), the tremendous power of the flesh is *bound*. Crucifixion gives a similar thought, and is *once* accomplished (Gal. 5. 24), as distinct from mortification, *which is, or should be, continual*.* Hence we should regard the flesh as a *judged enemy—bound*. We are not to put a criminal on the throne. We are not to untie the bonds at all. The house has been taken by the Lord,† and everything in it has been made *His spoil* (Mic. 4. 13). This involves the presenting of the *members* unto Him (Rom. 6. 13, 19). Herein is true Christian progress. 'Tis not—"How much do I profess?" or "How emotionally expressive of love am I?" but rather, "How are my members serving the Lord?" Godliness is a matter of daily life. The eyes must be in His service. The mouth should be used for Him. The hands should never be employed merely for self. Devotion should be manifest in the whole activity. The *negative* aspect is the binding of the strong man, so that we may not act at all as we used to act. The *positive* aspect is the use of the "goods" for the Lord. That is to say, "Old things are passed away"; but also, "New things have become." Thus the believer is not to excuse the flesh, as if it were unbound, but to walk and war in the Spirit. The warfare is real (2 Cor. 10. 4, 5), but the result is not uncertain. Any

* Cf. John 13. 10.

† In Matt. 12. 43 we have the very distinct aspect, when the unclean spirit GOES OUT of his own accord: it is still "his house" (44).

rival to the Lord's *authority* in the life, is virtually a denial of redemption, and an usurpation. Do not put a *pretender on the throne of your life for one hour. Let the proud flesh be mortified, in the Holy Spirit.*

“Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.” Job 40. 14.

“The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.”
Psalm 118. 15, 16.

IN the remarkable passage of God's witness to Job now before us, a wondrous test is given! Can Job disannul GOD'S judgment, can HE display majesty and excellency, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him? *If so, he can save himself!* No, Job feels the exact reverse of “majesty and excellency,” and soon cries out, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

The Divine words used remarkably indicate the source of so much trouble in his life and in other lives. He had worried himself much through *self-confidence*. How important is it to *remain*, not only to *become*, as little children. Pride is a cruel master, *as well as grievous sin against God*. The words ring out, “Wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous?”—We see the *same thought* in Jas. 4. 11. Here is a wondrous preservation against evil speaking. It is SO easy to *complain*, unless we are led by the Holy Spirit.

But there are *other* helpful lessons too. If we cannot bring down the proud, we cannot save ourselves. Thus salvation includes a mighty bringing down *of our own pride*. The camel must go through the needle's eye: we must be brought to *nothing!*

Again, we think of One Who is able to bring down: “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and THE LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED IN THAT DAY” (Isa. 2. 11). Our precious Lord Jesus,—if so be that we are in Him,—the One Who is able to humble, is the One THUS manifested as ABLE TO SAVE. Hence judgment makes a background for *triumphant* grace! And His right hand is glorious, to save for ever the poor, worthless sinner. The negative of man's failure reveals GRACE yet more.

Ah, dear reader, not knowing the Lord, you cannot save yourself, but the power of the “Strong One,” even of the flesh within you, can be bound, by Christ, the Stronger One (Luke 11. 21, 22). He can give a new life, for He died to save. Will you still try to save yourself,—a vain quest? Or would you not seek the Lord while He may be found, humbled to own your need, humbled to rejoice in His right hand of sovereign grace and power?

“THAT THOU MIGHTEST STILL THE ENEMY and THE AVENGER.”

Psalm 8. 2.

THE God of all grace can work when *He* pleases, as with John the Baptist. The importance of the *early* life is thus manifest, and thus the importance of a *spiritual condition* of parents. He, Who is “Great in counsel,” delights to choose “the weak things of the world,” “that no flesh should glory in His presence.” And thus it is written, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matt. 11. 25). “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word” (Isa. 66. 2). The utterly worthless are welcome to the worthy Saviour, and those who, after salvation, are conscious that they have, and are, only earthen vessels, and without their Lord able to do nothing, are the ones to whom He says, “Go in this thy might,” for His “strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Thus we have a twofold encouragement:—the expectation of blessing to “*little ones*” brought to believe in Christ, AND the joy of *power* if we are conscious of our need: again let the contrast be emphasized—“*Babes and sucklings*”—“ordained *strength*.” How mighty is the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's approval of the rendering “*Perfected* praise,” was not a mere chance (Matt. 21. 16). This translation had surely been arranged with a view to its Divine use: God can overrule translations. There is little strength without praise. *Victory* is linked with *praise* (2 Chron. 20. 22). Often we seem to seek failure, because we are afraid to praise. Praise glorifies God (Ps. 50. 23), and shall it not be our *continual* privilege? Praise is continual in heaven! Without praise we shall *soon* become so heavy and dull, and *other things* will *soon* enter in. We rob God, and rob ourselves too, when we *omit* to praise, when we forget to praise, when praise slackens. Praise in the power of the Holy Spirit is beyond human tonics. Is there not every reason for praise? Thus will there be real strength (*cf.* Neh. 8. 10).

And what is the Divine meaning of the *added* words? “The enemy and the avenger” WILL speak, *unless silenced*. If we are silent, they will sound forth their words. Sometimes a believer feels the *power* of the enemy, and depression almost comes in, because there has been a *vacuum* in praise. God will not always “still” the enemy by a direct interposition. This would make us idle. *He uses our praise!* Then let us delight in His methods.

As to the enemy, we think of *Satan*, and Zech. 3. 1 comes to mind. Moreover, Rev. 12. 11 rings out, “*They overcame him*”

by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." If we, too, would overcome, we should ever be praising for the precious blood of Christ. When the Lord Jesus referred to the enemy in Luke 10. 19, His added words, (verses 20 and 21), seem to show He would direct their minds, and ours, to this verse. The disciples may have been somewhat occupied with the encouragements of *their* "labours" among men (17): He drew their hearts toward the privilege of nearness to *God* and access. Herein is victory. Pride will enter otherwise, and power over the enemy will be changed, and there will be a fall into his judgment and snare (1 Tim. 3. 6, 7).

THE TOKEN.*

Exodus 12. 13.

The Lord remembers Israel. In a wondrous passage of Scripture He says, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. And another prophet tells us that the Lord said, "Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." The precious words of God ring out, as to Zion, "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of the hands; thy walls are continually before me." But though He has thus shown His love unmistakably, and though He will yet choose Israel, He has also shown His holy hatred of sin. Therefore, dear Jewish reader, do not think us unkind, if we seek to point out

something that is missing

in your religious arrangements to-day. We do not speak against you because we *wish* to do this. WE LOVE ISRAEL, AND PRAY FOR ISRAEL. Nor do we speak against you as if we ourselves were good naturally: we were sinners of the Gentiles, and it is only

by the **GRACE** of **GOD** we are what we are.

When Israel were in Egypt, the God of Abraham delivered them. But how? You think at once of the deliverance from PHARAOH and reply "with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt." (Ex. 13. 9). True and this was to be marked by a CONTINUAL sign or *token* upon their very hands. But was there not

a token before this,

and a token of

a greater deliverance!

BEFORE GOD SAVED ISRAEL FROM PHARAOH, HE SAVED THEM FROM THE DESTROYER, AND THE TOKEN OF THIS WAS THE BLOOD ON THE DOOR. Many other things were appointed by God at that time, namely the provision of unleavened bread and of bitter herbs, the girding of loins, the putting on of shoes, the taking of a staff, the eating of the lamb,

* Leaflets circulated among Israel during THEIR sad feast of Passover.

and so forth, but not one of them was the token or part of the token. On the contrary,—

there was only one token.

The blood was the ONE mark, because of which the destroyer could NOT enter. NOTHING ELSE could protect: THIS never failed to protect. It was God's appointed token, and therefore *sufficient*. And this deliverance was as we have seen, before and greater than the bodily deliverance from Pharaoh.

Plainly such a token is missing to-day—not only is it physically missing, but the SPIRITUAL lesson of it has been lost. Yet as this was the Lord's own emphasized token, is there not something wrong whenever this is so forgotten? Would it not be well to find out what He lovingly meant? Possibly you think much of deliverance from earthly danger, as from Pharaoh, but have you forgotten "THE DESTROYER?" God Himself would have allowed the destroyer to touch Israel, yea, He would have "GIVEN" this arrangement, as Ex. 12. 23 implies, IF there had not been the token. And how is it with you? By what token are you satisfied that God's anger is turned away from you? Has the blood of a sufficient Sacrifice been poured out, instead of your blood? Since you and I need deliverance eternally, WE NEED MORE THAN AN ANIMAL SACRIFICE. Since you and I require a robe of righteousness for the heart, we require more than a lamb.

Something is missing in Judaism,

rather Some One is missing—No, He is not missing! Messiah is the appointed Sacrifice waiting to welcome poor, heart-broken sinners:—

You have missed Him.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?

A beautiful house in Egypt, a rich family with many slaves, a firstborn son in full health, but *at midnight* a great change:—"the chief of all their strength," this eldest son himself, on whom so many hopes are set, lies DEAD. An unseen hand has smitten him.

Behold a striking contrast. A simple house, no display of wealth but rather a condition of bondage manifest, yet rejoicing at the same midnight, and a glad going forth to a land of promise, with the eldest son full of joy,—himself and his parents' joy the next morning. An unseen hand has kept watch over the humble door.

Whence the difference? Money has not availed, for "riches profit not in the day of wrath" (Prov. 11. 4). Earthly greatness has not protected: Why the difference?

Look at the doors and their posts. Upon the first house there is carved work, there is evidence of earthly grandeur, but there is no blood. THE BONDMAN'S DOOR, HOWEVER, IS MARKED BY BLOOD. That is the difference. God appointed that a lamb should die, and

that the boys of Israel should be spared. He has kept His word. He always keeps His word.

Nor is the teaching out of date now. The way of salvation is *always* the same. The pictures of it may change, but the reality is invariable. 'Tis only by the death of another that we can be spared. There is no other hope. *Our life is forfeited.* An Israelite's life would have been taken as much as an Egyptian's, if the blood had not been on the door. No other defence would have stood. But the blood was an effectual plea. The sacrifice of God's own appointment is sufficient.

Dear reader, what does this chapter of ancient history mean to you? Are you sheltered by the blood? or have you devised a plan of your own? Alas, your own way will not avail. All your hopes will be cast down. God said of old and still says, "When I see the blood, I will pass (pause) over you" (Ex. 12.13 *Heb*). We should be cruel if we held out any other hope. But *this* precious way of escape is still open, and whether you be Israelite or Egyptian, Jew or Gentile, if you feel your need, you are welcome to a place of safety under the cover of the precious blood of GOD'S PROVIDED PASSOVER. He will not smite you as well. If you are sheltered in Messiah, Messiah's death under judgment means that you go FREE -- FREE to live for Him, to please Him, and soon to see His glory.

TEN MINUTES.

"I wish I could have that ten minutes again." So we often feel—the *ten minutes* of conversation when we were light: the *ten minutes* of opportunity with one whom we may never see again: the *ten minutes* of unconcentrated prayer, hardly to be called prayer, and so forth. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. But we cannot have the *ten minutes* again. It is gone: it has left its legacy—in our character, and that of others: it has left its mark of emptiness for the Judgment Seat of Christ. But, God is faithful: yes, "If we *confess our sins*, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We want fruit, not failure: and He graciously says, "From Me is thy fruit found." And though He does not give us the *ten minutes* again, a new *ten minutes* of opportunity is *NOW* with us, that confession of sin may lead to an absence of self-reliance, and to the presence of a confiding in Himself, that we may have present victory over the sin which so easily besets, and use the *ten minutes NOW FOR HIM*.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"SEEK THE LORD, AND HIS STRENGTH: SEEK HIS FACE
EVERMORE. REMEMBER HIS MARVELLOUS WORKS THAT HE
HATH DONE; HIS WONDERS, AND THE JUDGMENTS OF HIS
MOUTH."
Ps. 105. 4, 5.

A Word of Introduction.

A *GAIN* would we encourage the dear people of the Lord by a reminder of what He IS, and would also bring before them the privileges of devoted obedience. God has great riches for His people,—and many of His gifts cannot be enjoyed except on the path of more devoted love, as we let go the things of earth, which are "threads and shoelatchets" at their best. These pages are not simply a professional urging to godliness. We would feel our OWN need too, and urge ourselves also, and seek the prayers of God's praying people, that there may be more devotion unto the Lord, and that He may be first in everything, and His will, our delight. Oh that this may be more and more manifest to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1. 6).

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

THE Gospel is good news—a message—not that which is a vision of man's own heart (Jer. 23. 16, Ezek. 13. 2), but a **PRECIOUS TESTIMONY FROM GOD.**

He has sent it, sent it in love, and, therefore, it is rightly, and emphatically, called "The Gospel of God." Since every blessing for eternity is wrapped up in the finished work of the Lord Jesus it is fittingly called "the Gospel of Christ," again and again. And there is not "another gospel"—except it be a counterfeit to deceive (Gal. 1. 6, 2 Cor. 11. 4). How important that believers

should rejoice in such a glorious message—God's own way of dealing with the sinner's need! Happy are we, dear reader, if this Gospel of Grace has been welcomed in our hearts, and if we are among the "called of Jesus Christ." Ah, can you, too, say, that this is *your* joy? The writer is conscious that he was a lost sinner, but *now*, having been found by the Saviour, he has found salvation, (Eph. 1. 13), and therefore, can humbly say "My Gospel" (Rom. 16. 25, 2 Tim. 2. 8, cf. 2 Thess. 2. 14) even as he says, "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28).

Some dear children of God have wondered at the *different names* given to the Gospel, and have thought there are different gospels, in a special sense of the word "different." But such a view seems full of difficulties, in the light of God's stress on one gospel. We do well to rejoice in the underlying thought of their hearts, *viz.*, that every word of God is used perfectly, and every distinct word must have a distinctive emphasis. But is not this fully met if we acknowledge

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE ONE GOSPEL?

This is, indeed, a key to so much of Scripture. We do not separate "Jesus" and "Christ," but when the Holy Spirit uses one name, or the other, or both together, *He has a reason*. Thus is it with His many names, and also with the many names of *God's people*. And may not a similar lesson be found as to the precious words which describe the near coming again of the Lord Jesus? In like manner we have *varied* aspects, as varied views of one city, since it is not all visible in one picture, because of *its size*. The *vastness* of God's Gospel necessitates many, many pictures, and we have the *relative* emphasis of *each* verse, to help our hearts onward in the prayerful realization of the fulness of His truth!

"The Gospel of the Kingdom" (Mat. 4. 23) is *not* out of date. Christ connects it with

THE PRESENT TIME

in Matt. 24. 14,—even with the period between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the time of the end.* In the light of Acts 28. 31 this is not strange. And 2 Tim. 2. 8 illustrates, for Paul's gospel was associated with Christ as the One of the seed of David Who shall reign (Luke 1. 32, 33). This is, indeed, the Gospel of the Glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4. 4). Who can say anything else? A man would be far from the truth if he asserted that the Gospel of the Kingdom does not emphasize the glory of Christ! But some beloved children of God have felt there must be a difference in *nature*, whereas, we seem to have rather a beautiful difference of *aspect*! Are not believers *now* in the Kingdom of the Heavens, in *mystery*?—(Do not the parables of Matt. 13 imply this?)—And is not Col. 1. 13 suggestive in connexion with Eph. 1. 13, 14, 3. 6? The promise to Abraham is OURS in Christ (Rom. 4. 13,

* So the other prophetic mention of the "Gospel" in Matthew (26. 13) implies that there is *only one*.

Gal. 3. 6, 9): WE look for the Kingdom, and "in *that* Day" the *crown* of righteousness will be given (2 Tim. 4. 8, 18). It is well to see how the *last* written epistle of God's servant Paul lays such an encouraging stress on this, for our comfort and edification.

Possibly one of the greatest helps to exercised believers in this matter is found in Gal. 2. 7. *If* we accept the thought of different gospels, this passage will *not only* contradict Gal. 1. 6, *but also* present the problem that in the *present* dispensation, at the time *when* Paul was preaching one Gospel, Peter was preaching *another*, and thus there were two messages! But GOD did not set up such barriers. The very chapter before us is a clear witness on this point, and so we read, "When I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel" (14). Observe, "the Gospel," only one: the Holy Spirit Himself shows that the believers, and Peter and Paul themselves are specially before us, *should have walked together* in all things,

ACCORDING TO ONE GOSPEL.

Therefore "the gospel of the circumcision" emphasizes the *sphere* of ministry, *not* a different message. Verse 8 further points this out, and verse 9 *repeats* it. And why all this repetition? Did not the Lord know that some of His dear people would be troubled on this account, and so He lovingly dealt with it *in advance*? And would not any who teach otherwise be "blamed" by Him, according to verse 11?

Thus we have *no* thought of two gospels. All believers *were*, and should be, resting in One Gospel (Phil. 1. 5, 7, 12, 17, 27), and this was the word of *the truth* (Col. 1. 5). Oh that in these "perilous times" we too may be enabled, by grace, to "hold fast" the faithful Word, and to lay stress on the Gospel of the *Grace* of God (Acts 20. 24), which also sets forth *His glory* and not *the* glory of man (1 Tim. 1. 11), for grace and glory are ever linked (note John 1. 14, Ps. 84. 11). How contrasted are "the doctrines and commandments of men," which trust to the efforts of the creature, and ascribe at least part of the glory to the one who believes! Well may our thankful hearts say, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord," as we rejoice in the sufficiency of His gracious provision to meet the need of the heart-burdened sinner, and every after-need of the humble, trustful saint. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable." May it be ours to serve, and worship Him, in our spirit in the Gospel of His Son (Rom. 1. 9,), as we look for *the Hope of the Gospel* (Col. 1. 23), with joy and obedience and delight and praise!

Do not our hearts feel ready to pray, "O our Father, keep us waiting as long as it pleaseth Thee for an open door, but let it please Thee to keep us waiting upon Thee at Thine ever-open door!" He is ready for His ready people.

THE PROMISE OF THE INHERITANCE.

IT is important to notice the exact words of the Holy Spirit, and *how* they are *linked*. Frequent repetition is very impressive to an attentive and obedient heart. In Eph. 3. 5 many dear children of God seem to overlook the contrast between "the sons of men" and "His holy apostles and prophets," and the Divine stress on "as it is now revealed." There WAS a veiled preparation,* and many "types" can now be seen, to confirm the precious unveiling, but the privilege of saved ones now to behold without a veil, (*cf.* in another context, 2 Cor. 3. 18), is very wondrous. Some have thought that "Hid in God" implies "Not in the earlier Scriptures at all," but Col. 3. 3 does not mean that children of God are NOW without life in themselves: have they not been quickened, and made to be contrasts with those mentioned in John 6. 53?

But verse 6 is specially before the writer, where the literal force seems to be rather "That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs (*heirs together*), and of the same body (*bodied together*), and of the promise in Christ through the gospel." The Holy Spirit explains somewhat more of this precious verse by Eph. 2. 12, "the covenants of the promise," and we do well to notice how He has linked the words "inheritance" or "heir" and promise, again and again:—

Acts 7. 5. "He gave him none inheritance in it . . . yet He promised" (note 17).

Rom. 4. 13. "For the promise that He should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Gal. 3. 16-18. "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made . . . And to thy Seed which is Christ . . . The law . . . cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect: for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

Gal. 4. 28-30. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise . . . the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

Eph. 1. 13, 14. "That Holy Spirit of promise, which is the Earnest of our inheritance" (This passage emphasizes very beautifully the relationship of the present dispensation).

Eph. 3. 6. "Fellow-heirs . . . partakers of His promise."

Heb. 6. 12-17. "Who through faith and patience inherit the promises . . . God made promise to Abraham . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath."

Heb. 11. 9. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise . . . with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

* Cf. Rom. 3. 21.

Surely the Lord's emphasis is worthy of prayerful notice, and explains the wondrous unity, for example, of the epistles to the Ephesians and the Hebrews, and the way in which believers are blessed *with believing Abraham* (Gal. 3. 9), so that saints of *all* dispensations are saved and blessed together and perfected *together* "IN Christ." Dispensational distinctions are temporary and partial manifestations of that complete work, which is only in the Lord Jesus—in THE Seed of Gal. 3. 16! Wondrous privilege! Oh to live more and more in the light of this, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

AN ALLEGORY.

A. I should not like the responsibility of that surgeon. When he is operating, one slip of the instrument, and he may endanger the patient's life. If he knows of the "slip" after, his pain must be terrible, but even if he does *not* know, he must *often* have the thought, "I *might* have done better"; and the possibility of two "alternatives" will come up, and, if the patient dies, or suffers agony, he thinks, "I wish I had tried the *other* method."

B. Yes, the position is not an easy one. *Unintentional* mistakes are very humbling. And it is peculiarly sad when one feels, "I did not *know* what was best, but *ought* to have known": or, "I was in too much of a hurry." And possibly he says to himself (if he owns the Name of the Lord), "Did I seek God's guidance in this matter?"

A. Indeed, one would draw back, in this connexion, very often from venturing to undergo an operation, and from being a surgeon.

B. Very possibly, although there are yet stronger reasons for being very cautious, particularly when we all so often forget to honour the Lord as the One *Who knows the frame*, and Who has revealed Himself as the Healer in Exodus 15. 26. It is difficult to advise others, lest they act on assumed faith, but it is dangerous not to have more faith ourselves. We often fail to seek Him *first* (Matt. 6. 33), even as Asa failed. But have you ever felt that you are an operating surgeon?

A. In what way?

B. You, as a child of God, are concerned not only with the bodies of men but with their *souls*. It may be you have felt this when preaching the gospel, but is it not true at all times?

A. I suppose it is, yet we are all too careless of the responsibilities which are not so visible as those that affect the body. We can see a surgeon's knife, but we cannot see spiritual instruments, which may be easily misused.

B. No, yet the effects are very real. A dear parent is moulding much of a child's character. The responsibility is

tremendous, yet how many fail to realize this, and take the burden very lightly. How a parent should walk with God—rather, how parents *together* should walk with God, and enjoy unhindered prayer (1 Pet. 3. 7).

A. Do you not think we need to have our responsibilities brought before us more often?

B. Yes, provided we realize them first in the light of *grace*, and *then* in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Thus we shall be called to loving concern and true repentance, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, and yet be kept from maddening remorse. It is a solemn thing to "operate," as it were, on a soul. What will happen if our instruments are blunt through lack of communion? And what will happen if we do not *know* when we *ought* to know, or when we use them carelessly, or when we slip "unintentionally?"

A. It is too solemn to contemplate.

B. But we *should* prayerfully contemplate, that we may become *nearer* the Lord in daily experience, and seek grace to please Him more, and to do all His work in *His* way. The power of the Holy Spirit is real, and we have a great privilege. It is wondrously true that God often "overrules" our failures, but we are "responsible" to draw back from failure. He can prevent the destruction of those for whom Christ died, but if we "operate" unspiritually we are to blame for the mischief which would come, apart from His *preventing* grace (Rom. 14. 15), and this makes us deeply concerned to be *humble*, that we may do all "in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

(Beloved readers, YOU feel the power of the allegory. We are often "concerned" as to things seen—e.g. an earthly house on fire, and a man in danger of death,—but are we affected, as we should be, by the things that are not seen? Oh to be exercised and stirred up in heart to-day, unto the glory of our gracious God! Souls are in dire need. Eternity is real. Our privilege of being the Lord's representatives is, beyond measure, important. We cannot go one day—one hour—without our Lord).

It is possible to plead for patience impatiently, to grumble at grumblers, to judge others because we *imagine* they judge us, to have evil surmising because brooding over and condemning what we *think* is someone else's surmising against ourselves, and to complain of lack of love when in a temper ourselves. A child of God cannot but feel the need of the much fellowship with God, and much self-judgment. Sin is easier than we realize. Salvation by the precious blood is a call to a beautiful simplicity of holiness, in the Holy Spirit,—and affecting the tiniest things.

"AFTER THE SEVENTH SABBATH."

Lev. 23. 16.*

EVERYTHING in Scripture is wonderful. God teaches: but are we willing to learn? I wonder how many of us have noticed that the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread and of Tabernacles *alike* continued a "week," but in between them, as *the middle feast* of Israel's year, was a feast of *one day*! That *feast could not* be two days, though Israel double it *now*. It *could not* be a sabbath, but must be the "*morrow after*," though Israel have changed this thought also. It *could not* come *after* Tabernacles in the same year, though Jewish Calendars have altered this as well. God's lessons are quite forgotten. Lev. 23. 17, 21 specially links Pentecost with *the houses*, and the

NEW MEAL OFFERING,

then offered, was not burnt on the altar as a sweet savour (Lev. 2. 12), was *not* acceptable apart from the sin-offering of Lev. 23. 19. Such thoughts are precious, if our eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law (Ps. 119. 18). *God* Himself arranged "*a new thing*" in the birth of Messiah (Jer. 31. 22). And He Himself speaks of "*a new covenant*" (ברית חדשה) in the *same* chapter (Jer. 31. 31); and thus between Israel's "week-long feasts" there was marked out a *new meal offering*. Has God introduced anything "*new*," and *apart from a sabbath*? If He has, do Israel acknowledge this? If not, can we say *why* He appointed this new offering baken with leaven, but in which the leaven's work had been *mightily checked*? Surely we must find a counterpart to the *new offering* somewhere! But the new offering is not a picture of a SAVIOUR, for it is baken with *leaven*, and is NOT a sweet savour on the altar. Then must it not picture a company of people, accepted *because of a sacrifice*? Where can that people be found? A people who are as a new offering—a people NOT associated with a seventh day sabbath:—where are these to be found? Men of Israel are NOT before us, in their present condition. The Gentile nations (גוים) are NOT like bread in which the leaven of sin has been checked. The world is *full of sin*. Of whom then have we a picture?

The dating *from* passover, and from the day *after* the sabbath in passover week, when an omer was first lifted *out of the earth*, and waved before God, as a pledge of a precious harvest likewise raised *out of the earth*, gives the key to the problem. Here we behold, therefore, a people who have a new standing before God, because *One* has been first raised from the dead. But *they*, though lifted out from the earth, in one sense, still have *the leaven, and the baking, and the check to the leaven's work* as well. They have *two* natures: they are NOT altogether glorious: their bodies are NOT on resurrection ground: the leaven speaks of death and corruption. The baking tells of an earthly experience,

* Leaflet for circulation among Israel at "Pentecost" time, the Lord enabling.

(contrast the "omer" of Lev. 23. 11 lit:), and of God's hatred of sin.

In all this we have only one possible interpretation: i.e. Christians—*real* Christians—not imitations—who are "*a new creation*," because Messiah has been raised—are here before us, and their life of hatred of *sin* is seen, though their ACCEPTANCE is not because of *their* holiness, but because of THE Great and Perfect Sin-offering! A Jew, under the law, had an appointed sabbath. He has not kept it—the covenant to do "*all*" work *first* has been broken as well—but he cannot say, "Then I will give up, and start again." The only deliverance from law now is by *death*—death under the law's penalty. But there is no blessing of life after this! Stay: there is *one* hope. Let a sacrifice die! Then the sacrifice, being perfect, is accepted, and *the man lives*. That the *animal* sacrifices were *not* the complete work of God is plain for they could not make the worshippers perfect as to the *conscience*. But if a Sacrifice is found which in *heart* is able to take the judgment of the sins of my *heart*, then, since He must be a *heart*-obedient Sacrifice, (and thus more than a bullock or sheep), He *must* also, as a Righteous One, be raised again, to fulfil the unbroken words of Leviticus 18. 4, 5,—

"And ye shall keep My statutes and My judgments which THE MAN shall do, and live in them, I am the Lord."

Here is the hope. No deliverance otherwise! God's lesson is clear. Messiah having died, and been raised, there is a *new offering*, of a *new* people. Ah, dear reader, are you among them, or not? Any other hope is now only a dream, for "as many as are of the law are *under a curse*," BECAUSE that law is holy, and in it God declares—

"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen" Deut. 27. 26. One sin brings judgment—a curse without a hope! The ONLY escape is a Sacrifice! The ONLY escape is Messiah! Is He yours to-day, or are you still

WITHOUT HIM?

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2. 3.

Victory over pride is often a key to victory over remorse and much else; for it is often when we are self-confident that the Lord leaves us awhile to ourselves, that we may learn our weakness, and then remorse comes in. And by "victory" let us not mean a merely mental judging of sin, because it *ought* to be judged, but a spiritual contrast, in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

"Questions of Enquiring Jews," a *Free* Booklet gladly sent to any interested, or, rather, concerned by the gracious working of GOD. Correspondence welcome—Percy W. Heward—61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE LOVE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, WHEN WE LOVE GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

1 JOHN 5. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

THESE delightful words search us very deeply. We do want to know that we LOVE the children of God, but we cannot tell by what we SAY, nor by what WE FEEL, nor by what WE SEEM TO BE. Rather—do we love God, and ACCORDINGLY KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS in a LOVING MANNER, and with a LOVING OBJECT? IF SO, we truly love them! But OTHERWISE we need much concern. We may speak of love, and urge love, but if we LEAVE OUT the Lord's commands, or encourage them to leave out these commands, or even IGNORE their leaving out of these, is it love? Love is very definitely concerned for the glory of God, and the Judgment Seat of Christ. HOW WE SHOULD LONG that OTHER DEAR CHILDREN OF GOD MAY HAVE A FULL REWARD THEN. That is love, genuine love. O that it may be SHOWN in a loving way, i.e. in the Holy Spirit.

"NAY . . . BUT IF
ONE WENT unto THEM from the DEAD."

Luke 16. 30.

HERE is a humanly suggested way of salvation. Men do *not* repent. But is there not "some" way of convincing them of the *realities* of judgment, that they may tremble? "If one went unto them from the dead," said the agonized man in torments, "*they will repent.*" Such was the proposal. But observe, it was *a proposal from hell*. Yet many embrace it to-day, and shelter themselves that they *would* believe if someone rose from the dead. Yet they *do not* shelter themselves in reality, they only deceive themselves. IF this evidence, or any other

proof were given, *they would still find some way out of it.* The HEART is wrong. Sufficient evidence *has been given* already! It is remarkable that *man's* professed testimony to an after-life (as distinct from God's revelation) often only *hardens men* in their sin. And is it not linked with the great evil of "spiritualism?"—And against *this* sin God Himself has warned men, in no uncertain sound.*

Abraham's testimony is put in direct opposition to that of the man in hell. And Christ Himself records and approves Abraham's testimony, and with *that* witness, cuts the conversation short, in holy warning:—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." This verse which attacks the root of every theory to win men by human efforts, emphasizes *the preaching of the Words of truth.* God still uses *His own Words* to warn of the real wrath to come, and to show the precious Saviour of Whom, and Whose work, they are so full!

THEY SUPPOSED.

Matt. 20. 10.

IT is so easy to "suppose," and when we "suppose" † we are often led on to failure:—soon they "murmured" and "kept on murmuring" as the word implies (Matt. 20. 11). They "supposed" without any foundation: they went beyond the word of the Householder, according to their own opinions, and *esteeming* themselves worthy of more. They questioned *free grace.* Hence their grievous sin. Ah, dear friends, this thought is applicable to-day. The elder brother in Luke 15 *questioned free grace:* and these men were not welcomed to the fellowship of the Householder: *they disapproved of grace.* And do you think we shall enjoy the friendship of our Lord, if we disapprove of His methods of free grace? By no means. If we would delight in His presence, must we not take His standpoint? He delights in grace. He will "give" (14)—He will do that which He "wills" with "His own" (15) possessions, and *will* have mercy (Rom. 9. 15), for He delighteth in mercy (Mic. 7. 18), and is rich in mercy (Eph. 2. 4). Let us not build upon our "supposing"—our opinions, but let our thoughts be based on His Words. Let us rejoice in whatever He arranges, and *never* murmur against His wisdom. If He shows special privileges to any, let us not envy them; nothing but praise should fill a believer's life.

* A leaflet readily sent to any address.

† Same word is found, with suggestion of *man's* mistake, in Matt. 5. 17; 10. 34. Luke 2. 44; 3. 23; Acts 7. 25; 8. 20; 14. 19; 16. 27; 17. 29; 21. 29; 1 Cor. 7. 36; 1 Tim. 6. 5. The only passages giving a somewhat different aspect are Acts 16. 13, and 1 Cor. 7. 26:—and in the latter of these the apostle seems to reprove by an expression similar to 1 Cor. 7. 40—"I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The Corinthians were depreciating his responsibility.

"BUT GOD.

Who is rich in mercy . . . even when we were *dead* in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ!"

Eph. 2. 4. 5.

ON another page of this magazine we see *man's "But,"* and a vain proposal to send one from the dead! Now we have God's OWN contrasted gospel! His "BUT" is most wonderful. He has not only warned, but He has emphasized another *alarming* aspect of *death.* *The sinner is dead now.* Hence every human gospel utterly fails! There is no lever in it to raise a single dead man. "*But God,*" in rich mercy, has sent a Saviour, Who has died, and Who has been raised that, *in Him,* guilty sinners might have a righteousness, and the *dead in sins* receive eternal life! Here is "*God's but.*" Dear reader, which do you want?—Man's *powerless* "but," or God's *mighty* "but!" Say not in thine heart—"Who shall do this, or that," but hear *what has been done* (see Rom. 10. 6-8). A free, full, and finished salvation is proclaimed through the death of the Lord Jesus. Eternal life is *not* a theory, but the gift of God, and the *one* hope of deliverance from the way of death. "This place of torment," of which the rich man spoke in Luke 16. 28, is definitely *closed* against those to whom Christ has said, in the gospel, "I go to prepare a *place for you*" (John 14. 2). Here is the amazing contrast, and He has the keys of hell, not only that the ungodly may *not* escape, but *to lock its gates against His blood-bought people!* Thus they have a *blessed* Hope, and a present enjoyment of a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17), that they may please God in the power of the Holy Spirit! Any, *in any part of the world,* who do not understand the way of salvation, yet feel their need, are earnestly invited to correspond: 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7.

"THIS PLACE OF TORMENT."

THERE is no suggestion of a mere "condition": there is no hint of a HUMAN PARABLE implying something far less. The words sound forth as a *message from hell.* "This place of torment." Judas, by transgression, fell, that he might go to **HIS OWN PLACE.** There are no atheists in hell! There are no doubters in hell! And to-day, demons are not atheists: "they believe and tremble" (Jas. 2. 19). YET the fear of torment does not produce godliness (Matt. 8. 29, Mark 5. 7). How preciously contrasted are the words of John 14. 2, 3, "I go to prepare a *place for you,* and if I go and prepare a *place for you,* I will come again, and receive you *unto Myself.*" Such is the miracle of grace. Those who can enter into Exod. 33. 21,—"*Behold there is a PLACE by ME,*" will not enter in the place of torment, but will share their Lord's glory in the place where His honour dwelleth (Ps. 26. 8). Can we rejoice in *such* love? *Then* what manner of persons ought we to be.

“I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel.”

1 Sam 15. 30.

“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.”

Psalms 51. 4.

THE contrast between Saul and David is marked; the one, indeed, *sought* forgiveness, but *thought* much of what it meant to HIM: the other emphasized his sin, *even to his own shame*, AND sought MERCY FOR GOD'S GLORY. The two stand-points indicate the difference between a selfish desire after *salvation*, for itself, and a spiritual experience of the deep work of God, for *Himself*. The poor, humbled, heart-broken sinner realizes his own unworthiness, and longs that God may be exalted. In like manner, when a soul has been saved, *pride is shut out*, boasting is excluded, and the believer's deep concern, whenever growing in grace, is that “GOD in *all* things may be glorified.”

To the extent that “self” becomes prominent, *real* spirituality is hindered, and *true* success is prevented. *Our* opinions, *our* wishes, *our* honour—what are these things? We remember John's words: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, *but unto Thy Name give glory*, for Thy mercy, and ‘or Thy truth's sake” (Ps. 115. 1).

The words “I have sinned” occasion other remarkable contexts. Achan said them (Jos. 7. 20), AND the returning prodigal of Luke 15. 21 said them. But how vast the difference! 'Tis not only *what* we say, but *how* we say it: not only *what* we say, but *how* we *feel*, and *why* we say it. If this be so, in another connexion we must own how important it is to *hear* the appointed tones of the Lord's Words, that we may truly understand them. If the flesh “reads” Scripture, it reads with the wrong aspect, but if the Holy Spirit uses the book in a living way, and makes the heart to HEAR, the believer is truly profited, and then there will be a pressing forward in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“That the Man of God may be Fit.”

2 Tim. 3. 17.

“FIT men” have ever been sought by men. But “a man of God” has a different,—and altogether higher “fitness.” Ah, we must be, in a spiritual sense, *belonging to God* before we can be “fit,” before we can be equipped! “A man OF GOD.” Observe further that the *babe* (verse 15 literally) was trained before there was the *man* of God. A neglected cradle is Satan's opportunity. An unspiritual mother loses her highest privilege.

The stress on *all Scripture* as a *preparation* for fitness is important. And in Timothy's early life, were not the Hebrew Scriptures the only ones in use? Do not think that the Old Testament is “too deep” for the children. The Holy Spirit's stress is remarkable. And verse 15 not only shows that knowledge without *faith* in a PERSONAL SAVIOUR is vain (see John 5. 39, 40), but also implies that we should emphasize God's Words even *before* children believe, that God may use His message to this object, and also afterwards may employ the early acquaintance with His teaching to His own glory.

And the believer must ever remember the same thought. If you and I are to be “fit”—the word suggests the *very opposite* of confusion and dislocation—our training must be still in the Words of truth. Here is the Lord's text-book, and “God-breathed” not only signifies the *origin* of Scripture, but the Holy Spirit's *living* use of the book, that we may feel its tones and power, TO-DAY. Thus is it profitable for *our* correction in *our own* daily experience. We must not view the value of Scripture from an *outside* or “general” standpoint. “Thy Word is a lamp unto MY feet, and a light unto MY path.” And let us further remember that the instruction of God is not only for our good, but that we may be FIT FOR HIS USE, for every good work, for making known His Word, for resisting evil, for glorifying His Name!

A Wondrous Change, and a Precious Responsibility. Children of God Viewed in Colossians 1.

AT one time alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works, they were for ever reconciled through the death of the Saviour, Who made peace through the blood of His cross. Nay, more! They were meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—belonging *now* to the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

Now, although they had faith in Christ, there was a danger that they might not *continue* in the faith *grounded and settled*. They had heard the word of the truth of the gospel, yet they might be *moved away from the hope* of the gospel. Did the coming of the Truth result in *fruit-bearing*? *Still* must they *seek to be fruitful* in every good work. Had they *known* the grace of God in truth? There was *yet an abundant need* to *increase in the knowledge of God*.

Therefore, in order that every man might be presented *perfect* in Christ Jesus, Paul preached “Christ in you, the Hope of glory.”

The more we seek to emphasize the will of the Lord, the more will the world rightly expect a high standard of us, in other things. “Separation” without spirituality is *personal* sectarianism.

A MISQUOTED VERSE.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.” John 17. 3.

OFTEN quoted as “This is life eternal to know Thee.” And many sing, “Tis eternal life to know Him.” Undoubtedly the true knowledge of the Lord is joined in so many ways with eternal life that every view is precious (see 1 John 5. 20). But the special aspect which the Holy Spirit shows in the verse is fuller, and that is now before us. “This is the eternal life, *in order that* they may know Thee.” Life *with a view to* knowledge! Possibly the word “This” as in Matt. 16. 18, and John 2. 19, refers *partly* to the Lord Jesus Himself, but in the light of verse 2 there seems a peculiar stress here on two important thoughts:—

(a) We cannot know God, till we have a new life:

(b) We are quickened, by grace, *in order that* we may have this knowledge. Salvation is with a view to the knowledge of God (Jer. 31. 34, cf. Gal. 4. 6-9).

Merely mental knowledge is not suggested: the unsaved have this. The fruits of life are set forth in Scripture in a way which refutes the man-exalting theories that declare man does his “part” to secure salvation: can the “repentance from dead works” be produced by a dead sinner? Of those who believe, it is written, “Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ *hath been begotten*” (1 John 5. 1): note the tenses. The work of God is first. There is no room for boasting. Sovereign grace shines out. So with this knowledge of God. “Religion” is not knowledge of Him. “They knew Him not” (Acts 13. 27).

But if we have received the precious gift of an understanding *in order that we may know Him That is True* (1 John 5. 20), do we not rejoice in Jer. 9. 24, and seek the growth of 2 Pet. 3. 18? Our new life makes us *capable* of knowing God. Matt. 11. 27 is deeply suggestive. Matt. 16. 17 is parallel. If without such life, we *could* not know; now that we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, we are encouraged to know God, and any lack of such knowledge is a shame and disgrace (1 Cor. 15. 34). Mere religious observance cannot take the place of this *personal acquaintance* (Hos. 6. 6, see 3). It includes a real fellowship (1 John 1. 7), and to this height of blessing have believers been brought, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. The enjoyment of eternal life now is in *walking* with God. The proof that we are saved is that *knowledge* of God which is seen in the more and more instinctive appreciation of His will, and the *glad* holding aloof from anything else. As a language is learnt by intelligent living in a home where it is spoken,—and as the perception of a parent's hint is clear to the child who lives with the parent, so heart-communion, in the Holy Spirit, is the royal road to a felt realization of the will of God!

CALEB.

WHEN we are discouraged, let us remember Caleb—and the God of Caleb. The opposition looked great, but the man of God believed God. The sons of Anak were NOT mighty to him; for the Lord was mighty—“Their defence is departed from them” (Num. 14. 9). Do we look at our circumstances from God's standpoint, or do we make the people's heart melt (Jos. 14. 8)? *If we discourage others, we are responsible for their sins.* But it may be said, “That is very well, but if I could see the encouragement as Caleb did . . .” Listen a moment. How quickly did he see it? He had to wait 40 years, and then still a little longer for the promise (Jos. 14. 10). Have we waited 45 years? Why are we discouraged? Let us *continue* to trust. “He that shall *endure* unto the end” is the Lord's *own* stress for the last times (Matt. 24. 13). Did He not know it would be easy to become tired, and to give way; and that ten years, or twenty years or so, increase the strain, a real strain?—*But the Lord is mightier.* “Let us not be weary in well doing!” Remember Jas. 5. 7, and read Isa. 50. 10 a hundred times, rather than faint.

But so many seem opposed “*now.*” Caleb and Joshua were only two! “But the time of waiting worries me.” Again we would remind of Gal. 6. 9, 10. Ah, beloved friends, all our “but's” are met by the Mighty God! Speak with Caleb's *confidence*, without wavering. Never hesitate. Trials are to encourage *faith*. See in the very difficulties and delays, an opportunity to prove God's faithfulness, and to glorify Him the more. If encouragements came quickly, this great privilege would be lost. Do not cut the knot as in Isa. 50. 11 (a sad contrast with 10), and lose the blessing. The God of Caleb is living still. Rejoice always in the Lord (Phil. 4. 4).

WORSHIP.

WORSHIP is not to become a bare “effort”: if in spirit and in truth, it is that which the Father seeks, and those who know “the Spirit of the Truth,” and His inworking, are the only ones who can *thus* worship. Hence, as with love, the fuller privilege of worship is not to be regarded as reached when it is forced, but rather when it *expresses the condition* of dependent fellowship which cannot but realize something of what GOD IS; and, realizing, cannot be unimpressed. How often we fall so far short of this, that we feel ashamed to put down the words. But it is a privilege humbly to rebuke ourselves, and to encourage others, by thoughts of the *height* of worship to which our Father invites His children. And we *were* “children of wrath,” even as others.

Prayer *aloud* is often a help against depression, and, in general, amid strain,—real or imagined.

The Burdens Which We Make Ourselves.

THE Lord gives benefits *innumerable*, but *how often we fail to "possess our possessions"* (Obad. 17). How many are the trials which we make for ourselves, or increase for ourselves, or make necessary for *ourselves*, to bring us back, *via* pain, unto *Himself*. How many are the difficulties caused and enlarged through unbelief. That which we "fear" comes, and that of which we *speak*, through mistrust, reaches us. Silence is, indeed, often a blessing: "He that refraineth his lips is wise." Too often a word of "complaint" escapes the lips, and the seed is sown, and there is fruit, and one word of grumbling is one too many. The use of the lips, which should be *unto the Lord*, is often fraught with danger: "Whoso keepeth his mouth, and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles" (Prov. 21. 23). One word of impatience or temper, or, it may be, we excuse a *little worldliness*, may more than blight one day, and make a heavy burden. We tread a self-chosen path, and need to *retrace* our steps with sorrow. If only we realized that our life is one, not *two*, and that home and business should be definitely "unto the Lord"; and that details should be spiritual; we should not find ships going to Tarshish, or *bring ourselves* into temptations where we fall, through lack of prayer (Matt. 26. 41). We pray for deliverance, but *walk* contrary to our prayers!

Or, again, we surmise and imagine, and impute wrong motives to another, or to others, and thus load ourselves with worry, "broodings," internal heart-burnings of indignation, and bitterness, instead of showing the love which thinks no evil, which does not thus impute motives, but which rather deals with actions spiritually, using the *towel* of humility, and the water of the Word.

Moreover, other burdens are real because we do not know the Lord as *fully* as we should; we are afraid to trust Him "too much," even with our bodies. By disproportion, by prayerlessness, by lack of spiritual gatherings, by rising late, by levity, by business scheming, by a thousand things we faint,—we all know a *little* of OUR OWN peculiar dangers,—and thus we find a burden! *There is a real cause for the effect*: let us judge the cause in the light of the sanctuary, and enjoy the effect of communion with our beloved Lord, and of the birthright which is ours as blood-bought ones, in Him. The Holy Spirit is *real*, that the Lord's people may seek and have, increasingly, a present deliverance from worry, in the path of *simple* obedience. If we try to serve two masters, we become "distracted." *Let us believe the Lord, and follow the Lord*. The flesh did not save, the world has no claim on us, we are not left in the authority of the devil (Col. 1. 13). Christ has made us His own! Let this be manifest in everything.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." John 14. 21 and 23.

A Word of Introduction.

THE mercy of God has been manifested. Poor lost souls are enriched. They are "found," and made nigh. Gratitude calls to love: and love cannot be disobedient. It is delightful to add that not only gratitude calls for love, but the enabling granted makes love possible, even with the strain and stress which EVER characterizes love. What we ONCE WOULD not do is now desired. What we COULD not do is now possible. Thus the Lord refreshes His people; and these pages are issued in order that He may have the glory, on the lines of love's DEVOTEDNESS, not only in one part of life, but throughout. Devotion is beautiful: it is an attractive topic, may it become a fuller experience. "In Christ" by grace, believers should be UNTO HIM with gratitude.

THE HERD OF SWINE.

THE PROBLEM OF A MIRACLE OF JUDGMENT.

HOW often men cavil at God's wisdom. How many have dared to blame Christ for allowing the demons to destroy the swine. But does not such an attitude show a failure to perceive a fundamental fact, even GOD'S possession of *everything*, and His *right* to destroy? To talk of "other people's property" is unwise, worse than unwise, when we ponder *the Lord's* actions. Moreover, as to animals, has not Scripture manifested *throughout*

that this part of *creation* is secondary to man, and that, whether in sacrifice or otherwise, God is pleased to use many animals for our instruction? *This* sets forth very plainly His *great* concern for us, and that *physical* death is a small matter compared with the *eternal* judgment, in which *these* have no share: a remarkable indirect evidence as to the *fixed* distinction between man and beast, intensifying His witness against evolution, and with regard to *everlasting* wrath.

The chief problem, at first, seems a miracle of judgment, but even *this* turns the other way, when rightly viewed. That is to say, it impresses the thought that when Christ typified judgment (since, at that time, He had come to save the lost), He dealt with a herd of *swine* or a *fig-tree*: all His works of power upon men were full of *grace*. But He *will* come to judge: He Himself declared this. Dispensational teaching is plain, but judgment is *not* removed, except "*in Christ Jesus*."

We cannot say that we know everything about the owners of the swine, but what we do know about the character of Christ is sufficient. Hence we must say the objection of many is based on a *hastiness of heart*. Men "assume" that the possessors of the swine were acting *rightly* in possessing them. This is an uncalled-for *inference*. "But," the reply is "*You infer the reverse*." Nay, we do something *more*, we accept the *statements* of Scripture that Christ was perfect, and reject *any* inference that attacks this, and, moreover, urge that even from an *ordinary* standpoint the man who opposes *until* he knows *all*, is premature in his judgment. This should silence a thoughtful infidel; but the grace of God which saves the most thoughtless and unreasonable is our joy: we are not aiming at convinced mental believers: "It is the Spirit That quickeneth."

Inasmuch as Christ came to the lost sheep of *Israel*, it is probable that, unless we are told otherwise, those to whom He ministered were Israelites. Hence a helpful lesson as to our business to-day. Let us be careful lest we engage in that which is against, or which leads to the neglect of, *God's appointments for us*. This principle may guide one who, alas, says "*I do not smoke, but sell tobacco for the world*." The thought is, "Be careful *how* you obtain your living, lest you dishonour the Lord's Name." Many "border lines" of danger are suggested. Scripture does not say, "Sell nothing that you would not buy yourself." The young ruler possessed, it would seem, goods which were "grand," yet he was *not* bidden to destroy them,* although he could no longer use them *rightly himself*. But there is a *danger* if a child of God seeks to *obscure* the thoughts hinted above. Let each heart be willing for the Lord's will. Swine were *not* intrinsically evil, but did it glorify God if Israelites kept them? Was there a beautiful *witness*? Are believers wise when they

* Other Scriptures would show the destruction of anything intrinsically evil, e.g. Acts 19. 19.

put their children to business amid world-pleasing and world-indulging schemes?

Passing to spiritual parallels, we remember Matt. 7. 6, 2 Pet. 2. 22. An unsaved soul is the *reverse* of the sacrificial sheep. Thus we see here a picture of *the future of the ungodly*. In one company, they will pass to judgment, "*with the devil and his angels*." They are *now* running violently toward a fearful doom. This lake *suggests* the lake of fire. How the delivered man must have felt thankful as to *restraining* mercy, granted even *before* he knew renewing grace. How grateful believers should be, rejoicing in the Lord.

Another important principle is seen. The Lord granted *the demon's request*, yet He graciously changed the wish of the saved man. And *their* request led to ruin. It is worthy of notice that, as a complete company, they were compelled to acknowledge Christ's right to *command* (Luke 8. 31). And He will soon be in manifested authority. Another striking point comes out. The men of Decapolis did not want Christ, IF His presence meant business loss. His work was too costly. "The hope of their gains was gone" (Acts 16. 19). Which do we value the more—The salvation of precious souls, or our business? *An answer in words* is not sought. What is the answer of *our life*? The man engrossed in getting on, who bears the Name of Christ, and yet gives less than a twentieth of income to "Him"—nominally—is not the only one who needs humbling in this solemn matter. To us *all* the loving words sound forth, with continual conviction, "Lovest thou *Me* more than *these*?" Oh that our response to *His* love may have more of the alabaster box of ointment, and become a living contrast with the attitude of Ananias and Sapphira, and with that of Israel in Malachi's days. The Lord is worthy of fullest devotion. How much have we "lost" with joy for Him? Phil: 3. 7 is real "Loss for Christ," "the loss of all things." Oh to *mean* what we *say* about willingness to give up. Love finds a pleasure in that which is a bondage to the unsaved, and a bondage to the one who owns Christ but clings to worldliness. Let Him be First!

Why is the Epistle to the Hebrews thus Named?

MANY *descriptions* of books, even as division into chapters and verses, are the work of man to help quicker reference.* There is always a danger lest we become forgetful of this. "Advantages" may become the background of *laziness*. Evidently the epistle before us was addressed to those who were

* Not *a*ways the arrangement of man. "The Book of Psalms" is so entitled in Luke 20. 42 and Acts 13. 33. Moreover, the chapter divisions of Lamentations are Divine *acrostics*. Thus the verses also are marked off. But other examples show the dividing work of man, e.g. John 7. 53 and 8. 1.

viewed as believers (3. 1 ; 6. 9, 11) who *had* in the past taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods for Christ (10. 34). It would, indeed, be read by others, as all the epistles (10. 26), but oftentimes the words of *warning* are to keep the Lord's own to the path of His holy will. The contrasts with the *external* Judaism of that time, and also the stress on the types, have been rightly taken to suggest that those who first received "the Word of exhortation" were inclined to a measure of disappointment, because of *continued* strain, and because they had not the outward manifestations of an elaborate temple. But believers from the Gentiles, and not only Israelites, had the danger of attraction toward a *visible* Judaism, as Gal. 6. 12 shows. Indeed, unless we are near the Lord, there is always the tendency toward walking by *sight*, not by faith. The flesh demands "props" and "signs." But the Lord's people, whether Jews or *Gentiles* by earthly race, need to *endure* as seeing Him Who is invisible. So we cannot say, as some, that the contents plainly show this letter was addressed to Jewish believers *alone*; and certainly not to Jews, as Jews. Indeed, as the gospel of Matthew is the only one of the four which mentions "the Church," so we find in the epistle close parallels with *Ephesians*, and a stress on the *heavenly* calling (3) in which Jewish and Gentile believers are one. Let all who are God's sons (Heb. 12. 7) receive encouragement and guidance from the epistle, which is addressed to *such*.

"WHEN HE SAW THEIR FAITH."

Luke 5. 20.

THESE very emphatic words remind us that the faith is *noticed* by the Lord, and He *delights* in it. Observe, further, we do not read that He saw their action, but their faith, for faith was manifest in the action, and activity without faith is out of place, even as faith without activity is not real. Their method was remarkable : we should at first say "Ingenuity," but *faith* is the Holy Spirit's description. This is noteworthy. Faith is, in the real sense of the word, resourceful : it is not taken back, nor alarmed by difficulties. Faith is not "discouraged." If God permits difficulties, His grace excels them.

Does the Lord see our faith, a faith which worketh by love ? Is there with us that confidence in Himself, and have we that holy determination which will not be thrust aside by circumstances ? Difficulties are to make faith grow : "He answered not a word" did not put off the Syrophenician woman. Faith has a deeper *root* than circumstances. It does not spring from sudden impulse : it looks *beyond appearances*. The trials are but food for faith : "They are bread for us," said Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14. 9). God delights in faith, which will not be daunted, and will not be deterred ! Have we *such* faith ? If we have toiled

all night, shall we not act still on *the Lord's Word* ? If every door seems closed, can we not uncover the roof ? If the crowd charge us to hold our peace, shall we not cry the more ? What if all things *seem* against us, shall not our spirit revive ? If the vision tarry, shall we not wait for it ? If the time of the wilderness training be long, is not the Lord's wisdom better than ours ? There is no cause for discouragement. In due season *we shall reap*, if we faint not, and he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. The Lord has grace and power for *every* need : we would press onward, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"BEING INTERPRETED."

THESE precious words found, for example, in Matt: 1. 23, Mark 15. 34, John 1. 41 remind us, in a beautifully definite way, that God is *not* the God of the Jews only (Rom. 3. 29). The use of two languages is not a waste of space. Such expression may not *seem* "needed," but the very word "languages," reminding of Gen: 11, brings before us that where sin abounded, *grace overflowed*, and there is music in the reference to grace which Rev. 5. 9 emphasizes :—"Out of every kindred, and TONGUE, and people and nation." The Lord's hand is *not* shortened. Judaism suggested "*religion*," Greek culture was a reminder of human "*wisdom*," and Rome's language (Latin) speaks of "*strength*"; and thus John 19. 20, preparing for 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24, tells us that men of *all* nations and conditions *need Christ*, and also that out from all nations men *shall* be gathered *unto Christ*. "There is *none* other Name under heaven." The change from the Hebrew of the "Old Testament" to the Greek of the "New" is full of meaning : yet the Hebrew is *not* forgotten :—"At this present time also there is a *remnant* according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11. 5). It thus becomes delightful ever to see a *few Hebrew words expressed in Greek letters*, and yet how often we miss this teaching !

Mark 15. 22 and John 9. 7 are likewise helpful. Containing the above thoughts, they *also* remind us that places were named among men, unconsciously, but *in God's overruling*, with a view to helpful lessons. So Jebus ("Trodden down"), was changed to Jerusalem (Salem - Peace ; "Possession of Peace"), and Luz—"turning aside") to Bethel ("House of God"). Thus "Siloam" speaks of the "The Sent One," in Whom, and by Whose work alone, our eyes are opened to behold *Himself* (John 9. 37). But what about "Golgotha" ? Man's reason for the name was probably, the "rounding" of the hillock, yet the Holy Spirit reminds of the "head" of the burnt-offering in Leviticus 1, and the root of the word signifies to "roll," and we think of the rolling waves of judgment upon Him, and the *rolling away* of

sins. Yes, the sea is linked with "rolling," and there at Golgotha was He crucified, going under the sea of judgment (Ps. 42. 7), and coming into deep waters (Ps. 69. 2), that He might save His own. To the natural eye, there seemed very little beyond a physical death: but the believer beholds his Saviour taken *from* the place of *peace*, and bearing *wrath*, as well as rejection, and thus becoming the Risen *Head* of His redeemed people, and their "Peace": the very term "Head" suggesting, with a measure of contrast, "the place of a skull." Exalted, He dieth no more. Exalted, He will return. Oh that our hearts may live looking for Him, and that He may be the Centre of our joy and devotion,—yea, the Centre of every part of our life as well.

"FOR," Luke 6. 43.

THE link of verses, of sentences, and of words, in Scripture is always deeply instructive. Many have noticed the precious "FOR" which begins John 3. 16, and the words "BUT God," of Eph. 2. 4, are treasured, nor have all been unmindful of the striking "and" of Matt. 28. 20, showing the path of obedience leading to fellowship with the Lord. It would be helpful to gather *many of the little words of Scripture*. An ordinary concordance sometimes omits them, but a *Concordance of Conjunctions only* would be a valuable aid: meanwhile let us not slur over these words: "Every Word of God is pure," as refined gold. Apparently there are several thoughts here. "Cast out first the beam"—*for a good tree brings not forth corrupt fruit,* this implies;—

- (a) Prove thou art a good tree, and
- (b) The beam is *not* part of the fruit, it is a foreign substance: *cast it out.*

But further, when there *has been* personal cleansing first, one is *bidden* THEN to help a "brother." Observe the contrast;—the man who is ignorant of his own failure says, "Brother, let me pull out": the child of God who is humble does not "talk" so much, he lovingly *acts*: "Then shalt thou see clearly to *pull out,*" not to say "I will pull out," and thus exalt self by contrast. Love is very wise in its way of working: *absence* of meekness of wisdom may cause a "ruffling," even when intentions are good. The desire to help a *brother* Scripturally, and spiritually, is thus intensified by the "for": *since* the "mote" is *not* part of the real "brother," *since* he is a *good tree*. Hence true affection should stimulate us to cast out that which is not of God. The *reason*, therefore, is beautifully acceptable to God, and, by no means, a display of pride.

Doubtless, we would link the word "For" with other parts of the preceding verse, e.g. with the solemn name, "Hypocrite." The

Lord speaks plainly: He shows that the *right* condition is a heart that pleases God, and then there will be words that please God (45). Satan may be glad if this is temporarily obscured (46). But the lips that say, "Lord, Lord," and are loud in profession, will soon show the real character of the heart at *other* times. "*Fruit*" is the Lord's loving emphasis. He reproves the "language" of mere profession of "Brother," and "Lord, Lord" unless there be the *continual* accordance with His will. This is a precious stimulus, and thus verse 42 encourages us to remove *two* sins, and to check a third, in the *right* order, by the power of the Holy Spirit, BECAUSE the Lord's fruit trees should be well-pleasing unto Him, in bringing forth that which is His own will. Shall it not be so? If these pages do not lead to *practical* godliness, the mental progress of readers will bring heavier spiritual loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

"SEEING CLEARLY" is not the result of great learning, but the effect of spiritual obedience (Luke 6. 42). The *beam* in our own eye is the problem. Failure in daily life, and lack of discipleship (see preceding verse), linked with pride, must ever be viewed as the real cause of failure to "see" the will of God in many other things. Often one will say, "I *cannot* see this, and I will wait till I do." Let us not always consider such an attitude "spirituality": often it is a sad reminder that *we have "beams."* The best commentary to Scripture is *via* spiritual removal of these beams: "Then shalt thou see clearly."

"LET YOUR SPEECH BE ALWAY WITH GRACE."

Col. 4. 6.

"I SHOULD like to do this, or that":—thus we often say, or think. And our "this" or "that" may be well-pleasing to the Lord, or not. Sometimes it is "grand," and lacks the *simplicity*, which we should seek, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. But even if it is, in itself, well pleasing, we often fail to see the path thither. Would we serve the Lord in some special action?—Then let our speech be *alway* with grace. Here is the test. "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him." Growing up unto Christ in ALL things is graciously appointed. We want to "answer" aright; observe the path of blessing "Let your speech be ALWAY with grace, seasoned with salt, THAT ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." We must not only prepare for emergencies. The "preparation" of an address is not the great point for a preacher, but the BEING prepared *himself*, that service may be "FRUIT." We are not urging slovenliness, or

lack of definiteness for EACH thing : but these must be AFTER the continual preparation of a life unto the Lord, or, rather, wrapped up therein—and this Divine principle applies throughout. If we would do ANYTHING for the Lord, let us *first* look unto Him for grace as to EVERYTHING. If we please Him in *background little things* : if they are done "in the Holy Spirit," we shall receive strength, and grace, and wisdom, and all for larger opportunities and emergency-problems. "Always with grace," let the thought ring in our ears, yea in our hearts. An impatient word to-day, a proud answer in an unguarded moment, and so forth, will cripple us answering aright when the Lord gives further "opportunity." Surely this is deeply humbling to us all. The "tiny preparations" for blessing or failure are more numerous than we realize. "Christian character" is the fruit of past "Christian character," and carelessness as to little things will mean failure as to larger things, and we may *wonder* where the reason is. But the Lord has revealed it. This principle is often acknowledged in general, but denied in particular. We fail to own that some act which we cannot see to be wrong, and which we defend when reproved with love, is the cause of weakness, and falling in some other act which we do see to be wrong. Our life is one entwined whole : how we need to be *with* the Lord.

"IN ALL THE WILL OF GOD."

Col. 4. 12.

God's will is best, we know not what to choose,
If we should plan, how much our hearts would lose :
"Our" path, and will, our aim should never be,
The path and will of God we long to see.
Hence from our hearts for guidance would we seek.
"Choose Thou the way," thus *all* our life should speak :
'Tis not enough by lips our prayers to frame,
All of our life should pray in Christ's loved Name !
"Choose Thou the way" : self only chooses ill,
God's plan is right, we *thank* Him for His will,
Would not be only to His will *resigned*,
But *gladly seek* henceforth His will to find.
"Choose Thou the way" : God's time is ever best,
Impatiently we oft have lost true rest :
Faith does not murmur, love dare not complain,
Let God appoint,—though there be toil and strain.
"Choose Thou the way" : earth's comforts and success
Are not for saints, who *all* "in Christ" possess :
God still refines, with love beyond compare,
And *all His will* should be our wishful *prayer*.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I HAVE DECLARED UNTO THEM THY NAME, AND WILL DECLARE IT : THAT THE LOVE WHEREWITH THOU HAST LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM, AND I IN THEM." JOHN 17. 26.

A Word of Introduction.

*I*T is a joy, in the Lord's enabling love, to send forth these pages once again. So often we feel our weakness, but how often He strengthens and sustains. Thus we can say "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." No glory of a "man" is possible without serious loss. If the Lord uses any instruments, the honour is His. If He is pleased to accept anything, what is the foundation of this? Surely, His own work. And thus all "credit" is shut out, and we can simply say,— "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory" (Ps. 115. 1). And every helping, praying saint will say the same.

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER.—(1).

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

MANY dear children of God fail to see the precious *limitation* of this prayer. It is not for *all* : only those born from above can rightly say, "Our Father." When the unsaved, in their religious services, and children generally, join in this expression, can it be well-pleasing to the God of *truth* ? Further, not a few have robbed saints of the present dispensation of the Address on the Mount, some by emptying Matt. 5. 38-44, and other verses, of their plain and simple meaning, and others by transferring all the Lord's appointments to another dispensation. But what reason is there for this transfer ? The words as to persecution *cannot* fit

the Millennium, and the future "remnant" of Israel will not be converted before the Lord's appearing in glory (Zech. 12. 10),—the saints of the present dispensation being caught up at the beginning of the Day of the Lord (John 6. 39 with Acts 2. 19, 20, 1 Thess. 4. 15, see Rev. 20. 4).

If we gladly accept the Lord's commandments (John 14. 15), we shall find their appropriateness, and thus be enabled to glorify His Name, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The suggestion that John 16. 24 cuts us off from all previous prayers misses the whole point. The Lord there gives further instruction as to the *mode* of prayer *now*,* but can we not pray "Our Father" *in the Name* of Christ? Indeed, how *else* can we say it aright, for He is the *Only Begotten Son*! In our further studies, we shall see there is no "legalism" in this prayer, but quite the reverse. All is by grace.

How beautiful is the expression, "Father." John 17. 26 comes to mind. The name "Father" was revealed by Christ (Matt. 11. 27), even as the name "Jehovah" through Moses (Ex. 6. 3). A Concordance will show this. Even in the one address before us "Father" occurs 17 times, and how much more in John 14–16. The basis is shown in John 20. 17. A wondrous *nearness* is emphasized, yet withal a *reverence* (Mal. 1. 6). A "family" separation from the *world* is *marked out*, and together with this we have the unity of believers in the precious plural, "Our." The *heavenly* calling (Heb. 3. 1) is impressed by the added words, "Which art in heaven": compare "Your *Heavenly* Father" in Matt. 6. 14, 26, 32. (The stress on "heaven" in the whole address is remarkable: a Concordance will again help: Israel's *earthly* calling is NOT before us: all fits in with the fact that this occurs in the *only* gospel which mentions the "church" by *name*).

Spiritual prayer is NOT to God *as Creator*, though all men *should* acknowledge Him thus: it is NOT to Him as Lawgiver, for *none* can draw *near* to Him in this sphere: it is contrastedly, the expression of a heart-love and dependence, of those *who have been born again*. The *English* term "adoption" in Gal. 4. 5 does not bring out the word used by the Holy Spirit. Salvation does *not* involve a fiction, but a *real* birth and quickening from above (John 3. 3), and the *whole life afterwards depends on this entirely changed position and condition*. *May it be so in our daily experience!* Thus will "our Father" be glorified, and our prayers have a reality, simplicity, and confidence, and His answers will be real and *realized* (Matt. 7. 11).

A TWOFOLD BLESSING.—"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake . . . I wrote unto you little children, because ye have known the Father." 1 John 2. 12, 13.

* Cf. The Lord's commands, for Israel in the *land*, given through Moses *while* they were in the *wilderness*, and to be applied afterwards.

THE LORD'S USE OF HIS PEOPLE. "MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE."

2 Tim. 2. 21.

THESE well-known words call forth the loving concern of every thoughtful child of God. He may see the precious allusion to the future, and the privilege of a vessel to honour in the Kingdom, but the principle applies *now* as well. The Lord deigns to *use* His people, AND deigns to call them "*useful*." How wondrous is this condescension. *He has saved us that we may be useful*: salvation is not only a negative from God's *wrath*, it includes a wondrous positive of love and loving obedience to Himself in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Useful to the Master" are the *inspired* words!

By nature we, like Onesimus (Phm. 11), were unprofitable (Rom. 3. 12), but redemption has changed the whole aspect. Just as the Lord had *need* of the colt (Matt. 21. 3), reminding very definitely of the *redeemed* ass of Ex: 13. 13, so He graciously "needs" us* A Zacchæus was caused to hear the words, "I *must* abide at thy house," and the Lord cannot do without us;—not because of anything in ourselves, but because He will *not* break His own purpose, nor disappoint *His own love*. He has condescended to make His redeemed ones part of His plan, and many sons *shall* be brought to glory.

But there are the *two* aspects. Although salvation is secured, and every *believer* shall have *some* fruit, as the parable of Matt. 13. 3-9 shows (1 Cor. 4. 5), YET there is responsibility, and though none shall pluck from His hand (John 10. 28), we would heed the warning lest another take our crown (Rev. 3. 11).

If we are to be *used*, we must consciously *abide* in Christ (John 15. 4). *Fruit* is the result of His own use of us. "*Abiding*," as an experience of love, is a command, and sets forth our *privilege*. The Vine reveals His life through *engrafted* branches, i.e. the frail human bodies of believers, whose great object is *not* to reveal their old life, but the Lord Himself (Compare 2 Cor. 4. 7). The great need is *not cleverness*, *not* human exaltation, but simplicity, and a holy emptying, for Himself, that His purposes may fill us more and more. The flesh must be laid low, and its works must be cut off, that there may be *room* for the Lord's work. He does not seek eloquent preachers, but only clean vessels. He does not appoint earthly grandeur but lowly dependence. His strength is made perfect in weakness. While we have any confidence in the flesh, we cripple ourselves and become unfit (Phil. 3. 3). "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think *anything* as of ourselves" (2 Cor. 3. 5). Thanks be unto God the verse does not end there: He empowers the powerless.

* Yet see Luke 17. 10 (Job 22. 2).—we must NEVER boast (1 Cor. 4. 7).

"Who am I?" said Moses: "I am the least" said Gideon, but the Lord referred to *Himself* as *the Sufficiency*.

The context in 2 Timothy 2 beautifully impresses a *cleansing* thought. "If a man therefore purge himself from these." Sin must never be excused. Fellowship with evil should be judged. *That* is the Lord's mode of training. The Holy Spirit leads along these lines. The result then is ever sure, "He *shall be a vessel unto honour*." "Useful to the *Master*"; the name here denotes *His sovereign authority*. Psalm 103. 20 rings out, and do we not pray thus to serve (Matt. 6. 10), in *our daily life*? Oh that this may be so in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Independence is the blight of spirituality.

"BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, the LOVE of MANY SHALL WAX COLD."

Matt. 24. 12.

THESE words of Christ are very searching. Each one reminds us of a danger, an imminent danger, a present danger, a danger as to which each believer should be personally concerned, for we dare not boast of our own strength. Iniquity abounds: we cannot deny this. And what special *form* of iniquity? The Holy Spirit's word is "*lawlessness*." Men say "Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?" (Ps. 12. 4). Pharaoh spake thus, but did he prosper? Everything is preparing now for the "lawless one," as Antichrist is called in 2 Thess. 2. 8. And thus we see the casting off of restraint,—in home and nation alike. Men feel their boasted freedom, but are themselves the *servants* of sin, and of corruption (2 Pet. 2. 19). The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God (Rom. 8. 7). Insubordination is a sign of the times, and various schemes are made to wear down and tone down authority, in order that the clay and iron may temporarily "work together," with a patched-up unity. The Lord foreknew the present state of affairs, and this encourages us to restfulness in Him, and to realize, with more intensity, that "The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Possibly the greatest danger we have is an *unconscious* assimilation to surroundings. A believing parent is afraid to exercise his, or her, loving authority—rather let me speak of *their* beautifully united authority—lest children resent. And among believers there is sometimes a tendency to speak lightly of authority (2 Pet. 2. 10). Nor is there a growth in the attitude of 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13, Heb. 13. 17. Satan does not always act as a roaring lion:—he has many *devices*—the plural is important.*

* The word signifies "thoughts in the mind," and may include not only *his* thoughts, but the unkind and unharmonious thoughts which he would put in *our mind*.

If he is disguised as an angel of *light*, there must be something positively "beautiful" in appearance, in his "attractive" work. It must have a distinctly spiritual resemblance. *Counterfeit gold is not ugly*. It is in this connexion that we need a very close walk with God. We shall frequently pass Satan's counterfeit coin, as *good money*, unless testing all in the light of the sanctuary.

And Matt. 24. 12 helps to warn in this connexion. The Lord's "law" is "love"—Matt. 22. 37, 39, John 13. 34. If lawlessness abounds there is selfishness, and this is lovelessness. Distinguish, moreover, an absence of love, AND a love growing *cold*. We must not assume because we have *some* love, that we are not included in the gracious reproof. The Lord, Who rebuked *littleness* of faith, as well as its absence, graciously warns *us*. "Lawlessness" around affects us imperceptibly, awakens an independence of heart, and thus there is *lawlessness* or lovelessness. Or there is "love": *with* caprice of feelings, instead of the love that is out of *devotedness* to the will of the Lord. Love grows cold when we are unmindful of the Lord's *will*. There *cannot* be spirituality without true obedience: there cannot be obedience without true spirituality. Let us not think we are proof against this: "*many*" will be affected, and we need to walk *in the Spirit*, and to have a keen delight in the Lord's revealed will, and a definite fear of any independence, which has a large measure of loveliness, however it expresses itself. We must be subject—*happily* subject to the will of God,—and happily harmonizing with His people in His appointed path, if we would enjoy the *riches* He so graciously makes known for our enjoyment of them,—and of HIM.

"THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT." 2 Tim. 3. 17.

THE word "perfect" in this precious verse means "fit," and is from the same source as another word used to suggest the setting of a dislocated limb, or the *mending* of a net, or a complete "adjusting."

How wondrous is the Holy Spirit's encouragement to faith and earnestness. *First*, we behold God's care for every emergency we meet. *Secondly*, we see that even "a man of God" *needs* God's Words (cf. Dan. 9. 2). *Thirdly*, that only those who belong to God can truly profit by the Scriptures, and *fourthly*, that our lack of "fitness," of spiritual agreement with one another, and of completeness of Christian character, is *whenever* we neglect the Words of God. Here is a deeply heart-searching thought. "Religion" is often mentioned by the man of the world, but men of God have something far deeper, even a new life, and a true

communion with Himself. That their new experience may be more enjoyed, and their new powers more and more used, the food and discipline of God's truth are needed—and the training of God's truth is very *real*, for *three* words out of four in verse 16 suggest a measure of "correcting," although ALL in the fulness of *love*. Ah, true correction is in love, and true love does not omit to correct! A godly home realizes this.

Often we are ready to mourn our "unfitness." Why? Is it not because we have neglected God's Words? Is it not because the morning season *with Him* has been hurried over, through late, and irregular, rising? Is it not because we have been unwilling for, or at least unmindful of, the *reproof* of His Words and have rather read them as a *duty*, or, it may be, "to find a subject" for a class we take? There is a great peril in *neglecting* the things of the Lord. If we would be "fit," and fit in with one another *aright*, knowing how to take opportunities for the Lord, we must be *fitted*, as verse 17 shows. Literally it reads, "Fit, *having been fitted completely*." The *fitness* is the EFFECT of God's fitting. As the truth is applied by the Holy Spirit we are moulded, and thus able to please and serve the Lord, and to bring Him glory. Oh that it may be so, unto His praise! Precious indeed are the words, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2. 14).

"The LIGHT of the BODY is the EYE."

Luke 11. 34.

THE theory of "an inner light," i.e. a natural inner light, and a spark of goodness, finds *no countenance in Scripture*. Far otherwise. It is written, "Ye were sometimes *darkness*" (Eph. 5. 8), *cf.*, "Having the understanding *darkened*" (Eph. 4. 18). Salvation is a mighty *change*. "God, Who commanded the light to shine OUT OF DARKNESS, *hath shined in our hearts*" (2 Cor. 4. 6). *Every* theory of an inner light denies the fall of man and glorifies those who are ruined, almost involving a *pantheism*. It is so different from John 1. 4, 5. Remember also, "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness" (Luke 11. 35). This is a striking message, to-day!

And the words of our title have a solemn bearing on the attitude of a *disciple*. "The light of the body is the eye," i.e. if I want my whole body to be full of light, I must *look* in the right direction (Heb. 12. 2). If I am *independent* and *self-occupied*, and *self-exalting*, there must be loss!

Hear further:—"The whole body shall be full of light, as whenever *the lamp* by its bright shining doth give thee light" (Luke 11. 36). The lamp gives light *whenever* there is nothing

opaque, and especial light to that which is *near* it. If my eye is not *single*, it is *evil*: to the extent that a *single* eye is *not* existing, sin against God is ruling. A devotedness unto the Lord is the *only* spiritual attitude. *Purpose* of heart, and singleness of aim are deeply important. The condition of the *WHOLE* life of a child of God depends on his *attitude*, on his *standpoint*. At *what* do I look? On *Whom* do I look? Godliness is not *via* human effort, but *via* looking to Christ. Thus shall we *know* the truth, and thus have "light" on that which may now seem dark. Let us, therefore, seek, in the Holy Spirit, a standpoint where we can behold Him (Eph. 5. 14, 2 Cor. 3. 18). *This* is the path of holiness.

THE COMING ONE, AND THE KINGDOM.

THE Lord Jesus ever directed His disciples' heart to the Kingdom. "The righteous shall shine forth in the Kingdom" —"I appoint unto you a Kingdom"—"That Day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." And, as He linked His words with Himself—"Me and My Words": "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments"—so He was pleased to draw their minds, and ours, to something more than an event—to *Someone*, more than to something, and that *Someone*—HIMSELF. "I will come again and receive you UNTO MYSELF." His love to His own people emphasized this, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be *with Me* where I am." This thought, in His heart of love, should awaken a prayer in our loving hearts, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come." We do not look for the "Second Coming" as a mere event among events, but we look for "Him That shall come." Compare the name of the last book of Scripture: *not* "the Revelation of St. John the Divine" as our *English* heading words it, *not* "RevelationS," but the "Revelation of JESUS CHRIST." Ch. 1. 1 is clear as to this. We shall see *Him*, so shall we ever be *with the Lord*. In like manner 2 Cor. 3. 18 is before 2 Cor. 4. 18. Let us ever emphasize the Person of Christ. "That Blessed Hope" reminds us of His own Name.—The Lord Jesus Christ *Who is "our Hope"* (1 Tim. 1. 1). This attitude is a precious antidote to fear and anxiety. Oh that Christ may be more *central* in our lives. When Eve lost the *central* aspect of the *tree* of life, and said another tree was "in the midst," everything went wrong. So is it to-day in an individual life, as well as in an assembly. Do we look for *Christ*? Do we not wish to look for *Him*, with *intense* desire? The very words lead us to confession of sin. The Holy Spirit ever exalts Christ (John 16. 13); may this ever be our longing,

“WILLINGNESS TO SAVE ONE’S LIFE.”

ABRAHAM “offered up” Isaac, because he was truly *willing* (Heb. 11. 17). This is a precious thought: thus the apostle “died” daily,—though we have a further thought in that passage, the strain was so intense. In Matt. 16. 25 we are reminded that it is possible to be *willing*, i.e. wishing, to *save one’s life physically*, and thus actually to *destroy* it! The Lord sees *the will*. John 7. 17 emphasizes this, in a happy contrast, “If any one *will to do HIS WILL*.” Have we such a willingness? To return to Matt. 16. The Holy Spirit shows us the opposite of self-protecting. Verse 24 is definite: “If any one *wills* to have come *after Me*, let him *deny himself*.” We CANNOT combine the two “will’s”:—self-will, and care for self, cannot please HIM. If we “will” to follow HIM, we *cannot* “will” to look after ourselves (see Matt. 16. 22 marg.; Acts 20. 24. Phil. 2. 30). Note, too, John 12. 25: full of teaching.

If, therefore, we are enabled by grace to SEEK the Lord, and to DENY self, (for these two thoughts are inseparable), we are viewed as “losing our life” (lit: “destroying the soul” for the Lord’s sake, Matt. 16. 25). This expression is most remarkable. We call to mind Heb. 4. 12—“the soul” here suggests the natural man,—who is called the “soulish” man: and the helpful teaching is that children of God are to *judge the flesh* very definitely. Compare “mortification” in Rom. 8. 13. Notice that we do *not* read, “If any one *will to destroy*”: nay, this spiritual mortification *must be earnestly carried out*, if we would *rejoice* in the promises. There must be a *godly continuance*, for we have not yet “attained.” We still need to mortify more and more. Oh that it may ever be in the *power* of the Holy Spirit.

And as to willingness to *follow the Lord*, in the sense of John 13. 36 (21. 18, 19), let us BEWARE lest we *assume* we are willing. Peter said, “Lord, I am READY” (Luke 22. 33) but he was *unready*. It is easy to say what we would do: it is easy to satisfy ourselves that we are *willing* to do, and that God accepts our “will” as Abraham’s, but let us be prayerfully concerned lest we deceive ourselves. Our loving Lord said, “If any one *wills* to have come after Me, let him *deny himself*,” not “let him will to deny himself.” Oh for grace to obey with love’s promptness, as becometh those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

The love of God to His *children* is very wondrous and tender. He, though so Glorious, delights in their “little things,” which are done to please *Him*. He welcomes them, and their prayers. Nothing is too small for His interest. Surely it is a *great privilege* to be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ!

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

“I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD, MY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL IN MY GOD; FOR HE HATH CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HATH COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AS A BRIDEGROOM DECKETH HIMSELF WITH ORNAMENTS, AND AS A BRIDE ADORNETH HERSELF WITH HER JEWELS.” ISAIAH 61. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN we praise God for grace to send forth something TO HIS GLORY. Again we know that ALL the glory must be His. What is there which we have not RECEIVED? Nor would we wish to have the glory. IT IS A SIN TO ROB GOD. But as He is exalted, He delights to GIVE unto His people. So Israel’s priests had full provision after He was honoured (contrast 1 Sam. 2. 15-17 and verse 36). And it is the same spiritually to-day: our privilege, and our true gain alike, must ever be—acknowledging the Lord. Yet we would not do this, for OUR joy’s sake. Rather for HIS sake. Oh that our delight may not become our centre, though it is a privilege! But let us delight for His sake. This is our wish: may it be reached and realized more!

OUR “GLORY.”

A COMPARISON of Psalm 16. 9 with Acts 2. 26 shows that in Christ’s perfect life His tongue was, indeed, His glory. Alas, how often instead of the fire of true glory, there has been the fire of James 3. 6 in our experience. Psalm 30. 12 urges to a spiritual contrast with the days gone by (1 Pet. 4. 3). The tongue is part of the *whole* body, to be *presented unto the Lord*;

this "little member" should be a *weapon of righteousness* (Rom. 6). In this connexion it is interesting to see that the Lord's servants were to be His mouthpieces, representing Him. Does not 2 Cor. 8. 23 include this thought? But 1 Cor. 11 also helps, with its remarkable bearing upon the subject of godly order among brethren and sisters. Those who imagine a contradiction between the first sixteen verses of chapter 11, and chapter 14, overlook that in the latter we have an assembly, in the former *not* an assembly, but that which "*belongs*" to an assembly, *including* the private prayer of those who own the Lord's Name. May we not say that even in *private* prayer, as brethren should *not* put on hats, sisters should not permit the removal of a covering?

But just now notice the words, "It is a glory to her" 1 Cor. 11. 15. The beautiful appropriateness of Luke 7. 38. and John 11. 2. 12. 3 must be felt in this connexion. Our highest—whatever it is—should be at *His feet*. But not only so, the *different* position, (not by any means as to salvation from wrath, but as to the arrangement of service), appointed for brethren and sisters, is more fully explained. The words "Glory of God" (7) describe part of the Lord's will for a believing man. He is to use his tongue for the Lord, in more *prominence* than a sister. The word "glory" includes such a thought. But the more frequently *silent* devotion of a sister is equally recorded by the Lord in His book: it is much more fragrant to Him than so *much* public prayer. The principle of Matt. 26. 13 applies. One feels alarmed to see the way in which not a few "glorify themselves" by earthly decorations, instead of bringing their glory down to His feet; just as many use ornate words in prayer instead of using their tongue *simply for Him*. But if we see our real glory is to glorify Him in the way He has marked out, whether we be called to speak or to be silent, we shall, with holy joy, hating all envy and rivalry, bring Him praise, in true devotion, enabled by the Holy Spirit!

ON LEARNING THE SCRIPTURE.

LEARNING is a privilege. Let this thought be primary to the glory of God. If we say, "What a weariness is it!"—we shall find nothing but weariness. And the children will reflect our attitude.

The Holy Spirit emphasizes learning. Directly, by such words as Deut. 31. 19, and Acts 20. 35. And indirectly, (a) by acrostic psalms, and (b) by the way in which one inspired writer quotes from another.

The Holy Spirit thus shows, moreover, this use of learning Scripture. We need to have God's own truth as a weapon. Thus the Lord Jesus, as a Perfect Example, did not utter many fresh

words, but quoted Deuteronomy three times in the wilderness. Can we be surprised that critics have especially attacked Deuteronomy since?

There are, undoubtedly, varieties of temperaments and differences of mental condition, and of past practice. Nor would we lead the child of God to expect an easy path. But God's grace is greater than we realize. And He delights to encourage His children.

Many make mistakes through undervaluing the powers God has already given. They *talk* about their failures, and thus multiply them, even as "thinking" and worrying can produce actual physical swellings, which appear to be as tumours. Faith is powerful. If the object of learning is God's glory, there may be hopefulness.

When we *start* learning, we may be like those who have not exercised a certain muscle to any extent for years. Hence the need for prayerful patience, and persistence. Concentrated affection, *without mere anxiety to remember*, is an important principle. Many things make an impression upon us that we CANNOT forget them. Let us seek such spiritual impressions from God's truth.

Here is one who finds a trouble in learning, and thinks he has a bad memory, but he can recollect faces easily, or hundreds of notes in various tunes—in the right order. This faculty needs training along a new line. Here is another who is perplexed, but can call to mind *hundreds* of changing prices of goods. The power to retain information has become too much in a groove. Seek grace for victory. The ability is *there*, in God's mercy. Let it be *applied*. "Application" is a prayerfully realized responsibility.

These thoughts may encourage "some" who are wrongly convinced they "*cannot learn*." *Deeper* impressions are needed. Reading *aloud* may help these. But, even beyond this, let there be a desire that *God Himself may impress* the spiritual teaching on an *obedient life*. This is an important key. Definiteness of character is needed. May such be our characteristic, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE CLEANSED LEPER.

DOES the Lord heal only for our advantage, in negative deliverance *from sin*? Nay, the object of salvation reaches far beyond this. The healed leper was not left in the camp, he was brought quite near as a worshipper. Types picturing death and resurrection (the second bird), and the consecrating work of the Holy Spirit were all brought *together* in Lev. 14, till he was an *accepted worshipper*, and equipped to please God. Do we desire a *negative* deliverance from wrath, and *nothing more*? Such a thought robs us of the true *fulness* of salvation. Is our

great joy "release," or the privilege of drawing near? To be an escaped soul is blessed, but God wondrously excels this. The cleansed leper was not left half-way. The Lord carried the work through, and he was anointed on ear, hand, and foot, *just as the very priests in Lev. 8*. And have not we boldness to enter into the Holiest? Shall we count the glory of salvation to be irksome? The Lord did not leave Isaiah, when, in the year of the leper king's death, he took up the humble cry of Lev. 13. 45 spiritually, *until* the prophet was consciously and painfully cleansed, and *meet* for the Master's use. And the especial encouragement to the healed Samaritan leper of Luke 17 was given *when* he became a worshipper (verse 16). We remember the parallel in the man born blind (John 9): what is our last view?—"Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him" (38). Nor is this strange. The blind man of Luke 18. 35-43 was not left a BEGGAR: delivered by grace, the CLIMAX was, he "followed Him, GLORIFYING GOD": a mighty change. And, in Acts 3. 8, mark the Divine order of words, "Walking and leaping and praising God." The privilege of praise, and worship, is wondrous beyond measure. And the leper's body was to be unto the Lord: his ear (first), to hear aright: his hand, to work aright: his foot, to walk aright,—all the members unto the Lord. This is Romans 6: this is Romans 12. 1, 2: this is true consecration. Where the blood was the oil was, and in *this* order. The Father *seeketh* true worshippers (John 4. 23). We often think of escapes from judgment, often look upon publicity of work, but the Father emphasizes worship, and to draw near to Him is a privilege beyond standing before the people (Ezek. 44. 11 and 16). May this be our joy, and our aim, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit!

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

"What wilt Thou do unto THY GREAT NAME?"

JOSHUA'S concern for the honour of Jehovah's NAME is a severe rebuke to present-day complacency. He had learned to "fear this glorious and fearful NAME, The Lord Thy God." It is ours, however, in this gospel day, as those born from above, to look up into the heavens, the place of our home (John 14. 2), and speak to God as "Our Father." Nevertheless, we are not "free" from the need of "grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

In Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land, Israel defiled themselves with false worship, and brought dishonour upon the NAME of Him Who had loved and redeemed them. Again and again the Lord intervened for His own honour. "I wrought for MY NAME'S sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out." Though they

believed not, yet He continued faithful; He could not deny Himself. If they would not sanctify His great NAME, He would do so Himself to their shame and confusion. Even the "little reviving" granted in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah did not last, for we find that the burden of the Word of the Lord by Malachi was largely concerned with a similar despising of the NAME. "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar." "Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which He loved."

Yet in both these contexts, the Divine grace shines out in the promise of Israel's restoration. "I will accept you . . . and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen." "Incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering: for MY NAME shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now that Israel has, for a time, been set aside, the honour of the NAME of our God has been, in measure, entrusted to the saints. But have they been found faithful? "Hallowed be Thy NAME," are words often upon the lips, but does the life harmonize? The NAME, "Father," has been revealed by the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, especially in connexion with His resurrection (John 20. 17); and that is the Holy NAME we beseech Him to sanctify. It is also our privilege to be His chosen servants to that end. But how? The Lord Jesus, earlier, in His address on the mount, instructs His disciples as to their manner of life during their pilgrimage: in order, He adds, "That ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven." The life that hallows our Father's NAME is one of suffering and rejection for our Lord. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." Then how fitting, when, in these beautiful words, we pray for the sanctifying of the NAME, to look backwards to the NAME of "Father," and onward to the "Coming of the Kingdom," when that NAME shall be known in a yet fuller degree; "For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." K.

References:—Josh. 7. 9; Deut. 28. 58; Heb. 12. 28; Ezek. 20; Mal. 1. 7; 2. 11; Matt. 5. 45; Jer. 31. 9.

OLD—NOT NEW:— In the Sight of God.*

A NEW year. No, not unless you have a new life. "Is there any thing whereof it may be said, 'See, this is new?' It hath been already of old time, which was before us," Eccl. 1. 10. When God brought up Israel from Egypt, He said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12. 2).

But notice that He appointed them a Passover Sacrifice, and

* Leaflets for Israel at their feast and fast season—"The Day of Atonement," Oct. 2nd. Oh for much prayer that God may be glorified.

thus the eldest boys of Israel *lived*, as it were, with a *new life*. Their sacrifice died, and that was a picture of *their death before God*. Their *bodily* life was thus regarded as a new one. But you need a spiritual life—a *new spiritual life*. Is it possible? Thanks be unto God, it is!

God did *not* command all the sacrifices because He *needed* the blood of bulls and goats. Nor can *their* blood take away sins. But God showed HIS way of salvation.

Have you ever thought *why* Abraham said, "The Lord *will see*," AFTER he had offered the ram? Have you ever asked yourself *why* Moses said that the Prophet, like unto himself (Deut. 18. 15), would be "according to *all*" that they asked? What did they ask? Do you remember the added words of Ex. 20. 19, "*Lest we die!*"

Thus the promised Prophet of Deut. 18 is able to deliver from death! But God cannot excuse one sin. Therefore, if this Prophet stands in between any sinner and God, to fulfil the wish of LIFE, He *MUST* be the Righteous One, and *MUST* provide a sacrificial death for sinners! And the Hebrew Scriptures declare One Who will thus meet our need. *Only One*, not two. Can you find two righteous servants in Isaiah 53? Can you find two who fulfil Psalm 15? Are there two who are called

"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

in Jer. 23. 6? No, *only One!*

A truly new year is not possible without a new life, and a new life is not possible apart from the death of a Sacrifice, and a sufficient Sacrifice is not possible without a righteousness, and therefore we are led to the One of Whom Isa. 53 speaks:

**A RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL MAKE A RIGHTEOUSNESS . . .
AND HE BARE THE SIN OF MANY.**

He is a Real Saviour, and there are those who have **NEW LIFE** in Him.

ATONEMENT, A REALITY.

WHEN we search the Hebrew Scriptures we find that God *Himself* emphasizes atonement, and why? Why is it that Cain, without a sacrifice, was altogether rejected, and that Abel, with the firstlings of his flock, was graciously accepted? *This* was *not copied* from the nations: there were *no nations* from whom to copy. The *only* righteous man at the time of the flood offered sacrifices. Ishmael and Esau are quite away from sacrifices, but both Isaac and Jacob are definitely linked therewith. There was *no* deliverance of Israel from Egypt *till* there was a sacrifice: and the Egyptians were without a sacrifice,—and lost.

If there was sin among Israel, God did *not* suggest forgiveness

apart from a sacrifice (Lev. 4. 20, 26 etc.). The Day of Atonement was not arranged to give unusual teaching or to cause surprise: it is quite in accord with *all Scripture*. God emphasizes atonement.

But God did not *need* the blood of bulls and goats: the cattle on a thousand hills were, and are, His. Nor can a dumb animal be "holy," and in fellowship with God. Why then this emphasis on atonement? Why could not money and costly gifts meet the necessity? Why *MUST* there be the pouring out of **BLOOD**?—Because the sinner's life is forfeited, and the perfect **LIFE** of Another is *needed*, to present an acceptable **DEATH** in the place of the sinner. God, in this sense, too, had *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33. 11), BUT "*Precious* in the sight of the LORD is *the death* for His saints" (Ps. 116. 15).

The death of a Righteous One, for the unrighteous, is beautiful in God's sight. But what death is "*for His saints*?" The *same* word is found in Psalm 50. 5:—

**"Gather to Me My Saints, the ones making My
Covenant upon a Sacrifice."**

The Lord's "saints" are in His covenant which has only *one Sacrifice*. Likewise in Psalm 110 there is only *one* Priest. He is a Priest for ever: there is **NO ROOM FOR A SUCCESSOR**. The type, or picture, of *this* Priest did not offer, so far as we are told, more than *one Sacrifice*; though He must have offered one, to be called a Priest, and to bring the fruits of the sacrifice to Abraham (Gen. 14. 18, 19). The teaching of God is definite:—

ATONEMENT, A REALITY!—

Let the words ring out:—Atonement, a necessity! God will not excuse one sin. And atonement thus shows that sin must bring death: not only physical death, but death under God's knife of judgment. So many seem to think that their own death will be sufficient. *But God would not recognize that which died of itself* (see Lev. 7. 24, 22. 8). And if a sinner's death would satisfy God's claims, why did He refuse everything except a perfect sacrifice? No, dear reader, you cannot possibly be an atonement, or part of an atonement. But atonement is necessary. Death, death, death:—death to the sinner is a Divine threatening. And *salvation by atonement* shows that God has a knife against sin *wherever it is*. The sacrifice, when sin was laid on it, *could not live*. *God will punish all sin*. It was *murder* to kill a clean sacrificial animal, under certain conditions, because a Righteous One must not be killed, except as a Sacrifice. And Israel were themselves cut off when they cut off Messiah (Lev. 17. 4). But, at the same time, God fulfilled His promise, that He would make an atonement (Ps. 78. 38).—

**"And He, being compassionate will make an atonement
as to iniquity, and He will not destroy."**

Mark the word **יָכַפֵּר** **נִכְפַּר**.^{*} The atonement was *not* made *then*. God's promise was *made*! But the atonement was future. And so, at the right time, Messiah came. Thus He fulfilled the *future* tense of Exodus 3. 14, "I will become that which I will become," and shewed the meaning of the *Name* in Ex. 34. 7:—

"BEARING INIQUITY and TRANSGRESSION and SIN."

נָשָׂא does *not* mean "forgive," but rather to "bear iniquity," and *thus* forgive. The root is *atonement*, the fruit is *forgiveness*! *God will not forgive without atonement* (Lev. 4. 20), for He will not break His word. Wonderful testimony,—

**"BEARING INIQUITY":— IN THE PLACE
OF SINNERS—THIS IS HIS NAME.**

(Compare Isaiah 53. 12):—

"AND HE HIMSELF BARE THE SIN OF MANY."

Again turn to Psalm 78. 38:—

"AND HE WILL NOT DESTROY."

THUS "He will *not* destroy." So if I have NO atonement, *I must be destroyed*! Atonement is the only hope. There is no other escape. Atonement is a *necessity*. Atonement is a *reality*. But YOU cannot *be* an atonement. YOU cannot *make* one. Yet if you feel your sins a burden, you can rejoice in the One Which God has provided. Messiah *has* fulfilled Ex. 3. 15; He was God (Isa. 9. 6) but BECAME Man, that, by the presenting of His body, there might be a real atonement, and sin be truly covered, and sinners who believe in Him might not be destroyed, but saved for ever from their sins! Are YOU still *without an atonement*? Are you seeking to do what you are not able to do, even seeking vainly to give your own atonement? Or are you made willing to rest upon *God's Gift*, God's ONE Gift!—

Surely some will say, "Nothing else can meet my need!"

The joy of *God's people* is found in the Sacrifice of Isaiah 53. 6. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

There are two contrasted marvels in the world. The Lord Jesus said, "They hated Me without a cause." But, thanks be unto God, it is also true that He loved *without a cause*, i.e. without a cause apart from His own love (Hos. 14. 4). The astounding fact of man's sin is great; but the astounding fact of God's grace is greater.

^{*} "He will make an atonement": not the *past* tense.

"Questions of Enquiring Jews," a Free Booklet gladly sent to any interested, or, rather, concerned by the gracious working of GOD. Correspondence welcome—Percy W. Heward—61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

THE LORD JESUS SAID:—

"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME; AND I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE; AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH, NEITHER SHALL ANY MAN PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY HAND."
JOHN 10. 27, 28.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN, in the mercy of our God, we can send forth this little message of HIS GRACE. How wondrous to feel that He has a personal interest in His people who have been made HIS for ever, by precious blood. The depth of His condescension, and the height of their exaltation, are a call to praise without murmuring, to love without worldliness, to obedience without hesitation! The darkness around intensifies the call to love's obedience. Surely we desire to walk worthy, overflowing with praise, and PLEASING HIM Who has done so much for us. Spirituality should be our characteristic, obedience to the Lord should mark everything. May we thus glorify Him, in the Holy Spirit, as we look for "that blessed Hope."

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER—(3).

"THY KINGDOM COME."

THE Scriptures are full of the thought of a *house* and a *kingdom*:—a Sanctuary for God, a Kingdom belonging to God. He designed to emphasize both among Israel (Ex. 19. 6, 25. 8: see 1 Sam. 2. 35, 1 Chron. 17. 14), and we have the antitype (1 Pet. 2. 9). The thought is delightful: the Lord's joy should be our joy. The petition, "Thy Kingdom Come" appropriately follows "Hallowed be Thy Name," for God chose Jerusalem to put His Name there (Deut. 12. 5, 11, 21), and it was the city of the Great King (Matt 5. 35). The HALLOWING of the Name suggests "the HOLIEST of All," and *then* we have next—*The Authority of God*. Among Israel the only throne, *at first*, was

God's mercy-seat (1 Sam. 12. 12), and the priesthood and kingship *will* be united in Christ, fulfilling Psalm 110. "He shall be a *Priest* upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13). How bright is the prospect:—for *His redeemed*.

Israel have said that a prayer without the Kingdom is *incomplete*, yet how little they know what they say. Can we honour His Name without remembering the Kingdom? Psalm 72. 20 is more than an appendix: "The prayers of David . . . are ended" and reach a climax in "Blessed be the glorious *Name* for ever; and let the whole *earth** be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen," and this is in a "kingly" psalm (verses 1, 19). So in Psalm 45—"Touching the *King*" is the message of verse 1, and in 17 we read "I will make Thy *Name* to be remembered." How can we separate these (Zech. 14. 9)? We have all thought too little of the glory of the Lord.

John's ministry and Christ's ministry *began* with the Kingdom (Matt. 3. 2, Mark 1. 14), and in *resurrection* He still spake of "things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," and the book of Acts closes in the *same* way as it commences (28. 31). Col. 1. 13, 4. 11, 1 Thess. 2. 12, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 18 show the intense desires of the apostle,—and these were under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"Thy Kingdom come" reminds us that it has *not* yet come. We are still strangers and pilgrims. The Lord has cut at the root of the error which gives the *disciples'* prayer to everybody. How can we *nationalize* such a prayer? The one who rightly prays declares plainly that he seeks a country (Phil. 3. 20, Heb. 11. 14). Now we behold "the kingdoms of the world" (Luke 4. 5), but they *shall* become *His* (Rev. 11. 15, Ps. 82. 8). The words of Genesis 1. 28 will come true in the *Last Adam*:—He will "have dominion" (Ps. 8). Do we *love* His Appearing?

Observe THREE aspects,

- (i) "The Most High ruleth in the *kingdom of men*" (Dan. 4. 17): this is *Providence*.
- (ii) "The Kingdom of the heavens": a heavenly position for those chosen out of the world (*cf.* John 18. 36): this is *Salvation*.
- (iii) "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom" (Dan. 2. 44): this is *future Glory* (Ps. 2. 8, 9 with 110. 1).

Men will not *develop* the Kingdom: it will *come* (Dan. 2. 34), when He That Shall Come arrives. And for *this* the redeemed pray. Christ has received this from the *Father* (Ps. 2. 7, 8, Heb. 10. 13, Dan. 7. 13): hence "THY Kingdom," and the precious words of Matt. 13. 43, 26. 29; Rev. 11. 15. How real the contrast with Rev. 17. 17 and with Gen. 10. 10. Surely our separated hearts cry once more, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, "Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22. 20).

* *Cf.* the next petition in Matt. 6, "Thy will be done in EARTH."

WRESTLING IN PRAYER. IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO SPEAK OF WRESTLING WITH GOD?

HOW often we have all heard beloved children of God speak in this way. It is frequently the case that they are in deep *earnestness*, and *mean* much which the Lord approves, and He deigns to accept their *wish*,* but, if there is any misunderstanding of His will, do we not lose some blessing? We grieve the Holy Spirit if we misapply the Scriptures. 'Tis not "criticism" to point this out, but affection.

Hence the writer would, with the frankness of love, suggest a few thoughts which may be used of the Lord, if pondered with prayer. Nothing will hinder *true* earnestness, if it is associated with a spiritual recognition of the guidance which the Holy Spirit has given.†

We recollect the *positive* instruction of Ephesians 6. There our wrestling is said to be with evil powers, (this we shall ponder later), but there is *no* word of wrestling with God. Many, many expressions are used, in Scripture, to show an overflowing in coming *boldly* to the throne of grace (Heb. 4. 16), but *not one command or encouragement to wrestle with Him*. The *negative* witness is remarkable. And does not the thought of such wrestling seem at once derogatory to Him? He Himself loveth us (John 16. 27), and *delights* to give. We have not to *force* an access, or to persuade Him to give *against* His will. Wrestling has a wrong aspect altogether. Faith's beautiful dependence, seen in 2 Samuel 7. 18-29 is quite different, and mingled with much thanksgiving (Phil. 4. 6).

But are we not told to "*Ask, seek, knock*" (Matt 7. 7, 8)? Undoubtedly our Heavenly Father permits a time of *waiting*, to strengthen our faith, but, (let it be repeated), we do *not* seek against His will. We do not knock because He does not hear (Isa. 59. 1). We do not strike *against* His promises. Difficulties are permitted, as in Dan. 10. 1-13, but *they* do not involve wrestling with God. Is not the thought *presumptuous*, unless it has Scriptural warrant?

* If the Lord waited till we expressed ourselves perfectly, how long would He wait! We should *never* receive His tokens. But His condescension, though it prevents our "anxiety" about words, (which would close our mouths altogether), and though it explains *why* He often encourages those who have not grasped His will (e.g. in "the breaking of the bread"), must never be misused carelessly when His loving will has *been* brought before us. *At once we become trustees*, and any alteration is most perilous. Surely we love Him too much to excuse this.

† How often we all seem afraid to let the Lord's words have their *right* place. Will election make a *disciple* careless? Shall we hedge it round? Will the Lord's unveiling as to His return make a *disciple* occupied with events rather than looking for Him? The deliverance is *via* "discipleship," not by "fear" of the Lord's words, or by modifying them.

How has such an idea arisen? Apparently from Genesis 32. 24-32. But mark, first of all, that the "Man" *wrestled with* Jacob (24). The expression is exactly the "*other way round*" from ours. The Lord acted first. The *Lord* saw something in Jacob that needed humbling. And there was no blessing to Jacob while *he* sought to wrestle back: a *lasting* weakness then became necessary. We think humbly, in this connexion, of the pain to Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6), and the permanent *bodily* strain of 2 Cor. 12. 7-9, lest there should be a lifting up of self. Jacob, too, needed a continued physical disability (Gen. 32. 31), to *keep him from "wrestling,"* i.e. to hold back from pride.* The *promise* was given to a humbled man (26): "Let Me go" THEN placed *power* within his reach: he grasped the simple hint: he was thereby given *authority* to ask, not to wrestle; he must speak to the Rock, not smite it. "He *wept* and made supplication" (Hos. 12. 4): *that* was his might. Is it ours? *Then* the words sounded forth "As a prince hast thou power with *God*, and with *men*, and hast prevailed": "He blessed him there." Jacob had been "scheming" with regard to Esau, and the Lord showed him his *utter* weakness.† Power with men *follows* power with God. Abraham could meet the king of Sodom when he had been with Melchizedek.

Yet we do have, or should have, a wrestling. We have seen this already, and Ephesians 6 stimulates. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (cf. John 18. 36: a contrast with human ideas that a Christian is a citizen of this world); "but against principalities, against powers . . . wherefore take unto you the *whole* armour of God . . . *praying always*" (verses 10-18). How contrasted is prayer with sleepiness§ (Luke 22. 40-46). "Watching thereunto with all perseverance" signifies "sleeplessness." Mark the testimony concerning Christ;—"Being in an *agony*": the fuller meaning of this word includes "conflict." The prince of this world then came (John 14. 30). His people find a *measure* of the same opposition. Col. 4. 12 illustrates ("striving" margin), and Col. 1. 29, with 2. 1, (no chapter break in the original), helps us. Here we behold a real *conflict* in prayer (Rom. 15. 30). *Satan would seek to hinder access* (Rev. 12. 10). His forces are mighty. How often we pray unhindered *because* our prayers are not prayerful enough for Satan to seek to prevent! We

* How contrasted is this with *some* thoughts of faith-healing. (How much God teaches by the *body*). But many children of God make still greater mischief by human schemes, and man-confidence, in striving to gain "health."

† This is a precious thought.—True prayer is to prevent anxiety, and to hold us back from taking things into "our own hands." God delights to be trusted by His people. As the sinner is *naturally* too rich to seek a perfectly free salvation (Isa. 55. 1), so the believer is apt to become too "wise" to trust an absolutely wise Guide. Our gracious Lord deigns to humble us, when we *feel* that without Him we can do NOTHING (John 15. 5). 'Tis then He explains the realities of prevailing prayer (John 15. 7, 16).

§ Can we be surprised therefore that Satan's special attack is, oftentimes, sleepiness at prayer seasons? Shall he have the *victory*?

ask without faith, and we should be almost surprised if God answered (see Acts 12. 15). This is "natural," but how grievous. Let us be bowed down. Our spiritual need is more "wrestling" in prayer, but NOT wrestling with our gracious God. *He delights to give when we are in a condition to receive!* The Holy Spirit enters into our *need* in this connexion (Rom. 8. 26), and prayer in the Holy Spirit is associated with obedient love. To us is there the privilege of pleasing the Lord, that we too may rejoice in the words, "He *blessed him there!*" Are we not desirous of this experience daily? God does grant crises, but He is graciously willing to grant a fulness of blessing EVERY DAY.

"IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS."

Mal. 3. 8.

"WE are not in the old dispensation," some reply, or, at least, think. But apart from the fact that tithes were honoured before Moses, and are linked approvingly with the *Melchizedek* priesthood in Gen. 14, and with righteous Abraham *before* he was circumcised, shall we use the deliverance from "legalism" to encourage selfishness? Impossible—if we *realize* grace. Freedom from law does NOT mean "lawlessness": its ONLY Scriptural setting is in connexion with the Lord's laws given unto the *mind*, and written on the *heart* (Heb. 8. 10). This is a startling contrast with human theories, and shows the *greater* devotedness which should characterize obedient saints to-day. *Love gives up more than a minimum.* We are in a law to Christ, i.e. our relation to "law," now we are no longer UNDER it, is actually closer: when we WALK WITH GOD our WISHES are the laws of God ENJOYED, in the *enabling of the Holy Spirit*.

Every Scriptural reviving seems linked with *giving*. In Ex. 36 the people needed to be restrained from giving. Unless a child of God gives, *he* robs himself of joy,—*she* robs herself of a privilege. How often we see a *dulness* of life because those who own the Lord's Name try *their own* methods. When Israel *held back*, they soon "walked *mournfully* before the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3. 14). Dear fellow-believers, absence of giving, irregularity of giving (1 Cor. 16. 1, 2), poorness of giving (2 Cor. 9. 6), grudging of giving (2 Cor. 9. 7) are not only robbing the Lord, WHO CAN DO WITHOUT YOU; but robbing yourself, and you cannot afford not to give. *You blight your joy*, and wither your happiness. Worldly wisdom, selfishness, *thoughtlessness*, or delay in these matters can only bring spiritual bankruptcy. "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but *it tendeth to poverty*" (Prov. 11. 24). Hence, many spiritual diseases, and much coldness. Will you not accept the Lord's loving invitation, and *prove Him now herewith?*—Mal. 3. 10.

THE LORD JESUS AND OATHS. DID HE ANSWER UPON OATH?

THE gospel which emphasizes "Swear not at all" (Matt. 5. 34) brings before us that the high priest of Israel said to Christ, "I adjure Thee by the Living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26. 63). Some dear children of God have felt this to be a "difficulty": may it not be *full of His instruction*?

First, we notice that the Lord did *not* reply, "I answer on oath," or any words that involve this. Indeed there is not the definite "I am" of Mark 14. 62 in response to a simple definite question, but the strangely suggestive answer, "Thou hast said." To view this as an *ordinary* affirmative would be to lose its *convicting* message. Hence we *cannot* say that the Lord Jesus answered on oath. The general principle, moreover, remains that a reply does not necessarily accept the *proposed* conditions.

It is also deeply important to remember that our beloved Lord, in wondrous grace, became "under the law" (Gal. 4. 4), and the law did NOT forbid *judicial* swearing. To *empty* Matt. 5 of its plain meaning and allow *legal* swearing to believers now would be almost to imply the law permitted *profane* swearing! Again, the Lord Jesus went to the temple, we do not have an *earthly* parallel. He ate the *passover*. We need to understand prayerfully the true signification of *imitating Him*. We *cannot* do all He did; rather He draws our mind to doing *His commands* (John 14.15, Matt. 28. 19, 20). Is it not so?

An oath is not wrong in *itself*. Heb. 6. 17 and 7. 28 would show this. The Lord not only separates His people in Matthew 5 from worldly "position" and worldly "redress," but emphasizes that THEY are not *possessors*, or *able to change things* (verses 34-36), and therefore *cannot* swear. *He Himself* was the Glorious One. If, therefore, He refrained, there was a purpose of love to us, to leave us an example of meekness, but we must never forget His glory and His right. Thus we see the helpfulness of God's truth, and the blessing of difficulties! And so is it ever, if we are quiet before Him under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

"Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15. 27). Herein we have a lesson as to witness. Unless we are with the Lord how can we tell forth His character? An *outside* knowledge of a person is very incomplete. The biographer may know many facts, and yet be out of harmony with the character of the one of whom he writes. Our witness must not be bare hearsay, we must know Him.

A PERMANENT INSURANCE AGAINST BURGLARY.

"Where Thieves Do NOT Break Through
Nor Steal." Matt. 6. 20.

WE become *used* to the preservation of our possessions. We may be almost ready to say, "I do not wear jewellery or a gold watch, I do not have an elaborate home: and so thieves go *elsewhere*." But we all have "something" which many a thief would like, and, moreover, there is another danger, i.e. fire. And, further, we are travelling about: *accidents* are possible: the very next train to ours may have a serious loss of life. This world is full of uncertainties, and so men of the world are occupied with *insurances*. Poster after poster is designed to emphasize this. The world's "best insurance" is in front of many eyes, and the "benefits" are shown on many hoardings. The eyes of children of God should be a matter of prayer that they may not sin (Matt. 5. 29), and that we may be turned away from beholding vanity (Ps. 119. 37), but probably we have all seen many such placards even though not looking out for them, and though graciously enabled to believe the Lord meant what He said in Matthew 6 19-21.

But do we live up to our belief, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit? Are we thankful *and* trustful; trustful *and* thankful? We become too "used" to the daily mercies of the Lord, and we become too much like the world in our mode of meeting "possibilities." God has a better path for His trustful people. He Who is willing to deliver from anxiety is willing to deliver from many human schemes too, but we are not called to "DREAM" that all will be well. If I put aside man's insurance against burglary, let me not take God's love as a matter of "course," let me not put aside prayer, let me not use the saved money for *self*, let me not treasure up earthly *things* against God's will, and then ask *Him* to keep *them*, let me not make seeming "faith" a convenient mode of settling down carelessly, let me not forget the *heavenly* laying up. And so is it with ALL other insurances, which any are enabled to put aside for the Lord's sake. Remember the spiritual substitute, or else there is no glory to God.

In so far as any object rather than Christ fills our view, we are guilty of idolatry. The object may be very dear, and, in itself, lovable, and even, in right relation to Him, precious; but it must not be separated from Him, or take His place. We are commanded to *do* all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and to live "unto the Lord." Herein is an attractive privilege which humbles and exalts!

“FAITHFUL IN A VERY LITTLE.”

Luke 19. 17.

THE parable of Luke 19. 11-27 remarkably sets forth the importance of *standpoint*. The faithful servant says, “*Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*” The wicked one argues, “*Thou takest up that Thou lavest not down.*” “*All the glory is ascribed to God by the one who toils hard (1 Cor. 15. 10).* It is noteworthy that the Holy Spirit does not use the same word “*gained*” in Luke 19. 15-16. The man “*gained by trading*” or “*carried on the business thoroughly.*” but he rather emphasizes that the Lord’s pound did “*the work.*” Compare, “*When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants,*” for “*What hast thou that thou didst not receive?*”—“*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things*” (Luke 17. 10. 1 Cor. 4. 7, Rom. 11. 36).

But may we not notice *another* stress on the *sin* of self-exaltation? Our utmost activity is *small*: the Lord commends faithfulness, but whatsoever position we have for Him, and whatever we do, must be summed up in the words, “*a very little.*” The Lord does *not* say, “*Unprofitable servants.*” He encourages; but He *does* say, “*A very little.*” Compare, “*He that is faithful in that which is least*” (Luke 16. 10). These Divine words are not only to keep us from self-esteem, they are to remind us how wondrously full will be the fuller responsibilities of “*that Day.*” Thus are we stimulated to set aside earth’s attractions and glories. The Lord will give “*much*” when He returns. It is a joy to live for Him now, and to say a word in His Name, but how vast will be the privileges of those who reign with Christ! Shall we not *gladly* lay aside EVERY WEIGHT, and be occupied with Christ and His service? May this be so henceforth, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“*Obeey*”—Heb. 13. 17, literally “*Be persuaded.*” It is not a mark of spirituality to be obstinate. It is not a mark of godliness to be independent. It is not to the glory of God that we should *demand* personal revelations, or leadings. God works through “*one another.*” If we are led astray on this point we shall often have the language of nearness to the Lord without its power, and may even deceive ourselves that we are waiting to see His will for ourselves, when He calls us to a loving humility, which is beautifully “*persuaded,*” through the means He graciously grants.

To be ashamed of sin (Rom. 6. 21), and not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1. 16), is to be in a condition which pleases God.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

“THOU HAST PUT OFF MY SACKCLOTH AND GIRDED ME
WITH GLADNESS.” Ps. 30. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

THE child of God has a RIGHT to rejoice because of REDEMPTION, and it is with a desire to exalt Him Who puts gladness in the heart (Ps. 4. 7), and a new song in the mouth (Ps. 40. 3), that these pages are sent forth. There is no call to EMPTY laughter and mirth (Eccl. 2. 2). “*Under the sun*” the outlook is dark, but SALVATION IS WONDROUS. The believer is NOT to be “*of the world*” in his joy, but to remember a DISTINCT joy—THE JOY OF THE LORD (John 15. 11, Neh. 8. 10). This “*joy*” men would seek to take from us, but can they do so, if we abide in THE LORD’S PRESENCE (John 16. 22)? Ah, this is the key. If we leave, in any measure, His presence (Ps. 16. 11), we leave, to that degree, the realities of joy. With a desire that believers may be “*kept*” from worldly merriness and excitement, and ALSO “*kept*” from the disappointment which comes when those who are “*above the sun*” live AS IF under it,—and LIKEWISE “*kept*” from any excusing of sin, and neglect of godly sorrow and repentance,—are these pages humbly sent forth, in the Lord’s Name. “*As sorrowful, yet ALWAYS rejoicing*” (2 Cor. 6. 10). “*Rejoice IN THE LORD always, and again I will say, Rejoice*” (Phil. 4. 4).

THE BLESSINGS OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

IT is a privilege to be willing for the Lord’s will. It is a delight to be glad in the Lord’s will. The crossing of our natural inclinations may be precious pruning, with a view to “*more fruit.*”

The mortifying of "independence" is the *Lord's* victory over *our* self-will.

When David was not allowed to build a house for the Lord, he "prepared abundantly before his death," and Psalm 132 is beautiful. The Lord "*remembers*" all love to Him. When Moses was not allowed to enter into the land, he humbly owned his failure, but *rejoiced* to give Joshua a charge, that he might be strong and of a good courage. Love to the Lord never harbours murmuring, resentment, or envy;—that bitter "rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14. 30). It is a *command* that believers should "In everything give thanks." "No good thing" will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Seeming disappointments test our love and our patience (Prov. 24. 10): they enlarge our prayer and our confidence in God: they prevent a habit of "our own way," which becomes a tyranny, miscalled "Freedom"; they prepare the Lord's own in the gracious use of the Holy Spirit, for the further trials of the last days: they help us to comfort others, and, reminding us that THIS is not our rest, to say from the heart, "Come, Lord Jesus." Shall we undervalue such blessings? Even a disappointed look dishonours His Name, and sullenness is ever unspiritual. Remorse cramps godly repentance, and complaint cripples devoted activity. See God's hand in everything, and, learning His loving lessons in the Holy Spirit, look to Him for His guidance, and thank Him for His will, when its accompaniments are painful. Without the plough, the ground is harmed: without the knife, the tree is less fruitful: the splinter will not at all times work its way out. We need the pain, but the Refiner is our Father, and He *sits* to refine: He does not hurry the work, nor leave it untended. His love is beautiful: may our faith and love be stronger every day, for that is the true characteristic of His blood-bought people, growing in grace.

"BECAUSE YE ARE NOT of the WORLD."

John 15. 19.*

HOW much depends on this. The Lord Jesus speaks to *His disciples alone* in such words. "If ye were of the world" is meant to reveal a *remarkable* change which has taken place. "If any one is in Christ there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17 lit.). *It is impossible to deal with children of God as if they were governed merely by the same principles as respectable men of this world.* It is this startling fact which alters everything. The believer is **IN A LAW TO CHRIST** (1 Cor. 9. 21), and he cannot be treated as if this relationship did not exist. He has been *bought* with a price: he is *not his own* (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20): such a

* Circulated among believers at the time of the recent election. Available as reprint; the theme is ever important to those redeemed.

momentous change cannot be without far-reaching effects. Does **REDEMPTION** mean little, or nothing?

Those who belong to Christ are representing *Him*; they are not of the world *even as Christ was not of the world* (John 17. 16). 'Tis not **SEPARATION FROM** a *part* of the world, or from *certain* actions of the openly *evil* men of the world: the *whole* aspect is affected: the *whole* world is set aside! Through the cross of Christ, believers are crucified to the world in general (Gal. 6. 14), and are bidden *not* to be conformed to this *age* (Rom. 12. 2). Is not the limitation of such words a setting aside of the Lord Jesus? The religious and respectable world is no longer ours, any more than the irreligious. "But you are *in* the world," many will reply, "and do ordinary things." Yes, in the world, but *only* to act on the authority of **OUR POSSESSOR**. We do ordinary things, *because* commanded (Rom. 13. 6, 7). We do not vote, because *not* commanded. *His will is our law: we are not our own.* There is no room for argument as to pleasing others. We are not our own! We need give no other reasons. The reader may think this "peculiar," but redemption involves *possession*; and without Christ's authority for voting, without some Scriptural principle *applying to this*, how **CAN** we vote "in His Name?"—"Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" is definite: surely we love Him too much to treat these words lightly, or to drag down His Name.

The Address on the Mount was given expressly to disciples. The Lord Jesus set this forth. *NO land could* carry out these arrangements. A minority, willing for persecution, are the *only* ones whom it fits. **SOCIALISM** knows **NOTHING** of this: primitive Christianity knows **NOTHING ELSE**. The believer's standpoint is so different from that of others: it must seem "foolishness" (1 Cor. 2. 14, 15), as he follows an unseen Lord (1 Pet. 1. 8), in *voluntary* rejection (Heb. 13. 13, 14). The path is plain, but not easy. "**BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF THE WORLD,**" must have many startling effects. You cannot be "of the world," **AND** "not of the world" at the same time. The question is—"Under which banner will you serve?"—The reproached Lord still invites, and a respectable, nominal "Christian world" has a counter-call, *but has it a counter-CLAIM? DOES REDEMPTION MEAN MUCH, OR LITTLE? Am I myself bought with a price, or not? Of His own the Lord still says, "MY sheep hear MY voice" (John 10. 27). Are we willing that this should be OUR DESCRIPTION TO-DAY, even if the world scorns and persecutes?*

The whole question of "Can I do This or That?" must be viewed in the light of the cross of Christ. Everything is settled by His wondrous death. The believer has died, and is now viewed as alive with a new life. This is *not improvement*, but infinitely beyond it. Many "worrying moments" would be spared, if we simply took the position of those "in Christ Jesus,"

who have **NO RIGHT TO LIVE, EXCEPT IN HIM**,—and no one for whom to live apart from Him. Many "uncertainties" come through an attempt to remain on the *other* side of crucifixion, but "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." Compromise is not God's will. We do not like to lose all our reputation; but **CHRIST MUST BE CENTRAL**, at all costs, if we would "grow in grace."

Unless, therefore, we can find Christ's authority for voting and a share in politics, we dare not take these things in hand, if we would simply please Him. "**OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN**" (Phil. 3. 20, *lit.*). There is no blending of two positions. "Because ye are *not* of the world" involves a definite attitude in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is not reigning now. The world's kingdoms are not yet claimed by Him (Rev. 11. 15). He is waiting (Ps. 110. 1). It is ours to wait too (1 Cor. 4. 5). Abraham did not seek to hurry God's work. The land was promised, but not "given." He remained a pilgrim. Lot did not realize this. The words of Lev. 10. 1 are solemn, for if we add to God's words, we shall lose much. **FAITH IS QUIETLY PATIENT**. The principles of Scripture are simple, and if we humbly take a disciplelike position, and cannot find *any* Divine warrant for *any* share in politics during man's day (1 Cor. 4. 3, *marg.*), how shall we act? Shall we be disobedient or obedient? Shall we follow the Lord closely, or afar off? Shall we keep to His will gladly, or mournfully? The heart's affection to Himself which prays, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus," will affect our position on earth, and solve our problems more than all arguments, as we hear His own precious words,—

"**BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF THE WORLD.**"

NEW TESTAMENT FINANCE.

OUR Heavenly Father has given His children precious guidance as to *everything*. He has not promised an *easy* path, but He delights to prove His sufficiency everywhere (Gen. 15. 1). Sometimes we are made to lie down in green pastures, and led beside the still waters (Ps. 23. 2), but if we are called to pass *through* the waters, He will be with us (Isa. 43. 2), and it is written, "We went through fire and through water:² but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. 66. 12)!

In this connexion it is a joy to remember that true service belongs *unto the Lord*, and it is **HIS** graciously acknowledged, and **CLAIMED** responsibility. This is a wondrous relief and strength to His people. They are bidden to cast *all* their care upon Him (1 Pet. 5. 7). *The financial charge is His*, and the silver and gold are *His*. There is **NOTHING** too hard for the Lord. It is not for His people to worry themselves, but it is their joy

* Note a spiritual lesson in Num. 31. 23, with Isa. 6. 6, 7.

humbly to be His instruments, and to obey unquestioningly. If we take the "work" into *our* hands, we must not claim *His* provision: if, however, it is *His* work, He is worthy of trust. He can supply *all* the needs for *His* own appointments, and *He will*. It is not for us to get into debt on His account: He is not poor: He can pay for what He pleases, and if He does not thus arrange, let us "go without." It is not for us to raise money by human means, but to be searched in heart, that the "labour" may be that which is really *His*,—not only work *for* the Lord but the work *of* the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 58).

There is nothing in Scripture to suggest bazaars, sales of work, concerts, etc., to gather money for the Lord! He, Who would not have the price of a dog brought into His treasury of old (Deut. 23. 18), and Who cast out commercialism from the temple on three occasions,* is still jealous for His holy Name, that there should never be mixture of "God and Mammon." It may be said, "Such things have been used," and "God has not forbidden them": but are not these two very dangerous arguments: we want the Lord's authority for everything. Moreover, the recommendation of 3 John 7 is precious, "Taking nothing of the Gentiles." He is the Same to-day (Heb. 13. 8).

Nor does the Lord approve of "devices" to *make* His people open their pockets. "Pew rents" are not Scriptural:—indeed, how different are all the Lord's arrangements of *simple* gathering from those which "prevail" now. The principle, "I will give so much, *if* others will give equally," is not in the Scriptures: rather the reverse. "Let everyone of you lay by himself," is a wondrous exhortation (1 Cor. 16. 2).† Love is called into action. The beautiful simplicity of Scripture, if the word may be used again, is deeply affecting to the humble believer. **GOD DOES NOT "FORCE" YOU TO GIVE**—"Not grudgingly, or of necessity" (2 Cor. 9. 7). He can work *without* you, but you **CANNOT** spiritually prosper without giving. Do not delay, "*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee*" (Prov. 3. 27, 28).

These words are meant to cut us to the heart, in the Lord's love, if we are willing to let His work "languish," *so far as we*

* Two successive days in Matt. 21. 12 and Mark 11. 15 (one record is after the words concerning the fig tree).

† Our English *version* looks as though there is a storing up *personally*, but the added words must not be overlooked—"That there be no gatherings (collections) *when I come*." The Holy Spirit's meaning seems to be, "Let each one place *by himself*," i.e. without waiting for others to give, without limiting himself to the limits of others who give. Personal prayer as to how much should be more definite. Believers should not appear before the Lord empty. Many have lost joy, *through not giving*. Free-will offerings are not a bondage: the bondage is when we persuade ourselves we cannot, &c. Love breaks such cords.

are concerned,* while we hold back, or "store up" for a rainy day with unholly prudence, or delay with the thought of giving later on. Delay is often lack of vigorous love. The Lord will not fail because we fail, but if we do not lay up treasure in heaven, we must not expect to find it there when our Lord comes back. If we sow sparingly, we shall reap sparingly. If we hesitatingly give three shillings to the Lord, and readily three pounds for the clothing of our body, we can hardly expect His "Well done." But the words again ring out, "Not grudgingly, or of necessity." Giving must be cheerful, or it is empty. If love to the Lord does not open our hearts, and our pockets, all other methods are utterly vain. Love, love, love: this is decisive. Love is earnest. Love is generous. Love is simple. Love is prompt. Love is continued. "Walk in love."

When God's people are revived, there is no lack in giving. Mark the days of Hezekiah. "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people" (2 Chron. 31. 10). It is the same always. Acts 2 and Acts 4 give a clear and united testimony. And a simple motive—"unto the Lord"—is a precious possession. "He that giveth, with simplicity" (Rom. 12. 8): "The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their simplicity" (2 Cor. 8. 2). This repetition is important. All other motives falter.

And every believer is privileged and expected to give: "Every one according as he purposeth in his heart" (2 Cor. 9. 7), "Let every one of you" (1 Cor. 16. 2). It is not enough to "think" about it, or to hope to do it: the giving is to be quick. No one is exempted. If your all is two mites, the Lord loves a cheerful giver: but if you have a bank balance, do not call "two mites" your all. Let us be honest before the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira lied, when they gave something. Proportion, as well as promptness, is Scripturally urged: "As God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16. 2, note 2 Cor. 9). The Lord's business is too solemn for delay. Find out His work, (do not help anything else), and then give freely. Put your heart into this, as your own privilege, and to His glory. Let love compel: "Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good . . . given" (1 Chron. 29. 3). Love loves to give, and we wither our spiritual life if we delay or withhold. These words appeal to the child of God with a small income, as well as to one who has more: it is possible to be a miser on a few shillings a week, and possible to give liberally with a slender purse. The Lord looks at the love, and all our costly love is so small compared with His! How much He loved—

"HE WAS RICH."— "HE BECAME POOR."—

* The Lord can maintain it, but we are responsible for what would be the effect of our failure. Cf. the principle of Rom. 14. 15.

Here is the measure of His love (2 Cor. 8. 9). Love, love, love: this is the corrective of our pride, our selfishness, our slowness, and all our defects. Oh that we may love "in the Holy Spirit."

Having thus seen the privilege of giving, and of regular, proportionate, cheerful, devoted giving, we next ask more definitely, "Where shall we give?—And what other arrangements has the Lord made?" In these things also He has not left us in doubt: "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His Way" (Ps. 25. 9). Scripture is sufficient, if we are made willing to learn and to do.*

But yet a further word, according to His words, to help us more into a condition to enjoy His methods. It is revealed that giving is a true investment, but we must not encourage any bargaining spirit (note Gen. 28. 22). Though it is delightful to realize the Lord beholds; with greater joy than David (1 Chron. 29. 17), yet we must not think He depends on us. He deigns to use, but if He gives us money, and we hold it back, even temporarily, the Lord's hand is not shortened. Esther 4. 14 illustrates an important principle:—"If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed." Remember, too, Rev. 3. 11; "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Another can take our privilege of giving; if we hesitate for a few weeks.† If we have seen the beautiful simplicity of devoted giving unto the Lord, we have possibly felt in measure how unkind we are, and also how we rob ourselves, if we allow various things to hinder this present opportunity.§ If so, we are in the right condition to notice the "mechanism," or rather arrangement of the Lord's work, and His method. Not otherwise! Since we find nothing of worldly appeals, or worldly committees, or of the publishing of accounts in an advertising way, should we encourage these? I do not mean it is necessarily wrong to tell of the devotion of a Mary, or of the liberality of a Barnabas, or of the "abundance" of the poor, (yet truly rich), Macedonians (2 Cor. 8. 1, 2), but Scripture principles, which express what is usually wise, seem to be these:—(i) The Lord's people should act together rather than independently (Acts 4. 35 cf. the Tabernacle throughout). (ii) The same verse shows the

* O for grace not to be deceived. The rich young ruler thought He was obedient, but faltered when his purse was asked. We little know where our bondage is till the Lord puts His finger on it.

† We take away joy from ourselves by withholding. "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly" (1 Chron. 29. 9). "Bring ye all the tithes . . . prove Me now herewith . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven" (Mal. 3. 10).

§ "Thou oughtest" (Matt. 25. 27) is a searching word to one who wishes to be the reverse of a wicked servant, and who seeks God's counsel in everything.

|| Acts 6 is suggestive. The apostles seemed awhile to make this "business" for the LORD very secondary (6. 2, 3, 4), AND at once we read no more of their

responsibility of those having *spiritual* care for God's glory in the use of money *also*. This is likewise impressed in Acts 11. 26, 30 and 2 Cor. 8 and 9.* The glory of God in avoidance of any complaint was granted thus :—(a) The brethren who *guided* the saints were *trusted* brethren, (b) The Lord's people, though never said to choose such shepherding brethren, sometimes *nominated*, for approval, at least, as to *certain* parts of finance, one or more brethren to *co-operate* with these (2 Cor. 8. 19, 20). At the same time, there were *personal* expressions of fellowship with brethren shepherding the Lord's sheep (Phil. 4. 16, 17); and the *over-sight* of finance, even in the matter of the support of elders was definitely entrusted to any with spiritual responsibility, if 1 Timothy 5 is intended to mark out the Lord's loving will. In no case, is the mere publishing of accounts *urged*,† but rather the thoroughly satisfactory *character* of any brethren thus privileged to act for the Lord.§ The world urges "oaths" to guarantee truth : Christ emphasized "character : " so is it here. Judas is a solemn example to warn. The use of the Lord's money is a test that draws us to much dependence, lest any self-arranging and selfishness should spring up. (If the Lord will, to be continued).

I had a "need," or thought I had one. It matters not what the need was. The *principle* applies to everything. Almost involuntarily, or rather "naturally," I cried for *speedy* relief from the strain, and the thought came with power, I believe from the Lord, since according to His words,—"Relief from the faith?" For a strain is but an opportunity for *faith*, and nothing else. It cannot cause doubt, if the Lord is honoured. Murmuring and despair cannot flourish if He is acknowledged *amid the storm*. "Carest Thou not?" is unbelief. There will be no room for faith in the glow. The difficulties of a believer are his privileges, and a smooth path may be a chastisement. Love can trust Him anywhere, and trust self nowhere.

preaching for a little while, but of the ministry of the Word by Stephen and then Philip, the first two of those chosen to *serve tables*. 1 Cor. 16. 3, 4 would indicate by the expressions "I will send" and "They shall go with me," (not "I will go with them," cf. 2 Cor. 8. 4 : the spiritually-minded Macedonians received the Lord's will), Paul's sense of personal responsibility unto the Lord in attending to this work : we cannot overlook, without loss.

* Num. 7 illustrates in various ways, beginning with the "wagon for two of the princes" (3), and leading up to the whole.

† A very insufficient check, and *often* linked with an "appeal" for help, directly or indirectly.

§ So 2 Chron. 24. 11 illustrates godly *care* in looking after this part of service unto God. 2 Kings 22. 7 is rather remarkable : nor is this passage alone. 2 Kings 12. 15 is equally forcible. We should plead for more stress on faithfulness. But we observe a complete contrast with "carelessness," and a *distinction* between the *overscers*, and the *workmen*. See 2 Chron. 34. 12, 17. 1 Tim. 5 may illustrate. God's principles will stand every test.

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