

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4. 4.

A Word of Introduction.

WE rejoice to see in the above verse a primary reference to the Lord Jesus: hence "the Man" as in Deuteronomy 8. 3. But He is the Example of His blood-bought people, and it is their privilege to live in their Heavenly Father's words. We mark the great contrast between Christ's attitude and that of Adam and Eve. And moreover, we see the deep importance in our own life of putting the Spiritual before the Physical. It is so easy to be occupied with the body: O that believers may be concerned to PLEASE THEIR LORD more and more.

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THE CLOTHES TORN, or THE BOOK?

IT was a wonderful event. The long lost and forgotten Book was found (2 Chron. 34. 14). The king should have made a copy of the law (Deut. 17. 18), but though he had reigned 18 years, and had shown earnest concern, he had not even seen it. But now God granted this great blessing. **GIVING** unto the Lord was the background, and it may be if we **GAVE** more unto Him we should find more of His invaluable truth.

Shaphan carried the precious treasure to the king. Do we expect joy at once? Rather, on hearing it, he wept (2 Chron. 34. 27) and rent his clothes (19). It was well. A blessing without humbling is very temporary. When we learn more of truth we would not, as the

stony ground hearers, "anon with joy" receive it. Rather would we be bowed down. If THE BOOK were found spiritually, in many lives there would be weeping, and many would feel God's displeasure against Christendom and its practices. Ah, how many clothes, of worldly fashions, would need rending at once. If He were exalted, we should see strange sights, but there would be joy in heaven. Nor did Josiah end with weeping. He "kept a passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem" (35. 1). He sought to obey the Book. The willingness of obedience came in. There was the same promptness of love in Nehemiah 8. 14-16 and 13. 1-13. And should there not be the same devotedness to-day? It would be a wondrous event if the Book were really "found," in a spiritual way, among those who bear Christ's Name to-day. How many would learn, like Josiah, that they had long omitted their Lord's will, and they would make haste and delay not to keep His commandments. Thousands would be baptized, and, instead of abiding in the systems of to-day, and, for example, the leavened bread and fermented wine of Christendom, how many would begin to seek to know His will as to simple Christian assemblies, that there might soon be sufficient believers, with one heart, in many a town to break bread after the "pattern" so lovingly shown;—yet so ruthlessly altered by the enemy, though many beloved children of God are at present quite unaware of the alteration, and its hidden cause.

Years passed by, and another Book was before another king. That king was Jehoiakim. The inspired message of Jeremiah was read. Three or four leaves were enough. The clothes were not rent, but, instead of this, the Book was cut with a penknife. There was no weeping: "they were not afraid" is the solemn description. The message of Jeremiah 36 is deeply solemn throughout. But man could not thus remove God's testimony. "ALL THE words" were rewritten, "and there were added besides unto them many like words" (32). The fire will never get rid of God's truth, but it will soon lay hold of those who despise it (Zech. 1. 6).

So is it ever. Either we tear the Book, or the Book causes us to know a rending of heart. Ah, beloved readers, which shall it be? Either we judge and criticize the Book, or the Book judges and criticizes us. O that we may humbly welcome GOD'S work in OUR EXPERIENCE. There is all too little DEPTH to-day. We read the Scripture unmoved. We have become used to the words. Let us confess this sin, and seek grace to find the Book, in its spiritual and searching power. The Holy Spirit still applies it mightily.

The contrast between 2 Chronicles 34 and Jeremiah 36 is the more striking, for Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah, and do we not find to-day, a higher critical son of one who emphasized the gospel? Ah, but we would not only look AROUND. Are we children of godly parents? Do we treat the Book with the holy reverence they manifested? Or again, have we children ourselves? Will they, through our failure in Christian nurture and admonition, grow up, in measure, as Jehoiakim? The thought is searching: let us not put it

aside. Our hearts rejoice in Josiah's witness, but we call to mind Zephaniah 1. 8. The home is the Thermopylae.

It is worthy of more than passing notice that the Higher Critics have set up a babel of contention concerning the Book found. They have made a peculiar attack on Deuteronomy, the Book with which Christ thrice defeated the tempter in the wilderness. Can it surprise us that, as Christ used no other Book, the enemy, smarting with defeat, assails the truth, under the guise of criticism? But it is pitiable. The incident that brought Josiah to tears, brings professing Christians to a theory that brands the found Book a forgery. But the charge is without evidence. No court can allow it, and God's court will more than disallow. He Who said, "Touch Not Mine Anointed" will not lightly overlook this sin. It may be there is a forgery, but it is on the other side and of another kind: the criticism should, perhaps, be described as an ancient plan, and men have put THEIR names, whereas a greater enemy is the real instigator.

It is pitiable to see men daring to wrangle over the very thing which brought true-hearted Josiah to weeping, but, alas, Higher Criticism knows nothing of such "weeping." Repentance is not "scholarly" enough, but it is blessed. A more striking evidence of the character of criticism could not easily be found. It was not an impious forgery that brought the king to soul-concern. It was not a wicked lie that led to his faithful weeping. It was the precious work of the Spirit of God, Who touched his heart, and that work is not out of date, for He humbles us to-day, that we too may repent. Let us never, dear believing reader, seek to blunt the edge of God's sword. The Book judges us, in His chastening love. We rejoice that it was "found," we rejoice whenever it is spiritually "found" to-day, and our hearts desire to live as those having an ear for our Lord's "whatsoever," even though the truth in Scripture seem as new to us as to the king of old, whenever it is brought out from the "much rubbish" that overlays it. Thanks be unto God, He hears confession of sin, and love's obedience delights His heart.

SAUL AND CHRISTENDOM (With Special Reference to this Type of the History of Romanism).

THE fact that Saul was appointed by God when he was little in his own eyes (1 Sam. 15. 17) is NO PROOF that he continued doing God's service. His alteration of God's will in worship (1 Sam. 13. 8-14) is soon seen, and this setting aside of the commands of God sadly illustrates lawlessness. Sin obtained a stronger and stronger hold. The more definite rejection of the WORD of the Lord in 1 Samuel 15. 23 is very solemnizing. But, amid all the development of sin, we find a tendency to speak religiously, e.g. "God hath delivered him into mine hand," and "Blessed be ye of the Lord" (1 Samuel 23. 7, 21). We see how ALL THIS TIME the opposition was growing

against the one who would be the king. Some, like Jonathan, it would seem, continued WITH Saul, but others went forth to the rejected coming king without the camp. The climax was reached in the seeking to a woman with a familiar spirit (1 Sam. 28. 7), and thus an attempt to gain direct help from Satan. So Saul died for his sin (1 Chron. 10. 13), and we see the bitter end of THE WAY OF SELF.

Christendom has developed, with leavened doctrine and practice, from what was little. Pride has come in, and the WORD of the Lord has been rejected and altered. Romanism illustrates this principle most openly, but the woman of Revelation 17 has various DAUGHTERS. The goal of those who began apparently WELL is defiant rejection of the Lord Jesus, and a fellowship with Satan, when the lawless one springs up out from lawlessness (2 Thess. 2. 7 lit:*). Shall we, beloved friends, remain in things that grieve us, as Jonathan remained, or go forth, in the Holy Spirit's enabling, to our beloved Lord? Thanks be unto Him, His people will not remain with Christendom when it goes over to Antichrist, and so they will not, like Jonathan, die with him, but it is deeply important to learn the lesson NOW, and to seek a fuller devotion to our rejected Lord Jesus and His Words to-day (John 14. 21, 23).

Practical Application of God's Gracious Warning as to Satan's Methods.

(Matthew 4).

IT is precious to behold our beloved Lord tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4. 15). The contrast with Genesis is striking, and also with Revelation 13. Antichrist WILL cast himself down (Dan. 9. 27), and WILL receive the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them (possibly a reference to Babylon, called "the glory of kingdoms" in Isaiah 13. 19).

But may we not also see something that applies very definitely to our every day life? The first temptation was to irritation, to discontent with one's portion, and to an activity BEFORE the appointed time. Do we never thus dishonour our beloved Lord's Name?

The second temptation before us here aimed at presumption, and the misappropriation of PART of a verse of Scripture, without pondering the whole in its context. Do we never fall into this sin? Do we never draw inferences quickly, when they suit our wishes? Faith NEVER cuts up the Scripture: it depends on God's words without leaving any out.

The third view of temptation suggests doing evil that good may come. Have we never EXCUSED something in business or something else, that did not please God, lest we should lose financially? How humbled we must all feel when His truth searches us through and through. Satan, "the god of this age," seeks much indirect homage as well as direct worship, and when we fall in with his methods, and fashions, and arrangements we have a parallel with the sin that Christ, as ever, repudiated, in

* Booklet will be gladly sent.

His perfect and invariable holiness. A moment's hesitation is defeat. May our hearts be so dependent on our Heavenly Father that we are quick to discern. Communion is not by fits and starts. Why should not we, as Enoch, WALK with God? His hand is not shortened, and, blessed be God, His ear is not heavy.

Meditations in View of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

HOW solemn is the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is a REALITY about it, which we often forget -- "According as his work shall be," "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (Rev. 22. 12, 1 Cor. 3. 13):--such words are searching. There is as much righteousness as at the Great White Throne. The difference of JUDGMENT is tremendous, but not of JUSTICE. There is no favouritism, but holy strictness, yet it is a FAVOUR to be there, for the Lord's beloved people are to be judged there, that they may NOT be condemned with the world. The Lord will not call disobedience "obedience," nor give a reward for a vacuum. O how concerned His people should be. The following meditations are suggested, not that all may seem to suit each individual, but that writer and readers may be together helped in humble quietness before God concerning this matter:--

I wonder how much love to Christ there is in my actions. Are they done really TO PLEASE HIM? How will they appear under His holy analysis? Years ago, may be, I thought I should have a large reward, but now I see so many defects. Will He find anything but dross? O that there may be more gold henceforth.

It is easy to be accurate, but reward is not for accuracy. Unless there is a holy motive, what real service am I rendering? An unsaved soul can do MUCH accurately. I know there are some things in my life that evidence His inworking, but how I long that such may be much more numerous.

I have spoken of reward. I would not seek this for itself. But what if my precious Lord, Who went to Calvary and gave Himself for me, has no joy, or little joy, from me in that Day? How can He have joy if I have been unfaithful? How can He say, "Enter thou into the joy that belongs to thy Lord," if I have used His love and enabling for myself? "Spiritual selfishness" is so easy. O how sad I should, and would be, if I am not getting ready to give Him joy. Does not this melt my heart?

Prayer in secret is linked with reward in Matthew 6. Have I not been dull then? Am I always reverent? How easy it is to hurry over prayer when alone. Can I expect His joy in reward if my prayer life has been poor, if I have been full of petitions for myself, and have forgotten praise, and put aside intercession for others? How much there is that will rather bring loss, even in private seasons of prayer, though regular as a duty and habit. It is possible to go through such times for the worse and not for the better, when SELF is not judged.

If I see so much that grieves, how much more does He see? How much

of my life pains me. I could not tell my failures to others. I am ashamed. But He sees all, and because His love is so intense how much He FEELS all. Can I be content to grieve Him? And to grieve the Holy Spirit?

"He that goeth forth and weepeth." Do I weep over souls? It is enjoyable to preach, and to pass on tracts. I am concerned for the unsaved. But do I weep? Does sin pain me, or am I rather occupied with my share in the work? O for a deeper, fuller feeling. It is easier to write of this than to be sufficiently quiet in God's presence to EXPERIENCE it. But, beloved readers, is not this our prayerful desire?

"FROM WHENCE COME WARS?"

James 4. 1.

THERE are no wars where there is no sin. The thought is solemn. The history of this world is a history of conflict, because of sin. Some of the chief dates that a child learns at school are the dates of battles. Ask a teacher what they are called, and he will reply, "The DECISIVE battles of the period," or with similar words. Yes, only "decisive" for a period: man is ever proving his weakness. And the word "decisive" is itself humiliating. A decision by force, because of the absence of LOVE! "From whence come wars?" It is not difficult to give the answer. The ugly, unholy power of "SELF" is behind the scenes. "Your pleasures" says the Holy Spirit. Men ever want their own way (Isa. 53. 6). IF all loved their neighbours as themselves, war would be impossible. But they do not, and to assume war will be made impossible without such love in the heart is only to dream. All human theories are too shallow and superficial. They do not go to the root. Socialism wants an "equality" rather than a "true harmony," but it lacks the POWER for both. It has pretended cures for the external, but nothing for the internal. Peace theories built upon a sandy foundation are more than insecure. We cannot make men love by acts of parliament, nor make unselfishness flee away from a peace pact. While the volcano remains in the human heart, unrestrained by sovereign grace, there is the constant danger of a sudden eruption.

"From whence come wars and fightings AMONG YOU?" Alas, there was strife among professing children of God (cf. 1 Cor. 3. 3). And the same ROOT was the cause. Just as the LOVE of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6. 10), so SELF-PLEASURES prevent all spiritual restfulness. "Pleasures:" how striking is the contrast of Romans 15. 1-3; Galatians 6. 2. Observe that knowledge does not rule: the history of Solomon shows this. Affections imperil all (1 Kings 11. 1). Hence the searching words, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the feelings and desires" (Gal. 5. 24). We read of corruption in the world through DESIRE (2 Pet. 1. 4): it was so at the first. Adam was NOT deceived: he chose, he wished, he loved,—and thus lost all. Well may the Holy Spirit say through James, "Your pleasures that war in YOUR MEMBERS." Satan seeks to use our MEMBERS, and our hearts cry out for grace and power to fulfil Romans 6. 13 as never before.

"From whence come wars?" The question may well sound in our ears again and again. We cannot put the world right, but we can humbly yet firmly decline to share in any of its conflicts,* but we should judge THE SPIRIT of warfare in ourselves first. It is unfitting for us to plead that we are men of peace, unless we are at peace among ourselves. It is well to remember this, for the world is not at rest. "When they shall say, Peace and Safety; then SUDDEN DESTRUCTION cometh" (1 Thess. 5. 3). The work of RIGHTEOUSNESS alone shall be peace, and while the sinful heart, common to mankind, which condemned the Son of God, is not judged, there can be no lasting quietude. An armed truce oft depends on armaments, but peace is founded on a CONDITION of love, and THAT LOVE DOES NOT WAIT FOR OTHERS TO AGREE TO LOVE. The Address on the Mount fits a heavenly people, not the sons of this age. WE cannot put the world right: if there were no open wars, men would not be holy: rather the outward sore healed up would allow of deeper spreading of the leprosy WITHIN. The criminal rebellion of Genesis 11 shows how evil, a world at rest, apart from recognition of God, would be before His holy eyes. War is like an ugly sore, a hideous discharge for some of the filthiness of the inner cancer. Believers who trust to any league of nations, instead of emphasizing the blood of Christ, and the holy nation out from all nations, are only helping onward to the most fearful eruption the world has ever seen. Beloved children of God, you cannot patch up humanity's tower. Hasten to call individual sinners into God's one Ark of safety.

"As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten: Be Zealous therefore and Repent."

Revelation 3. 19.

THE tenderness of the Lord Jesus continues to awaken, one may almost say, "surprise," although we have seen and experienced it for so long. The Laodicean angel was in a saddening condition of pride: his pride overflowed in words, and the words showed the very reverse of love. Yet, with a matchless tenderness, the Lord Jesus deigned to speak of HIS love. His rebukes of His people are not because He lacks love, but because He has such FULNESS of love. "I chasten." Why? BECAUSE "I love." The irritated heart that cries out, "What is the reason for my trouble? My sorrow is more than I can bear," is entirely at fault. The true attitude is "Lord, what art Thou teaching me?" We call to mind Ezra 9. 13, "Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities." The true servant of God is ever brought to wonder at God's patience. Why do men speak against Him, and His warnings in

* Some may at first fail to distinguish God's JUDICIAL wars in other dispensations. He has a right to judge, (hence these wars, too, were because of sin), but has not committed this EXECUTIVE to His "strangers and pilgrims" in the present time.

providence? They do not realize the awfulness of SIN. Why do children of God sometimes appear ready to complain of their lot? They do not feel the nature of SIN, and the importance of cleansing. Chastening is for the PROFIT of a saved one (Heb. 12. 10). Gold untouched by the fire is usually mingled with much dross.

And the command of Revelation 3. 19 is precious. "Be zealous therefore, and repent." The closest parallel is found in 2 Corinthians 7. 9-11. There we find zeal and repentance. And godly repentance is not a mere saying "I am sorry." There must be ZEAL, and jealousy for God's honour. Unless we JUDGE OURSELVES, we cannot please our Lord. There is too little judgment of self to-day. We regret a sin as we regret spelling a word wrongly. The fact that we have grieved the Holy Spirit, and misled others is treated too lightly. The wound is healed slightly. "Be zealous" may suggest, moreover, a holy PROMPTNESS. And this is a privilege.

It is remarkable to see how much we read in Scripture about the repentance of God's people. The attitude which has given the judgments of Isaiah to Israel, and the blessings to the church, has handed Christ's searching words in the gospels to a Jewish remnant, and missed the path of His will. The REPENTANCE of the one lost IN the house, is described similarly to the repentance of the one lost OUTSIDE in Luke 15. 7, 10. 2 Corinthians 7 emphasizes the repentance of BELIEVERS, and 2 Peter 3. 9 shows that the Lord does not return till THIS takes place. Five epistles in Revelation 2 and 3 mention repentance, and thrice at least link it with children of God. Is not this a solemn thought? It is well to rejoice with joy unspeakable in Christ Jesus. Never can too much be said of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places. The precious blood of Christ can never be overvalued. We would utter the mighty acts of the Lord, and exalt Him at all times. But let us remember that there exists much that, as lukewarm water, is distasteful to Him (Rev. 3. 16), and the Lord has a holy right to expect REFRESHMENT from His people. If we are settled on our lees, if we are excusing sin, if we are unlike Him Who died for sinners and Who suffered without the gate, is there not a NEED for repentance? Is it pessimism to mention this? Is it lack of love to plead for the need, when we confess also OUR sins, as well as the sins of others? Is it not love to remember HIS LOVING CALL to repentance? If we, as believers, had something of the Lord's view of sin, there would be a wondrous reviving. But if we can encourage ourselves in buildings, and money, and numbers, while the primary call to repentance is overlooked, is not Ichabod written over our work? Thanks be unto God, He will not fail, and He still saves souls, even amid the absence of much repentance, but His sovereignty of grace does not justify our slowness to obey. Yet, with a tenderness more than that of a man, His loving words still sound in our ears, not to pass on merely to some one else, or to see how they apply to Christendom, but that we may know He speaks to US, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

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"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103. 1-3.

A Word of Introduction.

O THAT these pages may increase the praise of those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Praise should fill everything, so that there is no room for the mixed multitude's murmuring. We are all easily affected by murmuring around. Praise is not so contagious. But if all that is within God's people, physically, is harnessed to praise, it is well, inasmuch as the enemy strives to work on the physical. "Forget not" is an important command, and the thought of forgiveness is dear to a believing heart. Healing of SOUL diseases is often overlooked to-day. While we praise God whenever He enables as to the body, (and also when He lovingly permits trials), we would never make secondary the deliverance from SOUL diseases, to His glory.

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PETER AND THE KEYS. What is the Teaching of Christ?

"AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." Matthew 16. 19.

ARE we willing, dear reader, to ponder EVERY word of the Holy Spirit? Or is the mind already made up, with certain opinions long held? Unless any interpretation stands the test of the written words of God, is it not both false and dangerous? Nothing of earthly

advantage can weigh against God's words, and the privilege of believing them.

Every Scripture passage has a CONTEXT. This is a simple, but important statement. And the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 16 has just referred to Himself very definitely. The question of verse 13 was concerning Himself. The answer of verse 16 related to Himself. And in verse 17 "it" is printed in italics: surely the thought is that flesh and blood had not revealed Christ to the apostle. In verse 18 He begins with the emphatic "I" and then, "THOU art Peter"—a stone. Now one stone is not normally a foundation, unless explained as such, and here we have rather an added contrast, "And on this Rock." Christ does NOT say "On thee," nor "on this PETROS" but "on this PETRA, I will build MY church." Christ is BUILDER and POSSESSOR: is it strange that He is FOUNDATION also? The word "Petros" is NEVER used in the New Testament for a foundation, "Petra" is so found five times. Moreover, the Holy Spirit remarkably, on another occasion, quite distinct, emphasizes that this was a Name of Christ ("The Rock was CHRIST," 1 Cor. 10. 4). Such a statement is not accidental. And when the word "This" is thus used by the Lord Jesus does He not elsewhere refer to Himself? See Matt. 21. 42, a quotation, and John 2. 19-21, ("Destroy THIS temple . . . He spake of the temple of His body.") Still more remarkable is the repeated evidence of the Old Testament. It would be blasphemy to suggest that the Rock there is a created being. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect," "Of the Rock That begat thee thou art unmindful." "The Lord is my Rock," "Who is a Rock, save our God?" "Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation" (e.g. Deut. 32. 4, 18, 30, 2 Sam. 22. 3, 32, 47; 23. 3, Ps. 18. 2; 31. 3; 42. 9; 92. 15; 94. 22; 95. 1 etc). And the apostle uses the name for Christ, not for himself, in 1 Peter 2. 8. The attempt to TRANSFER a name of the Lord Jesus (in His Deity) to a created being is fundamentally serious. Is it not part of the devil's planned attack to undermine the unique glory of Christ? The Church is built on HIM, and the types of a foundation in the tabernacle illustrate the same precious thought. Peter never claims, in his epistles, anything like this, but shows a fitting reverence for Christ. Men say, Peter on the one hand, and the church on the other: he rather shows Christ on the one hand, and himself linked with the Lord's people. If we shut Peter out of 1 Peter 2.5 do we not shut him out of this priesthood? No thoughtful reader can see any contradiction in Ephesians 2.20. Every builder knows that the foundation MADE OF MANY STONES (or bricks) which he lays, rests upon that which has been provided by God in nature. So is it in grace. And now in this same chapter we find much help, because the dear people of God are said to be both part of the building (21, 22), AND members of the household (19). The first view emphasizes grace and union with Christ, and one another; the second shows their responsibility, and precious stewardship. 1 Peter 2 is similar. Have we not here the living stones resting on Christ (verse 4-6), and ALSO the already-mentioned "holy priest-

hood" of believers IN the house? Observe that this seems to be the apostle's inspired interpretation of Matthew 16. We repeat:—He does not arrogate to himself the honour of a foundation: he shows that is the glory of Christ. Nor does he assume a humanly arranged priesthood, but addresses the children of God, even those like to "NEW BORN BABES" as included in the "holy priesthood" which alone he describes. This is crucial. Peter, the apostle, knew nothing of the claims of modern Romanism. Matthew 16 affords a parallel with Ephesians 2. and 1 Peter 2. Thus we have the Church AND the Kingdom of Heaven, and the latter is linked with RESPONSIBILITY. The keys seem to be those of a steward (so Rev. 3. 7 with Isa. 22. 22), and "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4. 2). The IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING mention of "the kingdom of heaven" in Matthew 13. 52 may illustrate this. The Lord Jesus was there setting aside Israel's unfaithful scribes (Luke 16. 1, 2): His people from all nations were to take their place (cf. Matt. 21. 43). The kingdom of heaven is not heaven: there is NO SUGGESTION that Peter could exclude from heaven. The added verses of Matthew 16 help us. Christ addresses PETER immediately as "Satan" and an "offence" or "stumbling-block" to Him. Peter was evidently not the Rock. As soon as the apostle ALTERED CHRIST'S WORDS (22) he was THUS rebuked. Living stones are united to Christ, and He is the Holy Stumbling Block to the UNGODLY (1 Peter. 2. 8): but disobedient ones are linked with Satan, and become, as it were, a stumbling block in Christ's way. Hence we see the important lesson that Peter was not to arrange and develop "the church," but to be dependent, and acknowledge whatever had BEEN settled in heaven. He is told what he is to bind. Those who wish to alter the Scriptures, and give "the church" a right to add to them, dislike this loving dependence, but faith rejoices in it. The apostle had the important lesson in Acts 10. 10-16. A great sheet was let down from HEAVEN, and Peter hesitated to do what he was told. He thought it was binding NOT to accept the unclean animals, which pictured GENTILE sinners also reached by God's mercy. He said, "Not so" but was told, "What God hath cleansed (first), that call not thou common," and SO he went, "nothing doubting," to Cornelius. On this occasion, what God had LOOSED first he had to LOOSE. This is dependence, not independence: this is simple Christian doctrine, not Roman Catholicism.

Hence it is not surprising that similar words are used in connexion with a LOCAL church in Matthew 18. 18, and quite as remarkable language is used of the power of prayer in verse 19. Many seem to think that John 20. 23 confers priestly power, but they have failed to notice that the words are "They have been remitted," "They have been retained," not "They are being remitted," or "They are being retained," implying that their power was only when God had remitted or retained FIRST, as in Acts 10.* And

* The special tense used in Matthew 16. 19; 18. 18 is rare. Elsewhere we find the ordinary "periphrastic future," which would have been literally

equally strong language is found of the ordinary believer in James 5: 20, "SHALL SAVE a soul from death." The power of the GOSPEL is before us (Rom. 1. 16).

Binding and loosing have been shown[†] to be terms often used legally among the Jews, for that which was forbidden or approved. This is interesting, and it is important to see that we have here things rather than persons.

It is deeply suggestive to consider the parable of Matthew 18. 23 by which Christ answers PETER'S question almost immediately after the reference to the local church and "binding." The kingdom of the heavens is there associated with one who was forgiven, and who dared to cast his fellow-servant into "prison." This was an unholy binding, and his Lord delivered HIM up till he should pay that which was due.* The closing verse (35) shows God as the heavenly Father, acting in stern chastisement, when the principles of His forgiveness are not followed out. That which is bound in heaven is to be bound on earth, and so with loosing. The same thought, in another way, is found in Romans 15. 7.

To sum up:—There is nothing in these verses to suggest that the Church is built on anyone except the Rock of Salvation, even the Lord Jesus, Whose Deity is thus set forth. There is no mention of a human priesthood, nor any reference to purgatory, or aught similar. ‡ Like words are used for others in Matthew 18, and the chapter in Acts which shows Peter's special privilege as to the kingdom of heaven, emphasizes that he was to accept as cleansed, what God hath first cleansed. Thus the privilege of disciplelike obedience was made his, and if, as worthless sinners, we, too, rest on the Lord Jesus and His atonement, we have a like relationship to Christ the Foundation, and the privilege of pleasing Him, by acting in His Name in daily life

"It shall be—being bound" (e.g. Matt. 10. 22; 24. 9; Luke 1. 20; 5. 10; 17. 35; Col. 2. 8 etc.). Why does the Holy Spirit avoid this, and employ the unusual? There seem to be only two other New Testament occurrences apart from Matthew 16 and 18. Luke 12. 52 is one, "For there shall be from now five in one house (having been) divided." Two interpretations SEEM possible here, but there is nothing against the STRESS on their remaining in the house after the precious division. The preceding context may imply this if rendered literally, "Suppose that I became (alongside) to HAVE GIVEN peace in the earth." Hence the "division" may be viewed as in the PAST. Hebrews 2. 13, ("I shall be One That hath set confidence on Him") appear from verses 12 and 14 to refer to the resurrection of Christ, looking back on His previous life of faith. What if the Holy Spirit takes the unusual tense in Matthew with the same thought of looking back?—"Whatsoever thou shalt have bound on earth shall be (a thing) HAVING BEEN BOUND in the heavens." This is in accord with Acts 10. 15, and would imply nothing could be binding unless it were that which God had FIRST bound. Thus the apostle would be checked not to use the keys as the lawyers had done (Luke 11. 52: lawyer and steward are words from the same root) and the application of Christ's teaching when Peter immediately altered HIS words in Matthew 16. 21, 22 would help.

* The 100 pence or its equivalent, not the 10,000 talents already settled.

‡ It is worthy of notice that Christ retains the keys of Hades (Rev. 1. 18) while instructing His people to represent Him among fellow-believers.

(Col. 3. 17*). May this be the joy of many a reader, brought to a living union with the Son of God. Then will there be an understanding of the truth here set forth, in many changed experiences, not by bare argument, but by the gracious inworking of the Spirit of God Himself, applying the Scriptures to the daily walk.

Varied Experiences, but Unvaried Grace.

THE Holy Spirit guides us much through the varied nature of Scripture. Isaiah 6 was not the whole of the prophet's life, but it was an important event in it. The apostle wrote only one Romans 7, but we should be much poorer without that vivid, inspired autobiography. Sometimes a believer finds it hard to say how much of a certain experience is his Lord's chastisement for some definite failure, and how much is His gracious preserving from future failure, with rich results, that we may help others aright. And it is well that we do not know, so long as we are "EXERCISED THEREBY," and humbled. God does not command us to spend time analyzing His dealings: we must not DESPISE them, we must not FAINT under them, we must seek PROFIT and PARTAKING of holiness thereby. "Analysis" often is mental: the true attitude is spiritual. Sometimes one part of truth is impressed with unexpected power. We realize the intercession of the Lord Jesus, and His Judgment Seat. 'Tis not a question of grasping truth, truth grasps us. When some other part of His doctrine begins to affect us more remarkably, it may be that the former portion of truth becomes less vivid than it should be through our failure, (and we own this in all), but it is also true that God has some fresh lesson to teach, that we may increase in heavenly knowledge and love.

It is so with trials. God does not permit us to be ever in the same class. † He removes one problem, and permits another; not capriciously, but for our good, and that we may grow up into Christ in ALL things.

The believer should never be an earthly pessimist, but it is well for him sometimes that the failure of self should be felt much more keenly than usual, though our Father will not leave us, nor forsake us, and He grants more than gleams of grace even at such a time. Yet, on another occasion, He may grant a mountain top, and an almost unclouded view, it seems, of the riches of grace. Ah, even then we see in a mirror darkly. The beauty and glory of Christ ever transcend our highest realization. But the VARIED experiences are used, as we have seen, to teach us to bear with one another, and to learn our own need, and to trust Him more for His unvaried grace.

* This needs emphasis. As we have seen quite as strong words are used for prayer as for any privilege entrusted to Peter and the other apostles e.g. Matthew 17. 20; Mark 11. 24; John 14. 13; 15. 7. Nor is this strange. John 15. 7 and Matthew 16. 19 are EQUALLY expressions of "In His Name," nothing more, nothing less.

† Nor does He put all His people in the same class together. The differences of experiences in one life are still more different in many, to prevent hastiness of judgment, and to help love.

“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Matthew 27. 46.*

AGAIN and again a man has brought me this question. Shall I refuse to listen? Shall I make light of it? Far otherwise. It may be, among many, alas, who seek to make mockery, and among the multitude who repeat the objection as a parrot, there are some who are deeply concerned. In any case, there is a wonderful reply, and I should be unwise not to take the opportunity. If only dear Jewish and Gentile friends would listen, and think, instead of asking a question and then running away or interrupting, there would be precious opportunities. But the devil seeks to make men inattentive: he does not want them to stop and think, lest they see their danger, and their need, and the One Who so graciously meets it.

But NOW there is no one to interrupt. The reader may interrupt HIMSELF, and tear up the paper; but, if so, he does not interrupt me: he only robs himself, and shows unwillingness to ponder that which is of eternal importance. The man who is afraid to read this message through, or too careless, himself shows his real peril, more than any words of mine. O that some might be warned not to play with eternity.

There is nothing wrong in the words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Every earnest old-fashioned Jew must agree, for they are in the Book of Psalms (22. 1). They are precious, holy words. Why do you object, my reader, to Messiah quoting the תחליט † with His dying breath? He loved the Scriptures.

But there is a fuller reason. Can you say David fulfilled all Psalm 22? If not, of Whom is it written? Have you ever compared it with Isaiah 53.

Ps. 22. 6(7§) with Isa. 53. 3.

Ps. 22. 15(16) with Isa. 53. 12.

Ps. 22. 16, 17(17,18) with Isa. 53. 7.

Ps. 22. 24(25) with Isa. 53. 3.

Ps. 22. 27(28) with Isa. 53. 12.

Ps. 22. 30(31) with Isa. 53. 8, 10, 11.

You cannot rightly make Psalm 22 national: it is personal, concerning One rejected by the wicked generally, but also by “a people” (6, cf. Isa. 49. 7). The One Who has a SEED to serve Him is plainly the Righteous One of Isaiah 53. 10, 11. No words can get rid of this parallel.

If you deny Messiah as the Fulfiller of Psalm 22, have you any one to fulfil it? The answer, “I do not know” is a poor one if it means, “I do not care.” If we do not know we ought to be anxious, for here is One Who will praise God in the midst of the great congregation, and

* If this testimony to Israel awakens prayerful concern, we shall rejoice. We hope (God willing) to have it as a reprint, and also translated into Yiddish. Many have Jewish shopkeepers in their neighbourhood.

† The Book of Psalms.

§ Hebrew reckoning of verses.

Whose righteousness is TO BE DECLARED †(31). How can we declare if we do not know? “But,” you reply, “if He was God why does He say, My God?” What about Psalm 45. 6, 7? “Thy throne, O GOD is for ever and ever . . . therefore God, THY GOD, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” There is NO DIFFICULTY in One Who was God addressing One Who was God by this name, particularly in public for others to hear. Even men often speak thus, in the use of appropriate names for one another. If you say that the thought of God addressing God is not in the תתנ* you have a harder task than you realize. You dare not say “God CANNOT be Three Persons,” for who can by searching find out God? You must accept God’s own statement. Is it not true that God said, “Let US make man,” and “Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?” ‡ Is it not true that the words “Creator,” “Maker” “Husband” and “Holy One” in Ecclesiastes 12. 1, Isaiah 54. 5 and Proverbs 9. 10 are plural? Yea, is it not a fact that in the well-known Deuteronomy 6. 4 we find both a plural and a singular, and that Israel only emphasize the singular? Is it not a matter of importance that we find such an expression as “A Holy One, a Holy One, a Holy One is the Lord of hosts” in Isaiah 6. 3? Is not Isaiah 48. 16 more than difficult without the Triune God? Is it not a fact that the Lord revealed Himself to Moses as One Who would bear sins (Ex. 34. 7) forgiving, lit: bearing), and that the prophets refer to One of David’s line as the LORD our Righteousness (Jer. 23. 6), though the Lord will not give the glory of His Name to another (Isa. 42. 8)? Is it not true that verses can be found which speak of One as God and Man (Isa. 9. 5, 6), as both the Root and Branch of David (Isa. 11. 1, 10)? All these problems are clear if we recognize the Deity of the Messiah, but in no other way. Ah, dear reader, why do you reject this?

But it may be you add, “If I agree that this is possible, I expect the words ‘My Father,’ and not ‘My God.’” The beauty of God’s truth shines on in meeting your very difficulty. The very book which tells you He said, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” also tells you that He thrice used the word “Father,” while on the cross. When the Lord interceded for others, when He emphasized His eternal Spirit, He said “Father.” Have you ever studied the beauty of the use of various names for God in Genesis?—E.g. “God” in Genesis 1. 1—2. 3 and “Lord God” in 2. 4—3. 23. Again, “As God had commanded him, and the LORD shut him in” (7. 16). The critic fails to see the difference between the names in Genesis 9. 26, 27, but all those who know the covenant grace unveiled in the name “LORD” have more than a mental interest in every name.

Hence it was fitting that Messiah, when He was made a Curse for guilty sinners, bearing their sin (Isa. 53. 12), should use the name “God” when He referred to this fact. True, in His personal holiness He remained spotlessly pure, but, as the Surety for His people, He took their place. Did they merit judgment? He must be judged. Did they deserve the waves and billows of God’s wrath? Then all God’s

* The Hebrew Scriptures.

† Genesis 1. 26, Isaiah 6. 8.

waves and billows must go over Him. Did they earn the dire doom of being forsaken? Then He, as their Substitute, must utter that very word "Forsaken." The sin offering was under wrath (Lev. 5. 11). It is all too wonderful for human words, but it is God's grace. Ah, dear Jewish friend, you need such a Saviour, whether you know it, or not.

But, possibly, you feel that, though these objections are met, one remains. You ask, "Is not the word 'Why?' a word of bitter complaint?" Not necessarily: Joel 2. 14 and Haggai 1. 9 will show this. A question may be asked, for others to ponder the answer. What if that is one object here? As many know, the New Testament was written in Greek, and the question here is not "Because of what?" but "With a view to what?"—implying a PURPOSE. Is not this quite in accord with Psalm 22? "A seed shall serve Him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation" (verse 30). Here is the purpose. Far from being a chiding, the language of Scripture, while it expresses deep feeling, is linked with a full recognition of the holiness of God in all that happened (Ps. 22. 3). If we realize that Messiah was God, Who took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and thus, in His perfect Manhood, became the Substitute for His people EVERY WORD FITS. And, if you refuse this, 'tis not only Matthew 27 that you refuse, but also Psalm 22. THE PROPHECY OF DAVID BREAKS DOWN unless you have the very Messiah, Whom we preach.

And does not Zechariah 13. 7 give a parallel? A sword awakes against God's FRIEND. Why, unless He had become the Surety for sinners? The Shepherd of Israel is smitten, but Who is the Shepherd? Psalm 80. 1 answers, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel . . . Thou That dwellest between the cherubim." The same Psalm refers to the perfect humanity of Messiah in verses 15 and 17. Thus all parts of Scripture fit in with one another, and we can only bow the head, and WORSHIP. Ah, it is wonderful to know One Who FELT the word "Forsaken" that His believing people might hear the precious words, "I will never leave thee, not forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5). Dear Jewish reader, your question only makes us praise more heartily for the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. May many among you also share the unending joy of this thankful praise.

"QUESTIONS OF ENQUIRING JEWS," a FREE Booklet gladly sent.

It is not possible to know all the greatness of God in nature, or in grace. But it is possible to be humbled more, as we realize in measure. And our very failure to realize impresses His glory more, and spiritual humiliation is linked with adoration, and we worship gratefully as we feel that He loved and loveth us!

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness." Psalm 31. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

THE confidence of God's dear people in Himself is very blessed. They do not speak of One Unknown or Far Off. God is deeply interested in His children: the name "Father" is not only a Name. Not with any desire to assume that they are better than others by nature do God's messengers go forth, with His gospel. And so, in issuing this magazine, we have no wish to exalt ourselves, or a human society, or to profess great attainments. Very conscious of our need, and of the Lord's love, we desire to tell of His grace, and to set forth the experience we desire, in communion with Himself. Let it never be with hypocrisy that we tell of heights beyond personal present climbing, but that the Lord's glory may not be dragged down to our imperfect realization of His perfection. But,—O to love and please Him more.

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"LET US BUILD WITH YOU"

Ezra 4. 2.

THE OFFER OF THE FLESH.

THE offer of "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" in the days of Zerrubabel has many counterparts to-day. But we would not only think of the flattering proposal of the world, (which often precedes open opposition,—whenever it is rejected), but of the proposal of the WORLD WITHIN, i.e. the flesh. Warfare WITHOUT

is vain unless there is warfare WITHIN. "Let us build with you," says the flesh, and it will be tractable, in many ways, if it is allowed some share in Christian service, aye, and in home arrangements. If the flesh is not outlawed, it will often behave very respectably for awhile. It is this that often misleads beloved children of God. They think there is progress when they are becoming a little more worldly. They have many helpful thoughts, and there is a large amount of zeal. The flesh does not fight openly on every occasion. It may serve its purpose to be quiet. As Satan can be disguised as an angel of light, so can the flesh. It is like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. Have we not known apparent enthusiasm in our lives, and found sorrowfully, after all, that the flesh was thus deceiving us? We thought we were more earnest for the Lord than we were, and the flesh apparently CO-OPERATED. As Satan proposed to Christ the gift of the earth's rule if He would but fall down and worship, so the flesh is ready to withdraw resistance, if we will give it a little more freedom, and enjoyment. Let the flesh find some delight in the carnal and naturally attractive accompaniments of "Christian" work, and it will patronize that work oftentimes, beloved fellow believers. This is not a bare theory: the sad experience of the writer as to these subtleties leads to a prayerful longing that readers as well as himself may have increasing discernment, in the gracious enabling of the Holy Spirit, day by day.

'Tis when we say, like Zerubbabel and Joshua, "Ye have nothing to do with us," that we realize what the flesh really is. "Self" is a cruel master but it will appear a loving servant awhile to attain its own ends. It will approve of some gold, if there is room for more dross. But let self be denied, and Satan will seek to trip up in every way. He will endeavour to burden with the thoughts of the mind, as the word "devices" seem to indicate (2 Cor. 2. 11), in order to take our mind off Christ (Col. 3. 1-4). Self-will seeks to fight, and will show that it has no real love. O that we may CONTINUE the answer of Ezra 4. 3, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together ("Unite my heart to fear Thy Name," Ps. 86. 11) will build unto the Lord God of Israel." And will not our Heavenly Father hear our heart's longing to continue devoted unto Him, and to bring more pure gold? Will not a standard be lifted up by the Spirit of the Lord, when the enemy comes in like a flood? Shall we not have the encouragement that our Lord intercedes for us, with unwearied hands, that in the warfare with this Amalek we may have spiritual victory?

Those who fear the Lord are not afraid to talk about Him, nor afraid that He should record their words.

"Ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me." The principle applies in many ways. If we are living at a distance from the Lord, we shall lose power of witness.

"REMEMBER THE WORD."

Psalm 119. 49, John 15. 20, Joshua 1. 13.

THE same precious expression comes before us in more than one context. Faith humbly, yet boldly, asks God to remember His promise, and the Lord Jesus impresses upon His people His forewarning that they might not be discouraged. Nor would we overlook how Joshua instructed the two and a half tribes to remember God's appointment for them, through Moses.

How powerful is the prayerful plea that depends on God's Word. We do not ask Him to remember merely our wishes, but His own sure Word. He has caused His people to hope thereon, and He will not fail. "Hope" is a joyous privilege. They are not building on a shadow. They are not dependent on a bare inference. They have His own abiding Word. There is a beautiful confidence when we can thus pray. It is for God's own glory that He should remember His own Word.

And we need a memory lest we be taken by surprise; and a memory, like the Israelites of old, that we do what we have been commanded, and not ignore our brethren. It is so easy to be selfish. It is so easy to forget. Till Peter remembered, he went astray (Matt. 26. 75). And likewise the women brought spices in error, because they did not remember Christ's Words (Luke 24. 8).

May it be ours to have a godly memory for the Words of the Lord. How we long to forget some things. The evil that surrounds we would drive away. Past failures have a present fruit in memory, and Satan would use this against our precious Lord. But we do not want to forget His Words. The parallel expressions of Acts 20. 35 and Jude 17 may well be in our hearts and minds, and let us never forget the Lord's stress on remembering HIMSELF.

Some UNDERLYING Thoughts in the Longest Psalm, Verse By Verse.*

1. There is no COMPLETENESS if God's Words are ignored.
2. The half heart seeks "it," the whole heart seeks "Him."
3. The hands and the feet please God together.
4. Keeping should be intense and unhesitating.
5. Special "actions" result from general "ways."
6. A child of God is more ashamed of sin than all else.
7. Praise depends on knowing God and His judgments.
8. God's presence and His commands are precious together.
9. "Taking heed" needs a standard by which to decide: God's Word is touchstone and standard.
10. Past seeking does not make present praying unnecessary. We are weaker than we think.
11. The object of treasuring God's Word must be His glory.

* Please turn to the verses, unless known by heart.

12. The Text Book has its Author as the Best Teacher.
13. "My lips" are to repeat from "God's mouth," else they will talk amiss.
14. The believer is more than a millionaire, unless he robs himself.
15. Meditation must be "IN" as well as "ABOUT."
16. Lack of joy leads to forgetfulness.
17. A dead sinner cannot keep, nor can one who lives among the dead.
18. The treasures are there, but I need Divinely opened eyes.
"Common sense" and "genius" are not enough.
19. God hides His Words from those who settle down.
20. True longing is continual: emotion is temporary.
21. Pride always means wandering.
22. One who loves others FEELS reproach,—for their sake.
23. Meditation is a cure for worry.
24. The believer has his many privy counsellors.
25. Revival is according to God's Word.
26. God answers those who hide nothing from Him.
27. Right meditation and talking spring from true understanding of God's way, as it was with Moses (Ps. 103. 7).
28. Deep feelings cast one more upon God.
29. LAW is granted GRACIOUSLY to believers.
30. Holy determination leads to holy perceiving.
31. The believer finds no bondage in being attached to God's Words.
"Self" is his dread.
32. A small heart goes slowly: affection runs.
(“If the Lord will,” to be continued).

“Only a Little Thing.”

IT was only a little thing, only one action, only a *word*,—but it was the bitter fruit of *previous failure*. And so the Lord was dishonoured. And how can He overlook this, or that which led up to it, at His Judgment Seat (2 Cor. 5. 10)? Nothing is negligible before Him Who judges righteously. But how blessed if we are led to spiritual repentance (2 Pet. 3. 9). True, we cannot undo the action, nor fill the gap of the hour that lacked service to Him; but will He not own the repentance?—and thus His loving joy, in this will make the *net result much less* falling short. And love's humbled earnestness now can use the passing moments,—never beyond His will, never boasting “I have done all His will,” but ever getting nearer to His will, in the Holy Spirit. And if He does not overlook the hasty word or the sinful look. He equally does not forget the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. “Only a little thing,” but it pleased Him, and it is not too tiny for Him to remember, and reward. Not that we seek reward for its own sake, but for His sake, and His joy (Matt. 25. 21, 23).

Sidelights on Jeroboam's Character.

MADLY going his own way, the king daringly wished to apprehend the man of God who spoke in the Lord's Name (1 Kings 13. 4). In a moment the offending hand was helpless. The still unhumbled king at once pleaded for healing, “Intreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, THAT MY HAND MAY BE RESTORED ME AGAIN.” Not a word of confession of sin. How easily we overlook this. The rich man in Hades seems so different from the one who fared sumptuously every day, but can you find one word of sorrow for sin?—“Send Lazarus”—“I am tormented.” Where is the sorrow? Ah, he speaks again, “I have five brethren,”—but not one suggestion of their spiritual need, “Lest they also come into this place of torment.” Sin's punishment is felt, but sin is not condemned until in answer to Abraham he adds, “They will repent,” but no word of personal repentance. And healed Jeroboam speaks again, “Come home WITH ME, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee A REWARD.” Solemn words: “with me”—Although the king gave no sign of horror as to his sin. Who that knows God would desire Jeroboam's reward? We are not surprised that we read, “After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places” (1 Kings 13. 33). There was no humiliation before God.

It is remarkable that Jeroboam's request was answered, and he was healed, whereas the man of God who interceded for him was slain. We cannot but recollect Moses, who interceded for Israel in Numbers 14, and was kept out of the land through failure occasioned by the murmurings of the same people for whom he prayed. God's ways are wondrous, and He displays a holy righteousness toward His much treasured servants. He never excuses sin.

It is a privilege to know the Lord That healeth, and many a believer can tell of mercy as to the body (Phil. 2. 27). But let us seek a godly proportion. Jeroboam was occupied with his withered hand, and sought healing. It is Jeroboam-like to think more of the BODY than of God's lessons in the AFFLICTION. Healing was no proof of godliness. God is sovereign. We may be sure that the enemy of souls will try and cause a disproportion, and take our minds off THE LORD AND HIS WILL. It is blessed to ask for physical deliverance, when we can to God's glory, but is a believer ready so to do till he (or she) has thanked God for the trial, and sought to learn its lessons?

Jeroboam had three signs in front of him (1 Kings 13. 4, 5), and yet he was unaffected. If the wishes are adamant against God's warning, there is a peril beyond measure. How blessed is the contrast in the history of the one here prophesied by name, “Because thine heart was tender” (2 Chron. 34. 27).

ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN ALL.

HOW often we are not childlike enough. God our Father has not told us everything. The "secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29. 29). We do not desire, or at least, SHOULD not desire to pry into the things He has hidden. It is natural to seek the unrevealed, and usually TO IGNORE THE REVEALED. We have more than we shall exhaust in the truth revealed. This tendency to desire something else is parallel with the natural condition that **wants** to do what is forbidden. "When the command came, sin revived" (Rom. 7. 8, 9). The Athenian spirit to hear something "newer" is not dead (Acts 17. 21 lit.). But it is contrary to the will of God; we should thank Him for what He has revealed. He knew perfectly what to say, and what not to say. The dazzling glory of heaven would blind us (cf. Acts 22. 11), and complete knowledge would be unbecoming to our present condition. We know in part (1 Cor. 13. 9). LOVE is emphasized more abundantly in the very context.

Alas, oftentimes while we are "imagining," we are forgetting the practical purpose of revelation. In all dispensations there is a parallel with Deuteronomy 29. 29. "These things that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may DO." Doctrine is not merely for the brain: all truth is for the heart and life. Grace teaches us how to live to-day. Our Heavenly Father is not seeking profound thinkers, but worshippers: He looks for faithfulness, not philosophic brilliance. Our beloved Lord desires clean vessels, not geniuses. We have missed the mark if we live in our reasonings, which are yet to be proved very faulty (Ps. 94. 11). "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know (1 Cor. 8. 2). All the while we are dreaming, we are losing God-given time for obedience. It is so in everything. Many beloved children of God have wanted to do PUBLIC work and have let slip the precious PRIVATE work their Father was constantly giving them. The next things, and the little things, are precious in His sight.

Why is it we ATTEMPT to explain all? Is it pride? Are we ashamed to say, "I know in part?" One apostle was INSPIRED to say, in a very important matter, "I cannot tell" (2 Cor. 12. 2), and another, "We know not what we shall be" (1 John 3. 2). It is our wisdom to be reverently silent. God is Greater than human explanations. We know Him sufficiently to TRUST Him. If we do NOT, if we "must" understand all, we may well question the reality of our faith and love.

Who can explain the nature of GOD? He, Who is from everlasting to everlasting, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, cannot be found out by searching (Job 11. 7). Do we not rejoice in this majesty beyond our knowledge? Who can comprehend a past eternity? Who can understand measures of space? Time and place and manner are alike beyond us, when they concern God. We bow the head and worship.

Are we ashamed when the evolutionist uses against us a few great

swelling words of vanity? They are NOTHING but a covering of his entire ignorance, as to the fundamental question. HE KNOWS NOTHING OF ORIGIN, and, if quietly thoughtful in any measure, is aware of this. Man is but man. Let us never be ashamed to own that we do know what God has said, but that we have no doubts as to anything that He has spoken. Can we EXPLAIN all the ways of God, though privileged to behold in measure (Job 26. 14, Ps. 103. 7)? Shall we say "Why?" when we look on the ruin around? Shall we criticize the "Hitherto shalt thou come" of foretold sins, or humbly own God will yet overrule all to His glory? Most of the attacks on God's election seem to ignore the fact that they only cover up THE PROBLEM THEY ATTEMPT TO SOLVE: for God is Almighty, and has all knowledge. "Why did not God intervene?" is the echo of "Who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. 9. 19). There is ONE ANSWER, and it is in Scripture. "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The Holy Spirit cuts the questioner short, in infinite wisdom, and with holy rebuke. We MUST own our limitations. If we try to explain "Why" as to God's election and providence, and to apportion sovereign grace and human accountability, dealing with the deadness of the sinner and the importance of gospel-proclamation from the standpoint of partial human logic, we only show the "reasonings" of a child which appears CHILDISH before true wisdom. Our right attitude is reverent faith: that is CHILDLIKE, and lovingly obedient. God has left scope for spiritual faith: do we desire to afford no room for it? He has revealed MUCH, to stir up our praise, and has shown that ALL is to be unto His glory. What if men say, "How?" or even dare to utter blasphemy? Nothing can change spiritual faith of one who KNOWS the Lord. Shall we vaunt ourselves in explaining, in human words, the believers' dependence on grace, and YET his personal responsibility in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ? By no means; but we would ever pray and praise for grace, and nevertheless would blame ourselves for EVERY failure. The relation of soul and spirit may not be fully UNDERSTOOD, but the Lord's redeemed would seek to walk in the Spirit. Grace is full of worship, and earnestly practical.

And so is it as to all things. The glories of the Coming of Christ are revealed ENOUGH TO MAKE OUR HEARTS RESPONSIVE, but we know not "what we shall be." And in all our prayerful study we would dread lest there should be an indecision when He has spoken, and lest, on the other hand, we should read, without humble discernment, and then exalt our mental inferences and assumption to the level of His holy words, and despise those who are not of one mind with our puffed up mind. The humbler a believer is the more he will know, and the less will he be talkative of his knowledge.

The best "Illustrated Bible" is not issued by the thousand, but individually, and further illustrations are being continually added through an obedient life.

MENTAL or SPIRITUAL?

Is salvation a bare MENTAL acknowledgment? Shall I say—Christ died for sinners, I am a sinner, I know that fact, and therefore, I am saved? No, beloved friends, ability to set out a syllogism is not salvation. Many make regeneration the repetition of a formula. It is a grievous mistake. The humbled sinner believes with the heart.

In like manner, assurance is not merely mental? Shall I quote John 10. 28, and say my eternal life cannot be lost? Shall I read 1 John 5. 13, and then declare that the book was written for me to know I have eternal life? Far otherwise, it was written to indicate the tests that I may know, by applying them, if I am in Christ and have the fruit. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." If there is not a hatred of continuance in sin (1 John 3. 6), the claim of salvation is abominable. The revelation of God is never to appeal to the brain apart from the affections. Unless I love Him, I flatter myself in vain that I am His. If the teaching of grace is given to the flesh, that judged criminal let out from prison, runs riot with it, and turns grace to lasciviousness. Not one word in Scripture about salvation ignores the need for a deep heart-work, and not one word about final preservation therein nullifies the holy unveiling that the Lord Jesus became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY Him (Heb. 5. 9). There is no evidence that we ever were disciples indeed unless we continue in His Word (John 8. 31), and John 10. 28 is not to be read without John 10. 27.

God does not let His people have burdens heavier than they can bear, but He may permit those which are heavier than they think they can bear. It is natural to wish to escape from trials, but faith wishes His will. It is so refreshing to know that God never makes a mistake as to any trial. It does not come because He has forgotten, but because He has remembered. It is not because He has ceased to love, but because He continues to love. Hence our first privilege is to thank Him for it, and to ask Him His gracious lessons through it, and His merciful restraining from anything that would dishonour His Name in our experiencing of it. But do we not own that other things often come into our mind first, instead of these God-glorifying acts?

The types point to Christ, but He excels them all. Sometimes we see first in the shadow more easily than in the Antitype, because His glory is so wondrous and dazzlingly brilliant.

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come," and the heart that does not say "Come" has little fellowship with the Spirit of God.

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG. LET ALL THINGS BE DONE WITH LOVE."
1 Corinthians 16. 13, 14.

A Word of Introduction.

IN the mercy of our unchanging God and Father we send forth these pages. It is our desire to give a balanced witness. We cannot condense all truth into a few pages, but we do not want willingly to overlook any part of His testimony. Nor would we have a disproportion, through human choosing. All truth is precious, but it is our heart's desire that our God would direct us to the very portions that specially meet present needs. If any natural bias comes out there is a peril. We would prayerfully long that these pages may be responsive to God's will, to the edification of His people, as they earnestly get ready to see their Coming Lord face to face.

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Another Precious Sidelight On the Deity of the Lord Jesus.*

"I AM the LORD: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to ANOTHER." Isaiah 42. 8 is definite and impressive. Our glorious God ever lays stress on His Name (LORD), and this emphasizes Matthew 28. 19, and such passages as Revelation 1. 17. The HUMILIATION of the Lord Jesus in love is explicable because of

* Other leaflets on this subject, e.g. The Deity and Atonement of the Lord Jesus; Judgment and the Deity of Christ; Negative Testimony to the Deity of the Lord Jesus etc., gladly sent.

stupendous grace, but His exalted majesty would be inexplicable if He were not essentially God. The inspired book that condemns idolatry unsparingly does not give unspeakable honour and worship to a CREATED being. Christ's Deity is in its very warp and woof. But His Humanity is equally asserted, and necessary for the precious plan of our redemption (1 Tim. 2. 5). And His Manhood was not eternal, nor was it Deity. He really became a Man, and partook of flesh and blood, and in His perfect Manhood became the perfect Sacrifice, made a Curse for His unworthy people (Gal. 3. 13). O how amazing is such grace.

And now the writer would make a suggestion that seems to set forth, in a fuller degree, the Glory of the Lord Jesus. Why do we read, "God also hath highly exalted Himself, and given Him the Name which is above every name" (Phil. 2. 9)? The added verse begins "in the Name of Jesus." The Name "Jesus" refers particularly to His humanity (Luke 2. 21), but the Name OF Jesus is surely the Name above every name, reminding of Exodus 6. 3 and Isaiah 42. 8. Was not this Name belonging to Christ before? In His eternal Spirit, verily: but not in His humanity. But here He is seen as ONE PERSON raised from the dead, hence the Name can be GIVEN. Thus the problem is solved.—How can the Glory be GIVEN at all, if it is not given to ANOTHER? The answer is that He Who received it WAS not ANOTHER, but by becoming Man He, in His complex glory, was able to receive the gift. Isaiah 42. 8 thus shines forth in the light of this. Is this the precious hint of the Holy Spirit, seen by comparing Scripture with Scripture?

The word "to give" is the same as in Luke 7. 21, Acts 25. 11, 27. 24, Galatians 3. 18 etc., and is from the root "grace," and has the thought of freely bestowing, hence of forgiveness in such contexts as Luke 7. 42, 43, Colossians 2. 13, 3. 13. Till the wondrous complex glory of the Lord Jesus is realized this word remains a difficulty. But when we behold together the TWO Scriptures that God will not give His glory to another and that He has graciously bestowed this Name, the Holy Spirit appears to answer EVERY error by ONE of the verses, and to shut our hearts up to praise in the one solution of the two. Christ was not Another (cf. John 1. 1), but took a body, that He might be able to receive the gift.

We cannot intrude into His glory. No one knoweth the Son but the Father (Matt. 11. 27). Curiosity and irreverence are more than out of place. But when, in mercy, we see how He became a Curse for us, possibly we understand the reference to "grace" the more fully here. We realize that His meritorious work entitled Him to life (Lev. 18. 5 lit: Rom. 4. 25). He was raised as the Obedient and Righteous One. Believers (amazing fact) are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). But we are NOT called "Lord" as He is: we are STILL dependent ones. Hence this Name is not part of His award, but linked with the word "FREELY GIVEN," though the nature of His Deity compels us to own the precious APPROPRIATENESS of such a gift. For Him, in His complex majesty,

to lack the Name that belonged to Him in His essential Godhead would veil the glory of His work. Hence the perfect harmony of all the inspired language, and the music of the words of John 17. 5, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." We can only bow the head and worship, and say with the apostle; "O the depth of RICHES, and of WISDOM, and of KNOWLEDGE of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11. 33).

A Few Thoughts on Love.

LOVE does not make a parade. It is not dramatic. As soon as we look at 1 Corinthians 13 we see that the love that is there set forth is VERY HOMELY, and marked by a godly doing of little things, and a holy manner. The GREAT things of that chapter—removing mountains and giving one's goods to feed the poor—are not set forth as the evidence of love. Alas, many of us are too great for love. Love is so simple.

How often we like the feeling of love. Love rejoices, and sometimes we mistake the effect of love for the cause, and SEEK THE EFFECT. We aim at our own joy in loving rather than the delight of the One Loved. Love is not talkative. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour AS THYSELF" is a great help in explaining the word the Holy Spirit uses. Who can imagine a right love of oneself talking much about it, and saying "How I love you." Expressive language of affection is not always love: it may be the opposite. Spontaneous care for one's own real needs, and concerns as to dangers, must be viewed as right love of oneself. And so we have the key. Love to others is not the froth of words, but the reality of interest in their true welfare.

Love has varied aspects included within itself. There is remembering love, or, rather, the remembrance of love. There is the thoughtful activity of love, to meet the emergencies of another. There is the obedience of love. There is the tenderness of love. There is the exultation of love. There is the love that bears a strain for another's sake, and even unkindness from the one loved. And all are fitting in their right place. The buxant love of a little child to a dear father, and the tender love of a mother to a suffering child are very distinct in manifestation, but they suggest how true love must be suited to the condition of the one loved, and not merely to the condition of the one loving.

And as we ponder these things our hearts are humbled, and, looking up to our Heavenly Father, and realizing our need of the Holy Spirit's enabling, we pray more fervently for growth in love, and growth-in love TO-DAY.

It is easy for the natural man to read Scripture without applying it: but the true profit is when the Holy Spirit applies to our humble hearts.

A Few Thoughts on a Question:—

“‘God is Light.’ Is this a Similitude,
or a Positive Statement?”

“**GOD IS**” (Heb. 11. 6), and “God is Love” (1 John 4. 16). We may only know parts of His ways, but yet, if in Christ Jesus, we have received an understanding to know Him That is True (1 John 5. 20). How wondrous are the riches of grace. “God is Love:” have we any doubt as to the positiveness of this statement? He not only HAS love, but His wondrous being is expressed in His love. Shall we not acknowledge the same definiteness in 1 John 1. 5? Observe that the passage does NOT say “God is THE Light,” for the Greek of this would imply that the words “God” and “Light” are co-extensive. On the other hand, the term “Light” is WIDER. There is natural light—created light as well. We recollect the words, “Let light BECOME.” The light that “BECOMES” is not the same as the One Who IS Light. Possibly some dear children of God are troubled by the thought, “Is God material Light as we understand it?” How can He be? “God is a Spirit” (John 4. 24). He is beyond all that He has created. He dwells IN THE LIGHT (1 Tim. 6. 16), and covers Himself WITH LIGHT as with a garment (Ps. 104. 2). “Ah,” some dear readers may reply, “You really mean what I intended by a ‘similitude,’ that is, as the natural created light is the opposite of darkness and drives it away, so He is the Opposite of sin and expels it from His holy presence?” Yes, it is true that He is glorious in this way, with no darkness at all; no defect at all is found in Him. We think of a CONTRAST in nature as we behold the moon with its dark spots. There is no failure in God, no sin, no falling short at all. But do you call this only SIMILITUDE? Is the material the reality, and the spiritual only the figure? Might we not rather say that the spiritual is the fullest reality, typified in the material, for our help? Let us take God’s standpoint, and not that of our earthly eyesight. But if He has ASSOCIATED the spiritual and the physical, may there not be a REASON why God appeared in a cloud, because men could not see His face and live? Accordingly, we have the brilliance of the Divine presence in Daniel 7, Habakkuk 3. 4, and Revelation 1. And so we can say “God is Light” from His OWN standpoint, BEYOND that which is material, and, when He has been pleased to reveal Himself, He has revealed a dazzling light of glory. We would worship, and, remembering Saul’s blindness, through Christ’s glory beyond the midday sun, would be grateful for mercy that deals so tenderly with our present frailty to behold.

The weeping of Israel in Numbers 14 reminds us that we need a godly REASON, as well as an apparently earnest action. It is important to search humbly into the undercurrents of OUR OWN lives, and to search OUR OWN motives in the light of God’s sanctuary.

“They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

John 12. 43.

THIS passage speaks to us all. There are occasions when we are bold. There are occasions when we hesitate. These men “believed into Him” says verse 42, but “they did not KEEP ON CONFESSING Him.” There was a variableness, and that is our danger. Open persecution is sometimes easier to bear than being put out of the synagogue. It is often less difficult to take the definite issue—Christ or Belial—than to stand firm when there need NOT BE DENIAL, ONLY NON-CONFESSION. ’Tis by little things that we are tested. The ones before us “loved the good opinion of men.” It is natural for some to lose reputation with joy. They like to be notorious. For others this is the strain. But our hearts should be exercised. Do we not want God’s approval? What is the approval of men? There are many losses as well as loss of life. Loss of position, loss of esteem, loss of membership with others—how easily we cling to something instead of Christ. Our hearts feel rejection. Encouraging temperaments that love others may be snared in this sin when a rough temperament escapes. There is no spiritual blessing in giving up the praise of men for any reason except the glory of God. Too often we do appointed things with an unappointed reason.

O that we may learn the meaning of the words, “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13. 13, 14 with 11. 25, 26).

Afterward.

Hebrews 12. 11, 17.

THE words are different, but there is a similarity of thought in the two almost adjoining verses, and the contrast is very great. How precious is the “afterwards,” EVEN NOW, whenever chastisement is truly accepted AND God’s gracious lessons are lovingly learned. How terrible was the afterwards of Esau, when he WISHED to inherit, wished to have the blessing, and sought a change of mind on the part of his father with TEARS, but all in vain. We do not read of his sorrow for sin, it was the blessing that he wished.

Are there not many to-day who are putting aside the things of God, and ignoring the true value of spiritual things? Are there not children of God who find some attraction as to the things of earth, and forget the value of the reproach of Christ? Truly the Lord Jesus said that “the sons of this age are wiser, with a view to their own generation, than the sons of light.” O that we may be more concerned to trust the Lord, and live in the light of His Coming!

A deep sense of sin and a desire to worship aright are fuller evidences of God’s work than much verbal profession.

THE FLESH. A Fragment.

I TRIED to reason with the flesh, but found it would hold on to its wishes and cravings, however unreasonable and valueless I showed them to be. I sought to reprove the flesh, but though I was ashamed of it, the flesh would never be ashamed of itself. I endeavoured to make it more tractable, but it only pretended to yield, till its opportunity came, and then the same old nature asserted itself. I attempted, alas, to bring its wishes into a good channel, and to offer it a little liberty, at the same time linking actions of Christian service therewith, but I soon discovered that the goodness it assumed was only to secure yet more liberty, and turn it to licence. And so I found everything in vain, except mortifying the deeds of the body, and deadening my members upon the earth as described in Colossians 3. 5. And thus I realized that the Holy Spirit had long ago set this forth, and nothing else, and that when I first came to Christ, I crucified the flesh with the affections and desires (Gal. 5. 24), and my heart grieved, and grieves, to think how long I have often taken and still take to learn the simple lessons, which are set forth in the Scriptures for those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. And though I see this wondrous instruction now, I will not boast of my obedience, but I long thus to live, and to wage this warfare in the Spirit.

Different Standpoints.

“ I KNOW not the Lord,” said Pharaoh, (Ex. 5. 2), and proudly went his way. “ I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God,” said the unclean spirit in Mark 1. 24, but showed no love to Him, nor to holiness. “ Shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee,” was the earnest desire of Moses (Ex. 33. 13), and we find a wondrous echo in John 17. 3, “ And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee.” And likewise the epistle gives the same encouragement “ We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him That is True” (1 John 5. 20). Well may we finish with the precious words of the apostle, “ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection” (Phil. 3. 10).

“ The love of Christ ” constrained Paul, and he abhorred “ the love of money.” The two are mutually exclusive. There is more delight in money than we realize. It is easier to be worldly than we think, and to call it “ keeping up a proper position.” The flesh is never at a loss for a good word: and it is possible to love money even when one’s capital is a few pence. Self does not need wealth to become a miser: the heart decides the attitude, and all things are laid bare to our Heavenly Father.

What is my Heavenly Father Teaching Me?

THE believer realizes that he is not the victim of chance and fate. An infinitely tender and personal love watches over him. This confidence in his Heavenly Father gives a new view of EVERYTHING. Troubles are not BECAUSE Mr. So-and-So is unkind,—even though he may be, but, because God in wisdom permits, physical trials are not merely physical: they have spiritual lessons wrapped up in them. And so we may regard all experiences. Circumstances are God’s messengers. The believer is not so concerned about circumstances, but he is concerned with his own condition which makes them necessary (1 Pet. 1. 6). Sin, not its chastisement, alarms him. And when we speak of chastisement, let it not be thought that we mean “ punishment ” with a harsh appearance, but loving reproof that we may be cleansed, and drawn back from wandering.

The trial comes, and the first thought is not to be, “ I do not see WHY I should have this,” nor, “ This is unnecessary,” nor “ How can I get rid of this ? ” Far otherwise. The first thought should be thanksgiving that God has not left His gold to its dross, and the second thought, “ What is my Heavenly Father teaching me ? ” Then complaining thoughts and human plannings will not find much room left. And this is well.

When God is glorified by our consciousness He has a purpose, and by our desire to respond to His will, and to have the fruit for which He looks, there is a helpful exercise of soul. The present tendency to speak against one’s lot is very dangerous. God overrules all to His glory (Rom. 8. 28). We are all inclined to feel irritation before we are aware of it, and this is dishonouring to Him.

Let it be noticed that we do not only plead for “ resignation.” It has been well pointed out that we have no mere “ resignation ” in Scripture. We need holy approval of God’s will. Resignation is only passive: it almost suggests a “ putting up with ” that which we bear, and a passivity, whereas there should be an active gratitude, and intensity to learn His teaching. Sometimes we quickly see something which He condemns in our life, and from which He would draw us. Sometimes we soon realize the “ tendencies ” to self-will which He sets aside, and perceive the reminder that we are more easily led astray than we think we are, and so need the humbling burden awhile. But if we cannot see “ Why,” we KNOW God has a reason, and a little love to Him has proved enough of His great love to trust Him fully in the dark. And the sanctifying effect of faith, when we cannot tell why His chastening is continued, is truly precious.

I thought I was willing to bear almost anything for the Lord, UNTIL THE TIME CAME to bear something, and then I realized my need to rest on Him Who bore me up, and to be ashamed of myself.

A Changed Aspect of the Same Question.

WHAT am I to do ? I see myself before God—as a sinner. I look at my best deeds: they are not good enough for God. If I say, “I will try my best,” that will not make up for the sins that are gone before. What am I to do ? God is not a man, and He will not change His Word to suit me. He is Holy and Truthful. I feel my need. I want to go into His presence: I long to know that my sins are forgiven. God’s mercy is wonderful. The Scripture makes this clear to me. But yet I feel a barrier between me and His mercy, because my sins must be punished. But now that problem is solved. The death of the Lord Jesus was for my sins. I trust in Him, and I am forgiven. My past sins are blotted out, and now I have a new life, that, with new power, I may please Him. This is the grace of God to a sinner. Now I no longer ask the question “What am I to do ?” despairingly, but I look upward and ask, “What am I to do ?” gratefully. “What am I to do ?” to serve the One Who has saved me ?

“Whom have I in heaven ?”

“And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” Ps. 73. 25.

THIS psalm shows a delightful change, after going into the sanctuary (verse 17). Before, there was envy: afterwards, there was praise. We, too, need more of the sanctuary. The joyous confidence of Asaph shines out after he had been in the sanctuary: and thus he cries out “Whom have I in heaven ?” The added italics hinder the meaning. “Who belongeth to me in heaven ?”—as if to suggest that there are those who have **NO ONE THERE**:—no Father Who welcomes to His home (to include that which is especially unveiled in the present dispensation), no Saviour and Advocate. How solemn is their position. We sometimes use the word “Who ?” with a similar thought. A father may say to his child, “Who is my little girl ?” The meaning is clear. And so the psalmist realizes a humble, yet reverent, intimacy with God. It will now be clear that the italics are not a help. The verse continues, literally, “And with Thee I do not desire in the earth.” That is to say, “I have nothing as a rival, no one to be compared.” The danger of **ANOTHER** is very real. We cannot serve God and mammon. The bride has **UNDIVIDED** affection for the Bridegroom. When Asaph had looked around, he became discontented: but, when he found pleasure in God alone, circumstances were only God’s messengers, and he could rejoice, as Habakkuk, even if the fig tree did not blossom. May it be ours to have a like peace and joy, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”
Rev. 12. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

THE record of God’s faithfulness to His people is refreshing. He never gave them a false hope. And He is the Same to-day. The absence of open persecution often gives us a mistaken lull. The world is not pleased with the principles of Christ, but it thinks that the children of God do not really believe and carry them out. Hence there is more “popularity” for believers, or at least more respite. But the real gospel of Christ is still unpopular, and we need to be concerned lest we like a more comfortable time at the expense of truth. O that we may glorify our Heavenly Father by an overcoming faith, and holy stability in the Holy Spirit’s enabling.

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“Should Such a Man as I Flee ?”

Nehemiah 6. 11.

NEHEMIAH’S definiteness is refreshing. We see it in dealing with others in chapter 5. 11 and 13. 8. And we find here also his godly concern not to dishonour the Name of his God. Could he not trust God implicitly ? Had not God always proved faithful before ? We call to mind the bold determination of Ezra, “I was **ASHAMED** to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way” (Ezra 8. 22). Why “ashamed” ? “Because we had spoken unto the king saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.” And,

with the same attitude, Nehemiah would not scheme for himself.

This principle is deeply important. If we ask God to turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness we must beware lest we instruct Hushai to defeat for us that counsel. **OUR TRUST IN GOD MUST BE MANIFEST.** It is so easy to regard our actions as reasonable prudence when they are actually unbelief. Nehemiah learnt afterwards there was a plan to make him afraid. Nor did he regard such fear lightly. "Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, **AND SIN**" (Neh. 6. 13). Planning for oneself is sin.

How many dear children of God hinder the testimony of faith by doing that which at least looks like laying up for themselves treasures on earth. How, many by methods of insurance etc., suggest that they are belonging to this world, and that faith is somewhat limited in its scope. "Should such a man as I flee?" is a message of deep importance. If believers have humbly emphasized faith (not merely urged others to faith) they should seek to live up to this **THROUGH-OUT.** Faith **WITHOUT A STRAIN** would be exceptional.

And when persecution breaks out these words will have another application. Many of us are naturally shrinking. We do not choose danger. But for grace, it may be, some would be cowards rather than marked by bravado. And it is in such a case that the precious word rings out, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be **COWARDLY**" (John 14. 27). **GOD DELIGHTS TO BE TRUSTED.** He is still looking after His people. "Fleeing" is sometimes **APPOINTED** in days of persecution (Matt. 10. 23), but everything must be chosen in God's sight, and linked with prayer, and the **AUTHORITY OF HIS WORD.** It is not for us to plan for ourselves. Obedience is enough: God will see to the rest. The Holy Spirit still indwells. God never raises hopes falsely. It is blessed to know Him a little, and to long to know Him more.

The Danger of Mixture.

IN 1 Chronicles 22 we have David's whole-hearted preparation for the Lord's house, and chapter 29 emphasizes the same. We rejoice in this, and in his earnest desire for his son. And Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 1 shows his longing also. But we reach the word "horses" in verse 16, and the business arrangements of horses and chariots, **BEFORE** we arrive at 2 Chronicles 2. 1. And so we feel concerned.

Micah 1. 13 comes to our mind in the light of Deuteronomy 17. 16, and 2 Chronicles 9. 25 pains us. There is always a peril in what men call "success." Solomon mingled commerce with God's house. Babylon was the centre for commerce, and God's Jerusalem in the future shall be a holy contrast (Zech. 14. 21). We remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (John 2. 16). But the words of Holy Scripture not only concern the past. They are God's message for us to-day. We

are in peril if we have "mixtures." The ephah of Zechariah 5 shows the tendency of Christendom. Let nothing commercial be brought into God's work, and let not His people seek earthly success, or to be like the children of this age (Luke 16. 8). Some may think they have excluded commerce if they reject bazaars etc., but Satan's plans are **FAR** more subtle. O that worship may be our attitude, a holy contrast with the spirit of this age. Judas could speak of the poor, yet commercially. Worship was devoted to Christ. The **PRINCIPLE** of the alabaster box for Him is deeply important.

"He Looked for the City Which Hath the Foundations."

Hebrews 11. 10.

ABRAMHAM was not a visionary, but he had the vision of faith. He believed God (Gal. 3. 6). Unlike Cain before the flood and Nimrod after, he built no city—"only altars." He thought more of worship than earth's greatness. But, instead of building a city, he looked for one, "whose Builder and Maker is God." If there is any verse as to which we regret the omission of the article in our valued Authorized Version, it is this. "Not "A city" but "THE city" not "foundations" but "THE foundations." And "he kept on looking" or "expecting," Faith is heartily hopeful: and faith **CONTINUES**, and amid the strain, it does not become weary. And the patriarch's faith shall not be disappointed, nor shall ours, if we are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. 3. 9).

It was on these lines that God's beloved servant who wrote "Hebrews" was inspired to encourage those who had come to the Lord Jesus without the camp, and yet hesitated. They had need of patience (Heb. 10. 36). Like the old time saints of God they had opportunity to have returned (Heb. 11. 15). But such refused the opportunity, and should not God's dear people to-day continue looking upward? Is not a man of faith one who expects a trial—and victory?

Nor is this the only passage that tells of the city. Verse 16 adds, "He hath prepared for them a city" (cf. 1 Cor. 2. 9). And in Philippians 3. 20 we are reminded that our **CITIZENSHIP** is in heaven, and in Ephesians 2. 19 we read of "**FELLOW-CITIZENS** with the saints."* Yes, there is a blessed Hope and God is worthy of all confidence. And strikingly the words "fair" and "proper" used of Moses in Acts 7, 20, Hebrews 11. 23, alike render another word for a town or city. Truly Moses also belongs to the city, and Revelation 21 describes with wondrous details. The child of God need never be ashamed of faith. He has a glorious reality, and God is Faithful.

It is natural to propose faith for others, but it is spiritual to have godly faith oneself.

* Cf. manuscripts in Hebrews 8. 11.

Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm. Verse by Verse.

33. When SELF teaches, we misuse: when a fellow creature teaches, we forget: when God teaches, we keep.
34. God gives discernment in answer to prayer (1 Kings 3. 9, 10).
35. "Delight," yet we need God's power to carry it out.
36. A covetous heart and God's testimonies never agree (2Pet. 2. 14b).
37. 'Tis not enough to have the eyes turned: quickening in God's way must fill every vacuum.
38. Thy Word, Thy servant, Thy fear--united.
39. The reproach we fear most is seen in 1 Timothy 3. 7.
40. My longing is not enough: His quickening causes it to bring forth fruit. Never be satisfied with desire.
41. Thy mercies, Thy salvation, Thy Word my riches.
42. Without God's mercies, reproach would silence (see Rev. 12. 11).
43. I deserve to be silenced: I look for an opened mouth: such is grace.
44. Continuously NOW: for ever IN THE FUTURE.
45. The freedom of following God's will: there is none other.
46. "Verse twice 23" shows the one spoken against becomes a speaker, with contrasted words, the fruit of meditation.
47. Love is not a temporary emotion.
48. Godly HANDS never hinder meditation.
49. If I created hope, I might despair; but "Thou hast caused."
50. I have comfort in, not instead of, affliction.
51. Satan tries to discourage away from God's Words.
52. Despondency is through forgetting God (Psalm 77).
53. Alarm for persecutors, instead of oneself, is a remedy for fear.
54. Many set promises to music, but the pilgrim-psalmist set statutes.
55. The night may shut out earthly light, but not the remembrance of Him Who is the Light.
56. "This" is a big word: you cannot know what the psalmist had unless you COME NEAR TO SEE.
57. "My Portion": then do I want earth's other things (Mark 4. 19)?
58. The Lord's "face" (marg:) is precious, if we know the light of His countenance (Ps. 89. 15). NOTHING ELSE will suffice.
59. MY ways left, THY testimonies instead.
60. Love is prompt: both positive and negative, to drive out all excuses.
61. They could not rob me of my richest riches.
62. Midnight cannot hinder pilgrims' praise (Acts 16. 25).
63. Friendship on the line of God's will is precious (John 15. 14).
64. "Thy mercy" encourages prayer for more.

The Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah and Benjamin at Jerusalem (Jos. 15. 63, Judg. 1. 21): the separation was not complete, and we see the bitter results. Mixture is more perilous than we think. Judges 1. 20 gives a holy contrast, because of faith.

Some Notes as to Parents.

CHILDREN should be subject in the home (Titus 1. 6). And when they grow up there should still be the deepest respect as the book of Proverbs shows. Respect for the NEEDS of a parent is emphasized by Christ in Mark 7. 9, 10, but refusal to be held back from God's service even on account of parents is deeply important (Luke 9. 61, 62: 14. 26*: 18. 29). There is NOTHING onesided in the teaching of Christ.

Matthew 19. 5 is clear, as to the new responsibilities of a married believer. Christ must always be first (Luke 14. 26) and His words, and Matt. 19 is not against other Scriptures as to a parent. That is a human misinterpretation. The leaving of father AND mother is noteworthy: if only ONE parent is living, and in a "widowed" condition, there are definite claims. The Lord Jesus seems to illustrate this principle of responsibility in John 19. 26, 27. 1 Timothy 5 uses the FEMININE: the mother or grandmother, ‡ being regarded as the "weaker" (cf. 1 Pet. 3. 7), would need special care. But Timothy was not hindered from the Lord's work through Lois or Eunice, if they were still living. We do not know, but it is interesting to see the suggestion. Thus the Holy Spirit shows a godly balance. May it be ours in His gracious enabling.

"And He Smote Thrice and Stayed."

2 Kings 13. 18.

THE failure of Joash is often ours. We "stay," we are not enthusiastic enough for God's glory. We lack expectation. We become weary. The earlier verses intensify the lesson. In verse 15 we read "Take bow and arrows." "And he took unto him bow and arrows." Then in verse 16 there is the same implicit obedience, and while Elisha's hands are upon the king's hands there is encouragement. The obedience continues in verse 17. "Open." "And he opened." "Shoot." "And he shot." § Then the words sound forth, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria." GOD INTENDED TO WORK. Then we read, "Till thou have consumed them." It is evident that in the EXPERIENCE of the king, the SUBSEQUENT failure meant LOSS of a blessing that was, as it were, "his" at first. Listen to verse 19 "Then hadst thou smitten Syria TILL THOU HADST CONSUMED IT: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria BUT THRICE." The message is deeply important. "If ye have faith and doubt not" (Matt. 21. 21). Subsequent doubt can undo more than we think. It is true that God's truthfulness can never be undone, and thus the words of 1 Kings 13. 17. "IN APHEK" make clear that He could still keep His Word, and

* As he hates his own life, not neglecting the needs, but refusing to recognize the wishes of the flesh. This verse implies that ALL have a sinful self.

‡ "Nephews" are rather, "grandchildren (or great grandchildren)." How appropriately written to Timothy (2 Tim. 1. 5).

§ Numbers 20. 9 comes to mind: obedience up to a point.

that He, foreknowing the king's failure, had given this limitation. But it is equally clear that such a limitation was not unveiled TILL the king failed, and in HIS EXPERIENCE the blessing was forfeited. O for grace to continue in faith. NEVER STOP PRAYING UNBIDDEN. Never become weary in well-doing. God may seem to delay, but He lovingly urges us thereby to more faith. "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times." "ASK, and it shall be given you; SEEK, and ye shall find, KNOCK, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7. 7). "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4. 2).

PRAYER.

WHEN we look at 1 Kings 8 we must realize the one great remedy which God puts before us, and that remedy is PRAYER. If there were pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, caterpillar—Israel were to betake themselves to PRAYER. If they were besieged or in captivity, their way of deliverance was VIA prayer. Alas, we have become too materialistic to-day. We rightly cry out in horror when would-be scientists exclude God from creation and nature, but have not we excluded Him largely from our daily life? If anything goes wrong we are more concerned about the "NATURAL" reasons for it, than as to God's teaching thereby. Israel might have said, "Pestilence and mildew must be fought by scientific agriculture," but then they would soon have forgotten that pestilence and mildew were not self-active. They were and are PERMITTED BY GOD. Natural laws are defied to-day, but GOD is the One Who appoints and controls them. It may be said that we cannot suspend natural laws. But THAT is not the question. God can! More often He seems to bring a further law, of which we may be ignorant, to operate, but thereby the EFFECT to us is the suspension of that which is expected. This human tendency to exclude God nullifies prayer. We talk about expecting to be ill for so many days, predicting as if we knew, and assuming an illness must take what we call "its course." Can we wonder if according to our unbelief it is unto us? I am amazed that, with the vast power in prayer entrusted to believers, we all, (the writer included), become so natural, when we ought to be supernatural. Prayer is a mighty dynamic. The Lord Jesus refers to faith in a way that means SOMETHING (e.g. Mark 11. 22-24): we are apt to whittle away the words till they mean next to nothing. The sad assumption of presumption, which has often tried to bring FAITH INTO THE SPHERE OF THE FLESH, and to argue that SELF CAN HAVE ITS WISHES, in no way undoes the true power of the Divine words. One error does not excuse another. If some have made out prayer to be a PERSONAL mightiness, and thus dishonoured God, are we to deny its mightiness when DEPENDENT on God? Our troubles we oftentimes take as a matter of course, instead of SEEKING TO GOD. In like manner, there is no value in omitting physicians in illness:

THAT is not faith. The avoidance of a doctor is no proof of confidence in God. Unless there is a definite SEEKING TO THE LORD in this and every other matter (2 Chron. 16. 12), there is no difference between faith in self and faith in a hundred drugs. The vital matter is seeking to God. He delights to be enquired of (Ezek. 36. 37).

Have You the Token?

A Passover Question that is never out of Date.

(If the Lord will, to be used to His glory as a leaflet among Israel).

I WANT a token for good (Ps. 86. 17). Like Rahab, I need a true token (Jos. 2. 12). God gave to Noah a token in the cloud—a token that He would not destroy the earth by water (Gen. 9. 13). He gave to Israel a token that He would not slay their firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 12. 13). But I want a token better than Israel's lamb with its scarlet blood, and better than Rahab's scarlet cord,—a token of ETERNAL life by the death of a far Greater Sacrifice. And I HAVE that token:—have you?

Tell me, why did God clothe Adam and Eve with coats of SKIN, and receive Abel with the SACRIFICE and reject Cain without? Why did the patriarchs build ALTARS, and why did the nine plagues fail to release Israel till the tenth was linked with Passover BLOOD? Why did the high priest necessarily take in the BLOOD of a sacrifice, without which all the day of atonement would have been vain? Why did God promise One and One Only Who would bear the sin of many? If you know Who He is, you know the TRUE TOKEN.

The Lord saw the blood, and paused over (פָּסַח) the doors of the Israelites. If you have NO token, if you have NO protection, what will you do in the day of His righteous judgment? Beautiful indeed, are the words, "The blood shall be to you for a token." Nothing else helped to make the token. Nothing would do instead. The sacrifice was the only safety, and so is it now!

A sinner of the Gentiles, by earthly birth, saved by God's grace, I can hardly understand how Israel read the Hebrew Scriptures, and find everything centred around a sacrifice, and find only a uniquely Righteous One often prophesied, and yet are content not to KNOW the sacrifice, not to KNOW the Righteous One. Yet I can understand alas, for we are all our own enemies till our eyes are opened to see ourselves as LOST, and to see majesty in Him Whom we then, as heart-broken sinners, begin to DESIRE (Isa. 53. 2). Ah, there is a wondrous majesty in the Lord Jesus Christ. Men deny the Mighty God (Isa. 9. 5, 6) when they deny Him. But if you come to Him to-day, you will not be the first to find He is Altogether Lovely and your ONLY hope.

A lost soul will be excluded from the praises of heaven, but the Lord's redeemed will rejoice to praise Him for ever.

NOT a Discrepancy.

"And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him . . . and slew Rezin." 2 Kings 16. 9.

"Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not . . . for Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord . . . and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not." 2 Chron. 28. 20, 21.

AHAZ is a saddening character in history. Not very old when he died, he had crowded so much sin into his early years. His attitude to the king of Assyria shows the climax distress of one who does not know a Divine Refuge. He sends the pitiful message, "I am thy servant and thy son." The order of the words and the attitude betoken wretchedness: how blessed the contrast for those whom God has called His sons, and who are **SECONDLY** servants on this account (cf. Mal. 3. 17, Phil. 2. 22). But is there not a difference between the two records in Kings and Chronicles? Surely not, if carefully examined. Cursory reading is full of difficulties. In Chronicles we have a twofold stress on the bitter word "not"—he strengthened him **NOT**, he helped him **NOT**. May there not be a reference to **TWO** journeys of Tilgath-pilneser, the former preceding the message, "I am thy servant," these very words thereby alluding to a previous subjection? If so, this **MIGHT** illustrate the fact that "he distressed him" is only mentioned in the first verse in Chronicles. But as we have not full particulars, is there any difficulty if both verses concern the one journey? Would not the words "for Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord" * **EXPLAIN** "distressed him"? And would not the other thought be that though the king of Assyria "killed Rezin" he won the victory over Syria for **HIS OWN** interests, and did not really help Ahaz? The practical meaning of this is deeply important. We may, by **OUR** self-planning, get what we ask and propose, but nothing real and solid, no blessing for ourselves. Our purpose seems awhile gained, yet there is nothing but vanity in the fruit. †

It is easier to offer to have faith than to experience faith when the trials press heavily. But they never press too heavily, and real faith is proved then. It may be well to hold back any words which, like Peter's, say what we **WOULD** do, and to know the privilege of more words of humble dependence before God, that we may be prepared for emergencies in the sanctuary.

* Alas, that Hezekiah copied this sin once (2 Kings 18. 15).

† Cf. 2 Chron. 16. 1-9: an apparent temporary (but only partial) "advantage": afterwards "from henceforth thou shalt have wars."

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"The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Psalm 19. 9-10.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the enabling grace of God we again send forth these pages. Our privilege is a real one, for the object is His glory, and we long that, in answer to the prayers of many (2 Cor. 1. 11), there may be a consistent keeping to His will, and the provision of His food in due season. The glory of man is a poor aim; but the glory of God is an aim of which we would never be ashamed. Nor would we have this purpose only in a meeting or magazine. Far otherwise. Grace sanctifies the seemingly trivial things, and the background things of daily life. It is a joy to realize that God is interested in everything that concerns His people, and this little messenger is sent forth with the humble realization that He is a God at hand and a God afar off (Jer. 23 22), caring for our present needs, and arranging our eternal future. Such wonderful knowledge is too wonderful for our brains, but our hearts can worship, if we are "in Christ" and it should be our joy to feel the relationship of God to EVERYTHING that belongs to His people (Phil. 4. 6).

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The Rich Man and Lazarus.

With Thoughts on Christ's Truthfulness.

WE require the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of the Holy Spirit elsewhere in Scripture itself, before we dare to call this "a parable." Is not such a principle the only sound one? Has Christ here said, "Hear another parable," or has the Scripture declared "He spake another parable." or

is this part of a preceding parable, or does reverent comparison of Scripture with Scripture compel to such a conclusion? It may be that some beloved readers will think this attitude "hyper-critical," but is there not room for a little more **criticism of ourselves**, lest, inadvertently, we criticise Him? Our first thought should be to refuse to add to our Lord's words by **assuming** that the rich man and Lazarus are to be explained away as "a parable."

Will any reader object? On what ground? If the reason be sought out, it may be a humbling help to the objector. Permit loving frankness. The writer owns how easily he too is carried away by "usual" expressions, but do we not desire to keep to the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth? And is it not possible that the suggestion is based on the thought "**only a parable**," as if the descriptions were not true? It is deeply important to maintain the perfect truthfulness of the Lord Jesus. When we have His parables, on what are they based? Did not a sower go forth to sow? Could not an enemy sow tares among the wheat? Do not the birds of the air lodge in mustard tree branches? The parables of Christ are **built on facts** and possibilities, not myths—search and see. If Luke 16, 19-31 were a parable, would it not depend on **the fact of conscious punishment in the unseen world**? Or are there those who would suggest that He, Who was the Truth, accommodated Himself to His hearers, and adopted Jewish fables as the ground of His utterances? To mention such a thought is to condemn it. There is no Scriptural escape from the **truthfulness** of Luke 16.

Flippant, alas, are the objections of some. They declare that the rich man is simply condemned for his riches, and the poor man (mistranslated "beggar"—Luke 16, 20 gives no indication of repeated laying at the rich man's gate, contrast verse 19 and Acts 3, 2—The Holy Spirit does not approve the profession of a beggar),—the poor man blessed because of his poverty. There is not a single statement to support this. O for more prayer and less superficial reading. The further inference that every poor man is blest is a wild inference from **one case**. We find no "therefore" in verse 25, but a definite statement of facts in two selected solemn histories. Verse 14 (with 19) plainly indicates that the rich man had been covetous, and verse 29 indicates that Lazarus had received the words of Scripture which the proud ever refused. There were evidences of a contrasted attitude; and, dear reader, to whom are you and I like? Let us never read for merely verbal explanation; we want God's searching truth within. Where does the Lord Jesus Christ use "hell" to mean something else? The suggestion that we have such a condition in **this** life is unwarrantable. If the passage is made into a parable of the setting aside of Israel, on what is it based? On a reality or a myth? If the reader says the latter, his attitude to Christ is wickedness. If the former,

there **is** a real hell, with a real consciousness. Undoubtedly the after-death condition of Lazarus has a parallel with God's gracious salvation of the "unlikely" to-day, and thus the Lord Jesus thereby referred to the salvation of despised Gentiles. But He taught this when He spoke to Zacchæus. He forgave the woman that was a sinner. They became types, or rather samples of others saved by the same grace, but did not thereby become mythical. Sarah and Hagar are allegorized in Galatians 4 to set forth the two covenants, and God arranged history long before with this purpose, but they did not cease to be real persons on this account. Nor is Paul's salvation "only a parable" because he was a type or pattern of those who will believe from Israel when they, too, look on Him Whom they pierced (1 Tim. 1, 16.). One God is controlling all, hence the many **parallels**. The unfounded inference of an evolutionist that likeness implies descent is a parallel sin with the misuse of Luke 16. The supremacy of God, causing parallels, is the wondrous key to all and we would worship.

But it has been objected that the words of this passage cannot be taken literally. "Cannot" is a dangerous word in the mouth of finite man. The Jew says there "cannot" be the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus, and the Mohammedan that He "cannot" have been allowed to die for sinners. We praise God that our eyes have been opened in these matters. Let us be very humble as to every human "cannot." Is there a single impossibility in the recorded daily life of the rich man? Is there any impossibility in angels carrying Lazarus, or in the burial of the one who forgot God? But some will say, "What about Abraham's bosom?" The objection that there would not be room for all is impertinent. The passage only states that one was seen there; it does not hint even a second. To declare that Lazarus always remained in that position is assumption. Is John 13, 23 a fact or not? "There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples." If a disciple could thus awhile lean on the bosom of the Lord of glory when He became Man, I find no difficulty in Abraham welcoming thus; and, if any say "figuratively," will they next dare to deny the personality of God the Father and His beloved Son, because we read "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1, 18.)? Does not Luke 16 in an earlier verse (9) imply that loving believers will be personally welcomed in the unseen world by other conscious individuals?

Was it impossible that the rich man should see Lazarus? On what Scriptural ground? Hades is said in Numbers 16, 30 ("Sheol") to be within the earth, and the old time saints are not said to have gone up to heaven. Hence Christ went to Sheol (Psalm 16, 10) which then evidently possessed **two parts**, for His bearing of the **curse** was "finished." When He was raised, He transferred His people (Hebrews 2, 15—Greek), so that the spirits of just men are now brought to the goal in

heavenly places Heb. 12. 23). "David **ascended not** into the heavens" is the true translation of Acts 2. 34. but **is** he not now among the heavenly company of Psalm 50. 4? So accurate is Scripture throughout. We see that Revelation 1. 18 with 6. 8 appears to link Hades with judgment only in the present dispensation. But Luke 16 was **before** Christ's resurrection, hence the words are entirely appropriate.

We are not told if the visibility was general, or even continued; we do not read that the rich man saw more than Abraham and Lazarus: God can grant exceptional appearances (1 Samuel 28. 14). It is enough to accept what Christ has said. Why add to His words? But it is clear from Luke 16. 26 that Abraham implies consciousness in both conditions, and this is vital.

The objection that a tongue only belongs to the body is without a Scriptural basis. The Holy Spirit does not assert that the personality is a shapeless thing, nor can we forget the words of the Lord Jesus "Be not anxious for your **soul**, what ye shall eat" (Matthew 6. 25, cf. Isa. 29. 8). Human reasoning is often quicker to infer than to learn, but inferences without true knowledge can only mislead. The evolutionist's theory is built upon this deadly mistake.

Verse 25 is deeply solemn. The unnamed rich man, (how appropriate is this when we acknowledge his personality), had received his good things; they were only earthly goods. **No more** good remained for him; there is no hint of deliverance or change (cf. verse 26). Lazarus, on the other hand, had now reached his goal. His trials and pains were past, and he was comforted. It is worthy of notice that as in Matthew 25 (41. 46) Christ joins the unveiling of everlasting fire with "Ye did it not unto one of the least of these My brethren" so is it here. Crimes of murder and open roguery are not the only sins dealt with at God's throne. The absence of love is more serious than we think, and yet how little real love we all have. The words of Christ are ever practical for us.

The proposal to send to others (27) is linked with no confession of personal sin. God's glory is not implied. The wish to escape punishment is natural, and the desire that others may escape is not sufficient proof of love to God. The suggestion that something beyond God's word of truth is needed is at once negatived by Abraham (31). And thus our hearts learn that we dare not use human methods to gain converts. It is ours to keep to the Scriptures. Spiritism still proposes one from the dead (30), and Atheists still ask "Who has come back?"—but a fuller evidence **has** been given, and rejected! Christ Himself has been raised from the dead (31), but the joint witness of the law and the prophets and His finished work is still unheeded. God has no alternative hope; His last word in grace, as it were, has been uttered, and will not His next word be in judgment, as Psalm 50 shows? The rich man spoke of repentance in view

of a place of torment, but he did not manifest repentance in view of sin against God. Abraham seems to have showed the emptiness of such repentance, by using the words "Neither will they be persuaded." Unless there is faith's conviction the change of attitude is like Israel's weeping in Numbers 14. 1.

"This place of torment." The one who was there knew it was "a place." Ah, dear reader, shall we dare to explain away the words? Do any acknowledge the Name of Christ, and yet explain away His words? Are dispensational changes to be read into this passage, as if they involve a torment without escape? And we repeat, is the basis of Christ's solemn testimony to be regarded as a Jewish fable, concerning which we have inspired warning in Titus 1. 14? Shall we thus misuse the words of the Holy Spirit and encourage sinners to trifle on the brink of eternity? The earlier references to putting away a wife (Luke 16. 18) in the light of Romans 7, makes clear that the sinner bound by law cannot escape except by death. The only precious deliverance is by the death of the Lord Jesus (Romans 7. 4). The scarlet thread is throughout the Gospels. Unbroken law (Luke 16. 17), acknowledges no other salvation but that which is by Christ's precious blood. The peril of the sinner is here set forth in definite language, and the One over Whose lips grace was poured is the Speaker, and if we say, "Peace, peace, when there is no Peace" we make the heart of the righteous sad (Ezek. 13. 22), and take sides with Satan and his wicked promise, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3. 4), instead of acknowledging the Lord Jesus and His holy words (John 14. 23). The issue is a solemn one. May no believing soul hesitate a moment.

"Under the Earth."

THE epistles through God's servant Paul to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, were evidently written at the same time—precious testimonies from a prison as to the joy of the Lord. The link of various thoughts is helpful, showing how the writer was feeding on the truth. Complete inspiration does **not** veil the **experience** of the men God condescended to use.

In Ephesians 1. 10 we read: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might **gather together (head up)** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him." We notice at once that "under the earth" is not mentioned here.* So is it with Colossians 1. 20 (also verse 16):—"And having made peace through the blood

* Verses 22 and 23, indicate a twofold position: (a) Union—Head over all things to the church which is His body; (b) Submission—"under His feet"; this is recognition of authority **without relationship**.

of His cross, by Him to **reconcile** all things unto Himself, by Him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Nothing more is added except the "and you" as in Ephesians 2. 1. Thus language is the same for gathering together and reconciling, the only change being the order—"earth" first in Colossians, where "Christ in you," is emphasized. But in Philippians 2. 10, 11, we read "That at (in) the Name of Jesus every knee should **bow**, of things in heaven, and things in earth, **and things under the earth**, and that every tongue should **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here there is nothing of reconciliation or heading up, and accordingly "things under the earth" are included. These too must bow (cf. Isa. 45. 23, also 14, Rom. 14. 11). We recall the words "Surely the wrath of men shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain" (Ps. 76. 10), or, more literally and strikingly, "Wilt Thou gird on Thyself"—being compelled to glorify God. We recollect "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger" (Isa. 10. 5) and "Nebuchadnezzar My servant" (Jer. 25. 9), and the remarkable words "to do His will" in Revelation 17. 17. All must confess His name, even as we read all shall know that He is the Lord (Ezek. 38. 23, cf. 12. 21, 28. 22, etc., etc.). There is no relationship asserted in Philippians 2. where "under the earth" is added. Compare Revelation 3. 9, where Christ is exalted in the midst of His people.

Ephesians 3. 15 may be noticed, connecting redemption with heaven and earth, but not with "under the earth." There is a link between Revelation 5. 13 and 7. 10. The Holy Spirit has placed the earlier verse **before** the opening of the seals, to show that it cannot mean universal reconciliation. Anticipatory acknowledgment, by representatives of all beings, alone seems to take the words of God **as they stand**. But observe, that where "Under the earth" is included, we only read "Unto Him That sitteth on the throne." Not a word of relationship. In 7. 10, "To **our God** Which sitteth upon the throne." So in 5. 9, 10 "Our God" and in 7. 12 "unto our God" (cf. 19. 1). Why is this omitted from 5. 13? Is there not a reason?

It is beside the mark to suggest that the words of relationship are not always found, even when godly praise is mentioned. If for any reason they seem to be omitted (e.g. 5. 12), are not the same beings said elsewhere to utter them 7. 11, 12? But this is **not** the case with "things under the earth."

The **knee and mouth** are before us in Philippians 2—these are external. And lest the word "confess" should be urged as

‡ This is deeply important as a parallel. The expression "They shall **know** that I am the Lord" is remarkably repeated in Ezekiel—similar expressions occur over 70 times,—and surely all can see the difference between 30. 26 and 39. 23, or between 11. 10 and 20. 20. "The Lord **your God**" adds blessed relationship, but knowledge without this will include enemies also.

emphatic to denote heart-devotion, the Holy Spirit has used it in Romans 14. 11, as a quotation from Isaiah 45. In both passages there is **no statement** of redemption or relationship. Yet in **both contexts** redemption is asserted, but **not** co-extensive with the "every knee." A prayerful study of Isaiah 45 is rich with blessing. In verse 22 the call of grace and salvation, in 23 the assertion that every knee shall bow. Then in 24 we have first redemption, and next the contrasted laying low of those against the Lord. After this in 25 relationship by redemption once more, and next in chapter 46, the bringing down of the idols. Thus there is a continued alternative, and where the tongue confesses there is no statement of universal heart-confession. Hence Philippians 2 can **include** those who, in heaven, praise heartily, but it is **not** limited to them. The all-embracing words show Christ exalted everywhere, amidst His people and His foes. We may repeat the words, "The wrath of men shall **praise** Thee." How many would say "Praise proves love," but here the Holy Spirit shows that this is a wrong inference. The Divinely demanded confession of Christ's glory is before us. Psalm 18. 43-45 may illustrate note margin), and the words of evil spirits in the days when He walked this earth give an anticipation Mark 1. 24, 34. 8, 30). He would not allow this confession before the time Mark 4. 41.

To sum up: God has worded everything with perfect appropriateness. All without exception must acknowledge Christ, but all are not said to love Him. Where the word "reconciliation" is included, the universal terms are omitted; where they are included "reconciliation" is omitted. Nor can any other passage be found which sets forth that those "under the earth" will be made nigh. The higher critic and the teacher of universal reconciliation are alike in one point, namely, in drawing **hasty inferences**. We feel our own need to be quiet before God, and earnestly would we urge upon believers, and upon ourselves also, more of this reverent quietness. Human opinions must not weigh. We must not bring our preconceived thoughts. Let us humbly hear what God has to say. This is vital, and we would affectionately plead with dear children of God in any way affected by the erroneous doctrine to test **its foundations**. They are not in the Holy Scriptures. Not only is the wrath of God a reality, but eternal separation from Him is a fact. Let our hearts be stirred to exalt the Name of the Lord Jesus in telling poor guilty sinners of His work in the way He has graciously appointed, and in seeking grace to live unto His praise.

If the Lord will, a further article will be written showing that "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive" has nothing of universal reconciliation, if its exact words and context are prayerfully noticed. And typewritten notes on "The Spirits in Prison" are available. May everything be written and sent forth with a desire for God's glory, and with loving frankness.

It is easier to read the Scriptures carelessly than we realize.

Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm—Verse by Verse.—(Continued).

65. God's words and works agree, men's often differ.
66. A believer can learn; unbelief paralyzes the mind.
67. Unhumbled hearts love their own way; afflictions are not to destroy us, but our sins.
68. God's goodness is active, hence the prayer of expectant faith.
69. There is no room for worry when obedience fills the heart.
70. Indulgence is the reverse of love to God's law.
71. When the **object** of affliction becomes the **result** too, it is good "for me."
72. Again a personal "unto me"; money is poor compared with God's truth with His own accent ("Thy mouth").
73. Many demand from their Creator: the psalmist's inference was his "right" to be commanded.
74. Like hearts rejoice together (Acts 4. 23).
75. Complaints never praise, and praise never complains.
76. Comfort apart from God, proves uncomfortable.
77. Legalism and delight in God's law are quite different.
78. Godly meditation does not depend on circumstances.
79. It is good to come together if we are together.
80. Every sin (because it is sin) makes a disciple ashamed.
81. Fervency feels the strain, but hope is beyond the strain.
82. Mine eyes almost speak: all the being is united in prayer.
83. A shrivelled skin-bottle pictures physical weakness, but the Lord will yet fill it.
84. Each day has its burdens, but the one Lord remains.
85. The humble dig for a house on God's Rock (Luke 6. 48).
86. I would not wrong them, nor can I right myself, but I can pray.
87. "Almost" tells of God's "hitherto" (Job 38. 11).
88. Quickened ones hear and obey God's voice.
89. The heavenly Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10. 21), from which we have our precious Bible, is not like the books of man: faith rests firmly on His fixed faithfulness.
90. Generations pass away, God and His truth remain.
91. Things abide only as He appoints; He depends on nothing: everything depends on Him.
92. Afflictions crush bare duty but feed delight.
93. **Precepts** are quickening, not killing, to believers.
94. Possession, Petitions, Pursuit of God's Precepts.
95. Men say "Outwit them"; faith calmly considers God's words.
96. Perfectionist theories **narrow** God's commands.

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Jesus Christ was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Corinthians 1, 19, 20.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN, in the changeless lovingkindness of our God, we send forth a little testimony for Him. Every spiritual blessing is in Christ (Eph. 1. 3.) How beautifully the apostle wrote, in the Holy Spirit, "Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption." (1. Cor. 1-30.)

Every blessing is in Him. How wondrous to be quickened and brought, by grace, to be in Him, and to know Him. Well may we tell forth something of His glories and exalt Him. These pages are sent forth with that object. Nothing else can take its place, and anything that tries to take its place, however attractive, is sin. The Holy Spirit always exalts Christ.

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"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—1 Corinthians 15. 22.

THIS precious verse is often made a stronghold of universalism,—with how little reason, a prayerful study of its words, and the context, will indicate. Inasmuch as errors often depend on hurried reading and hurried inference, it is deeply important that believing readers should seek the mind of the Lord, with a quiet willingness for His will.

It is possible that some who, by grace, hold the truth, are almost **afraid** of such a verse. This is a mistake. A half-hidden wish that certain words were not in the Scripture is unwittingly sinful. If we do not understand any portion, is it

not rather our privilege to thank God for it, and to own our ignorance, and ask Him, if it be His will, to make it clear to us? "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way" (Psalm 25. 9).

We can hardly adopt the suggestion that this verse only refers to the fact of physical resurrection, implying that but for the work of Christ this would not have taken place, men remaining disembodied in judgment for ever. Is there Scriptural authority to connect the resurrection of judgment with the work of Christ? Is it not rather linked with God's righteous retribution as to sins done in the body, and His authority? The execution of judgment in that resurrection is linked with Christ's glory as the Obedient One (John 5. 27). That is quite a different point.

But, not only so, the context in 1 Corinthians 15 is not dealing with the resurrection of men as men, but only with the resurrection of believers in blessedness. If this be doubted, let the chapter be read. "The resurrection of the dead" is described in verses 42-44. It is in incorruption, glory and power. Can any one think that these words refer to the resurrection of judgment (John 5. 29)? The Scriptures distinguish the resurrection of the just (Luke 14. 14) and of the unjust (Acts 24. 15), and Matthew 10. 28 is clear as to hell (Gehenna) for **soul and body**. A resurrection linked with such a goal cannot be in glory. Therefore the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15. 42 is only of the just, but the words are as wide as verse 22—"the dead." Verse 29 illustrates the same point, if rightly understood. Those "baptized for the dead" are the new believers, recently saved, taking the place of the dead, i.e., of the believers who have died, oftentimes through the strain of persecution. The filling up of the ranks concerns children of God only.* It is clear that the "we" of verse 49 and the "we all" of 51 refer to those who are saved. And this gives force to 52—"the dead," evidently the Lord's people, but the limitation is explained in the **context**.

Why then should we seek any other interpretation of verse 22? Thus we come to see that the usual suggestion of two distinct "all's" is not in the passage. Yet instead of following the universalistic theory that all without exception are in Adam, and therefore all such will be in Christ, we find that the first "all" is not universalistic. The context indicates if "all" means without exception or without distinction, or the sum total of those before us. No prayerful Bible student has any difficulty with such passages as Matthew 3. 5, 4. 24. It is remarkable, too, that the context here **specially warns** us against making "all" universalistic against other Scriptures (1 Cor. 15. 27). One exception, quite as much as a million, proves that a limitation is not twisting the word. This is the Holy Spirit's instruction beyond human theories. If the Holy

* A leaflet on this subject gladly sent.

Spirit when He speaks of the **dead** in 1 Corinthians 15 means dead believers, and when He speaks of resurrection indicates that which is in glory, why not accept the same interpretation throughout? Through a Man came "the resurrection of the dead" **of which the context speaks**. Viewed in Adam all who are now saved die, their body is not yet enjoying redemption (Rom. 8. 23). The present tense is contrasted with the future "shall be made alive." Observe verse 31, "I die daily," and Romans 8. 9. By relation to Adam all children of God are awhile in this condition, i.e., "the image of the earthly" remaining. But there is, thanks be to God, another relation to Christ.

Helpfully verse 46 adds, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." Here again the Holy Spirit does not say "saved ones only," but the whole argument implies this. And the fulfilment of prophecy, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (54), at an emphasized certain time ("then"), cannot be said to include the rest of the dead, who live not till the thousand years are finished (Rev. 20. 5). Indeed, so definitely is this in the warp and woof of the passage that "this corruptible" and "this mortal" plainly allude to the bodies of humiliation of those **in Christ**. ‡

Hence as in Adam all those mentioned in the context die, so in Christ the same all shall be made alive. This use of the word "all" is paralleled in Romans 3. 23. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," can be applied to the unsaved, but that verse does not speak of such. It adds "Being justified freely." **Only those** in a state of justification are **mentioned** by the Holy Spirit as the "all" who sinned. Undoubtedly others were in the same condition, but they are not the subject dealt with by God here.

It will now be seen how definitely this fits the context, and thus we are graciously kept from altering the order of God's words, and saying the passage should read "All in Christ." We should never tamper with the order of the words of the Holy Spirit. "In Christ" is joined with the verb, and not primarily with the word "all." If those who, alas, misinterpret

‡ Observe in verses 54 and 55 the victory over death at the beginning of the Millennium. Verses 25 and 26 are evidently fulfilled later and thus seem to refer to Christ's millennial people, who will have earthly bodies. Death shall be last put out of working order. This seems the clearest hint as to the time of resurrection of those who love Him during the kingdom on earth. Death as His enemy is finally set aside—His enemy because against His own. But His **enemies** are under His feet; this plural, with Revelation 20. 14, 15, not only shows that death is not annihilated, but that it is made to work His **purpose** in the second death, for **those** who are not in the book of life. It cannot touch the redeemed. Things "under the earth" remain "without" (Rev. 22. 15). Compare the link "with the devil and his angels" for ungodly men in Matthew 25. 41. Yet all is over-ruled to God's glory. There can be no independent "enemy"; everything must be over-ruled.

the Scriptures, find that earnest believers alter God's arrangement, are they not encouraged in the errors which pain us? And the Name of the Lord seems to be dishonoured. Surely His honour is dear to us! His truth needs no human props or defences. Any appearance of dishonesty, however unwitting, should be humbly and earnestly judged. We all need to be bowed before God, for have we not all failed in this matter? And do we not cry unto our heavenly Father for His grace to-day, that we may be kept in the line of His will, when seeking to explain His words to another? So will His people please Him, and, walking in the Spirit, know more of His truth as they go onward in their pilgrim path.

Undervaluing a Type.

EVERY believer sorrowfully finds in himself cross-currents. Satan attempts to mislead in diverse ways. The attempt of Romanism to make baptism into birth, and into a cause of life, is quite parallel with the theory that the bread and the fruit of the wine were, and can be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. These errors show grievous sin. Birth and baptism are not Scripturally identified; they are quite distinct. Yet many quote John 3. 5 as if the two were identical, and have never thought apparently of their own groundless assumption that "born" means "baptized." So **thoughtless** is the unhumiliated heart. Moreover, baptism rather emphasises burial; a type of resurrection is the result, but the **baptism** itself lays stress on death. This is forgotten. And since none can deny that the word "buried" in Romans 6. 4 is typical, every theory that essentially refuses the typical interpretation of similar Scriptures, (claiming virtue in the rite), denies itself and stands convicted as inconsistent. More solemnly still as to inference, the assumption that baptism is itself a quickening from a state of guilt, blasphemes the Lord Jesus Who was baptized. The typical interpretation of passing through wrath alone fits the Scripture. In like manner, transubstantiation is a veiled attack on Christ. It argues that He presented His finished work to His people **before** He had finished it, and when His atonement by **blood** was **not** made, and **not** presented to God the Father. It thus attacks His sacrificial work and apparently implies union with Him **before** the Seed of corn fell into the ground and died (John 12. 24). The whole theory undermines salvation by His death.

We have no hesitation, therefore, in saying that Romanism not only undervalues the types but denies them, and by its figment of "priestly intention" makes **everything contingent on the will of a man**. How blessedly contrasted are John 1. 13 and James 1. 18.

The usual reaction from one sin is another. And do we not find some who bear the precious Name of Christ who carelessly assume these types are quite unnecessary, or who alter their appointment, and have never pondered what may, indeed, prove to their grief to be the sin of sprinkling, or of using leavened bread and fermented wine?

And not only so, those of us who may in mercy have been delivered from such errors, need to be bowed down before God, because of our failure also, in the spiritual realization of that which is graciously set forth. It is easy for us all, beloved friends, to **undervalue a type**, and to grieve the Holy Spirit. Let us thus think awhile of earthly part-parallels. A map of Palestine is not changed into Palestine, but it is meant to make Palestine real to us, and it has great value if we use it aright. The Scripture does lay much stress on the command and privilege of baptism. Nor did the Lord Jesus say unmeaningly, "This is My body." He intended to bring home to our hearts, **through the symbol**, His wondrous holiness and unspeakable love, in giving up Himself, and His appointment that His people should realize Himself. True this spiritual counterpart was not intended to be only a weekly experience. The symbol was to crystallize that which we should desire all the week, and which believers isolated from a Scriptural assembly are to seek from Himself, in His condescending love, rather than by broadening and conforming to arrangements which are not of Him. He can deal with a Patmos believer. The thought of some, "I must **obey** and partake of the Lord's supper, therefore I will partake **disobediently**," is a strange form of irreverence. But we have no wish to look down on others, we want God's dealing with our own hearts, that we may be exercised toward reverence. The ark when **trusted** was lost to the Philistines, but **God** exalted the types as soon as it was captured. The brazen serpent **misused** became Nehushtan, but it was precious when appointed by God. The revolt from ritual and ecclesiastical structures may lead to irreverence in a meeting. Freedom from forms may be turned into an indifferent posture in prayer. Handling a Bible carelessly is not a helpful token of love to its Author. And believers need to emphasize the great value of baptism, and of whatever the Lord has appointed. Not that the water is holy, with a mystic meaning, but His appointment is meant to be rich with teaching as to Himself, and to convey spiritual blessing on the simple path of loving obedience. And if children of God are "ignoring" this, they are losing and dishonouring Him, and we would lovingly stir up their hearts, and blame ourselves if we have neglected to encourage them,—for the glory of their Lord and ours is involved, and we would press forward with the holy object in view that they and we may receive damage by one another in nothing (2 Cor. 7. 9).

MIRACLES.

THE natural man is both credulous and incredulous. True faith involves a holy contrast with both attitudes. It simply depends on truth. The readiness with which errors are embraced reminds us that Satan is called the deceiver. Those who doubt revelation will at once accept a theory against revelation. In one breath they will condemn acceptance of what they cannot see, and in the next urge their own inferences, albeit they are against both sight and experience. There is a deep reason for this:—man is out of harmony with God, and thus his powers are all damaged. The mind is affected by the fall, but prides denies this.

Many ask us, "Where are miracles?" Do they think that infrequency makes a miracle? God's **constant** provision of everything in nature is not less His work because it is repeated. Repetition rather emphasizes the wondrous miraculous might of Him Who is never at a loss. There is no mere chance,—which men might almost dare to assume, if the occurrence were but once. The discovery of laws or principles of working, by a man whose faculties to discover are not his own forming, should cause worship, not pride. Alas, that it is not so. The world by wisdom still knows not God (1 Cor. 1. 21). How vain is the opinion that a law supersedes a Lawgiver—it reveals Him, and when that law not only appoints, but is carried out with miraculous precision,—it exalts Him.

Yet even many who bear the name of Christ seem half afraid of miracles. If they have been **born again**, how can they be so unwise? The new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17) is itself a glorious miracle. The wish to explain everything on natural lines may be part of the fear of man that bringeth a snare (Prov. 29. 25). Why should we be ashamed of God? Some would even say that laws of nature **cannot** be broken. We ask "Is God weaker than His work?" And again, "Does man know all the laws?" If God is pleased to over-rule some laws which we know, (or rather know in part), by another hidden law of His, why should we question Him? The laws did not make His will, but—His will made them, and we worship. "Who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" It is precious to realize that God is contrasted with man. How limited are they! Miracles are beyond man, but not beyond Him. Yea, everything is a miracle, or the result of one,—for man is nothing, and can do nothing of himself. Yet he would be wise, with the wisdom that is folly, but the beginning of true wisdom is the fear of the Lord. Happy are those who, redeemed by the blood of Christ, are brought to the privileges of a life of consistent faith in One Who is worthy of faith, and of consistent praise to One Who is worthy of praise.

Love.

LOVE is not only obedience to the will of God, though this is a precious manifestation of love. Nor is it confined to a fear of grieving Him, although it includes this. Nor can we describe it only as a feeling, although it is a feeling, and that which is without feeling is not love. It is not limited to expressions of affection, albeit love **is** expressive. But love goes beyond all these fruits which it produces, and combines purpose of heart, emotion, and activity, with a holy positive, and a holy negative, that God may be exalted, in a comprehensive devotedness to Himself that seeks no pride in its comprehensiveness. The Lord Jesus showed forth the beauty of love in the perfect life, and the Holy Spirit ever glorifies Him, and fixes the eye of believers on Him, that they may become more like Him Who redeemed them, and thus grow in grace well-pleasingly. Likeness to Christ is love, and lack of love is unlikeness to Him. True love never loves sin, but its hatred of sin is not a mental attitude, it is the driving out of evil by affection for God and His will. O that we may have love.

Shallow Thinking and Inaccurate Quoting.

A Plea for Reverence.

A large number of infidels have approached me with Genesis 4 in the Open Air. They have almost all, (I can remember no exception), misquoted the verse. This is strange, but a still stranger fact is that they make the **same** misquotation. You wish me to believe this is a mere coincidence? Accumulated evidence suggests something else. Are the questioners "thinkers" or only like to parrots? Alas, that they can trifle with God's words **without any serious thought at all**.

But one goes further. We grieve to say there are those who deny the eternal and conscious punishment which Scripture solemnly sets forth. Often they say that those who emphasize this repeat the devil's lie—"Ye shall not surely die." Do they think there is the slightest parallel between his vain **promise** and a holy **threatening** of eternal separation from God? If there is **not**, why do so many copy one another by bringing in such an argument? Can we acknowledge that such are as really thoughtful before God, as they should be?

And yet further, many beloved children of God refer to the Lord's Supper, and **persist** in speaking of the "bread and wine" though the Lord Jesus never used the word "wine," and the Holy Spirit likewise never applies it in the after record. The word "wine" is generic, and may in itself mean "fermented" or "unfermented." The words "fruit of the vine" are definite, and no Scriptural evidence has been found that they can mean

"fermented." Arguments upheld by tradition are a poor resting place; ferment involves a foreign substance, and is **not** the produce of the vine. Yet beloved children of God will repeat the same error—O for more reverent accuracy, to God's glory.

Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm—Verse by Verse.—(Continued).

97. Love loves to think; but meditation without love is poor.
98. God Himself teaches when His words are **ever** with us.
99. Meditation is more than head-knowledge or book-learning.
100. Obedience is a precious "expanding" commentary.
101. In the wrong way we cannot keep God's words.
102. We soon "depart" if the brain learns from a man.
103. Food without taste is incomplete, for body and soul.
104. We cannot detect false ways by instinct or reason.
105. My feet need a path; the path waits for my feet; the lamp illuminates both.
106. Determination unto the Lord is well-pleasing.
107. Affliction is a plea—not an excuse.
108. The open mouth of praise brings an open ear.
109. Circumstances are weaker than love's memory.
110. The wicked always wish to lead from God's precepts.
111. Without joy the true inheritance is undervalued.
112. The inclined heart does not decline.
113. Sin inverts, "I love vain thoughts, but . . ."
114. God and His word are together, as in Proverbs 30. 5.
115. Evil doers lurk, hoping to destroy, but faith stands.
116. If it were not for God's upholding we should be ashamed.
117. There is true safety when the Lord holds.
118. We cannot obtain truth if we leave the truth.
119. The **golden** contrast—"Thy testimonies."
120. Sin is never amusing; holy fear pleases God.
121. Injustice hinders prayer (note Job 16. 17; Matthew 6. 12).
122. The Surety is identified; God delights in His people.
123. Salvation and the Word of God are together.
124. It is mercy if God teaches, through mercy we can learn.
125. Who can know without grace-given understanding?
126. The ruin around intensifies prayer.
127. "Therefore" on a fixed basis. All else varies.
128. The three "all's" of simple faith.

It is easy to make a profession, but if it is not true, is not a further sin added? Let us not urge others, with **our own** wisdom, to get **our own** results.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures."—Psalm 36. 8.

A Word of Introduction.

MEN are torn apart by different opinions, but children of God should be of one heart and of one mind. Realizing the power of unconscious self-will against many parts of truth (e.g. against believers' baptism) we cannot but marvel, with gratitude, that there is so much agreement on parts of truth (e.g. the glorious Deity of the Lord Jesus). And yet our hearts should be pained that, even as to His atonement, so few recognise what is meant by substitution, and the blood of the covenant. Nevertheless, this makes a background for praise to God that often His beloved people do not push error to its logical goal, but are mercifully kept back from universalism. And so we find alternating calls to praise and humiliation, and, as we see our own need, our hearts long that, in answer to the earnest prayer of dear lowly believers, this magazine may be kept back from teaching that which will hinder the beloved people of God in the path of pleasing Him. Better far to be silent than to lead any of His blood-bought ones astray.

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"If the Lord will," Bible Gatherings at 61, Upton Lane, Bank Holiday, 5th at 3 and 6.

Further Meditations on the Rich Man and Lazarus.*

OBJECTIONS to the plain acceptation of the words of the Lord Jesus are sadly varied, and, in dealing with some, we may not be, for the time, meeting those of other objectors. But will such earnestly read on, or re-read the previous article? We have no wish to misrepresent any. Truth is solemn, and **no lie** is of the truth. A false prop for truth is an abomination to God. To ridicule others is often a distressing evidence of a heart out of harmony with God. When speaking of the solemn experiences of real persons to-day, who that knows God's salvation can be light in language, or aim at a verbal victory? We want God's truth, not repartee, and desire souls for Christ, not clever argument.

Many still misunderstand the word here rendered "hell." It is not Gehenna, but **Hades**, and is used to translate the Hebrew "Sheol." No human reasoning can identify this with the grave. The translation "grave" in such passages as Genesis 37. 35, Psalm 30. 3, 49. 15. is quite misleading. We have the same word as in Deuteronomy 32. 22, Psalm 16. 10, Isaiah 5. 14, 14. 9, Amos 9. 2 (a **great** depth). It is associated with the **soul** of Christ in Acts 2. 27, 31; the linked phrase speaks of His **body**, which did not see corruption. The earlier Scriptures show that Sheol of old contained the godly as well as the **ungodly**. This, as we saw in the earlier article, would exactly harmonize with the **two** compartments in Luke 16. The Hebrew and Greek alike have a definite and distinct word for the grave. It is remarkable that "Death and Hades" are together in Rev. 1. 18, 6. 8, 20. 13, 14.—compare 2 Samuel 22. 6, Psalm 6. 5 ("Sheol" wrongly rendered "grave"), Hosea 13. 14. The Psalm definitely **avoids stating** that there is **no remembrance** in Sheol. Regarding "**death**"—belonging to the **body**—this is asserted. How wonderful is Scripture. The Holy Spirit inspired a **question** as to Sheol, not a statement, because light was not then to be given on "life and incorruption" (2 Tim. 1. 10). In unforced harmony with this, many are aware that the true reading of 1 Corinthians 15. 55 is "O death" twice over, for it speaks of a **future** victory, but the victory over Sheol or Hades, is already past for the believer, hence the Holy Spirit alters the language of Hosea 13 to apply to this dispensation. So exact is Scripture, and so clearly, in any adequate translation, is the word "Sheol" contrasted with the grave.

But the objection may be raised, "Why judgment before the day of judgment?" Is not this only a seeming difficulty? Does

* Previous notes on Luke 16 and these will, God enabling, be reprinted. O that He may be exalted in definite witness. Those desiring copies should write.

not God reveal Himself even in the present world as One Who has perfect right, with His own complete knowledge, to appoint anticipations of the future? His authority and exercise of power are not restrained till "that day."

The point has been put to us, "On moral and on spiritual grounds we may ask—Why should Lazarus have received **evil** things, and the rich man **good** things? Why should **that** lead to the one being comforted and the other tormented?" This implies that we can explain exactly "**why**" some are prospered in the world and others are pained. Is it not better to simply trust God's wisdom, and to go into the sanctuary? (Ps. 73. 17). Psalms like 37 and 73 restrain many questionings, and urge to more worship. Is it not possible that many unconsciously assume that they know more than parts of God's ways, and see more than in a glass darkly? The present age has many "**inequalities.**" Luke 16, if taken as it stands, is one of the Scriptures to deal righteously with such facts. Yet many explain it away, but there is a conscious "afterwards," whatever men say. And the theory that "God will not thus act, for I should not" leads on to infidel objections against His holy permission and over-ruling of sin, and His allowance of suffering in providence to-day, which are not what we (with our limited knowledge) would do! "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" may have a fuller message than many realize. God's thoughts are **not** as man's thoughts, and if we begin to determine His ways in terms of our wishes and feelings, our confusion will be both serious and sinful.

The second question, "Why should that **lead** to the one being comforted?" is still a common error. Christ says that Abraham's words were "**But** now he is comforted and thou art tormented" (25). "But" is not "therefore." Any theory that would spiritualize away the passage seems strangely compelled to alter some words, whereas the literal acceptance finds the words **yet more fitting**, the more they are misrepresented and altered. The Lord Jesus surely foreknew the errors, and provided against them. We read in an article concerning the rich man, "What then is the charge against this man? **There is none.** Neither his works nor his belief are called in question or denounced." Few would make so grievous a statement, but this is the natural tendency. Error leads us to error. But rather let us look to our Lord's perfect words. Verse 19 is definite in view of Luke 6. 24. The great point of Christ's testimony again and again is that men have failed to **love** their neighbours as themselves, **and this essentially deserves wrath and a curse** (Deut. 27. 26). If verse 29 means anything, it means that the one in torment had **not heard** Moses and the prophets, and verse 30 that he had not repented, and verse 31 that he would have rejected the fuller witness of God, even in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Can such sins be

lightly overlooked? Moreover, even in torment he **showed no confession of sin**. This is of deep importance as to his unchanged character. A sad, sad contrast with a broken heart. And, in passing, this has an awful bearing on eternal consciousness. Thus the evidence is abundant; but, even if there were **none**, should we not humbly accept the **testimony** of Christ that he was rightly tormented? Any interpretation which urges that nothing is charged against the man is fundamentally serious (however it explains the torment) in its attack on God's **righteousness**.

Objections as to the mention of angels with regard to Lazarus, and silence as to burial, seem to help emphasis on the truth. Granted that the Lord Jesus declares a fact, we at once see ministering spirits are sent forth to minister to "heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1. 14). Lazarus **alone** was one of these. Naturally the rich man's burial would be a display like to his life. The poor man would have, we might almost say, "no burial" (Ecc. 6. 3); this from an Eastern standpoint was a disgrace. The question "How did the rich man get to Hades?" seems a strange one when Scripture sets forth that this was **normal** at death.* Everything harmonizes with literality, which, we would earnestly say, is the inference of simple faith, unless God Himself in Scripture shows the contrary.

So much is made of the word "beggar" that we would again urge that, after an erroneous translation is pointed out, it becomes sinful to keep on using it against the true meaning. The Greek word occurs 35 times. It is nowhere else rendered "beggar." "Beggary" comes in Galatians 4. 9, where the thought is **inability to give, not begging**. The New Testament has other words to express asking alms as a profession, e.g., Luke 18. 35, Acts 3. 2. These are left out in Luke 16. The thought that a dear child of God could not have such sores strangely overlooks the book of Job. A priori reasoning is dangerous, beloved friends. We have already called attention to another contrast with Acts 3. There is no Scriptural evidence that "was laid" means repetition. The pluperfect occurs in Matthew 7. 25, Mark 15. 10, 16. 9, Acts 14. 23, normally without any such idea. Strangely a well-known Greek Testament Handbook, in the Contents, has a misprint "an act **repeated** in the past." In the body of the book it rightly says "**Completed** at some past time," and **nothing** about repetition. But some may be misled by a printer's error. The tense-thought is a past action with a past effect. How solemn was the effect here. No notice is said to have been taken except by the dogs. But let us be concerned lest we are callous. To read this history without heart-humbling is to grieve the Holy Spirit, yet we all find this easy, especially when refuting the mistakes of others.

* A Concordance marking "Sheol" will emphasize this.

The question "Why five brethren" seems forcible to some, and they think they have found a reference to dispersed Israelites. There is always an attraction in speculating. But is there any hindrance to the literal existence of six in a family? The sons of Jacob were literally twelve, and yet there were spiritual lessons from the number. But the **historical** fact was first. The family of six, contrasted with one, reminds us that in Ezekiel 9 six were summoned for judgment, and one to mark those who sighed and cried for all the abominations.

The **context** has nothing against literal judgment. Some seem to think that the removal of Israel from their stewardship **makes** this rich man figurative. But they fail to see that Luke 16. 9 **also** refers to that which is after death. And the setting aside of Israel and bringing in of Gentiles was not only a dispensational change—it was linked with eternal blessedness and judgment. When the Lord Jesus spoke of the rejection of Israel in Matthew 21. 43, He at once referred to **after wrath**. This is of deep importance. Many of Israel thought that their dispensational privileges were eternal, and that the blessing of the nation included the redemption of the individual. Christ unveils the fallacy, and emphasizes not only a change for all, but a **personal** judgment of a **personal sinner**. This was vital. Many viewed themselves as blessed **en masse**. Christ, even as in John 3, deals with individual souls. The "figurative" explanation undoes this. The dispensational setting aside is a foretaste of eternal wrath; **hence the parallels**; but the foretaste does not make the reality void, nor render pictorial the record of the reality. God as the God of **history can** arrange "anticipations" of the after-life in the present. But this no more makes Luke 16 unhistorical than Hebrews 7 makes Genesis 14 a myth.

Many fight hard for their thoughts on this passage. Nor is this strange. For if they cannot stand here, all their other arguments are of little avail. As soon as this is seen to be truthfully literal, all theories of unconsciousness are swept aside. Hence their tremendous effort to prove that we too spiritualize this narrative. But the humble disciple **should keep to his Lord's words**. He must not be led astray because some have unwarrantably made Abraham's bosom and the finger of Lazarus figurative. Why have we **any** need to assume that **any** of these things are figurative? The narrative as a true narrative is a solemn and suitable warning to sinners. How dangerous to take away this warning, and to undo Christ's solemn words. It is evident from such passages as Matthew 10. 28, Mark 9. 48, and Matthew 25. 41, 46, that the Lord Jesus gave such utterances as to an afterwards. Do those who change Luke 16 to a figure speak as **He spoke**, with such burning testimony to guilty sinners? If they fail in this, or if we thus fail, it is our condemnation as His representatives. The heart-searching

parallel witness of John the Baptist comes to mind, and we need such a testimony to-day in the power of the Holy Spirit. The tendency is altogether in the other direction. Hence the frequent explaining away of Scripture. Sinners are playing on the edge of a precipice, and nominal Christianity provides them with a social reunion on the brink of eternal judgment. But let there be a true awakening among believers, that they, remembering Christ's record of Abraham's words, many **keep to the Scriptures**, and shun the methods which seem popular, and, it may be, successful, but which lack the hall-mark of the **Written Word**. How grateful should we be for the plain truthfulness of the Holy Spirit, and, by grace, let us be faithful, that none may be able to say we have deceived them, by lip or life, as to the eternity of conscious separation from God. Now, blessed be God, is the day of salvation, and we have His warm welcome for a troubled soul, as well as His warning for those as to whom He still says in the living testimony of Scripture, "I have called, and ye have refused" (Prov. 1. 24).

The Cry of Revelation 7. 10.

"Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb."

VERY simple are the words—very brief is the cry. But how much it means, and means to believers now. Heaven is full of praise, and that which is not full of praise is not heavenly. The strain of tribulation is behind these dear believing souls, but they speak nothing of themselves, nor of their sufferings. The glory of God fills their hearts. To-day we are all inclined to speak too much of our needs and our burdens; let us exalt our heavenly Father more. I know there is a contrast, in some way. Heaven has no prayers of faith, only praise. Faith is changed to sight. But even on earth there should be more thanksgiving. "With thanksgiving" is a Divine attachment to every prayer. And God the Father seeketh worshippers—we do not read He seeketh petitioners, though He welcomes such. He has no deaf ears for our humble requests, but we often have dumb lips for the thanksgiving that befits the redeemed. We are so occupied with our circumstances that we often forget Him Who is above circumstances. O for grace to love Him more, and to ascribe glory to Him. It is wondrous mercy to be allowed to praise, and to know that He rejoices in His people's voice of gratitude. We cannot make Him greater by our glad worship. It is our privilege. May we use it more in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

"We Look for the Saviour." Philippians 3. 20.

SALVATION is not merely a thing, we have a Saviour, because **He** Himself first laid hold of us. Well may we glorify God for this. In like manner we look not only for an event, but for a Person. We cannot say **when** our Lord will come back, but we know **He** will come (John 14. 3), and we are bidden and encouraged to look for Him.

Peter was **specially** told that he would die, and Paul, when he wrote 2 Timothy, had received a similar revelation. But tell me, where is any Scripture for children of God, without this unveiling, to put off the Coming of Christ beyond their life time? And, be it observed, the knowledge of intervening events, to these apostles, did not make them less intense in their loving and longing expectancy.

It is interesting to see the link of saints with "one another" expressed in "we which are **alive** and remain unto the Coming of the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 15), and "He Which raised up the Lord Jesus shall **raise** up us also by Jesus" (2 Cor. 4. 14). Thus believers feel their union with both parties of the one company, whether they are personally kept alive or fall asleep. "We look for a Saviour." The attitude is one of confidence; we have deliverance from doubt. It is one of expectancy; we have a joyous desire. It is one of intensity: for love has been caused in the heart toward Himself.

We dare not say, and would not say, "My Lord delayeth His Coming." By grace we would avoid the expression "If the Lord tarry," and keep to the simple Scriptural expression, "If the Lord will." We know that, "He That shall come will come and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37). But everything is in our Father's will and wisdom and authority, and we know neither the day nor the hour. But "circumstances" can never rightly take the mind off "that Blessed Hope": Christ is "our Hope" (1 Tim. 1. 1).

It is so easy to say we are looking for Him without getting ready. If we emphasize His Coming, and choose wordly friendships, what token of our love is manifest? If we sing of His Coming and dress as the world, what proof do we give that we really look for Him? If we talk of His Coming, but lay up treasures on earth, what fruit of our faith is seen in our lives? If we look for the Saviour and say "Even so, come Lord Jesus" how important it is that our daily walk should correspond and bring Him glory. The context in Philippians 3. 20 is solemnly definite against minding "earthly things." One questions if there is giving up of earthly arrangements **because of that blessed Hope, as there was about 1830**. If there is a settling down in our **own** lives, we need to be deeply concerned. Spirituality will never last 24 hours without reviving; a fire left to itself burns dull. We need more of communion with our Lord, that we may rightly look for Him.

Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm—Verse by Verse.—(Continued).

129. Praiseful enthusiasm for Scripture is never out of place.
 130. Thy testimonies enter me (inwardness), and I enter them, --and there is light. At the very door a blessing!
 131. Out of breath with love's running.
 132. "Usest": God's **habit** of loving kindness graciously encourages.
 133. The aim of iniquity is **dominion** (cf. Rom. 6. 12).
 134. Every blessing is to help to yet more obedience.
 135. If God's face shines, how quickly His people learn.
 136. Argument has a long tongue, love a tender eye.
 137. God's judgments are like to Himself, and unseparable.
 138. Righteousness and truth are together, as in 1 John 1. 9.
 139. Cf. "the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up."
 140. There is no dross in God's golden word.
 141. Circumstances would, but must not, make one forget the Lord.
 142. Human standards change; here is that which is changeless.
 143. Anguish cannot kill spiritual delights (cf. 2 Cor. 12. 10).
 144. Thy testimonies are perfect in any case; but my blessing depends on holy understanding.
 145. A half-heart does not know how to cry.
 146. The object of deliverance, "I shall keep."
 147. Before the sun rose, the psalmist was in earnest prayer.
 148. After the sun set, he loved to meditate in the truth.
 149. The earnest student knows how to pray.
 150. God does not remove all trials, but is with His people in them.
 151. The nearness of the Lord kindles faith (Ps. 91. 15, Is. 43. 2).
 152. No doubt can paralyze faith.
 153. Affliction cannot spoil love's memory.
 154. The Scriptures do not lead a man to stand up for "his right" (1 Pet. 2. 23).
 155. Attitude to the Scriptures shows man's condition (Luke 16. 29).
 156. Mercies and judgments not incompatible (Ps. 101. 1).
 157. Satan **would**, by persecution and flattery alike, lead to **declension and forgetfulness**.
 158. The contrary **effect** to Satan's aim.
 159. No forced obedience: manifest love. Cf. "Thou knowest."
 160. "The beginning of Thy Word." Genesis 1 included.

God has graciously provided one work of salvation: it needs no make-weights.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I will never forget Thy precepts, for with them Thou hast quickened me." (Psalm 119. 93).

A Word of Introduction.

THE truth of God must ever be our message. As soon as speculation and theory, however fascinating and seemingly spiritual, take the place of God's words, Ichabod is written over a magazine. It is a wondrous privilege to have the Scriptures, they are not merely truth—they are truth for a believing heart. Mathematics may well be called truth, but what food is found therein? The Holy Spirit gives the child of God food, and we need food. We soon become spiritually lean without food. There is a great danger if we neglect food.

The verse above from Psalm 119 illustrates this fact, that the precepts as well as the promises of God are rich with blessing. "The letter killeth" does not mean that the literal meaning of Scripture is dangerous. Nor are His commands to be called legalistic. A dead sinner finds everything condemnatory; but a quickened believer finds all His words, applied by the Holy Spirit, quickening. May this be our experience.

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The Death of Josiah.

GOD'S records of history are ever deeply important. Josiah was the **last** King of Judah who hated sin: the **next** One will be One of Whom it is written, "Thou hast loved righteous-

ness and **hated iniquity**" (Heb. 1. 9). Josiah is, moreover, the king regarding whom the mourning of a prophet is specially recorded (2 Chron. 35. 25). After him there was nothing but failure. First Egypt and then Babylon interposed: the times of the Gentiles begin with the latter: 2 Chronicles 36. 7 may partly indicate "why." Babylon, not Egypt, carried away the vessels of the house of the Lord.

If only Josiah's sons had been like to himself! How solemn is the language of Zephaniah 1. 8 in the light of verse 1:—"I will punish the princes, and the **king's children**, and all such as are clothed with **strange apparel**." O for more godliness in the home! How sad that Josiah hurried to death, without leaving godly order. There seemed such encouragement in his early days: yet the words ring out, "Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart" (Jer. 3. 11). Let God's dear people pray earnestly for a **deep** work,—in their own experience also.

Josiah **personally** was very devoted (2 Kings 22. 2). "Like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him" (2 Kings 23. 25). Hezekiah's remarkable characteristic was **faith** (2 Kings 18. 5), yet he failed in **this**, when he made a covenant with the king of Assyria, and took treasures from the house of the Lord. Even so Moses, **meeker** than all others, **spake** unadvisedly. And Josiah, always depending on the **words** of the Lord, acted in his own wisdom when he went against Necho (2 Chron. 35. 20). There is no thought of asking counsel from the Lord. We are all in danger, as to our "strong points."

This is the more remarkable because he was prophesied, by **name**, by the man of God who, **after** much obedience, became "disobedient unto the **word** of the Lord" (1 Kings 13. 26). And, further, Josiah was 39 years old, the very age of Hezekiah when God healed him. Everything should have caused special prayerfulness at such a time. Let us, by the grace of God, seek to take warning. We cannot speak self-confidently, without failing, and failing at once.

The chief difficulty of another kind is 2 Chronicles 34-28, "Behold I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace." Surely Huldah was a true prophetess. Can **God's** words be broken through a Josiah's mistake? Our hearts earnestly answer, "No." What then is the key? The **added** words in the very same verse show that God referred to the peace of Judah's land, and Necho himself emphasized this:—"I come **not against thee this day**" (2 Chron. 35. 21). So exact is Scripture: Judah's troubles did not begin till **after** Josiah's death, Necho did **not** at once follow up the killing of Josiah. 2 Chronicles 35. 24 and 36. 1

illustrate this. Thus we learn the need for prayerful care as to "inferences." If we misuse a promise, we may learn, like Josiah, that its shelter is not exactly what we thought. How many of us have often misused the promises of God. May this solemn narrative be used to cause holy humility, and a concern to wait for God's counsel in everything. So will He be glorified, and in the lowly walk of faith we shall, like Josiah, at first, find the preciousness of promises, for our Heavenly Father delights in the joy of His people!

The Lord Opens Doors.

CONSCIOUS of unworthiness, the writer would record grace in connection with the proposed, and now accomplished, journey through Czechoslovakia to Vienna. Mercy was experienced at Antwerp among men of "all nations," and mercy in little meetings in German villages, "to testify the gospel of the grace of God," and in tract service. Then we sought smaller towns or villages in Czechoslovakia, although we must not forget the Lord's encouragement in Brünn, and a gathering there. At Vienna a determined Jew followed us far, and fetched a police inspector, whom we were asked to accompany to the station, but telephoning soon brought a message of full permission, to the discomfiture of the Jew. May his opposition only lead us to pray: the Lord Jesus emphasises that enemies are to lengthen our **prayer** list. The return journey had problems, through police inability, at times, to understand free gospel tract work: but this meant a New Testament more than once in a police station, and we have much for which to thank God.

And now our hearts think of other journeying, and two dear brethren who may be in Poland when this reaches readers. O that God may use their testimony, and also nearer-home testimony of brethren using "holiday" from daily business, to the blessing of Jews and Gentiles, and His own glory.

And not only in other lands are there opportunities. English villages also are definitely sought by beloved brethren, with a message of salvation. And the Lord has just opened doors through varied officers among the naval men. O for fruit to His praise. During **this** day's journey several "details" impressed me:—

(1) On the railway station a copy of the gospel of John fell out of a pocket unexpectedly. I picked it up: another at once fell out—not before, nor after can I recollect anything similar—I could not but feel the Lord **MEANT** a copy **there** for some soul.

(2) One of the first men met was a Roman Catholic, who seemed glad to take Scripture for others, etc. God can work.

(3) I was just thinking, "We have not met a believer" (albeit one much earlier had been seen), when **one came up**, owning Christ's Name.

(4) Unexpectedly we passed the synagogue, and I called on the "Rabbi," to leave a booklet. He asked me in. We spoke of God's way. Some will pray for him. He invited to call again. Asking his name, I told him I should remember it, since meaning "together" in Hindustani, and expressed a longing that we might be together in God's grace and truth. Even this may be used to impress him.

(5) The tract, "The Bow without an Arrow" was the basis of afternoon conversational gospel witness, and early in the evening two brilliant rainbows appeared. May the Lord use this to some of the men addressed.

O for more dependence on our gracious God, in the HUMBLING of the Holy Spirit.

Typewritten letters on journeys, in England and abroad, unto the glory of the Lord, can be sent for a fortnight. If they help humble prayer, there will be true fruit.

Jottings on Christ's Post-Resurrection Ministry.

LUKE and John were led to give a fuller account of Christ's resurrection witness than Matthew and Mark. Yet there is a wealth of meaning in Matthew 28. 18-20 linked with verse 10. The salvation of souls is still an expression of the authority of Christ. How different is this testimony from the theories of man, which emphasize the sinner's "work" and "gift." The four "all's" of Matthew 28. 18-20, are remarkable, but the words "unto the end of the age" have no parallel in Mark 16.* The same breadth is found:—"all nations," and "every creature." The supernatural Gospel is super-national. How precious to be made partakers of a heavenly calling.

Luke 24 shows much of Christ's tenderness, and how He led His people on. His stress on the Scriptures is impressive, in verses 27 and 44 (so 32). The privilege and responsibility of world-wide witness must never be overlooked (47, 48). The death and resurrection of Christ are made the background (46). Acts 1 continues, specially referring to 49 ("sit" †). The description "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1. 3) is important. The disciples identified with the Kingdom to Israel (6); but the Kingdom of God is not only future, it includes His arrangements for His people to-day (Romans 14. 17). There is no approved confusion among the Lord's people. Acts 1. 8, again unveils testimony to all nations. A missionary-heart of love for Christ's sake is dear to Him. It is well to notice that this Divine appointment shows that

*Nor in other passages where "tongues" are specially before us. The fulfilment then is emphasized.

†Too quickly Peter "stood up" (Acts 1. 15, contrast 2. 14, after receiving power, after the "sitting" of 2.2).

the early church did not hold the usual theory to-day, that knowledge of any intervening event hinders looking for Christ. It is His gracious will that His people should preserve truth in holy balance, and avoid human inferences.

The gospel of John alludes to Mark 16. 9. It brings before us Christ's message of "Peace," even as Luke 24. 36, and lays a stress on the faith of those who have not seen. The "sending" of the disciples is linked with "whosoever"; there is thus the usual missionary climax, as in the other gospels. John 21 echoes Matthew 28. 20, with "till I come." Obedience is ever in view of His Coming—"Follow thou Me" (John 21. 22). Acts 1. 8 with 1. 11 repeats the same precious thought; may our lives illustrate it, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

It is important to observe the "worship" in Matthew 28. 17 with Luke 24. 52 and John 20. 28. And the gospel which is so strikingly associated with the record of Christ's ministry as the Perfect Servant begins with His Sonship (Mark 1. 1) and ends with His Lordship (Mark 16. 19, 20). No one is ever blamed for exalting Christ too much. We cannot praise Him beyond His worthiness of praise.

John 21 illustrates that in resurrection He thought of His people's needs, as well as gospel proclamation, "Feed My Lambs," "Feed My sheep." Observe they belong to Him; in like manner in Matthew 28 it is "Whatsoever I have commanded you." He is the Only One in authority. Romanism, and every religion exalting men, must appear so unspiritual in the light of Scripture.

We would not overlook the miracle of John 21. It leads up to "Feed My sheep." In contrast with Luke 5, we have the unbroken net and the counted fish, without any loss. Salvation brings a sinner to death, and out from his old sphere, "My sheep." The fish are caught, the sheep are fed. So wondrous is His twofold work.

But how brief is the narrative. John 21. 25 reminds us of this. How many were the "infallible proofs!" Yet we have the record of all that our Heavenly Father meant us to have, and if we seek to know, and illustrate, that which He has set before us, we shall find that all Scripture becomes "longer," along the path of spiritual obedience and refreshment.

"The Covenant of My Peace" Isaiah 54. 10.

THE believer finds a true resting place in God's faithfulness. When he looks around, he sees insecurity. But there is no insecurity in God's grace. It is beautiful to notice that Isaiah 54 comes between chapters 53 and 55, and thus this verse links "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him" to the millennial promise "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." Truly the unremoved, and unremovable, covenant of peace depends on the atonement of the Lord Jesus. There is

peace by the blood of His Cross, and in none other way, and none can undo this finished work. "Peace" is a delightful word. Men understand an armed truce, but do they really understand peace? There is a fixed foundation for peace. It is not an accident that the words "peace" and "complete" are closely associated in Hebrew. If anything is left out, the peace may be shaken. Every gap and incompleteness must mean uncertainty. But there is **no** gap in redemption. A "cheap" gospel, that looks to man to finish the work, has many gaps, but the free gospel of God, which declares that Christ has finished the work, has none! Yet it leaves room—the reverse of a gap—for unending praise. Praise is not a mere accompaniment, it is the fruit of salvation.

Plucking the Ears of Corn.

THE Scriptures are full of practical teaching. The disciples were indeed **hungry**. The Lord Jesus did not bring them to luxury. We remember that He, too, was hungry. He Who fed 5,000, and more, did not command stones to be made bread for **Himself**, nor did He prevent hunger in **His disciples**. There is much to learn from this, and we call Deuteronomy 8. 3 to mind.

There was nothing wrong in partaking of the corn. Deuteronomy 23. 25 is definite. God graciously thought of the needs of the **poor** (cf. Psalm 72). But the Pharisees, instead of showing sympathy with the needy, condemned them. Some have thought that they regarded the action as a "derivative" of **reaping**: others that a more recently discovered rabbinical prohibition is before us. In any case, they had tradition, **not** Scripture. The Lord Jesus does **not** say that "necessity knows no law": He does **not** suggest that in "need" we may break **Scripture** commandments. It is worthy of notice that He does **not** add the words "and are blameless" in verse 4, but only in 5.* He shows up the hollowness of their objection. They did **not** oppose breaking God's laws, only their own (cf. 15. 3). In like manner, many Jews openly emphasize Talmud more than Scripture. 'Tis ever the glory of man, but let us seek the glory of God.

And so we realize the privilege of Godly concern that we may interpret Scripture aright, and also be kept from wrong "imputations." A loving concern to please God thus does **not** mean an excusing of sin, but it is prayerfully careful, and shows primarily the holy **severity** of love to God against a condemned "self." This passage gives no warrant for "broadening," nor for causing others to stumble by disregard of the first day of the week. Though distinguished from Israel's Sabbath, it is **not** treated as the other days of the week, after the resur-

* Typewritten notes on this important theme gladly sent.

rection of our beloved Lord, or in the epistles,‡ nor are the Old Testament types, linked with this day, unimportant. The Lord Jesus here approved a simple meeting of a physical need: the one who would misuse this as an argument against special arrangements in the old dispensation, or the new, must lack arguments.

How beautifully the Lord Jesus, in a parallel passage, emphasizes the loosing of **Satan's** bonds on Israel's Sabbath (Luke 13. 16). For this purpose was He manifested (1 John 3. 8), and, because of His death, in the antitypical Sabbath (Col. 2. 17) the spared remnant of Israel will be a ransomed and released people. So is it in Matthew 12. The Lord showed His loving care for His people, the children of Abraham. How thankful we should be for deliverance from the chains of heathenism, and Judaism, and Romanism, but let us not use our freedom for an occasion of the **flesh**, but by love **serve** one another (Gal. 5. 13). Can we be trusted with freedom? Are we "sons" or only infants"? O that it may be manifest that redeemed ones, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, **use** their holy freedom devotedly, and **never** turn the grace of God into self-indulgence.

‡ Literature, and typewritten notes, available.

Jottings on David's Numbering of the People—2 Samuel 24.

THE first verse of 2 Samuel 24 (with 1 Chron. 21. 1), gives a solemn light on 2 Chronicles 32. 31 (with Matt. 6. 13). If we have self-confidence, God **may** permit us to see our utter weakness. David's humble confession, as in Psalms 51 and 32, refreshes, but the sin is nevertheless **recorded** for our warning (we are just as weak), and we observe:—

- (1) The census was military* (2 Samuel 24. 2); that of Exodus 30. 11-16 was priestly (so in Numbers 2. 1 and 27. 1 we have the stress on Aaron and Eleazer at the outset).
- (2) The recorded reason was unsatisfactory, "That I may know" (observe "Why?" in verse 3; contrast a precious "That I may know" in Philipians 3. 10).
- (3) David left out God's very Name (2), when even Joab brought it in (3).
- (4) The King ‡ acted against all counsel and warning ("the captains")—again a stress on the military; the prophet

* The different numbers according to different classifications, (a leaflet gladly sent), show this—29. "That drew sword" (1 Chron. 21. 5), and "Valiant men that drew sword" (2 Sam. 24. 9).

‡ Note stress on this word; contrast "David's heart" (10), "Go, and say unto David" (12). Hence the Lord reminded David that his kingship was only by mercy (23).

and the priests are left out, and so God uses a prophet to bring to a sacrifice, so gracious is He.

- (5) The time taken reminded of David's other solemnly recorded sin (8)—continuance awhile without repentance.
- (6) God's message laid a stress on the wrong heart-attitude ("Thy land" twice in 13).
- (7) The marvellous grace of God, used this as a background for teaching as to the work of Christ (1 Chron. 21. 27), and also thereby marking out the temple (2 Chron. 3. 1)

Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm—Verse by Verse.—(Concluded).

161. God's Word is far higher than princes (Isa. 51. 12, 13).
162. Holy awe never hinders holy joy. "Spoil" must be claimed.
163. If sin is not hated, there is little room to love God's law.
164. Repetition, and regularity, neither unspiritual, nor tiring.
165. Irritation comes from brain effort, not heart love.
166. God's salvation encourages godly obedience, not presumption.
167. Keeping and loving; we do not learn to love until we keep.
168. Consciousness of God's gracious interest causes fear of sin.
169. My cry and Thy Word; a wondrous intercourse.
170. Faith delights in the words "before Thee," and trusts God's word.
171. Ignorance is praiseless: if God Himself teaches we praise.
172. There is no dread of commandments when the heart loves the Commander.
173. The Lord's upholding hand is needed more than we realise; so broad is His commandment.
174. While waiting for Christ, we love His whatsoever (Matt. 28. 19, 20).
175. The spiritually living, praise (Isa. 38. 19; Ps. 150. 6).
176. Humiliation is a godly climax; pride may look spiritual, but lowliness is spiritual.

We hope to reprint these brief meditations, and welcome requests for copies to God's glory.

The Lord Jesus said to Simon and Andrew: "I will make you to become fishers of men," but He did not add to James and John, "I will make you to mend the gospel net," for that needs no mending.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Even the winds and the sea obey Him."—Matthew 8. 27.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is delightful to realize something of the glory of Christ. And this magazine is sent forth to exalt His glory. He is greatly to be praised. Often in the days of His flesh He manifested His glory. "He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." It may be that we have a storm in our experience. The winds seem contrary. The seas lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier. He can rebuke. And these pages are not sent forth merely to increase the mental intelligence of those who study Scripture; far otherwise, they are issued in God's Grace to encourage simple reliance on the Lord Himself, that He may be honoured in His people's living confidence. Faith fears grieving Him, nought else.

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The Bride in the Song of Songs.

DO we ever realize enough the earnest call to Christian unity in this book? One believer is not the bride, however precious may be his personal enjoyment of portions of the experience. Hence, so much of Christ's language in the Song is a call to His people to be manifestly united. It is remarkable that Babylon was linked with an unholy unity at the outset (Gen. 10). Unity is not in itself good. But a unity in which Christ is central is truly blessed. And thus we learn that the strong individual note in Canticles is not merely the individual believer, (although we cannot have too much personal affection for

Christ), but it is His united people so closely together that they speak as one. May this unity be dear to our hearts, even as it is to His.

There is another thought which may be used of God in our experience. The one who wanders, and whose heart fails when the Bridegroom speaks, is not only an individual. There has, alas, been **united** wandering. The Lord's people as a whole, have failed. When Daniel confessed sin, it was his own sin and that of the nation, and there is a parallel to-day. We have personally grieved the Holy Spirit, and collectively the children of God are not in the condition in which they should be.

At once we see that the reviving in the Song of Songs is not only the individual reviving of Isaiah 57. 15, precious and parallel though that be. Our Heavenly Father has promised a collective reviving, and we look upward for this to the praise of the glory of God's grace. O for a deep experience of faith's anticipation of the promised reviving even now.

The Positive and The Negative.

THE Lord graciously refreshes His people by a wondrous link of the positive with the negative. As turning from idols is first turning to God (1 Thess. 1. 9), so many actions are twofold. "Fear not" is one precious interpretation of "Rejoice greatly" (Zech. 9. 9) in John 12. 15, for how can we rejoice if we are anxious, and how can there be anxiety if the joy of the Lord is our strength?

Romans 4. 6-8 gives a very beautiful blending. "God imputeth righteousness" (positive). Then we have the proof text, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," for when He does not impute sin, there is not only a vacuum, we are not merely as Adam before the fall, we are not placed under probation, but made "the righteousness of God" in Christ (2 Cor. 5. 21). This seems too wonderful, but it is a reality, even for the believer who was brought to Christ, by grace, yesterday. God's salvation is gloriously complete.*

Romans 13. 10 helps in this connexion. It shows us that love's negative is positive. Unless there is "filling" of God's command to love, there is the working of "ill." How different is the opinion of men, who imagine that, if they have not done open acts of unkindness to others, they have "done no one any harm." The glorious height of God's appointment breaks down all human pride, but thereby we learn the preciousness of the work of Christ, and we have peace. Thus is it throughout Scripture. Our gracious Heavenly Father encourages faith and praise, because of the fulness of His work. There is no imperfection with Him. May we rejoice in such love.

* See Romans 8. 1, 2. "No condemnation" shows a Divine "freedom": there is more than acquittal. Believers are viewed in Christ.

The Misuse of Ecclesiastes.

MANY think they have proved their point when they bring a brief extract from Ecclesiastes against consciousness after death. But they seem to little realize the standpoint and viewpoint of the book, and the meaning of the context of the words they misuse. The opening sentence is remarkable. "Vanity of vanities" saith the preacher, in designed contrast with "The Song of Songs." Swiftly are the words added, "What profit hath a man of all his labour **under the sun?**" How frequently these words occur "under the sun" or "under heaven." Those who misapply verses, out of their context, may well be asked "How about other verses?"—e.g.—

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour" (2. 24).

"A man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity" (3. 19).

"Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works" (3. 22).

"I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living, which are yet alive; yea, better is he than both they which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun" (4. 2, 3).

Surely the believing heart feels there is something here which needs prayerful thought. More than once we read such words as "It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink" (5. 18), and again "Live joyfully with thy wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity" (9. 9). Why this stress on eating and drinking and on days of vanity? And another passage adds, "Also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God" (3. 13). How blessed the contrast in Romans 6. 23, "the Gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," and in 14. 17, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." **Now** we reach the solution. In Ecclesiastes we have the inspired record of the researches of the wise man, and his inability to find out what is "after" (3. 22), or to control what is "after" (2. 18, 19); hence the intentional stress on the miserable limits of his joy without revelation. "His own works" (3. 22)! Everything is to make manifest the need for revelation. Life is an unsolved mystery without revelation (7. 15, 9. 3). Hence the designed contradictory inferences (4. 2. 9. 4) in the inspired account of human philosophy. The key is sometimes given in quickly added words, e.g., 9. 5 is at once followed by "neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun" (9. 6). The greatest philosopher has been caused to mark out his limits, "under the sun." Hence the dead have no

share; they are outside the sphere that is his. He can find out nothing; and he records everything accordingly, to show that we need a revelation "under the sun." We need, too, a Name given "under heaven," whereby we must be saved (Acts 4. 12), that we may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1. 3). Let it be remembered that if Ecclesiastes speaks apparently of unconsciousness after death, it sets forth, in the same contexts, a denial of all retribution, and leaves designedly unexplained the fact that one dies without punishment, while another has contrasted burdens. But all this is to show the very reverse of the inference drawn by many to-day. It is to show the necessity for revelation and an after-life to manifest the righteousness of God! And so 12. 14 gives the answer to the preceding long account of human limitations, and let us remember, that the language that records and summarizes the reasoning, is verbally inspired, to make it exactly describe the full extent of human knowledge and of logical inferences apart from God's unveiling. Even the contradictory inferences of the human mind are stated with absolute perfection, to show that God has marked everything to lead men through their very confession away from themselves to seek a Saviour. And then, on this dark background, grace shines out with its wondrous glory (2 Cor. 4. 6). And now we can see why such expressions as "the gift of God" and "that a man should rejoice" are Divinely used in the remarkable photograph of the mental process—even to provide a background for the glory of **Christ**, and the gift of eternal salvation in which His people rejoice. Verily all Scripture is written with a view to **Christ**; to Him be glory. Verily He has changed the "Vanity of Vanities" to the "Song of Songs," and again let His redeemed people say, "To Him be glory."

LIBERTY.

FREEDOM is not a variable condition. It needs a standard and a touchstone. It is not merely "subjective" and thus dependent on a man's wish. Far otherwise. A wish can no more make freedom than it can make truth. The drunkard's wish is "slavery." Unless the action is "free," the one acting is not free. He is a slave, however much the wish is his own. Rather the more it is "his own" the greater is his slavery, if the action is slavery. Not only is his body enslaved, but his mind too. The will can forge its own fetters. The only true freedom is conformity with the holy will of God. When the will enjoys His will there is actual freedom, and subjective or experienced freedom as well. But, if the heart is unwilling, though the action be "free," the wrong condition spoils the freedom. O that we might learn the holy standpoint of God's will in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

"Be Not Deceived." Galatians 6. 7.

THESE words are addressed to children of God. Undoubtedly the principle applies to the unsaved also, but we, dear fellow believers, have a real danger of misusing the doctrine of grace. Deliberate turning into lasciviousness, and saying "We are delivered to do all these abominations" (Jer. 7. 10) are not the only peril. If a man sinned of old he needed to bring a sacrifice, and thus there was a certain amount of open shame. There was often an uncleanness till the evening or for seven days, so that one was shut out from various privileges. But now we seem to confess our sins to God easily and privately, and feel that all is right again in a moment. Never would we wish to make the riches of grace less, or to undervalue our Father's open heart and love, but we must seek to guard against misuse of mercy. Grace was never given to the flesh. We often say we are "not under law," and this is a precious expression for those in Christ Jesus, but the flesh always remains either under law, or under its sentence—in our case the latter—and, if we give it any freedom, our life dishonours God. Many have said "not under law," and then lightly broken the Lord's revealed will. Evidently they have preached grace to the flesh, but God preaches only judgment to the flesh. The old man, which we have crucified, can never evolve into the new man. Hence we need prayerful discrimination, in the Holy Spirit.

And the words of Galatians 6. 7 have a similar message. God has never made one of His statements untruthful by another. Grace never makes a state of sin possible, with impunity. Grace never reigns without righteousness. Hence "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." This implies that if we continue in sin "with an high hand" (Num. 15. 30 margin) we were never saved at all. It also implies that if, as believers, we grieve the Lord in any way, there is a consequence. He will never call unholiness, holiness. If I sow to my flesh in any measure, I shall reap corruption accordingly, even though I am personally in Christ. I may reap it now, in God's wise chastening: I shall reap it "in that Day." How often we sow into the flesh, and please the flesh even in our "Christian work." The harvest will be a heap. Let us not be deceived. Let us not think the "love" of our Father will preserve from stern chastisement. His love is not indulgence. Let us not argue that the tenderness of our Saviour will prevent "suffering loss" at His Judgment Seat. Suffering loss is no light matter: we cannot overlook these things spiritually. The words "Be not deceived" ring out, and the writer needs their message as much as the reader. The devil desires to rob us of our reward, because that is something we can bring gratefully to our Lord: shall the enemy have the victory? O for grace to loathe the flesh, and to remember the other part of the verse, "He that soweth to the Spirit." Thanks be unto God for that.

Samuel's Fear and the Lord's Appointment.

1 Samuel 16. 2.

“**S**AMUEL said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.”

Many dear children of God have been concerned as to this passage. They are rightly concerned that God does not commend untruthfulness,* but cannot explain the arrangement here. Is it not possible that many of us have read into the words something quite distinct from God's teaching? When Ananias raised an objection, and the Lord said, “Go thy way” (Acts 9. 15), we see at once His removal of the objection and adherence to His own plan. May there not be something similar here? A sacrifice would be appropriately linked with anointing; it was, as in 1 Chronicles 11. 3, “before the Lord.” What then can be said against the important thought that verse 2 is **not** the whole of the Lord's answer, verse 3 continues it. The Lord emphasizes that Samuel is to go in faith, to announce a sacrifice, and then unhesitatingly anoint a king. The sacrifice was not untruthfully private. Samuel invited the elders to attend (1 Sam. 16. 5). But it may be added, “Saul does not seem to have known” (verses 18-23). True, but the fact that this did not reach his ears was not because of any lie on the part of Samuel. The sinful king had no right to know. None would object to the carrying out of God's will without informing Saul. The only concern is “Do the words of verse 2 imply a deceptive announcement to him?” They were not addressed to him at all. There is no evidence that Samuel was to make a public proclamation. He felt fear at once when he thought God meant an immediate definite action as to kingship. But David was to be trained first. And thus the prophet was guided of the Lord as to the path whereby the Lord's chosen one was to be prepared. Hence there is no suggestion of keeping back information from one who had a right to it, nor of informing him untruthfully, but there is the Lord's instruction to His prophet as to the way he was to act, risking his life if need be, and leave consequences with the One Who appointed.

* Tracts showing Scriptural witness against deceit, and on the ambush of Joshua 8, gladly sent.

“A Lengthening of Thy Tranquillity.”

Daniel 4. 27.

DANIEL'S advice to Nebuchadnezzar was earnestly given. To show unkindness and indifference to others is to add sin to sin. A man may bring himself many troubles by cruelty. But if there is almsgiving **there is no salvation thereby.** The utmost will be a lengthening of tranquillity. So Nineveh's

repentance preserved the city **awhile.** But how blessed it is to realize “the gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6. 23). There is unending peace in Him. How wondrous to see that there is no “it may be” in grace. It is impossible for God to lie, and His people have a strong consolation (Heb. 6. 18). But this wondrous free gift is despised by the natural heart. Yet Christ shall see of the travail of His soul. Hence the precious words “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to **give repentance** to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” This **spiritual** repentance is altogether beyond Nineveh's, it is the precious fruit of a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5. 17). But election never drives away one deeply anxious soul. Rather it is his only hope. Nor does it terrify a serious soul. He **longs** to know how he stands. The man who is, alas, careless and trifling, or merely argumentative, is the one who is repelled by election, and he does not realize his duty to God, nor the shortening and lengthening of tranquillity in this life, nor degrees of punishment in hell, nor is he mindful of his own true welfare at all, or of that of others around him. O that we might declare truth with a holy definiteness and holy balance, that God may be glorified, and souls be concerned.

Moth, Rust and Thieves.

Matthew 6. 19, 20.

HOW many dangers there are in earthly treasuring up, and not only dangers. To please self is sin. The context shows that the question of serving two masters is the root. We cannot serve God **and self.** All treasuring up for self is idolatry; anxiety is worse than we have thought.

The succeeding verses lay stress on **food and clothing.** “Ordinary things” are the peril. And why is the **moth** first here? The rust deals with **metal**, but the moth attacks **clothes.** Can it be that they are a snare even more often than money? It is well to think over this.

If we choose a “variety” of clothes, are we on Christian ground in our experience, or are we living as the Gentiles (verse 32)? If only we could get to the simple root of the matter it would be to God's glory. The seeking of earthly clothes, instead of trusting the Lord more, is paralyzing (in its tendency) much godly effort for lost souls. Let us beware of feeding the moth instead of pleasing Christ. Let us lay up **treasure above** from to-day.

The word “adoption” in English implies the reverse of **living reality**, but the Holy Spirit's word, thus translated, is quite different. Those who are sons, by grace, are marked out as such.

Some Searching Thoughts from Psalm 119*

“O THAT my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes.”
 “My ways” are the problem. It is easy to hold aloof from many evil actions, and to keep back words of envy, pride, slander, or trifling, but are our ways directed? The “way” includes the whole attitude, the “bent” of daily life. Have we God’s standpoint? Do we enter heartily into His will, with a spontaneous, instinctive love?

Again, “My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments at all times.” The word “breaketh” is a strong one, and searches us. But “at all times” is a yet more searching message. Possibly there are moments when we can say that our heart is drawn out toward God, so that there is a “breaking.” But have we not too much spasmodic enthusiasm? Do we not long to see more regularity in our spiritual experience?

“Horror hath taken hold of me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.” Is it so? Do “rivers of waters run down my eyes because they keep not Thy law,” or do I become used to beholding sin around?

It is easier to argue against sin than to weep over it. The psalmist felt deep horror. Sin was to him so hateful. He realized the doom of the ungodly in some measure. We often speak of God’s righteous wrath in a very unreal way.

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.” Are we willing for trials and strains, if we can thereby become more like Christ? Do we welcome physical loss that there may be spiritual gain? Is it true that we need affliction to help us to learn? Are we so slow to learn, except through closed doors, burdens and pains? I wonder whether we welcome trials, and are exercised by them, or whether we fail to learn the lessons. The dross may be left, not plucked away. There may be no profit from the anguish.

“Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.” We think, too, of “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee.” There is so little praise in our lives. It would be well to have definite periods of giving thanks daily. Alas, even gratitude at meals becomes formal, and then we think specially of God’s gifts to ourselves. Do we praise for His righteous judgments? It is very evident that this psalm is full of searching messages. May we seek the application of truth, in the Holy Spirit’s inworking.

* Recently we went through this Psalm, with a sentence or so on each verse (available, God willing, as a reprint). By grace many believers have learnt it. Possibly others will rejoice in the same privilege.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

“The exceeding riches of His Grace.”—Ephesians 2. 7.

A Word of Introduction.

THE grace of God is precious beyond all human words. He has lovingly given His Beloved Son for worthless sinners, and with Him has given all things to believing hearts. (Rom. 8. 32.). How do we show our appreciation of such wondrous possessions? Do we still vainly seek the world? Do we seem half disappointed with Christ? Do we put the Scriptures in the background? or do we doubt and fear as though we could not trust so glorious a Saviour after all? The attitude of a child of God is to be a powerful testimony concerning the Gospel. May these pages help believers to live as such, to the praise of His Glory.

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Christ’s Birthday.

NOT Christmas, not December 25th, which is only a heathen festival adopted and adapted, but the real birthday which the Holy Spirit has marked out. Are not the Lord’s people related to Him on resurrection ground? True, His miraculous birth was part of the glorious plan that He might make atonement, but we cannot be united to Him, the other side of atonement. The birth of Christ without His death would save no one. The beautiful veil of the tabernacle, picturing His spotless

life (Heb. 10. 20), could only be a division, and exclude us, had He not died for sinners! "It is the blood that maketh an atonement." And therefore the Corn of Wheat did not abide alone (John 12. 24), but has brought forth much fruit, and our adorable Lord's birthday is the day of His resurrection as "the First Begotten of the dead" (Rev. 1. 5, cf. Col. 1. 18). The message of 2 Corinthians 5. 16, 17 may apply forcibly here.

If any ask for Scriptural proofs of this, they will not need to wait long for an answer. "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, **this day have I begotten Thee**" (Acts 13. 33). Thus Psalm 2 is authoritatively applied to Christ's resurrection, and plainly said to speak of **His birthday**. We accept this testimony, and thank God.

Hence we do not ask children of God to give up keeping their Lord's birthday, but to keep it **when**, and **as**, their Heavenly Father has appointed, and not as Christendom has arranged and perverted. And as to those who know Him not, we do not want merely to draw them negatively from Christmas, but positively we would tell them of Christ Himself, and how our hearts would rejoice if some, who begin these lines unsaved, are brought to have a **right** to keep His resurrection-birthday, ere they finish reading, because of a new relation to Him, even a quickening from the dead. By reason of His **death**, eternal life is the gift of God to a burdened soul to-day! The Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation, and the early church, which knew nothing of Christmas, kept His resurrection-birthday. In the gospels, the first day is never before us till Christ died and rose again! The seventh day is never before us afterwards. Acts 2 passes by the Sabbath, and likewise Acts 20. 7. The seventh day was frequently used in the Acts for witness to Israel: never is it **associated** especially with worship. And 1 Corinthians 16. 1 equally passes over the seventh day, and implies it is one of the ordinary days. In the light of Colossians 2. 16 it is impossible to make "the Lord's Day" of Revelation 1. 10, the Sabbath, but how happily can we associate it with "the day which the Lord hath made" and appointed (Ps. 118. 24). Thus there is an anticipation of the Day of the Lord, just as the Lord's Supper is a preparation for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Yes, "we will rejoice and be glad in it," because we rejoice in Him. Hence we do **not** receive the world's "Sunday" from Romanism, but the Lord's Day from our Lord Jesus, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is His birthday: Scripture says so, and we can rest content. God gave Adam a day, and likewise gave Israel a day (Ex. 13. 3). And He has given to His people now a day, but it is a contrast with usual birthdays. We can find

no **anniversaries** in the present dispensation. Israel had years, but pilgrims have a weekly birthday gathering, and the bread of affliction is linked with the fruit of rejoicing. And how real the contrast with a Pharaoh's birthday and the chief baker's death, and with a Herod's birthday and the death of John the Baptist. Believers should show the death, and remember the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and look for His Coming with expectant love.

Why should we keep our birthdays? They remind us we were sinners. Every year is a loving reminder of responsibility, but yearly celebrations—even as to societies—are out of place in the present dispensation. Is not our **true** birthday in Christ? Are not God's dear people raised up together with Him (Eph. 2. 6)? Then shall we not remember our birthday every week in His? His Name is given to us, and the life that we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God.

"Christmas" is sadly true to its origin. That origin is pagan, and its observance knows nothing of redemption, or of fellowship of believers, or of denying the flesh. It offers a substitute for Christ, stealing His Name. It goes back to the other side of Calvary, and invites to a feast based on fleshly relationship, with amusement to please those to whom Christ is no joy. But the real birthday is true to its origin. It is based on redemption, and includes the fellowship of saved ones, setting aside the flesh. The invitation is to a feast of another character, telling of joys united with those in the presence of God for ever. Oh, believing reader, will you not give up the false, and accept the only birthday God has revealed? Every delay in compromise and untruth must grieve the Holy Spirit. Faith acts with love's promptness, and hope's upwardness. And **this** birthday is a prophecy of our Lord's Coming when the resurrection body of His people shall have its birthday, and service shall be without defect. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Further literature on the non-observance of Christmas, because of simple love to Christ, and separation from heathen customs and traditions, gladly sent.

Something More Needed.

"I'VE never done anyone any harm" is a vain boast, but its wording shows a natural tendency to be content with the absence of evil before men. But a negative will not suffice. If it is a real negative, it must be a positive. Positive love is needed. It is important, by grace, to lay stress on active obedience, and how utterly man fails. What a need for Christ there is! In our daily life we are rightly concerned not to utter evil language, but that is not enough. Is our speech always with grace, seasoned with salt? We long to be kept from varied sins, but the victory is not by a vacuum. If we

would keep down murmuring, there must be positive praise, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. To omit to speak against God is a poor thing. Do we make known His salvation? I do not speak of preaching, but of a daily life witness. This is more important than we realize.

Some Broken Props for Universalism.*

THE passage regarding the "spirits in prison" in 1 Peter 3 is often misused to preach that Christ went to the Antediluvians when they were in Hades, to proclaim deliverance after death. The Scripture says nothing like to this, and it is equally contrary to all other Scriptures. Yet the mistake is so deeply rooted that sometimes the words of the Holy Spirit in the next chapter, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead" (1 Peter 4. 6), are entirely misinterpreted, as if they confirmed the same error. A little humble, prayerful, earnest pondering, of the two passages together, will probably convince most dear children of God how contrary to the words Divinely used is this sad and dangerous theory.

Shall we take 1 Peter 4. first? When was the Gospel preached to these persons? The passage itself contains God's answer. Was it not that they might be judged in the flesh? † Then this preaching preceded their physical death. Indeed, their judgment in men's law courts was because of this preaching. Evidently then they became martyrs for Christ. Thus we have dead believers, who were nevertheless living according to God when Peter wrote the epistle. They were not under His judgment, but restfully waiting, (while they lived in the spirit), a share in the glory of the Lord and resurrection. No other interpretation, it is evident, will meet the crucial word "That." The preaching was before the judgment in a human law court. This verse therefore, has nothing to do with the ungodly dead.

The context entirely agrees. In verse 4 we have rejected believers, and their trials are seen again in verse 12, fiery trials. They are partakers of Christ's sufferings, ‡ i.e., death at the hands of men (13). And the judgment is man's judgment now (verse 17). A parallel passage illustrates. New believers are viewed in 1 Corinthians 15. 29 as being baptized to take the place of the dead ones who had suffered for their witness. The church was meant to be a suffering church (Rev. 12. 11). In the light of Revelation 20. 4 we see how Christendom has missed the mark.

* Recent articles on "Under the Earth" and "As in Adam all die," etc., can be obtained in leaflet form for prayerful reading, or circulation.

† It is no more "men in the flesh" than "God in the Spirit"; the Greek links "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit" with the verbs "judge" and "live."

‡ Contrast "the suffering (singular) of the death" (Heb. 2. 9); atonement under the hand of God,

"But," someone may ask, "why are they called the dead, if they were not dead when the Gospel was preached to them?" The question is important, and the answer is simple. They were dead at the time of writing, and are thus described. The stress on their death for Christ's sake is important. If I say, "King George was born in 1865" will anyone assert I am inaccurate, because he was not "King" but only "Prince" then? But the Holy Spirit's own language is conclusive beyond English. I call to mind a translation proposing "Abram" in Romans 4. 3, but, though it speaks of a time prior to Genesis 17, the Scripture definitely says "Abraham." Genesis 12. 8 is **before** Genesis 28. 19, but it is written "He pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west." § Hence the word "that" in 1 Peter 4. 6 can maintain its rightful meaning. And now we can turn to 1 Peter 3. There seems to be throughout a designed contrast:—

1. The word "preach" is different, and omits the term "gospel," and emphasizes "heralding"; there is no thought of acceptance of the message only.
2. "Spirits" are here also, but they are seen in prison, not as "living according to God."
3. There is nothing of man's judgment and rejection; 'tis God's display of holy anger.

There is one definite time-mark, only one, which is repeated, ** (a) "once," (b) "when," (c) "in the days of Noah." Why is there no other time-mark? (note *ὅτε* in the Greek). Is not this the time before us? And "went" is an appropriate word for the "old world" as Peter describes it (2 Peter 2. 5). The noun from the verb used for preaching is employed for Noah in the same verse (and the same writer was inspired to emphasize the Spirit of Christ in Old Testament servants of God, 1 Peter 1. 11). The very next Greek word after "preached" is "disobedient ones," and the next two words are "once when." There is no hint of any other preaching. The ungodly rejected, and they remained spirits in prison when the epistle was written, a solemn reminder of judgment experienced and felt. Consciousness is a reality.

And thus these two chapters of Scripture give a twofold witness. Disobedient ones rejected and fell under God's judgment, and were, long after, still in God's prison. Believing ones fell under man's judgment, but they were viewed by Him as those free from judgment, through His beloved Son, and they were truly living, away from the judgment upon sin (Rom. 6.

§ A somewhat striking expression is "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it" where the fulfilment of God's purpose is viewed as if reached before He had caused the church to exist, by His precious atonement.

** "Which sometimes were disobedient" looks like a fresh sentence, but only in the English. "Disobedient" is in the Greek dative; Christ preached to disobedient ones.

23). This twofold teaching is to stir up God's beloved people to continue witnessing, even amid rejection. The path may be one of suffering, but how blessedly different to suffer according to the will of God (1 Peter 4. 19), in judgment that is now, than to be under God's wrath. Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? In prison now, and far off "in that Day," and then in unchanging judgment! How earnest should we be, to tell of God's precious Gospel by the blood of His beloved Son, while the long-suffering of God waits, and "now is the day of salvation."

A Parable.

A MAN had three sons, whom he also employed in his business. One of them was ever glad to enjoy the home circle with his father, morning and evening, but while at work there was not sufficient diligent care to carry out every appointed arrangement. He had no wish to be idle, but sometimes quite forgot his father's instructions, and, moreover, overlooked the actions of others that robbed him again and again. No one could question the existence of some love and gratitude for his father's love, but there seemed often so much joy in his own happiness therein, that he appeared to make secondary the larger interests of the one whom he loved. The second son was of a different disposition. The rules of the factory were strictly important to him; he hated any robbery from his father, because of a sincere attachment to his will. But the joy of carrying out the work gave him little time for his father's company, and the wish to see him more frequently at home hardly met with an adequate response. Again, no one could readily question the loving attention to his father's arrangement for work, and for others, but the same father's personal joy, in the fellowship of his loved son, was never so dear to the latter as it should have been, and thus there was selfishness, even amid the obedience. And, further result was a measure of friction between the two brothers, who alike were much more conscious of the other's failures than their own, and who seemed to be anxious to deal with one another in their own way. And yet their personal defects hindered ability to do so aright.

The third brother had a delight in his father's company, and thus not only knew his written arrangements for the business, but also the attitude of the one who made them. Taking this standpoint, he was concerned to carry out his will in a manner pleasing to him. Nor did he overlook the failures of others, but there was a personal humility, and hatred of pride when dealing with them. And he rightly hesitated to remain in the factory too long, with the result that his father's love was disappointed, by the absence from the home of those who were

dear to him. Moreover, did not the father give advice that more than made up for the time away from other activity?—not to mention the still more precious joy of delighting his heart! And how wondrously this affected the attitude of this son to both his brothers, though he, too, had a continued need for care, lest pride or impatience should assert itself.

Need the explanation be given, beloved reader? Is there not often too much selfishness linked with our love to our Father? Are we not sometimes careless of His will, and rather enjoying our love for our own sake? Or, if we escape this sin, are we not often outwardly accurate, but leaving first love? Do we not desire to be like the third brother, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit? True, it is easier to write about this than to illustrate it, but how wondrous is the grace of God, and we would humbly seek unto Him for this gracious reviving, that we may grow up unto Christ in all things, and not be one-sided.

A Few Notes on Psalm 107.

“O GIVE thanks unto the Lord”: well may believers say this both to themselves and to one another. Wondrous, indeed, are God's gracious works on behalf of His people. Salvation is a glorious fact.

The psalm divides into five sections. Verses 8, 15, 21 and 31, do not close their portions; in each case there is a verse **beyond**. For example, verse 9 adds “He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” Thus the first portion emphasizes the hungry and needy.

The second part deals with those who are bound in darkness and in the shadow of death, even rebellious ones brought to feel their ruin. The grace that deals with the needy sinner deals with the disobedient, and are we not both needy and disobedient? Sin is not only a wandering, it is a crime. Hence the climax here is the breaking of gates, and cutting of bars to let the prisoner free.

The third portion deals with the sinner's deadly disease. Observe here a drawing **near** to the gates of death. The gates, linked with the shadow of death, in the preceding verses, were broken, but here there is no hope for the sinner who **dies** unsaved; hence the changed language. But mercy is manifested **before** death—though death is very near—and praise to God is to abound.

The next section unveils the sinner tossed about on a troubled sea, and again God's mighty love is seen. This fourfold view of salvation on the fourfold background of sin is very impressive. In each, we have the feeling of anguish and despair first.

Then we have the concluding verses which show the “ways” of the Lord, and the solemn contrasts between blessing and judgment (John 9. 39). May it be ours, in His mercy, to live

praisefully in view of His Gospel, and our own deliverance, and to tell others of the glorious Gospel, that they, too, may experience its power in a like salvation from the solemn perils and terrible chains here set before us. Surely the redeemed of the Lord have a glorious theme, and the Holy Spirit ever leads them to glorify their Redeemer.

If I love a thing, I love it for my benefit; if I love a Person, should I not love Him for His joy, rather than selfishly? This emphasizes the need for a personal knowledge of the Lord in the Gospel. Any absence of this involves a selfish desire of personal advantage. O how much more believers should know Christ; only thus can they really love Him more. Hence we can understand Paul's fervent desire.

* * * *

Salvation is not a theory of yesterday, nor an ideal of to-morrow, but the privilege of to-day, uniting a past eternity of God's undeserved love with a future eternity of its realization. Such is the worth of grace!

* * * *

A guilty sinner cannot contribute a fraction toward his pardon; but God asks "nothing"; He humbles us to see our need of the "everything" which He has provided.

* * * *

Spirituality can easily be imitated in language, but not in the continued denial of self.

* * * *

The grace of God is sovereign, and therefore proud sinners are humbled in His mighty love.

* * * *

Free will is a misnomer till we find our joy in the will of God.

* * * *

Bondage need not be external to be real.

* * * *

Election never kept one soul from Christ, but it brought many to Him. Tell me of one soul in hell because of election. You cannot. But I can speak of many in heaven because of election. Can you find me one soul there apart from election? You cannot. Then what have you to say against this princely display of God's love?

* * * *

The disciples said "Lord, save us, we perish," although He had spoken of reaching the other side. Unbelief forgets God's promises, and faith feeds on them.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"
(Matthew 14. 31.)

A Word of Introduction.

THESE pages are sent forth to glorify God, and to invite His people to fuller confidence in Himself. And as we stir up others, we would stir up ourselves also. God is worthy of the fullest reliance. Peter's sin in Matthew 14 is not marked out because he lacked faith in Christ generally, but because he had Christ's word "Come," and yet he doubted. In like manner the sin of those in the ship was evident because He had said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." How important then to be clear that we have the word of the Lord, and then to trust entirely. Faith is not believing what "I" think, but what God has said. If faith is to flourish, we must ever lay fuller stress on the words of God, applied by the Holy Spirit to our hearts to-day.

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A Few Thoughts on Christ and Worship.

"THE Father seeketh" worshippers (John 4. 23); a solemn contrast appears in Matthew 4. 9. The devil dared to seek worship, even as Antichrist will yet do. The answer of the Lord Jesus was holly emphatic. The words "The Lord thy God" and "Him only" ring out. Worship is thus linked with Deity. Peter was a godly apostle. Cornelius fell down

and worshipped. Peter at once took him up. "Stand up, I myself also am a man." The first gift of our risen Lord was an apostle (Eph. 4. 11); but this gave no right to anything of worship. We think of Barnabas and Paul and the rent clothes of Acts 14. 14; we need a horror of sin. The high priest wrongly rent his clothes (Matt. 26. 65), professing that Christ's words and attitude were blasphemy; they would have been, had He been less than God! The glory of an angel is great; and even a holy apostle fell at the feet of one to worship—not once, but twice (Rev. 19. 10, 22. 9). The answer on each occasion emphasized two things, (a) "I am thy fellow servant," and (b) "Worship God." The most exalted angel is a servant; **worship is not because of high rank, but because of Deity alone.** The distinction between the Creator and the created is essential and fixed. Pantheism, evolution, modernism, alike deny this keystone. But, in thankful contrast, we reach the startling Scriptural emphasis on the nature of the glory of Christ. He was not a servant. "He took upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2. 7), but that was humiliation to Him. He was essentially more than a servant; hence we see that He was essentially God!

Again, the glorious angel rejects worship, but "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 6) is the utterance concerning Christ! He is more than all the angels; He is the Worshipped and they are the worshippers. The difference is not one of degree, but of kind. "Worship God" says the angel, and the angels worship God;—they are bidden to worship Christ. Christ is God—essentially God, with the Father.

Behold Him in the days of His flesh. He has become a Babe. But the wise men "worshipped Him." They had come with this very object (Matt. 2. 2). They did not worship Mary. Christ alone was worshipped. Before His ministry commenced He was thus marked out as God. His humanity never obliterated His Deity. In the days of His ministry, He never rejected worship. Not one occasion can be found where He objected that men glorified Him beyond His right. The leper worshipped (Matt. 8. 2), a Gentile worshipped (Matt. 15. 25), the disciples worshipped (Matt. 20. 20), the Lord Jesus led on the once blind man till he worshipped (John 9. 38);—the evidence is indisputable. In resurrection He again accepted worship (Matt. 28. 9, 17; Luke 24. 52). Beloved friends, do we not rejoice to take the same attitude? To deny the Deity of Christ is to bring confusion into the whole of Scripture, and to make it a book that encourages idolatry. Our hearts recoil from such a thought, and adore our precious Lord. We dare not take from Him one whit of His glory. The wonder of grace in His love to sinners shines out the more on this background, and we long to overflow with grateful praise and holy worship.

Other leaflets on related subjects gladly sent.

The Pharisees' Standpoint.

IN the Gospel we find the Divine record of the words of men, yet how often a man hardly shows the inner recesses of his heart. But when the Lord Jesus, Whose Name is the Truth, speaks, He unveils the real condition. This we strikingly see again and again in various Scriptures.

For example, how solemn is the testimony of John 9. 41. "Ye say, **We see.**" How much pride is manifested in such a claim. It seems fairly evident that Luke 15. 29 is an unveiling of the attitude of the Pharisees and Scribes. They had no joy in salvation by grace—"Lo, these many years do I serve Thee, neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandment: and yet Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this Thy son was come which hath devoured Thy living with harlots, Thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Mark the self-confidence, and with it the despising of others. There was no joy in the Father's presence: the Pharisees "friends" were not God's friends (contrast Luke 15. 6). We are thus led on to the painful language of Luke 18. 11. "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or **even as this publican**"—how God hates pride (Ps. 138. 6). It is clear that the steward of Luke 16 shows the covetous Pharisee of verse 14. "What shall I do?" Then, "I am resolved what to do." All is for self—**no sense of sin.**

It is exactly as in chapter 15—Blessed indeed is the contrast of a heart-broken sinner. The unjust steward never blames himself for wasting his master's goods. And the rich man in Hades says **much**, but never confesses personal sin. He speaks of repentance for others, to evade torment, but there is nothing personal.

The steward's utter disregard of truth in a dilemma is parallel with the attitude of the chief priests in Matthew 21. 25, 26.—"If we say, From heaven" and so forth,—only a concern for the **result** to themselves (e.g. John 11. 47-50). Convenience, not God's will; experience not truth: such is the standpoint.

The parallel of Matthew 21. 30 sets forth the same self-assertive sin "I, Sir," but the outwardly respectful son "went not," and sin led on, and still leads on, to sin, so in the next parable the attitude to Christ reaches a climax. "This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him."*

Then the same self-centredness as the steward showed is given as the reason, "Let us seize on His inheritance" (Matt. 21. 38), or, as the Holy Spirit sums up in another Gospel "The inheritance shall be **ours**" (Mark 12. 7). Again, no sense of

* Cf. Cain's advancing from self-righteousness (in his offering without blood) to murder.

sin! And is not this always so? Pride ever exalts and cares for self, and thus necessarily ignores and dishonours Christ. When self is prominent, there can be nothing for Him. Do we not long for the delightful contrast of laying low self because of love to Him? The precious words of Isaiah 57. 15 have never lost their meaning, and the Lord still revives the heart of the contrite ones.

There is a danger in everything, and children of God need ever to be on their guard. Their enemy is not sleeping, and the flesh is not dead. Satan seeks to dress up sin as holiness, and seeks to tempt us along the line of our obedience. Probably few perils are greater than pride of humility, and occupation with our praying instead of the One to Whom we pray, with our activity instead of the One Whom we would delight to serve. Holiness is no longer holiness when we make it our satisfaction first, and God's glory second. This is a deeply solemn thought. God's glory must ever be first. Let us not desire a blessing primarily for its sake, or our joy in it, but for His sake, and His joy in His people's obedience.

Sin, Felt and Unfelt.

THERE are some believers who would sigh over actions which would be regarded by others as holiness, and the difficulty is manifest when the former confess the sinful failures of their life. Some, who have a human standard of holiness, hastily think the former are excusing sin, whereas they are mourning over that which would often be overlooked in other lives. Nor can it be forgotten that when God's standard of holiness is humbly acknowledged, the enemy no longer appears to remain asleep. He would lull us to sleep so long as we think we have "attained," but he would torment those who are ashamed of themselves. Yet God is **greater** than the enemy, **infinitely greater**, and He never allows too great a temptation, though He brings to the feeling of much dependence on Himself, and the humbling guidance of the Holy Spirit. If those who, by grace, take God's standpoint, in any measure, are enticed by the enemy to an unrealized **pride because** they see sin more quickly than others, the fruits are bitter, and those who excuse sin more in other things have at once a handle for their objections. Probably many of us have **something** of the holy perception of our failures and **something** of the attitude which, alas, thinks certain actions, which ought to be confessed as sin, are "progress." This sad confusion comes through lack of a close walk with God. Another confusion is linked with it, namely, the inference that the absence of **outward** sin is holiness, and that the diminishing or withdrawal by the enemy of some temptation (to make us self-satisfied) is victory. Never do we, while

on earth, get beyond the experience of humble dependence, even as the Lord Jesus said to His people, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Some Spiritual Parallels.

Suggested through the Learning of a Language.

HAVE we not all more perils than we realize, and do we not desire, if we are humble children of God, to **please** Him much more? It is with this longing, that we are privileged to help "one another" by sharing thoughts that have been personally helpful.

If I take a grammar and a vocabulary I may learn much **about** a language, but yet I may be quite unable to **use** it. What if our study of the Scriptures is of the "grammar and vocabulary" character? Are we able to **use** God's words, or have we an outside knowledge? Moreover, when one can, by energy and care, begin to use the foreign tongue, yet there is a halting, which contrasts with the ready flow of even a ten year old child, who has a living acquaintance with the same language. The child has an **inner** knowledge, **thinking** in the same words, and many are the expressions that have been learnt through "need," because the child needed **this** or **that**. How important that you and I should have an **inner** knowledge of the will of God, and that our inner life should have the same "language" as our outer talking. O that spiritual things may never become official, but that we may **think** as we **speak**, and that the things of our Heavenly **Father** may never become like a **foreign** tongue to us. If I use a language one hour a week will it ever become "natural?" If I use spiritual things one day a week will there not always be something artificial?

This opens up a question for the **heart**—"If I speak of spiritual things as a foreigner, am I, after all, a foreigner?" It is possible to be as the foolish virgins—unsaved, even while long thinking all is well.

A dictionary will not make a living acquaintance with any language, nor will head-knowledge make saintship. God graciously blesses head-knowledge in its right sphere, and the Holy Spirit brings to the remembrance what is known (John 14. 26), and it is precious to emphasize the mind, but let it be the **love** of the mind (Luke 10. 27).

Notice a child speaking easily and **accurately** the language you have yearned and toiled to acquire. You feel at once the difference. Being born in the land does not explain all. There has been the use of **living** powers in a **sphere of careful speaking**. Can we, by the Lord's enabling, note a parallel? Let **living** souls become used to speaking spiritually, by **fellowship with godly believers**, who have a holy accuracy and manner,

and who are lovingly willing to help others. Many mistakes are through wrong fellowship (Prov. 19. 27).

Further, I must **hear** if I would **speak**. Seeing and thinking are not enough. I must **hear** much more. Alas, some of us find our natural ears become **set**, and we do not hear so readily as a child. We need a **childlikeness** to hear the tones of God's voice.

Let me introduce you to a man who has lived for years in a land far from the land of his birth. He has still sought intercourse with **his own** countrymen, and his language and accent grate on the ear. He still shows his foreign **birth** and fellowship. May it not be that some of us, even when we have been long born again, choose sometimes unappointed intercourse of those who prevent our Christian growth? Our "accent" spiritually often makes clear our sin.

Moreover, a child may be quite ungrammatical as to his own language. Uneducated surroundings may have a strong influence. Take the normal boy of a thriftless home: the school does not drive out the "wrong grammar" of the family. If I am a child of God, and seek His words, to a **certain** extent, fellowship even with believers will damage my use of the Scriptures, if they are not earnest for the truth.

The thought becomes more and more helpful. I do not want the school instead of the home, nor the home instead of the school, but both together, and both in **harmony**. Let the ministry of truth that I hear, and my personal Christian friendship, be equally well pleasing unto the Lord. If I am often with those who speak accurately, I may think I need the grammar less, but if I am to know **why** I do this and that, and to help others, there must be a godly proportion. The well educated boy has both the dictionary and the home practice. Let me have both **spiritually**. If there be any divergence, in this case, at least, **the text book** is decisive. In the things of **God** "grammar" is not in transition. Yesterday's error does not become to-day's rule in His will. There is no room for development.

If I have the business responsibility of going among those who speak incorrectly, how much care and need lest I **unconsciously** copy them. So is it spiritually. If we live in a ruined world, as a witness for our adorable Lord, let us keep hold of the book He has given. We need it daily. We need it as authoritative. And, more than a grammar, it is our food. No parallel can set forth the **fulness** of God's truth. Thanks be to Him for all that He has given.

Have you heard a man employ a language, with **many** mistakes, and yet he could "use" it far more than you, the one who could detect his mistakes? Some children of God look down on others who make mistakes, because they do not know

God's words, but they themselves cannot "use" those words. **Both** errors are to humble us; it is ever easier to see the failure of another. Knowledge of the truth that only enables one to criticize others is unspiritual. In this connection we seem to hear the words of some, "more light than love." The remedy is not the excusing of darkness, for it is not **love** to ignore the keeping of the Lord's commandments (John 14. 15). But there is a remedy, and we would judge pseudo-light and pseudo-love in our **own** experience, and hate the **tinsel** mixed with the **gold** we recognize in others, that there may be a growing up unto Christ in all things, unto His glory.

When one has fallen into a usual mistake, there will be need for **much** earnest thoroughness to eliminate it. And so with the things of God. We become held by an error, and cling to it more than we think. Are we willing to be bowed down before God, and to seek His victory, and to desire in the enabling of the Holy Spirit the due proportion of the book and the fellowship of His obedient people? Then shall we please Him and show we are not foreigners in the language of His wishes, but that He has made us those who are born from above, in order that we may humbly please Him in the way of His perfect will.

Fragrance.

WHAT is it? Can I see it? Can I touch it? No, yet it **is**. I find how it pervades the whole room: this fragrant flower bewrays itself, and yet I cannot prove or trace that fragrance by my other senses. I must have the capacity to smell, and **then** the fragrance (which is there just as much if I smell it or not) begins to refresh me.

The Name of the Lord Jesus is as ointment poured forth, and it cannot be hid, and if I know Him and illustrate a new creation in Him, there should be this indescribable fragrance in my life also. But, is there? O that I may be concerned about this, concerned if there is orthodoxy without fragrance or activity without this precious reminder of Christ.

Another aspect may help us. I go into a room full of fragrance and tarry there. Sometimes when I go forth there remains a fragrance in my very clothing because of contact. O, that this may be so spiritually. If we are in the presence of the Lord, and **abiding** there, fragrance will be ours, but not otherwise.

The "Other" Motive.

A BELIEVER may thankfully say, "I have no doubt as to my Saviour's love to me, and no doubt as to my deep heart wish to please Him. Humbly I can confess that this is my innermost longing, and my supreme desire." Thanks be unto

God whenever this testimony can be given truthfully. But then the child of God looks at his life, and says, "With such a Lord, and such an object, what manner of person I ought to be." And there is some contriteness of soul (O that it may ever be increased in us all, Isa. 57. 15), and some fervent expectation that the ordinary details of daily life may more consistently express this innermost longing, and illustrate it more and more fully, in the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit.

True, many sins are kept back. Impatient words, selfish words, various actions that dishonour the Lord, unholy mannerisms, and looks of irritation, are **kept back**—increasingly. But the believer wants to please the Lord more, and he experiences heart-concern because of the intrusion of the other motive, often it **seems** only half-consciously?

Why do I read the Scripture and pray? Is there at any time much of a natural mental interest in the former, and an asking for what **self** wants in the latter? In declaring the Gospel, a side-motive sometimes appears to force its way in. Natural pleasure in "activity," and the personal joy in the effort appears to put the Lord in the background. Not that there is any settled wish that it should be. Far otherwise. But lack of communion with God in **one** thing means failure in **another**, and the words "while men **slept**" have more applications than we at first realize. We are ashamed of the "**side-wish**," and yet the "other motive" keeps on ousting the **pure object** of love to God. The subtlety of the enemy is remarkable. That which **should** be the **effect**, and accompaniment, is made the primary aim. For example, the effect of pleasing God should be our joy, and stealthily the foe lays undue stress on our joy, or, again, we rightly fear irregularity, which dishonours the Lord: but routine for reputation's sake has **transferred** the real motive altogether. How our hearts long to be kept to **one** aim, and to include all else in that one aim. The "other motive" is our peril, for we may continue scrupulously Scriptural, and earnestly active, and yet this "side-aim" may be sapping our strength, and hindering our privilege of bringing much glory to the Lord. But the Holy Spirit never leads to the "other motive." May we not look to our Heavenly Father, and ask for **increasing** victory over self's disguised rivalry with Christ, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit?

The Scriptures are graciously given to encourage faith, and to show us for what we should have faith. Faith does not appoint its own objects, but gladly accepts God's will.

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