

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The Lord will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people."
1 Samuel 12. 22.

A Word of Introduction.

THE lovingkindnesses of our God enable us to speak yet further of what He IS, and what He DOES. To help His dear people along the path of obedience is an object of this Magazine, all included in one object of glorifying HIS Name! The words of 1 Peter 4. 11 are always applicable, "That God in ALL things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." We cannot praise Him too much: our fullest and highest praise is very small contrasted with His exaltation.

That He may deign to use each page, and bless readers unitedly, and cause an awakening of love, in the power of the Holy Spirit, must ever be the fervent, prayerful wish of His redeemed people.

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Thoughts that Help on Psalm 119.*

WE have not exhausted this precious *mine*. Happy indeed, are we if we can use the last word with its other English meaning also and *claim* God's message as our own. I have been impressed by the delightful emphasis on God's testimonies, precepts, and so forth. Only about three verses are without such a word (90, 122, 84 "judgment," in a somewhat different sense). Remarkably we find the beauty of God's "commands,"

* If readers have not seen "Some Underlying Thoughts in the Longest Psalm," "Using Psalm 119 to the Glory of God," etc., they are welcome to copies.

"promises" are not so frequently before us, though they likewise were dear to the psalmist (49): but his witness is specially important in view of the common tendency to exalt love against law. The believer, in a law to Christ, should rejoice in His commandments. They are only irksome to lawlessness. Is it not so?

The repeated "Thy" is precious: we rarely read of "judgments," usually of "Thy judgments" and so forth: God and His words are united (verse 12 illustrates very clearly). And most of the different descriptions come almost the same number of times: Law 25, Testimonies 23, Precepts 21, Statutes 21, Commandments 22, Judgments 21. The two Hebrew terms translated "word" occur 24 and 19 times respectively: the latter may be rendered "saying." ‡

In any single section we find at least six of these special words, usually seven or eight, never more. In only a few cases does the translation obscure this, e.g., "Thine ordinances" (judgments, 91), and "As Thou usest to do" (according to a judgment, 132).

I have been struck by the large proportion of sections beginning with "word"—eleven (half the whole): another begins with "saying," immediately followed by "word," and in five of the eleven "saying" is in the second verse. There is no *similar* use of other terms, though six sections contain "Testimonies" in the last verse, and "Precepts" and "Statutes" alike claim five. The most evident structure seems to meet us in "Tzaddi" and "Koph," where the second to fourth verses in each have the same order, Testimonies, Word(s), Saying, (138-140, 146-148), and the sixth to eighth, Law; Commandments, Testimonies, (142-144, 150-152). We notice both "Word" and "Words," but it is interesting to see that "Law" is singular, and the other terms, except "Judgment," plural. Thus are we encouraged both to value each message from God, and also to see how the different parts of His truth combine to make one whole in which our hearts rejoice.

The same word is unusual in adjoining verses, albeit we have "word" in 16 and 17, "commandments" in 47, 48, "precepts," in 93, 94, and "statutes" in 117, 118. It is refreshing to remember that we have only gathered a little of the fruit, § and that the prayerful desire after the experience set forth is a privilege in the daily life of those who would walk with God.

‡ It is observable that, with five exceptions, the Holy Spirit alternates these terms in a section, e.g., 41, saying, 42, word; 49, word, 50, saying; 57, words, 58, saying.

§ We shall always welcome helpful points on this psalm, and to know of believers who have learnt it by heart, or are seeking so to do.

The Parables of Matthew 13.

Continued.

In the brief compass of about thirty words we have the treasure, the hiding, the man, the field, the further hiding, the joy, the going away, the selling, the buying. The TWO words already explained in verses 36-43 have been rightly used to be the key, and everything else is fitting. The life, death, resurrection, and coming day of the Lord Jesus Christ are all unveiled, and we behold also something of His gracious and wondrous character. We see His joy in His people, and were not His delights with the sons of men (Prov. 8. 31)? Is not His joy often before us in Scripture, and frequently with a reference to His loved ones? "The oil of gladness above Thy FELLOWS" (Ps. 45. 7). "In that hour Jesus REJOICED in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast . . . revealed them unto BABES" (Luke 11. 21), "Well done, good and faithful SERVANT. . . enter thou into the JOY of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 21). And His joy was ever in the Father's will (Ps. 16 8, 9, 40. 8). The two-fold thought is found in Isaiah 64. 5: He was the One rejoicing and working righteousness; but at once we have the plural, even *the ones remembering God* in His ways, because they are accepted in the Righteous One Whose obedience is imputed to them as "the righteousness of God." And His exceeding joy in the fruit of His work is seen both in Jude 24, and Song 3. 11 where we have the day of the gladness of His heart. A Greater than Jacob toiled, and wearied not of His work, because of the love He had to His bride. Commandments are not grievous when there is love (1 John 5. 3). There was no forced labour in the obedience unto death of our glorious Saviour. We adore Him. His joy was a joy in the poor, guilty sinners He came to redeem—a joy in the elect of God—and nothing could change His purpose of heart. He went away—the very word used for His death and resurrection in John 8. 21, 22: 13. 36, etc.—and sold all that He had. In His incarnation He, Who was rich, for our sakes became poor, but, as Philipians 2 indicates. He yet further humbled Himself. He SOLD all that He had. We think of the way in which He was stripped of all, even His garments taken by the Roman soldiers. But this, though typical, was not "SELLING," His personal, active work. Usually we associate it with the obtaining of money, and then the use of that wherewith to buy elsewhere. But the silence of the Holy Spirit as to this would suggest that the two-fold transaction was entirely with the Father. And thus the precious work of Christ, in giving up all, was not lost, it was brought to God as the purchase price for those to be redeemed. The justice of God shines forth. The fact that they were His by creation, aye, and by electing

love before the world's foundation, could not obviate the need for atonement. They must be purchased,—or they must be condemned. And He Who purchases must present an adequate price, and gladly give up the whole. Nothing short of perfection in fulfilling the will of God could be acknowledged, and thus the Lord Jesus sold ALL. The withholding of one detail would have invalidated all. As Daniel 9. 26 reminds us He had NOTHING: nothing could be kept back. But thereby He receives everything, for the purchase is rightly His, and, furthermore, His obedience must become His award in resurrection, in accord with the words, "The Man Who hath done these things shall live in them" (Rom. 10. 5: there is no "if" in the Hebrew of Lev. 18. 5), and if *His*, it must be theirs, for was He not their Substitute? Hence imputation *and* union stand together, and we are made "the *righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor., 5. 21).

Difficulties often lead to blessing. Some may ask—Why purchase the field, as well as the treasure? Matthew 13. 24 has already implied this, and as our beloved Lord was the Last Adam He must have earth's sovereignty (Gen. 1. 28). To withhold this would be to deny the acceptability of His work. As the Son of Man, He will bear the glory on earth (Heb. 2. 5-8), and He will be seen where He was rejected, and His people too are to be manifested where they are now obscure. "The Righteous shall be recompensed IN THE EARTH." (Prov. 11. 31). "That field" must be His, and Jerusalem its centre must be "a praise in the earth." All "spiritualizing away" misses the fulfilment of God's plan, and would destroy His truthfulness.

Some may still ask:—Why the PURCHASE, if the people are God's choice? And why the purchase from God, if they were sold to the enemy? Both questions lead to the further unveiling of our Redeemer's glory. Sin has not only brought in a separation, but guilt, and therefore the deliverance from the debt is necessary, and the payment must be to Him to Whom the debt is owed. God's election is never at the expense of His holy law, but there is a perfect harmony between all His relationships. Again, Satan has NO RIGHT to those who have sold themselves to him for nought (Isa. 50. 3). As a liar and a murderer he has gained a temporary possession, but no right. And thus he must be cast out, NOT COMPENSATED, and, thanks be unto God, the Lord Jesus was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3. 8), and render him powerless against the many sons brought to glory (Heb. 2. 10).

The present tense is not an accident. We do not read "He went and sold and bought," but "goeth" and "selleth" and "buyeth." The vividness is not only to help our heartfelt realization, but to remind of the fulness of delight He had,

as He made haste to do the Father's will, that we, rejoicing in Him, may not be slothful, or hesitating, but, on the contrary, overflowing with love's intense readiness. Obedience without love would not be obedience. His obedience lacked nothing of love, it was love throughout.

Do we read elsewhere of "selling?" We call to mind the words of Christ to the rich young man, and as He described HIMSELF when He spoke of the Samaritan, so that which the young man failed to do was more than done by our exalted Lord. He not only sold all, and gave, but sold all, and bore judgment itself, that He might be able to give more than earthly food and blessing to the *utterly* poor and helpless! And surely His TREASURE—the same word is found in Matthew 19. 21—will be His eternal joy, and we, as parts of that treasure, shall rejoice with Him. It is all so glorious—what can we do but praise?

Just as the three LATTER parables to the multitudes begin with "The kingdom of heaven is like," so is it, INVERTEDLY, with the three FORMER, addressed to the disciples. Thus these words continually meet us, with their practical message as to the "heavenly calling," even though we are humbled to see that which merely professes to be "heavenly." But in the "treasure" we have reality, and behold the delight of God! the Father and God the Son in the redeemed, and our heart would rejoice as we meditate on the fact that we are His by grace and purchase. What manner of persons ought we to be in holy conversation and godliness:—His in love's devotedness.

The sixth parable is closely associated. If we already have guidance as to the Man, the finding, the selling and the buying, the fresh words of verses 45, 46, soon take their place in the picture. The description "Merchant Man" impresses. We realise that one may find a treasure unexpectedly, and AP- PARENTLY "by accident." Hence this further unveiling. There was *nothing* of chance, or surprise, in the glorious work of the Lord Jesus. He came to secure a people for Himself. Men may speak glibly of the commercial view of the atonement, but the Holy Spirit has shown us Christ's own stress on the PURCHASE. The work was not an indefinite display of mercy: the Lord Jesus came for a definite transaction of grace. The seeking of goodly, or beautiful, PEARLS may present a difficulty. But is it not in harmony with God's testing of Israel under law, and with the words "These three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none" (Luke 13. 7, cf. Isa. 5. 2, Ps. 14. 2)?* The Lord Jesus came unto His own possessions, and His own people received Him not. He found no pearls (plural): man is an utter failure. But there

*The treasure may hint this. Christ did not only buy the field, but came first to it, and found the treasure, as if He were about to display it. The long journey of Luke 19. 12 is revealed elsewhere.

is a delightful change—the plural is left, and we find one pearl, and that of great price. A more literal rendering emphasizes this thought, “BUT having found.” There is a precious contrast. He could not fail, nor be discouraged. And we shall yet see that, in one aspect, He found, in another He made, this costly pearl. The past tenses here do not remove the joy of the former parable, but they afford another aspect. Our Lord’s rejoicing was not the temporary excitement of a child of earth. Here we see the grandeur of His love in counting the cost. As the Merchant Man He knew the value set upon the pearl, and, with definite calculation, “sold all that He had and bought it.” His joy did not hinder this definiteness, and yet His view of all the circumstances did not make the action only part of an EXTERNAL plan: there was a PRESENT, living joy as He wrought it out. The glory of His perfect character is before us, and every tense used by the Holy Spirit combines to refresh our hearts.

We do not read He bought the sea, to which the ungodly are likened. The sovereign possession of earth was before us in the fifth parable, but here the thought is changed. ’Tis His own people as the fruit of His own work who are brought before us now. The treasure tells of God’s election, the pearl of Christ’s redemption, the good fish of the Holy Spirit’s quickening. The treasure was hidden, the pearl was made, the fish were brought out of the sea individually. Nor do we read of purchasing the oyster-shell, inasmuch as that seems to set forth, like the badger-skins, the humiliation of Christ in the days of His flesh, in the body prepared for Him, wherein men saw no beauty. *Now* He is glorified.

And how precious are His people to Himself, and how costly. “One pearl of great price.” Nothing but His precious blood could purchase them. But He gladly gave all, and withheld nothing, and, even as the righteous will shine forth as the sun, so will they have the lustre of the pearl, and the rich display of His rainbow-like COVENANT love. Who can tell all that is wrapped up in the love of Christ (Eph. 3. 19)?

The direct teaching of the Lord Jesus is clear, and we would never build doctrine on our own inferences, or on unmentioned thoughts. But there is often much further help for the soul, apparently HINTED by the words used, and, if we test all by the definite statements of Scripture elsewhere, we shall distinguish the Lord’s hints from human suggestions. We may therefore reverently ask—Does the Lord give us further blessing by the choice of a pearl? I think so, for a pearl shows that which is holy (Matt. 7. 6), excluding evil and welcoming praise (Rev. 21. 21). It is formed by the living oyster’s response to that which pierces and wounds. Here is the lustre of love that WILL not be irritated. May we not thus sum up the life-attitude of our adorable Lord? Thus the

pearl, as the beautiful tabernacle-veil, would seem to set forth His perfect life of obedience. But the blessings thereby are AVAILABLE only through His DEATH; and how can the pearl be obtained except via death? We turn again to the revelation of Leviticus 18. 5 (Rom. 10. 5). The remarkable fact is that the only deliverance from a position “under the law” (which Christ took, Gal. 4. 4) is by death (Rom. 7. 1). Hence we reach the apparent paradox that an Obedient One, not deserving death, can never reach the goal, UNLESS He becomes a Substitute for sinners. But if He becomes a Substitute He must finally receive the reward of His obedience after paying the penalty for those for whom He becomes a Substitute. And they, if He has truly taken their doom, must be free, and necessarily have His merits. Hence remarkably the law involves the demand that He should purchase His own obedience, and THAT very obedience becomes (as we have seen) identified with the people in whose place He stood. But such is exactly the wondrous picture suggested by the parable. The Lord Jesus both made and purchased the pearl, and we are His. Truly we may say the Law was with a view to Him:—and not only so, but Nature also was thus arranged. Nor is this surprising,—their Author is One, and the Same. We can only worship and praise.‡

The seventh parable, in structure and language, reminds of the second. These are the first and last parables in this chapter which begin “The kingdom of heaven is like.” The large drag net is cast into the sea, and it gathers of every kind or race (same word, Mark 7. 26, Acts 4. 36, 18. 2). And then we have the drawing on to the shore, and a definite severance, at a time of crisis, but there is no mention of IMMEDIATE glory or wrath. The good are contrasted with the corrupt, as the word signifies. There is not the hint that some “kinds,” or nations, are rejected. Rather, the decayed and putrid may bring before us those whose profession is manifestly dead, and loathsome. Such are cast outside, i.e. outside the net. But at the same time the good are gathered into vessels, belonging usually to the owner of the net. The Lord Jesus again gives an explanation. The time is “the ending of the age,” which, as we have seen in parable 2, implies a period.* The angels’ activity is linked with the same time there. And in both passages we have a twofold action: (a) sever (b) cast them into the furnace of fire. There is no warrant for the IMMEDIATE sequence, any more than the immediate burning

‡ A leaflet on this subject is available (also typed notes). It is very remarkable that the Law, thus rightly explained, in its positive commands and glory, would fit NO ONE ELSE. It is like the types, definitely with a view to Christ.

* The parallels would seem to include:—One field, one net; wheat, good fish; tares, corrupt fish; the end of the age and the angels in both: gathering out of His kingdom, casting out: final burning.

in verse 30. The putrid are OUTSIDE the claimed possession of the One Who has authority, whereas the good fish are gathered, on the shore, in separate vessels. May not this refer to the reviving and bringing together of the Lord's people in Scriptural assemblies, when Christendom is overturned, and the daughters of the harlot set manifestly aside? This would harmonise with Matthew 24. 45, 46, and show the Lord's delight in the fellowship and local gatherings of His people. § The 3½ years are soon over, and the ungodly have the FURTHER casting into the furnace of fire. There is no hint that this takes place at the beginning. As we ponder these solemnizing subjects, let us not alone seek accuracy of interpretation, but a godly exercise of soul in the Holy Spirit's enabling, that we may be ready for our Lord Jesus, and that we may be concerned as to those who know Him not, and who fear not the "wailing and gnashing of teeth." The practical nature of all Christ's utterances, both on *our own* behalf, and that we may be rightly anxious for *others*, needs continual emphasis.

And now we reach the last parable. the eighth, suggestive of resurrection ground, and a new order of "scribes." The eighth parable is personal, as the first, but there we have Christ in the FIELD, here we have His faithful people (viewed individually, "every"), following His example (note too Song 7. 13) in the HOUSE. The "scribe" is primarily a "writer," and the arrangement of Deuteronomy 17. 18 was very beautiful. I would never regret, when a young man, writing out the New Testament, in a somewhat literal translation. But reading and writing, though precious, are not enough without communion. Hence we have the word "instructed" or "discipled" (note Matt. 28. 18, 19, John 15. 8). It is by grace that we have become God's pupils (John 6. 45). And discipleship, implies docility and loving obedience in the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Lord Jesus by the word "scribe" indicates the setting aside of Judaism. It is interesting to see the words brought over (e.g. assembly, priesthood—belonging to all believers—elder, etc.), that we may seek to please the Lord where the earthly nation failed. We have said the Lord's people are to imitate Him, and is not He the primary Householder of this chapter? Yet, though His disciples are usually described as servants, (and we behold their responsibility in Mark 13. 34, 35), their high privilege and care for one another may be brought before us by the same word.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

§ Appropriately the parable to the people speaks of bundles, or gatherings on earth of unsaved ones, ready for judgment: the parable to the disciples suggests gatherings of saved ones, waiting for their Lord.

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"My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Ezekiel 37. 27.

A Word of Introduction.

THIS promise, to be fulfilled in the Millennium, reminds us of the delight God has in being with His people. We think of Exodus 25. 8. as well; "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." And in the present dispensation the words are definite, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them." (2 Cor. 6. 16). The eternal future is marked by the declaration, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them." (Rev. 21. 3). And Isaiah 57. 15. speaks of His individual interest in His redeemed. Do we value His love as we should, and enjoy our privileges? An assembly is not to be merely a "place" for preaching, but a habitation of God.

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"Seven Thousand."

IS it not not probable that most of us have misunderstood the reference to the seven thousand in 1 Kings 19. 18? Some have spoken of these as secret believers, and have suggested a parallel to-day. Thanks be unto God for all who love Him, of whom we know nothing. But believers should seek to recognise one another, and act together. God has not appointed different systems and societies, nor voluntary isolation, but the bringing together of His beloved people in loving fellow-

ship. Some dear ones, disappointed by the condition of things, remaining at home, omit regularity of worship, and are unwilling to journey on the week-day evenings to a Scriptural gathering, and tend to become listless on the Lord's Day. We all need to rouse ourselves and stir up one another, in the Lord's enabling, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb. 10. 25).

Undoubtedly the message was meant to cheer Elijah, and withal to reprove, in grace, any despondency, or undue self-consciousness found in 1 Kings 19. 10, 14. And have not we the same need to-day? We should pray for and seek out hidden children of God, and should beware of imagining we are "alone." Pride is easy at all times, and in all things: pride of pleasing the Lord in the path of His will is possibly one of the most dangerous forms of pride. Thanks be unto God for every call to humility, and joy in the consciousness of His work in others.

The Holy Spirit gives us the key in Romans 11 where the words are quoted, "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal: even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (verses 4, 5). Observe we do not read that the seven thousand were serving the Lord: the Holy Spirit's description is purely negative: we are not told what they had done but what they had *not* done, and thus the stress is on election and its precious fruits. This is one of the many passages to show the Scripture emphasis on the oft-forgotten part of truth, and to show that election is meant to be a deep encouragement. We are not told there were seven thousand believers, but seven thousand elect. And this is our rejoicing to-day. God's election guarantees a remnant. Men may speak against election, but where should we all be apart from it?—"Dead in trespasses and sins."

Thus the passage affords a precious parallel with Revelation 13. There we see that some will not worship the beast. Are all such believers? Nay, some are withheld before they know the Lord. And why withheld? Verse 8 gives the key:—their names were written long before, in the Lamb's book of life. Such as those of Matthew 25. 37, are brought to know afterwards "why" they were held back, and why they did this or that. Thanks be unto God for His electing grace, and for His "seven thousand," at all times, including to-day. Let our lives show a confidence in Himself, and a willingness for His path, without fainting, or a sideward, or backward glance to Sodom or Egypt.

God has freely given His people everything with Christ; it is their privilege to appreciate, to appropriate, to assimilate,—in fellowship with Himself.

A Mother's Responsibilities: Specially in the Book of Proverbs.

SCRIPTURE lays great emphasis on the privileges of parents, and the memory, as well as the heart, may be helped, if we add, their prerogatives and power. The very first mention implies that the child remains with them till grown up (Gen. 2. 24): we observe a definite contrast in the animal world.

The united influence of father and mother is ever before us, and the *first* "Commandment with promise" mentions them together, as those whom children are not merely to obey but to *honour*, a peculiarly impressive word. The absence of "honour" to-day is one of the sad signs of the times. The Holy Spirit, in an epistle dealing especially with the heavenly calling, mentions this command (Eph. 6. 1-3, see also Col. 3. 20). Precepts are not out of place because believers are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. *Lawlessness is not* the reverse of legality, but its kinsman: both exalt self. It is deeply important that parents should recognize this teaching, and God's instruction as to acting *together*. The present day tendency for such to disagree in front of their family is deplorable, and sinful. They little realize the bitter fruits of this departure from God's will. The children become one-sided, and seek to set one parent against the other, and to gain from one what the other would refuse. The scheming involved, together with deceit and its sad accompaniments, hiding from one that which another knows, must undermine the whole moral training. We think of Genesis 27. If only believers realized the *responsibilities* of marriage and a home earlier in their life, and recollected 1 Peter 3. 7, with the whole of Ephesians 5. 21-33, these Scriptures would be a source of rich blessing. Often we are awakened "too late," and yet, even then, God may mercifully grant the restoration of years which the caterpillar has eaten. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control, and if one parent regards the action of the other too imperious with respect to the young people, a *prayerful* conversation alone, if both are believers, may be full of spiritual exercise for both and of personal blessing to each. Often we see in children a family likeness, temperamentally as well as in physical features, and may well be searched as to our past unconscious influence, and its future use for the Lord.

About twenty times in the Books of Kings we read "the mother's name was —," as if to imply the great power a mother has. Alas, many women, even believers, seem to seek a sphere of authority to which God has not called, and, meanwhile, to lose the honour and privileges which He has appointed. If the home were more frequently in accord with Titus 2. 5, there would be "much fruit." It is easier to "preach" than to undertake background service to the Lord.

We all wish to see "great results" more quickly. 'Tis a grave mistake. "Guide the house" in 1 Timothy 5. 14 is a remarkable word. It contains the same root as "master of the house," and implies a queenly sovereignty, in happy subjection to God's will (Col. 3. 18). The Holy Spirit's language in 1 Peter 3. 6 is not popular to-day. Those who speak lightly of "the words of Paul," and urge that he was unmarried, show a distressingly proud denial of inspiration. It is remarkable that the same Divine Author used a married man to give this parallel testimony, which only self-will rejects.

Influence for evil is marked in such words as "his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly," 2 Chronicles 22. 3, and it is deeply refreshing to turn to Proverbs 31. 1, and read "The words of king Lemuel, even the prophecy that his mother taught him." If death and life are in the power of the tongue, we may find the same tremendous possibilities in that which is entrusted to a mother.

It is true that a father is mentioned somewhat more frequently in Proverbs (23 verses), but the mother is fourteen times before us. In accord with the harmony already urged, we note with joy that in twelve instances father *and* mother are together in this appointed *order*. Twice we are reminded of a mother's *law* (1. 8. 6. 20), her words are to be authoritative to her children, trained and caused to love her with the affection of chapter 31. 28. The deep feelings of a parent are brought out in 4. 3 (love), 10. 1 (heaviness), 23. 25 (gladness), and the bringing to shame of 29. 15 may be added. Too often parents of to-day rather expect the children to have their own way, and are not pained in the manner God has appointed.

The uniformity with which Scripture upholds the mother's authority is impressive. In 15. 20 and 23. 22 God condemns "despising," in 19. 26 "wasting," in 28. 24 "robbing," in 30. 11 the absence of "blessing," and in 30. 17 "despising to obey." Such language shows that He expects not only external obedience, but also esteem and respect. There are other ways of robbing beside that which is outward and material. These are days of "unfeeling," and we should be concerned that there may be holy contrasts among ourselves.

We have alluded to the priceless acrostic of chapter 31— all Scripture is priceless—the Holy Spirit shows a high standard, and we should not continually expect to be disappointed. It may seem easier to be "irregular" and to lose our authority in irritation, and worldliness, and other sins, but we shall lose heavily through these departures from the Lord. For the glory of His Name, may we not plead with Christian parents, and Christian mothers especially, to maintain their holy dignity, in devoted dependence on the Lord? The willingness to be thought old-fashioned and peculiar may well be viewed rather as a true adornment for those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Joseph's Action in Genesis 44.

ONLY One stands out in perfection throughout the pages of Scripture. Every other needed a Saviour. And the Holy Spirit does not hide Abraham's failure, nor omit Moses' unguarded words. Men of like passions, or feelings, with ourselves, lived lives of faith, but, like Uziah, they faltered when strong, and learnt, with Hezekiah, what was half hidden, yet, nevertheless, in their heart. Joseph was a godly man. "The Lord was with Joseph" is a precious refrain, but he also seems to have failed somewhat in his method of bringing his brothers to repentance, though his intention was right. We shall receive much practical help from Genesis 44.

It is remarkable that he seemed, through a measure of holy fear of a lie, to draw back from a direct accusation of stealing. Verses 4 and 5 only hint:* so is it in verse 15. The charge is "Ye rewarded evil for good," an evident allusion to 37. 14. 28. Yet we learn thereby not only that Joseph dreaded direct falsehood, and so should we, but also that we should avoid *deceiving*, even if the truth is "said." The fact is, like David in 2 Samuel 15, after committing our case to the Lord, we sometimes start our planning and scheming, and then untruthfulness soon comes in (verses 33, 34). How timely is God's warning in these matters (Ps. 37. 5).

"Ye have done evil in *so doing*" is not explicit, but while it rightly wishes to bring home a sense of sin, it really *implies* a present theft. That there had been *another* theft years ago is plain. The cup is linked with rejoicing, and Joseph had been his father's *delight*, and his brothers had stolen him (40. 15). With reference to this joy, (and possibly to the way God brought him out of prison through the chief butler's dream), a cup appears to have been chosen. The parallel seems helpful, but the language was misleading, even though the previous placing of the money in the mouths of the sacks might have given them the key.

Joseph longed for his brothers to acknowledge theft, and they did so. But God's overruling of a method to bring blessing does not justify it. We remember the wrongly smitten rock in Numbers 20.

The order in Genesis 44. 12 was designed to make them feel almost triumphant, and then, at the last, all hopes were dashed to the ground. And the rent clothes were theirs this time, not their father's, as in 37. 34, and love to Benjamin, *their brother*, was brought out, joined with love to their father, in contrast with the twofold absence of such love when they sold Joseph for "silver" (hence possibly the *silver* cup).

* The Septuagint, missing the appointed incompleteness, seems to try to remove the vagueness by adding, "Why did ye steal my silver cup?"

Judah must make the confession: the very one who had urged the selling. Reuben's intervention in 42. 37 had been refused by Jacob, but Judah's had been permitted (43. 8, 9). Thus the fitting words, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." This does not refer to the apparent theft by one among them. The plural "servants" is impressive. God had not allowed them to be at ease over their iniquity of years before. In 42. 21 they said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." The sin had long haunted them. It was *this iniquity*, not any present act, that Judah felt and confessed. But the confession was still vague. Hence the guarded words of Joseph, which actually never implicated Benjamin, "The man in whose *hand (not sack)* the cup is *found* (no charge of theft) he shall be my servant." It was *not* found in Benjamin's hand. But yet again the words seem to remind us of the danger of the border-line of deceit. Let us *trust God* more as to the way in which we would bring any to repentance. Let us not attempt to do His work on our own lines. We may even seek to bring souls to Christ by our own plans (1 Cor. 2. 5), but this is grievous to Him.

It is noteworthy that Judah distinguishes between the ten and Benjamin, and rightly so, for the latter was not involved in the iniquity felt. Joseph presses the point further, till the exact sin is acknowledged, and then he weeps. Ah, a wondrous *weeping* will yet take place among the nation (Zech. 12. 10-14), when they are brought to acknowledge their guilt, and own the now Rejected One. Then will they worship Him, and language far higher than Judah's repeated "My Lord" will be applied to the Lord of Glory, whose work infinitely transcends Joseph's, and who died to save "that nation" (John 11. 51), and who remarkably was the Antitype of Judah as well, in an altogether more glorious suretyship. The illustration of the dreams of Genesis 37 is very remarkable, and the stress on "thy servant" or "thy servants" on the one hand, and the affection in "my father" on the other, must encourage our hearts.† Let us learn not to be disappointed, when we need to continue in prayer, year after year, for souls that God Himself has laid on our hearts.

† It will help believers to see this set forth at length.

The desire to do better is not enough. An unsaved man may wish that he were different. We need to show that the desire is spiritual, by seeking earnestly, and receiving grace to do right, because our hearts are set on pleasing God. A holy motive and holy power are the evidences of life from above.

Some Repeated Words of Judah in Genesis 44. 18, 34.

My Lord (Seven times).

- 18 Oh, my lord . . . my lord's ears.
- 19 My lord asked his servants.
- 20, 22 We said unto my lord.
- 24 The words of my lord.
- 33 A bondman to my lord.

Thy Servant (Judah, four times).

- 18 Let thy servant . . . against thy servant.
- 32 Thy servant became surety.
- 33 Let thy servant abide instead.

Thy Servant (Jacob, four times).

- 24, 27, 30 Unto thy servant my father.
- 31 Thy servant our father.

Servants (Four times).

- 19 My lord asked his servants.
- 21, 23 Thou saidst unto thy servants.
- 31 Thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs.

My Father (Seven times).

- 24, 27, 30 Thy servant my father.
- 32 For the lad unto my father.
- 32 I shall bear the blame to my father.
- 34 How shall I go up to my father?
- 34 The evil that shall come upon my father.

"Father" also in 19. 20 (twice), 22 (twice), 25, 31 (seven times in all).

The numeration is helpful, sevens, and three fours.

The Parables of Matthew 13.

Concluded.

Furthermore, in one of the parables of redemption, we have seen the Lord's treasure, consisting of His people, and now we rejoice in the treasure of His truth granted to His own. We must have treasures ere we can bring them forth, and though we praise God for new things realized for the first time, we would never weary of the old things also. And our adorable Lord shows that those who POSSESS must USE. "Therefore" implies this responsibility, and may urge that we should emphasize on believers to-day the message of this chapter, that there may be godly separatedness from the world, because of love to Christ. Truth is not given us for our benefit alone: we are trustees. And no part of truth is to be untreasured. It is a wondrous privilege to know the ways of God. The added

verses in Matthew 13 show the blindness of Israel and their unbelief (54-55). Should not our attitude be the one mentioned by the Lord Jesus just before the parables, even the attitude of doing the will of the Father (Matt. 12. 50)? The response of love to all the gracious unveiling of this chapter is also a responsibility. May we grasp this privilege prayerfully, in the Holy Spirit, and bring glory to our adorable Lord, as we look for His Coming.

(If the Lord will, the Parables of the Debtors will commence next month.)

God's Holy Naming in Reproof.

THE Lord spoke to the prophet and said, "Are ye not as the children of the *Ethiopian* unto Me, O children of Israel?" (Amos 9. 7). Correspondingly we find immediately after a reference to His sparing many, that there might be a remnant, the words of holy indignation, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord." (Isa. 1. 10, 11). We call to mind, "Call his name *Lo-ammi*: for ye are not My people, and I will not be yours." (Hos. 1. 9). *But*, blessed be God, there is a remnant, and this small one shall yet become a strong nation, for the zeal of the Lord of hosts will yet perform the word that the Lord of hosts hath spoken, and "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (change of mind).

But there is the setting aside of the people, as a whole, for a season, and of the city, and of the land. Hence the words of Revelation 11. 8. "The great city which spiritually is called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, where also their Lord was crucified." Nevertheless it is written, "Neither shall thy land any more be termed *Desolate*." (Isa. 62. 4), for the set time to favour Zion will come (Ps. 102. 13), and "the counsel of the Lord that shall stand," and we read His words, "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. 29. 11); "Blessed be God" (Ps. 68. 35).

The days pass quickly, but each one is an opportunity. If we do not use it for the Lord, the enemy will use it against Him.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel to come in, that My house may be filled." Luke 14. 23.

A Word of Introduction.

THE precious words of Scripture, shining out above, remind us that God's object in salvation is not only an individual safety for the sinner who flees for refuge. It is far beyond this. There is the majesty of His eternal purpose in the bringing together of the redeemed into a unity which has no earthly parallel, and His house shall be FILLED. And so we have brought before our heart's grateful view "the habitation of God" (Eph. 2. 22), and the words ringing out again, "In My Father's house are MANY abiding places" (John 14. 2). It is deeply important to realize this. The object in view is "a house," with the thought of a home, its food, its rest, its delight and its fellowship, and, as that house is a temple, we have the blessedness of worship, and the eternal pleasure of God as His people's pleasure. And that house shall be FILLED, for He will not fail nor be discouraged. Therefore, to the glory of His Name, in the fuller realization of a covenant salvation by the precious blood of Christ, are these pages sent forth, that His people, "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance," may be getting ready for the Coming of their Lord, in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit along the path of a holy fear of grieving Him (Eph. 4. 30).

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"It Might Have Been Sold."

Mark 14. 5.

YES, "it might have been sold." And human wisdom would still approve of such an arrangement. Devotion to Christ, in its utter fulness, is incomprehensible to the human heart.

That which pleases Him in the use of time and strength and money is often "this waste" before men (verse 4). The fact is that men have no idea of the glory of Christ. The greatness of His condescension to save sinners is unrealized, even as the richness of His salvation. Judas, indeed, had an eye to personal gain, but some who joined his outcry did not apparently share his motive. Thus are we lovingly warned lest we unwittingly join with the enemy, even as the two hundred men who went with Absalom in their simplicity (2 Sam. 15. 11). It is needful to be on our guard. Unless the Lord Jesus is supremely dear to us we shall advocate methods of Christian work and philanthropy which will pain our hearts afterwards.

"It might have been sold." But what if it had been sold? What if the proceeds had been given to the poor? Would there have been a memorial to hand down wherever the goodness is made known,—a memorial of overflowing devotion to Christ? It is this that He has emphasized, and it is to be told wherever the gospel is preached, to show the attitude that befits those who are saved by His precious blood.

The Lord of glory never neglected the poor (see also Gal. 2, 10 with 1 Cor. 11. 1). He became poor for His people's sake. He rejoiced that to the poor the gospel was preached. And there is a Messianic hint in the verse "Blessed is *he that considereth the poor.*" The disciples knew Christ's love when they misinterpreted His words in John 13. 29. We behold His compassion on the multitude, and His care for the widow. There is no doubt as to His attitude.

But He Himself must be Central. If we put the poor in the place of Christ, we err grievously. If "charity" takes our minds off devotedness to His Person we are in danger. Philanthropy can never be allowed to make Him second. If we care for the soul we should not forget the body, but the things that concern His glory are ever paramount, and everything must be included therein. There is no room for a rival: Christ is the First and the Last in this connexion, and *all* Christian service and all gifts should be wrapped up in a devotion to Himself. May the Holy Spirit's application of these striking words of Scripture affect the writer and reader alike, and may we be ashamed together that we have loved Him so little.

Victory over one sin is not victory over all. Self-complacency because of one victory is a stepping stone to defeat, yea, is itself defeat.

The child is to know the father, the disciple is to learn, the servant to serve: every name is precious to a believer.

In Christ mercy and truth are met together; in the world we find neither.

The Parables of the Debtors.

IT is important to connect, and to study together, with prayerful meditation, the words of the Lord which appear to be linked by the Holy Spirit Himself. For example, we find messages concerning two sons both in Matthew 21. 28-31 and Luke 15. 11-32, and the wondrous references to clothing in the new garment of Luke 5. 36, the neglected robe of Matthew 22. 1-14, and the robe given to the prodigal, or rather the "found" son, in Luke 15. 22. There is a profound relation between the parables of the feast in Matthew 22 and Luke 14, but the differences with regard to the messengers (observe the *One* Who brings in and "compels"), and with regard to the final exclusion and final inclusion in the respective parables, are full of deep, helpful, spiritual lessons. The believer who compares and contrasts the aspects of truth which the Lord lovingly shows in the searching parables of the talents and the pounds will not go away empty. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," and we would compare spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2. 13), that we may have a fuller view of His loving will.

It is thus with respect to the parables of the debtors in Matthew 18. 23-35 and Luke 7. 41-43, together with the narrative of Luke 16. 1-12, which is, in any case, applied parabolically, and, it would seem, set in appointed contrast with the frank and free forgiveness of the *two* debtors earlier in the Gospel. The thought of sin as involving a debt is embedded in Scripture. We call to mind the margin of Luke 13. 4, and the precious and practical words of the disciples' prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The present day tendency is to hurry toward the climax of the wrong dealing of man by insisting on his rights. The rights of God are largely forgotten, and the centre of thought has been transferred from the Creator to the creature, so that accountability to God is often in the background, and the thought of debt almost, if not quite, obliterated. But the *fact* cannot be thus abolished. It is only by the finished work of the Lord Jesus that our guilt can be removed. The tendency of to-day is to be occupied more with the safety and joy of the sinner, than with the glory of the Redeemer, the beauty of His finished work, and His delight in His own people. This tendency is part of one and the same attitude, which in science, and daily life, and indeed, all things, as well as in doctrine, would minimise the authority of God, and make His exaltation secondary. With many, who are truly born again, this attitude may be graciously held in check, and may be unconscious, but we do well to search our ways that His majesty, and will, and joy may be dearer to our grateful hearts.

The parable of Matthew 18. 23-35 has a remarkable setting. The Lord Jesus had been dealing with faults among

brethren, and the godly care which would wash one another's feet (verse 15), and accompany all necessary discipline with loving self-control, and definite prayerfulness (verses 16, 20). Peter, unconsciously thinking more of his brother sinning against him than of his sinning against his brother, asked a question which implied, and made essential, an answer of "limitation." But we should not limit the Lord, or restrict His answer as in Acts 1. 24. "How oft" suggests that one must draw the line numerically, and, moreover, that the speaker felt it probable others would do much that would be hard for himself to bear. The Holy Spirit's gracious words on forbearing one another (Eph. 4. 2, Col. 3. 13) are intended to correct the unconscious self-righteousness to which we are all prone. It is often easier to see a brother's fault than our own faults.

The added words "Till seven times?" contain a still further hint of limitation, and call to mind the Divine encouragement of Luke 1. 4 to forgive *seven times in a day*, never losing heart, nor becoming irritated. Such language, though it brings humiliation to the one who feels he has repeatedly failed, may well encourage against despondency, for the Lord will not prove less loving Himself than His words to His people, though we have grieved Him seven times in quick succession. Yet love never takes a wrong "advantage" of His love, nor uses forgiveness to veil the claim and expectation of victory. In Matthew 18 the Lord's answer repeated that of Peter, and adds, with a striking stress on the completeness wrapped up in the word "seven," "Until seventy times seven." And thereby we have one of our Lord's many allusions to the earlier Scriptures, for Daniel 9. 24 comes to mind, and its precious climax in the forgiveness and restoration of the spared ones of Israel. The Lord Himself will then illustrate, on a remarkable scale, that which He here inculcates, and yet He will excuse no sin. The "therefore" of verse 23 shows a close link. Behaviour in the kingdom of the heavens is of the deepest importance, in accord with Christ's commandments. "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; *but*": His word is His people's law. Our lack of love toward others springs from a faulty realization of the love we have received. And so many failures are joined to an unconsciousness of the enormity of sin. The Deity of Christ, and His atonement, the path of separation and God's teaching as to eternal punishment are alike attacked, because the enemy would blind the eyes to the terrible fact of sin. If our eyes have been opened, let us be prayerfully on our guard in this matter. It is worthy of notice that the King has authority before any are brought into the sphere of His redeemed people. The Kingship of God the Father is here brought out (verses 23, 35), as in Matthew 22. 7. This is important, for, as we shall see in that chapter,

Christ is not yet acting in His kingship and judgement, nor is He called the King of His beloved people in the present dispensation.

The taking of account is a striking reminder that God has a right to all. His claims are, as we have seen, so often forgotten to-day. At once we are faced with a stupendous debt. The margin of our Bible suggests £187 10s., but why should we limit to silver, albeit this would mean nearly £2,000,000? Furthermore, the purchasing power was far greater. The denarius which our margin fixes at 7½d. was more comparable with 5s. or more, and this would suggest £15,000,000 as a minimum, even if we exclude gold. Our beloved Lord reminds us of what we ought to have rendered. And the amount has a real meaning: it is based on 10, the number of fellowship. Squares intensify the thought, and this is the *square "squared."* The measurement of the Holiest of All brings before us 10 cubed: here we have the holiness and perfection which should have been presented. God's holy law can allow of no compromise. How blessed it is to realize that in our bankruptcy our Saviour stepped in. But our hearts pause awhile to realize the great need, and the utter despair that reaches the sinner who beholds, for the first time, the majesty of the King's law, and what the subject should have done. Nor is there any hope of compromise. A "composition" in the pound is impossible. In the debt parables there is the Holy Spirit's stress on Christ's repeated testimony that the hopeless debtor paid nothing, nothing at all. And why? The debtor had nothing, what then could he do? All the glory of man is thus swept away. Since our adorable Lord appears as the exact contrast, His Deity and love, and the glory of His salvation, shine out together.

And now we approach a part of the parable where the usual objection against "pressing every point" seems feasible, until we examine more carefully, and prayerfully, what the Lord Jesus *omits* to say. The command as to selling and his *family*, would seem to remind of Adam and what his sin incurred. But this, though remarkable, is only an allusion, with solemnizing power. The personal sinner is here before us. The importance of accountability, and the way we all affect others must not be overlooked. Parents have vast responsibilities. An Israelite sold into slavery involved his whole family. Moreover, as the statement is "all that he had," in the earthly parallel all his possessions and treasures are enumerated. The bearing of this on the godly valuing of a godly home is important.

Everything seems hopeless, but grace shines out, for this is the "beginning" of the reckoning (verse 24, note 1 Pet. 4. 17 with another aspect), and if we have been caused to experience that we deserve the day of judgment, we shall, by faith, behold it *past*, the weight falling on the Son of God's love,

and not on ourselves in the *future*. But at first the outlook is dark. "He had not to pay." Observe that this is a stronger statement than "He had nothing." His *condition* of that of "not having," and therefore the selling could provide nothing. His family were worth nothing. Nor could he, with able-bodied might, produce anything for the One to Whom his debt was due. This might was lacking. "Nought" is as definitely marked on his whole character and circumstances, as helplessness is seen among the poor, halt, maimed and blind of Luke 14. 21. But *they* are brought into the feast, and grace shall abound here.

We do not read, "*That* payment may be made," nor "and thereby payment to be made." The words of the Lord Jesus have a deeper, richer, fuller meaning than any earthly parallel. The King *commands* payment to be made, and it *is* made, blessed be God! It is appointed, and there is no default. The Son of God became Man that payment might be made, a willing payment, a glorious payment, a complete payment, to secure the salvation of guilty sinners. But the way in which grace works is not unveiled at once. Nor is it so in our experience. We do not come to God as the elect, nor with a logical interpretation of all the covenant of grace, but as troubled sinners. God works through a man's heart, not merely through his brains. A man's will does not save him, but God does not save against his will. He lovingly causes a sense of need and a will toward Himself. Hence we have the needful experience here. "The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." Rather "Have longsuffering." The breaking down of a sinner is important: when an unbroken heart "anon with joy" receives the Gospel, there is no evidence of root. But "longsuffering" is passive: it does not give. The "grace" of God *reigns* (Rom. 5. 20) in the days of God's longsuffering, and by *grace*, not longsuffering, we are saved. Each word is used perfectly. The debtor, like the prodigal, hesitates to ask too much, but God does not hesitate to give. The proposal is "I will pay." 'Tis a right acknowledgment of duty, but a wrong anticipation of power. Yet this is what we expect when the Lord's work begins. And now there is a tremendous response of grace. Nay, it is more than a response. It is not "Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion." Rather is it "but": "*but* the Lord of that servant," for He manifested more than longsuffering. He graciously gave all, and "loosed him and forgave him the debt." Why? Some will answer "Because he desired him" (verse 32). They miss the holy exactness of the Saviour's words, "I *forgave* thee all that debt (forgiveness is an experience) *because* thou desiredst Me," but not, "I *loosed* thee because thou desiredst Me." The "loosing" is prior to the forgiveness, and this word is from

the same root as redemption, or release (see both words in Eph. 1. 7). Thanks be to God, the redemption is by the precious blood of Christ alone. Did we not see the holy command that the debt was to be paid, and it was! 'Tis not "I will" of the man, but "I have" of the Saviour. There is a call to praise.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

The Response of the Redeemed.

"**W**E love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19). This brief verse expresses a heavenly principle. And the redeemed of the Lord know its meaning. "Who hath first given to Him?" is a question that they would not be slow to answer. And the similar words "What hast thou, which thou didst not receive?" awaken similar heartfelt thoughts of gratitude. If we bring forth fruit, we bear not the Root, but the Root bears us (Rom. 11. 18), and Christ Jesus is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Indeed the very word for gratitude is from the root of grace, and is the *response* of a grateful heart, even as faith is the reply to God's work and word (the Hebrew word is derived from "truth"). Thus, we, with the apostle, desire to *apprehend* that for which we *were apprehended* of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3. 12). I feel sure that there must be many similar expressions in Scripture, and it would be an enjoyable exercise for children of God to unite in finding them. It is by such fellowship in Bible study that much more can be done to the glory of God in comparing Scripture with Scripture, and by such fruits of study we are caused to feel the preciousness of "one another." Many dear believers seem to think they are only to eat the food prepared by others, and not to help in preparing it.

A precious example of love's response is found in 1 Corinthians 1. 2, "Unto the (*called out*) church . . . *called* to be saints, with all that in every place *call* upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." And the message of Hebrews 6. 18 is impressive, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation." The "consolation" or "encouragement" and "exhortation" here mentioned (for the word has this fulness of meaning) *holds* us ("strong") and we hold it ("have") in reply. The words "strong" and "have" are from the one and same root. We think of a tabernacle type. The upright boards "held" with their tenons ("hands") the sockets which were appointed to "hold" them, and make their holding possible. "I *know* My sheep, and am known of Mine" (John 10. 14) illustrates the same joyful attitude, which the Holy Spirit ever brings before us, for our heart's refreshment. May the daily response be an experience that ever increases, to the praise and glory of God.

“EASIER.”

THREE times we find this word in Luke's Gospel. First, in chapter 5. 23, the Lord Jesus spoke concerning the paralyzed man. The easier thing was to *say*, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” because the guarantee of truth was invisible. But Christ showed that this declaration was not merely “saying,” by His whole life and manner, and at once illustrated this by “doing”; that which was harder to “say” (because it could be put to proof at once), albeit easier to “do.” “Rise up and walk!” “Easier to do,” *if* we may thus speak of the work of One Who was altogether mighty. Yet there is a deeply important lesson here. To forgive sins was, indeed, a mighty *work*, the fruit of an appointed burden beyond all parallel. It cost God nothing to create the world, but how much it *cost* Him to save sinners, Verily the cost was great to our adorable Lord to die for the guilty. And the forgiveness here was in advance, because of the sureness of His redemptive work.

In Luke 16. 17 we read of the firmness of God's words. “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” And thus again we are brought to the realization of Christ's work, for He has honoured the law and made it honourable (Isa. 42. 21), meeting fully every demand, and bearing the doom. The added verse in Luke 16 shows that men desired in their own way to put away the law to which they were bound, but this was impossible except by the death of Christ. And Romans 7 works out this testimony, and shows its present application. Apart from Christ there is no hope (verses 1, 4). But by His death we are brought to a marriage union which is impossible in earthly things. Ordinarily the other partner dies, freeing the spared husband or wife from obligation; but substitution involves resurrection, so that we, the ones who died, are united to the Raised One, Who died in our place that we too might be raised, and brought into this wondrous relationship. Hence the fulness of grace wrapped up in such words as “The Bride” and “The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.”

The third “easier” equally exalts our adorable Lord. “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God” (Luke 18. 25). We have no authority to tone down this striking testimony. The eye of a needle means the eye of a needle. That which is impossible with men is here before us. Salvation is a startling miracle. And, further, we see that the sinner must be brought to own his nothingness. But, thanks be to God, that which cannot be done by man is *not* impossible in the mighty work of our mighty God. Souls *are* brought into the Kingdom of God, saved for ever by the precious blood of Christ.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

The Lord Jesus said:—

“I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them.” John 17, 14.

A Word of Introduction.

THE WORD or the WORLD—which shall be ours? The grace of God shines out in Scripture, and He invites His people into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2. 12). Should we not respond, as those “redeemed from the earth,” with love's gratitude and readiness, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit? And shall we not respond? To encourage “one another” is the privilege of His people (Heb 10. 25), and it is with this object, and His glory in it, that these pages are sent forth. A forgotten Bible seems to be well nigh an impossibility if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but a neglected Bible may be more common than we realize.

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The Parables of the Debtors.

(Continued).

The thoughtful reader may suggest “But it was commanded that he should be sold.” and yet this was not carried out. Has such an one ever noticed the words of Genesis 49. 7. “I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel”? There is no declaration “Therefore will I scatter them in judgment among Israel”: hence God, Who knew what He would do, could bring in the wondrous fulfilment of Jacob's words beyond all that he thought (1 Pet. 1. 12), in the fact that the Levites had no tribal inheritance but were scattered among other

tribes in God's *service* (Jos. 21). So is it here: there is precious teaching underneath the surface. We have seen that the payment is not linked with any selling in judgment, but there was a precious payment in grace, and He Who paid is the One Who "loved the Church and gave Himself for it,"—He *bought* His people with His blood. There was a holy purchase, and thus the word "sell" may come to mind in remarkable contrast with Judges 2. 14, for all the covenant transaction was between the Father and the Son.¹ And the Holy Spirit works a desiring in the heart of the redeemed that they may know the forgiveness and fellowship which spring from the one finished work. Yet the gospel is not preached as a philosophy, but as an invitation to the lost, and when we are saved we see the plan of grace, surpassing all philosophy, and we begin to rejoice in the hope of seeing Him Who wrought it that we might be His for ever. The utterly bankrupt sinner has an absolutely full Saviour.

And now the debtor is free: how will he use his freedom? Gratitude, and pity for others, and loving desire to know the mind and fulfil the wisdom of his glorious Benefactor, should characterize the whole life. But 'tis here that we find a painful contrast. Blessings do not guarantee a corresponding life: responsibility is lovingly urged upon us. "*But* the same servant went out": we are not told how soon, but it seems easy to fail quickly. Yet probably the 100 pence debt was contracted after the forgiveness just received. There is a right "going out" (John 10. 9), but there is a wrong one also. When we are outside God's communion we are in peril. There is an ominous silence after the gracious deliverance: we remember the Lord's question in Luke 17. 17, "But where are the nine?" It is easy to be more occupied with a blessing than with Him Who has bestowed it. "They soon forgot" has many sad parallels. The forgiven man "found" one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence. The *fact* of the debt is not denied. There are real responsibilities between fellow believers. Let us be careful how we deal with our brethren, especially when we are "in the right." Let us be careful as to "finding one" who owes us somewhat. It is easy to forget *how much* we have been forgiven, how much we have grieved the Holy Spirit, how much our brethren have used patience toward us. A slight sense of sin cuts at the root of true holiness among children of God to-day. This man gripped his fellow-servant, and "was throttling him." Horrible, you say. But have you never been irritated against a brother? Have you never acted in hastiness? May be you have comforted yourself that you did not mean to go as far

¹With regard to election, they were "given" (John 6. 37), but the covenant agreement, in perfect righteousness, included His priceless payment, so that they are His in every way.

as choking him; but only to bring him to a right attitude. It is easy to persuade ourselves that our action is permissible, as we can talk against others, even under the plea of asking prayer for them. Do we love those who owe us an hundred pence? Let us not turn aside the question—"They are wrong as well," "They ought to pay." That is not the point. How do we bear the sins of others against ourselves? Have we love's conformity with the words "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any one have a cause of blame against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3. 13)? The Scriptures are intensely practical. The parables of Matthew's gospel speak to the heart. Call them not Jewish, and then turn aside the Holy Spirit's application of Christ's words!

You will have someone who owes you a hundred pence, and he will be a brother. It will be a real loss to you. He *ought* to deal with the matter. He is in the wrong, but if you do not love, you will be in the wrong too. Matthew 18. 15 is the exact opposite of taking by the throat. It is important to be ready when your brother turns and says, "I repent." It is important to seek him out when he is wandering, if, by gracious humbling, made spiritual enough to do it graciously (Gal 6. 1), but *never* take him by the throat. Never deal with any case unless you love. Never reprove unless you love. Without love you will spoil all, however sound you are in doctrine, and Scriptural in practice. The Lord Jesus did not take you by the throat. His love is meant to melt all our hearts still.

The very words of the fellow-servant should surely have reminded of grace received:—"Have patience with me." But when the mind is made up it is hard to stop, and still harder when we have taken another by the throat. Let us seek grace to deal with sin at the outset. "Leave off contention before it be meddled with" is a Divine principle (Prov. 17. 14). "But he would not" is the solemnizing description that the Lord Jesus gives. He was contrary: hence the word "but." The *will* was wrong: there was no justification of his attitude. The evil was within: let us seek grace as to our *wills*. It is deeply important that we should *will* to do God's *will* (John 7. 17).

The wrong will brings forth the wrong action. He "went and cast him into prison." "He went." This was indeed a going *away* from God's path. The "casting" speaks further, in such a context, of the evil heart. We are reminded of Satan's work (Rev. 2. 10). Have you and I a prison for the believer who sins against us, or have we water and a towel as John 13 appoints? The Lord indicates that Peter's "Till seven times" was proud forgetfulness of what he had been forgiven, and an attitude perilously near this unloving and unlovely bitterness. As soon as we make our limits, self is put

in God's place. And the violence was against a repentant brother! "Prison" denies brotherly love, and raises self's barrier. It is easier to act thus than we realize.

His fellow-servants saw. They were very sorry. Are we sufficiently *sorry* because of the sins that we see? Paul spoke *weeping* of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and rivers of water ran down the psalmist's eyes because men kept not God's law. Especially do we need sorrow as to sins among God's people, and an unloving attitude. The fellow-servants did not "go," they "came." If a brother sins against us we should go and tell *him* his fault alone, but this was a more public sin, and they could, without unholy gossip, go together to their Lord. Fellowship in prayer as to the manifest departures from God's will to-day is Scripturally approved. God graciously deals with that which is laid on the heart of His people in united prayer. Daniel 9 comes to mind. Their Lord took action. He called the servant, and called him "wicked." There is a parallel with 1 Corinthians 5. 13 where (as 2 Cor. 2 shows) a wandering *believer* is before us. Sin must not be excused. The child of God who excuses sin becomes like the unsaved: hence the word "wicked," just as in Matthew 25. 26 for the unsaved professor, though there is nothing here of outer darkness, or eternal judgment with gnashing of teeth. The silver lost *in* the house is characterized by the same language as the sheep lost *outside*. Eternal salvation never involves glossing over guilt.

The Lord does not here say, "I know you not." He refers to the forgiveness as a fact, and there is not the slightest indication of undoing such forgiveness. That would be injustice, yet many dear children of God have interpreted the parable thus. When once we realize that the once-forgiven debt, on the one hand, is *not* given back, and that this passage concerns a present relation to God the *Father* on the other hand, and does not deal with the Judgment Seat of Christ, we shall be freed from two common errors of explanation.

We have seen that the cause of the "loosing" was the appointed and commanded "paying," which the glorious Substitute graciously did. The "forgiveness" was, however, an *experience*, in the application of grace, in response to the *desire* of a humble and quickened and awakened soul. The *felt* debt—as the word "desiredst" shows—was graciously removed, and this was a call to graciousness. "*Shouldst not thou also?*" There is music in these words. We love because loved (1 John 4. 19). "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 32), is a message of searching power. All doctrine is practical, and everything that we receive is to bring forth fruit in our life. If we turn the other cheek to one who smites it is to preach the gospel that Christ took the retribution for our guilt. If

there is one smiting (sin), there must be a second (judgment). It should be normally on the sinner, but it is, by grace, on the One sinned against. Matthew 5. 30 is thus more than commanded gentleness, it is a panorama of the way of salvation.² So is it here. Forgiveness is to lead to forgiveness as an evidence of grace. "*Shouldst not thou also?*" We always have an "*also*": we were not first. We have received that we may give (note Rom. 11. 35). Would that this message might appeal to our hearts more than ever before. The Holy Spirit never leads to an unmoved coldness.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

² Leaflet gladly sent.

Lest They Be Discouraged.

Colossians 3. 17.

THE word only occurs here. The Holy Spirit has chosen it with a very definite message. The parallel in Ephesians 6 adds "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." *That* is the reverse of discouraging. The nurture of the Lord is gracious, and those who walk with God are tactful.

The responsibilities of children are important: yet they are often forgotten to-day. We see socialism and indifference asserting themselves, even in the home. The precious word "Honour" is despised, and many think that it is incomparable with love. They cry out for "equality," which has become but selfishness wearing a mask. We need to pray much for children, growing up amid the assertive and antichristian influences of to-day. Parental control, and guidance, and friendship and intimacy are unpopular. The Christian's home should be a holy contrast. Many beloved parents are almost afraid to expect much from the Lord, and thus give their children a taste for the world, or allow a measure of license miscalled freedom, through a vague fear that they will have a reaction otherwise. Thus the unholy thought that the Lord's path is miserable is inoculated unintentionally.

But while we would lovingly bring before children their privilege of loving dutifulness, without a mere sense of duty, and while we would affectionately remind them of the words, "He was subject unto them" describing the childhood of the Lord Jesus (Luke 2. 51), and not only His *early* childhood, we would also bring before Christian parents their graciously appointed responsibilities. Too often there is lack of harmony. For example, the mother may be indulgent, unmindful of the Holy Spirit's stress on "the law" of the mother (Prov. 1. 8), and the father may be severe at times, and *equally* indulgent at others. Too often there is friction between the parents, the children see this, just as the Canaanite beheld the strife of

Genesis 13. 7. The seeds of trouble are thus sown, and the enemy will water them, till there is a plentiful harvest. A little thing may do much harm, and *one* word of dispute is one too many. If only believing wives took to heart the Holy Spirit's words in Colossians 3 they would have more power, true spiritual power, in the sphere which God has appointed for them. This may well be mentioned first, for the Holy Spirit mentions it thus.

But the husband and father needs prayer that there may be gracious tact at all times, and that he may not provoke or irritate. It is difficult to *control* graciously. Appointed headship needs much appointed communion. The Holy Spirit deals with temperamental tendencies by all His inspired words. We all need grace that we may have victory in our respective sphere, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

Children are often fickle, and they show the sad selfishness of the fall, but there are *encouragements*, and there is *affection*, we must deal wisely with those who are receptive and in a formative condition, and beware lest we "discourage." Sometimes a child is misjudged, and a hasty word wounds, nor is the wound easily healed, if another follows. Many children are keen to see, and to resent, injustice, but this attitude is sometimes the effect, in part, of wrong training. There may have been, at first, childish discouragement, and then a settling down to sulkiness or antagonism. God does not justify this, but we must beware lest we plant the sapling, which the enemy nurtures, in the soil of the flesh. "Without natural affection" is a sad sign of these days. "Disobedience to parents" is a sad mark of "perilous times," but are we entirely clear in the matter? Have we encouraged love, or been offhand toward it, especially when it was clumsily expressed? Did we seek for the love that was mixed with selfish motives in an action done partly to please us, or did we condemn the whole, and "discourage"? Children soon lose heart: they have not stamina in these things, and parents may raise an impassable barrier. Ground may be irretrievably lost—at least it seems to be lost "irretrievably," until God works His miracle of salvation, and even then after-effects may be seen, damaging the beautiful fellowship of a Christian home.

Many parents do not understand their children, and the children do not confide in their parents. The children are to blame, but not alone. A sharp word has often checked early confidences. If restoration of one who is overtaken in a fault needs spirituality in the assembly, there is a similar need in the home. A code of laws with prison regulations will not befit that sphere. But gracious flexibility and tenderness must not become favouritism of one, and neglect of others. The parent must exercise a holy self-control (Gal. 5. 22-24). The inspired criticism of David shows the tender and winsome way which

should often be illustrated. "Why hast thou done so?" (1 Kings 1. 6). Yet the parent must maintain dignity, and cannot explain everything. Eli honoured his sons above God, when he excused sin, and when he restrained them not (1 Kings 2. 29, 3. 13). The firmness must be constant, not variable. And the restrictions must be with love's sorrow, not with bitterness. The *manner* often provokes more than the *matter*. How we need the enabling of the Holy Spirit. In this sphere also, believers are not sufficient to think anything as of themselves.

These thoughts remind us of the assembly, and of all our dealings with fellow believers. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" is God's appointment immediately after the references to heavenly places, and our privileges in Christ with which Ephesians 1-3 are filled (4. 2, cf. Col. 3. 12-14). We still *need* such forbearance of one another. Privilege does not remove all the angles: there are great responsibilities. We must never provoke (Gal. 5. 26), except to love and good works (Heb. 10. 24)! How many a believer has been "discouraged" by another, when he, or she, ought to have been encouraged. And it was all unintentional. But the cause was lack of communion. *Both* were to blame, but just now we think of the one whose manner tended to ignore the gold because of the dross, and to turn aside the feet (Heb. 12. 13) instead of washing them. Again our hearts must realize it is often the manner not the matter. This message is not a plea for compromise. If one who seems to be a brother smokes, seek grace to lead him to the Lord's pathway of glad separation. If a sister is fashionable, another sister should be found who can lovingly show the spiritual loss. At least she can "endeavour to show," if, alas, there is no response, the heart must not despair, yet it must be pained. Strange it is that children of God are willing to pain one another by their likeness to the world. Let the feet be washed: at any rate, let this be our prayerful aim, but let the manner be constantly gentle and humble, never provocative. And specially one thinks of those who may wish to please the Lord though their methods have much that causes grief, and that prevents any identification. The parallel is not exact with that of a parent, but we have a nearness to all who seem to be His, and appear to be "one another," and cannot love sometimes help such without unwise discouraging? Godly proportion and balance are needed, especially it may be, by those who think they have it, or by those who see the disproportion of others. But let our first thought be God's glory and praise for what He has wrought in others, and our second thought, "What is *my* need?" and then let us seek grace to grow in grace, and to help others, for our Heavenly Father can meet our need, and will, as we are in a ready and willing and humble condition before Him, in the Holy Spirit.

A Brief Bible Study.

"The king shall do according to his will." Daniel 11. 36.
A wondrous contrast:—"Lo I come, to do Thy will."

Hebrews 10. 7, 9.

"If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7. 17.

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in heaven." Matthew 7. 21.

"Whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."

Matthew 12. 50.

"He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2. 17.

"So is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." 1 Peter 2. 15.

"Ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Hebrews 10. 36.

"As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Ephesians 6. 6.

"The flesh desireth against the spirit; but the spirit against the flesh, that ye may not do the things that ye would." (i.e. the spirit restraining from the *fulfilling* of the desires of the flesh). Galatians 5. 16, 17.

"To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Romans 7. 18.

(Humbling sense of failure in God's sight).

"It is God Which worketh in you both to will and to do—of His good pleasure." Philippians 2. 13.

"Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." Psalm 143. 10.

"The God of peace, That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13. 20, 21.

It is easy to rejoice in circumstances and to imagine we are rejoicing in the Lord. So He sometimes permits a sudden reversal to show us where our joy really is.

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Show how great things God hath done unto thee."

Mark 8. 39.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

*G*OD is gracious, and faithful. He is able to make all grace abound (2 Cor. 9. 8). We little realize the fulness of His sufficiency, nor the sufficiency He is willing and waiting to give. Faith lays hold of His promises, and ventures to enjoy His sufficiency. The fuller the faith, the fuller can be the receiving: but there may (and will) be trials—to cast us more on God, that we may not trust to our faith but to Him. As soon as we make our faith central, we miss the true meaning of spiritual faith. When there is simplicity of dependence on God, we shall realize "how great things" He has done, and will do. And then it is our privilege to make known (Ps. 66. 16). We would declare (in ways He has appointed, see Mark 1. 45) that which is beyond our declaring in full (Ps. 40. 5), to the praise of His glory. May these pages help in this service and help fellow believers to this attitude.

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Should a Believer Belong to a Co-operative Society?

MANY children of God have never thought of this question. They have felt that in "hard times" it is their duty to buy as cheaply as possible, and there have seemed to be real advantages in the sharing of profits, which they felt they could not forego. But it is refreshing to be assured that many are willing to consider prayerfully the subject, if brought

before them simply for the glory of the One Whose Name they bear. This open attitude of heart is pleasing to Him. We have all illustrated Joshua 9. 14 again and again in the past,—“The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.” May we realize henceforth that God is willing to guide in *everything*, and that His written words contain principles to deal with *everything*, and that *everything* may be made a matter of “prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.”

Some have suggested that such subjects are trivial, and that we should rather be occupied with the salvation of souls. But does not this ignore the way that the Lord Jesus spent most of His earthly life in the background, and that “least commandments” are important (Matt. 5. 19)? Our Father seeth in secret. If we put aside obedience in little things, a little leaven will leaven the whole lump, and we shall soon undo much of our testimony for the salvation of souls. Nothing is small that pleases God, and if anything is against His will it should be gladly given up. It is not a question of the size of the action before men, but rather its attitude towards our Lord. It is true that some think that these matters should be left to personal opinion, but if believers are members one of another, such concern is not interference. Surely there should be a loving interest. A small splinter may cause a festering wound and affect the whole body. It was only a little thing when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and only a little thing when Uzza touched the ark. Will the heart that minimizes the privilege of pleasing God in *everything* go forward spiritually?

It may be felt by not a few that we can hardly expect Scripture to direct in all “details.” Co-operative societies are new. How can ancient Scriptures say anything about them? This standpoint would seem to be at variance with all acknowledgment of inspiration, and to forget that nothing is fresh to God, and He wrote (as 1 Cor. 9. 10 reminds us) for His people who live long afterwards. Furthermore the principles of His will are ever the same, are they not? Hence, remembering the precious words “The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way” (Ps. 25. 9), shall we, if we love Him, prayerfully seek His will, with open and trustful minds and with humble and expectant hearts?

The fundamental thought that searches a believer's heart is, “If I *share* the profits, am I not a partner?” Many, rightly weighing the Holy Spirit's words in 2 Corinthians 6. 14-18, would refuse the unequal yoke with *one* unbelieving partner, but is the relationship justifiable if there are *many*? Surely this Scripture makes clear to a disciple of Christ the plain path of separation from a limited liability company and a co-operative society alike. The fact that the latter is

not a financier's arrangement, affecting large amounts, does not make it essentially different, nor does the inclusion of some hundreds who own Christ's precious Name in the membership alter the fellowship with many who are not His. And it may be added, the holy principle now before us would lead a believer outside trade unions and benefit societies also, attracted by the love of Christ and His will. The Holy Spirit thus draws the Lord's redeemed together. The path may be narrow, but has He not used this word (Matt. 7. 14)?

It may be thought that we cannot live such a life in the twentieth century, but did not our Lord know what our circumstances would be? Some children of God confuse buying and selling with “partnership.” If we obtain or dispose of goods there is an appointed payment for the expenses of the seller, since all labour is worthy of recompense (1 Tim. 5. 18). This is *not* the sliding scale of partnership. Furthermore, some have confused taxation based on central or local expenses, and have thought we are thereby made partners. But taxation is not voluntary: we do not pay to meet the expenses, but because Government arranges, and God has declared that we are to fulfil the financial demands of the government under which He has placed us (Rom. 13. 6, 7). Possibly some readers will further suggest, “If you show any kindness, you co-operate.” But does not this quite miss the point? I may (and should) give kindness to a man whose beast has fallen beneath its load (Ex. 23. 5), and may feed one who takes the attitude of an enemy, but in “partnership,” I possess a part or portion of a unity, and have a *right* to a share in the profits. And this cannot please God.

In the Old Testament, God emphasized the danger of links with the inhabitants of Canaan (e.g. Deut. 7. 3, 4, Jud. 2. 2), and though there was not the special separation of the heavenly calling in those days, there were preparatory hints, and the child of God does well to realize that we are called “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Pet. 2. 11), and that the principle of the words “only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7. 39) is far reaching, and helpful.

To many of the Lord's people these Divine appointments are at once decisive, and nothing need be added. The Holy Spirit applies the written words, and love is eager to obey. But it may be helpful in giving a reason for our attitude, with humility (for we were no better than others in ourselves), to explain more fully that partnership involves varied responsibilities. What thoughtful child of God would wish to be *responsible* for the arrangements of a society run by men of this world, and animated by the spirit of the age? Our standpoint *must* be changed if we are in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5. 17). The attitude as to “success” and “filthy lucre” must be quite altered. How many co-operative societies have a tobacconist's

licence, and display deplorable fashions, etc.? Should a believer be a tobacconist? A member of a co-operative society *is*, in reality, whatever he may think, even as a shareholder in a railway runs pleasure excursions on the Lord's Day. Some, too, would feel exercised, and rightly so, as to Christmas trade and the hot-cross buns of a co-operative bakery. And the more tender we are (2 Chron. 34. 27) the more things we shall find that we would not tolerate if the shop was simply "our own." Why then remain in partnership? "Labels" and "advertisements," moreover, are often quite unsatisfactory. The writer remembers a co-operative society seeking a "clever" advertisement by trifling with Scripture, especially with the record of Genesis regarding the entrance of sin and death into the world. The Holy Spirit never leads to fellowship in other men's sins (1 Tim. 5. 22).

It may be suggested that partnership should, and would, lead to reforms, but the believer will soon discover that Lot in the gate can do far less than Abraham the pilgrim, to say nothing of the time spent in such activity instead of using it in the things of God. Yet a "sleeping" partnership, as we have seen, is equally indefensible. Rather let us go forth to our Lord from both evils, even to our risen Lord without the camp (Heb. 13. 13), although it still means bearing His reproach, and being counted foolish for His sake (1 Cor. 4. 10).

And surely we can trust Him. He Who made the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil to last is the Same to-day. We need not go down to Egypt to make both ends meet. Let us rather realize the principle of "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Mal. 3. 10), and "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6. 33). The believer who trusts the Lord, and obediently gives unto Him, will have wherewith to give, whereas the family of Eli will come and crouch for a morsel of bread (1 Sam. 2. 36). The Lord remains living and is worthy of trust, as thousands have proved, and still prove. "Jesus Christ the Same . . . to-day."

We have not yet spoken of the "political" standpoint of many co-operative societies, although Christians need to remember that their Lord said, "My kingdom is not of this world," nor of the way in which centralizing, whether of league of nations, or of amalgamations, or of universal providers, or of "co-operatives," must tend in the same direction. The bud we see now: the blossom will be in the days of Antichrist (Rev. 13. 17), and it is not for us to hurry those days. Rather, let us "risk" the loss of doubtful gain, even as we shun "uncertain riches," and continue the appointed path of humbly buying what we need, not seeking to become part-proprietors of a large organization, nor to meet our problems with our own wisdom (Prov. 23. 4). The peace of heart which God desires His people to have is to be found in His way, and if the plan of faith, and heavenly investment, which the Holy

Spirit marks out in Scripture were gladly and quickly followed, there would be a delightful witness to the unsaved, which would show that believers were not out for gain or self, but graciously attached to their Lord, and concerned for His glory, as they look for His Coming, rejoicing in it as "that blessed Hope" (Tit. 2. 12, 13).

One word, in closing, may minister His blessing. I do not ask anyone to act on another's faith, but, as soon as the Lord's will is seen, remembering that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14. 23), shall we not all make haste and delay not (Ps. 119. 60) that He may be glorified, and that the Holy Spirit may not be grieved (Eph. 4. 30)? And our Father will not fail to grant His approval: He has never overtaxed loving faith, nor overlooked the love of one obedient, trustful heart.

The Parables of the Debtors.

(Continued).

The solemn words, "His Lord was wroth," reminds of 2 Chronicles 32. 25. It is not a question of eternal wrath, nor of penal anger. God's spotless holiness cannot, in any relationship, excuse sin, nor can He, consistently with perfection, be aught but angry against unholiness. The base ingratitude of the one forgiven could not be rightly overlooked. The term "Father" does not exclude fatherly anger, it only excludes that which is penal. A home is not a sphere of weak indulgence. Chastisement is beautiful, but the sin that necessitates it is ugly. The servant was delivered to the tormentors "till he should give back all that was due." Observe there is no reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, on the future Judgment Seat, pronouncing as to His people's works in the day of His coming, though that view is deeply important and solemnizing (Matt. 25. 19-23). *Here* we have a present dealing, and the holy parallel of 1 Corinthians 5 shows that a believer may be delivered to tormentors. The word "*that*," in the context there, is impressive,—"*That* the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5. 5). Compare "*that* we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11. 32), "*that* they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1. 20). In each case we see a purpose of mercy to those confessing Christ's name.

To read into Matthew 18 the handing back of the already once-forgiven debt is, I repeat, quite contrary to the passage. The noun "debt" of verse 32 is *not* repeated, nor the other word of verse 27. Notice it was "*that* debt." But in verse 34 it is "all that which *is being owed*" (*present* participle). The hundred pence is the outstanding account, and the same word is used in verse 30, as if to suggest that by rejecting his fellow-servant's confession and sorrow he became before God guilty of the very sin he had denounced. It was, as it were,

no longer viewed as the burden of the other whose confession had been rejected by his brother, but transferred, from God's standpoint, to *himself*, the rejector. So serious is the effect of cherishing an unforgiving spirit.

The Divinely appointed principle is, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another," and the omission is dangerous. The Lord Jesus does not merely say, "So shall My Heavenly Father do to you if ye take your fellow-servant by the throat," but, "if ye forgive not." Nor will an outward form of forgiveness suffice, to keep up reputation. The inspired words are, "From your hearts." Surely God's truth is practical, and the parables are searching. Let us not seek to blunt their edge. It is not enough to know how to interpret the parables, we must seek to live them out, in accord with the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control."

But it may be said, "Where do we see this to-day?" I grant that the manifest *link* of action and consequence, which we behold in the case of Nadab and Abihu, and, at the outset of the present dispensation, in Ananias and Sapphira, is not always made so evident. But what if we have here the key to many of our experiences? Though the Lord Jesus may not assert that the Father would *always* work in exactly the same way openly, ("to you" has a primary force), we may generally see His purposes for the present age.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

³I would emphasize this more fully as to nervous overstrain, because the Lord's honour is involved so frequently in a manifest way. This stimulates to expectant, yet humble, prayer.

Thoughts on the Appointed Time for the Lord's Supper.

(1).—Has not the Holy Spirit Himself definitely suggested the name "The Lord's Supper," whereas another word would be used for a meal at another time of the day (Luke 14. 12)? Should we not, therefore, need His Own warrant for changing the time? And have we this?

(2).—Are not the approved Scriptural examples of the "breaking of the bread" associated with the evening? Did not the Lord Jesus appoint it then (Matt. 26. 20, 26, 29), and did not the disciples come together to break bread then (Acts 20. 7)? Have we other examples, or even one example, of His approval of a gathering with this object on the Lord's Day morning? Is not the burden of proof for any change resting heavily upon those who make it, and how will they answer the arguments of Romanism as to tradition and development?

(3).—Has not God been pleased to bring before us the morning of the first day in more than one Scripture, with emphasis on a distinct use of it? In John 20 we have the Lord's

resurrection, and His revealing of Himself to Mary (Mark 16. 9). Must we not say that His dealings with His people were individual, and in little groups, rather than in houses, till the evening? And in Acts 2—another first day—are not the saints said to be together for prayer and then witness in the morning (verse 15), but have we anything as to the Lord's Supper? Is not the morning passed over in Acts 20,* with regard to the breaking of bread? And is there not a purpose in all the record that God has graciously given? It is always a privilege to be together for prayer, and for searching the Scriptures, but do we not need His definite instructions as to *special* arrangements, if we are disciplelike?

(4).—Does not the Holy Spirit lay a stress on the "night" in 1 Corinthians 11. 23? This would not *prove* anything of itself, but it seems a "danger signal" when any plead for changing the 'Lord's Supper'. The symbolism may be His message—it is night around—but spiritual lessons do not exclude obedient simplicity (the doctrine of baptism does not make literal immersion unnecessary). It is well to observe in the gatherings of Revelation 2 and 3 ("the Lord's Day" 1. 9). He is in the glory (Rev. 1. 16), but His people have night-symbols (lamp-stands, stars). There are no accidents in God's words.

(5).—Was not the Passover type arranged with a view to the work of Christ, and His will for this dispensation? Was its hour unimportant, and is the Holy Spirit's language in the preparatory words of Luke 22. 14 unmeaning?

(6).—Is it not a fact that we find the Lord's Supper relegated to the morning in an ancient document, which uses also the word "sacrament," or military oath (Pliny's Letter to Trajan), in a way that suggests the gradual departure from Scripture simplicity, in accord with the warnings recorded in the Acts and Epistles?

(7).—Must not the question be lovingly asked, *Why* should we change? Is not the *underlying* reason oftentimes an indication of human wisdom, or unwillingness to be thought peculiar? Why should we wish to change? Shall possible convenience decide? Then shall we not also omit baptism, and likewise use individual cups? Should we not rather seek to be as simple as possible in what the Scriptures set forth, and not endeavour to find if we can make a variation? The man who

* The suggestion that this was Saturday evening, seems contrary to God's teaching as to the resurrection: and what warrant for it is found in the passage? or what hint at all? The parallel with Christ's revelation of Himself on the Lord's Day evening in John 20. 19 is surely suitable to all the context. The fact that John's gospel does NOT reckon time from evening to morning, at least after ch. 13. 1 (see 19. 14) has a helpful bearing for thoughtful believers.

To draw inferences, without clear Scripture is not a believer's prerogative. We would all realize that we may infer wrongly. But to find illustration of that which has been revealed, and to draw inferences against that which alters His revelation, would seem to be Scriptural, and humble.

wishes to see how far he can stretch a law has a debater's mind not a disciple's. May not this thought apply?

(8).—Do we not mourn the general departure from the Lord's will to-day? Is it not a fact that the foreshadowed "leavening" of the Lord's meal has included elaborate buildings, and ritual, the taking of religious titles which He expressly disapproved, the varying of baptism, and of symbols at the Lord's supper? Is it not therefore clear that there is an *organized* plan throughout, of which the human instruments are unconscious? Should we not be on our guard against this subtle aim of the enemy? Should we not on this very account cherish our Lord's words more and more simply? We shall never regret child-like obedience, and love's responsiveness. It is natural to argue, but spiritual to obey.

(9).—How can we take the encouraging words "as oft as ye drink," and "eat," in 1. Corinthians 11. 25, 26 to approve a "change" from the Holy Spirit's own word "Supper"? Is there *not* a reason why we do not read "as often as ye will?"—Contrast the only other occurrence of the word in Revelation 11. 6. Once, when paying a weekly rental, I was approached with this passage, and I asked if "as often as you pay your rental, I will give you a receipt," gave me the right to alter the already appointed frequency,—or words to this effect. Does not this idiom simply declare (a) that frequency is approved and (b) that *two* actions synchronize?—"ye eat"—"ye show the Lord's death." Do we not need grace to avoid any mode of reasoning that we should not adopt in any other connexion, and which, moreover, would cause us pain, and even appear to be quibbling, if used by any opposing God's precious doctrine? O for grace not to catch at any straws to help a theory, but to love the Lord enough to be increasingly disciplelike.

If believers are, by grace, enabled to weigh these thoughts in the balances of the Sanctuary, and to come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has emphasized "the Lord's Supper" with a purpose, should we not be brought down together, before our gracious Heavenly Father in confession of sin, (our own and His people's generally), and should we not seek to come together seeking "a right way" (Ezra. 8. 21) that we may yet please our beloved Lord as we expectantly wait for His Coming?

Correspondence, to God's glory, concerning His will, and concerning the removal of any arrangements which are not from Him, is welcomed. And let there be much humility with us all, and much tenderness to others, and avoidance of all bitterness. Moreover, let grace be sought to be occupied with Him Who died for us, and Who is our exalted Lord in the glory, occupied with Him Whom we would obey rather than with our obedience. The Holy Spirit never directs to self, but to Christ.

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"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3. 6.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

Few verses are better known among believers than the one above, and yet how much more fully might we, and should we, illustrate faith in His words. If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we may expect "wondrous things" in all our relationship to Him. I do not speak necessarily of wondrous things before God: many of the treasures of a trustful heart would seem nothing to the worldling. But men saw no majesty in the Lord Jesus. God is graciously willing to prove His faithfulness (Mal. 3. 10), and Psalm 25. 8 is not merely a couple of sentences. Believers should be joined together in heart, and mind, and judgment (1 Cor. 1. 10). Do we EXPECT such a reviving? Strangely it is possible to exercise faith in one way, and to be distrustful in another: but appropriating faith is warranted by God's own promise, when we have such words as these. But are we quiet enough to hear His voice, and meek enough to follow His will? The Holy Spirit never leads to pride.

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The Parables of the Debtors.

(Continued).

1 Corinthians 11. 32 gives a parallel testimony. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world.*" The same righteousness shines out, albeit there is no condemnation to those in Christ

Jesus. Yet this never excuses sin. 1 Peter 4. 17 helps our prayerful thought. We at once begin to learn a very important principle with regard to physical chastisements, and were it not that some dear suffering ones quite mistake God's gracious purpose therein, one might speak more fully as to mental trials, with their torment and strain. The believer is not normally to be in this condition. Truly there is deliverance to God's glory. But let not the one who is free from such anguish look down on his fellow-believer. His own failures may be greater, though the chastisement may be of another kind. Yet it is all permitted in love. Do not occupy *yourself* with the strain, but confess failure and sin, and look up to your gracious Heavenly Father, for His way out.³ The first thought in connexion with physical illness is not "I must get a doctor," but "I would find out why the Lord has permitted." *He* is not a tormentor, but He overrules all, and allows the tormentors, for our humbling. Why are we not more responsive to His hints, and to His loving rebukes?

There are more tormentors than one, and the torment has various aspects. We may, at first, shrink from the word, but can we doubt that it was torment in 1 Corinthians 5? Can we regard the trials of a believer, that oppress him, as sent by God directly, apart from his condition? Surely the Scriptural view is that He permits these in wisdom (Acts 10. 38), to bring us to Himself. The messenger of Satan that buffeted Paul was that he might not be lifted up. The words "all that was due unto him," may be the hundred pence which were really due to "him," yet there may also be the precious hint "unto Him," for the believer is *not* sold to the tormentors, nor does he render to *them*. In law we cannot give God that which we should: our only resting place is the finished work of Christ, but in the sphere of love's responsibility He allows a chastisement to continue *until* there has been the appointed fendering unto Him. Aspects may be different, but, inasmuch as Job's lips failed so grievously after the trial began, it was continued until he spoke of God the thing that was right, and until he prayed for his friends (42. 7. 10). There is a wealth of meaning here.

And what shall be the fruit of our meditation? Shall we not see God's hand in *all* our circumstances, and, thanking Him, acknowledge that He is righteous? Shall we not see that our attitude to our brethren affects much of our lives, and our enjoyment of relationship to our Father? Shall we not learn His approval of a forgiving spirit (Mark 11. 25), and seek grace against any other feeling? Shall we not glorify His Name by making manifest our gratitude for His so great

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love? Thus will Christian testimony be more consistent and the witness of John 13. 35 ("By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples") shine forth among His beloved people. "Shouldest not thou also?" will thus become an undercurrent, and more than an undercurrent, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, in our believing lives, to the praise of Him Who hath redeemed and delivered us from the wrath to come.

The parabolic message of Luke 7. 41. 42 has the same precious unveiling of grace as that just pondered, though the circumstances, and, to some extent, the standpoint may be contrasted. We have here two debtors, but, unlike the two sons elsewhere, both are brought into blessing. There is but One Creditor, just as in Matthew 18. But the aspects of a king's power, and of His subjects, and of right to punish, are not here before us. The sin is owned, but the *legal* and *judicial* liability of the debt are not the primary thought, although these must never be forgotten. How many are the views of sin: as a crime, a disease, an uncleanness, and so forth: and God's grace is yet more manifestly "many-sided," to meet every need of the guilty sinner.

If we may anticipate, we see that one special lesson here is *love*: to Him Who freely forgives (verse 4). The solemn message "Shouldest not thou also?" and our relationship to fellow-believers is rather the message in Matthew. It is true that love to Him means love to His people, but so slow are we to learn the various fruits of grace that we praise God for a different relative emphasis in different passages, that our hearts may be stirred to know and love Him more.

In both Scriptures the utter pennilessness and dire need of the debtor are seen. And in both there is no merit; no works are recorded to help secure the forgiveness. Mercy is absolutely free. The word "frankly forgave" is from the root of grace, and occurs in Ephesians 4. 32 and Colossians 2. 13. We shall never lay too much stress on grace. Its uninfluenced free bounty to those who deserve nothing is to call forth our fullest and eternal praise. And the Lord's use of the message to convict, and thereby bring blessing to Simon, gives us a fuller insight into the purpose of the gracious record. How often we fail to realize that we were "by nature children of wrath *even as others*." How often we overestimate our love. How often we fail to see the real nature of the devotion the Lord seeks and delights to receive. In nonev, Simon's hospitality may have cost much, but, in reality, the woman's devotedness was far larger to her Saviour. In a different context we find a similar, though distinct, encouragement: the Lord seeth not as man seeth, and "two mites" are precious, beyond human valuation, when they are the gift of a heart that is willing to be stripped of all for Himself. But if we have

an alabaster box, and bring but two mites, our hypocrisy is abominable.

We return to the thought of Simon's feast. He had "a house," and he invited Christ thither. But he needed to see that nothing was his own, nothing could he have done acceptably had not grace laid hold, and till he was forgiven. And the silver pence of the debt remind us that we owe that which our Redeemer pays. Silver, as in the tabernacle sockets, is often a reminder of redemption: and we could not redeem ourselves. We had not even one penny or a part thereof. "*Nothing* to pay." What wonderful grace have we received. We shall never tire of grace when we reach glory.

Five hundred is ten times fifty. The multiples of five with respect to "debt parables" are impressive, for the number "five" speaks of God's manifestation of Himself and particularly of *law* (ten commandments on two tables), and *grace*. The altar of burnt offering, picturing Christ's life when made under the law, was foursquare with its "five" cubits. Yet after ten thousand talents, five hundred pence seem small. Why the change? The standpoint is different. In Matthew 18 we behold sin from God's standpoint, and His holy estimate. Here we seem to see particularly the believers' perception and realization of it. And this is part of the key to verse 47. At first it would seem as if that verse had two difficulties. Yet they are both radiant with the light of the Lord's love when understood in any measure.

The first difficulty is that the forgiveness seems to be the response to the woman's much love, and the second that it appears at the outset to be better to have *much* that needs forgiveness. The question of verse 42 plainly shows that Christ's thought is of love as the fruit of forgiveness. At once we realize the evidential "for." It is not common, but is, nevertheless, quite clear. "Her sins are forgiven" this is plain, and the evidence is "she loved much." Cf. "This is gold, for it does not change under that test." "They said Paul was a god in Acts 28. 6, *because* the viper did not injure him," i.e., "the evidence being," &c. This is a help in John 3. 18. *because* sinners are judged for all their sins, even before they hear the gospel, as other Scriptures show (Rom. 1. 18-20, 12). The explanatory "for" or "because" is somewhat similar, and illustrates how carefully each passage should be pondered in its context; 1 Cor. 10. 5, Matthew 13. 17 ("For I say"), Mark 5. 42, 1 Cor. 11. 26. Note also John 12. 39. There is often a wondrous fulness in inspired language, and so we see that the forgiveness causes the love, and this love leads to the consciousness of forgiveness. The order of Christ's words brings this out.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

"That I May Know Him."

"That I may know *Him*,"—this is first: "and the power of His resurrection,"—here is the precious fruit of communion appointed. If we seek to know the power of His resurrection apart from Himself, we find self becomes the centre, and *our* use of the power becomes more to us than His glory. Thirdly, "the fellowship of His sufferings," in contrast with the exaltation and reputation which the flesh seeks in connexion with power. We remember the words of Colossians 1, "Strengthened with all *might*, according to His glorious *power*.—*unto all patience*." God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. The fellowship of His sufferings is not possible till we know something of the power of His resurrection. We reach His life of rejection from the resurrection standpoint. Not His substitution, and unique suffering in death, but His sufferings in life are here before us. An unattractive life, except to faith. God graciously hedges up the path that it may be for His own people, and not for those who desire a nominal association with Him. "Being made conformable unto His death"—again we see there is no share in His *finished* substitutionary work, but a *conformity* to His death on the cross, despised and cast out by men; and thus it is written, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 20). But that is not the goal, the glory with Him is in That Day: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead."

The Love of God.

How wondrous is the love of God. "Charity," in present-day English, may mean the giving of much, but it does not reveal the heart or motive of the giver: "love" makes known the attitude within. And God has unveiled His love. And that love is unspeakable with a Gift unspeakable (2 Cor. 9. 15). If He had given something great words might express the bounty, but He gave His beloved Son. There can be no comparison with this Gift. Creation cost God nothing: "He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." If He commands, everything must stand fast, and continue day by day according to His ordinances. But redemption cost God more than "everything." He gave the Son of His love, and gave Him for sinners, and gave Him up to judgment in their stead. And, in His equal love, redemption cost the Lord Jesus more than words can tell. He upholds all things by the word of His power. But redemption is not by the word of His power. There must be the bearing of wrath, which to the Holy One meant more than we can ever say. Nevertheless He bore it. And our hearts, caused by the Holy Spirit to wonder and rejoice, can only say, with worshipping gratitude, "Herein is *love*."

"Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah." Genesis 5. 22.

"From thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land." Acts 7. 4.

OUR homes are often the test. The Thermopylae decision is found there. If we lose the battle there, how can we expect to gain it outside? It is important to realize that God uses a crisis, though we dare not depend on a succession of crises. Let us ask Him to sanctify to us everything extraordinary, but let us look to Him for grace to find rich blessing in that which is ordinary and common. A crisis may be used to save a man's life physically, but he needs daily food for its sustenance. Crises can never take the place of abiding in Christ and feeding on Him. Special meetings are not to be our tonic, but daily seasons with God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are not told that Enoch walked with God one day before Methuselah was born; we have no suggestion that he hesitated to walk with God afterwards. The birth of his son was God's message to his soul. How helpful a message may be given to believers to-day in similar circumstances. The responsibility of receiving a young life to train for God, amid a ruined world, is a great one. Many look back with regret as they behold the inclination of boyhood and girlhood toward the world, developed yet more in young manhood and womanhood, with regret, aye, repentance, because they lacked faith, and consistent unworldliness to claim for God and keep to His will in babyhood and childhood. If ever there was a need for young parents to be as Enoch and walk with God, it is to-day.

If birth was God's testimony to Enoch, death was His further witness to Abraham. Not that the believing life began then. Long before this the Lord had spoken, and a half-way journey had been taken, but only half-way. There is a vast difference between Genesis 11. 31 and 12. 5, "They went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran and dwelt there." "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; *and* into the land of Canaan they came." May we not need the strain of bereavement to make us willing to follow the Lord's will more fully! May we not need the reminder of failure in Genesis 13. 7, 8, to awaken us to a yet deeper sense of simple obedience! Lot belonged to his "father's house," and Abraham "took" him (Gen. 12. 5). God took Abraham (Jos. 24. 3). Abraham was called (Heb. 11. 8), and thus obeyed. "Lot went with him" (Gen. 12. 4). We do not read of a responsive obedience. Surely every word of Scripture speaks to an awakened heart.

"This city is near to flee to, and it is a little one." (Genesis 19. 20.)

"Let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai . . . for they are but few." (Joshua 7. 3.)

THESE two verses, concerning small cities, have a message for us to-day. We need grace to ask for God's will, and according to His will alone. In the second passage Israel acted with human wisdom, and soon found that numbers did not decide. God's presence can make an Abraham stronger than a king of Babylon, aye, stronger than a king of nations and his confederates, even as God's enabling grace can empower Gideon's three hundred against a mighty host. The fundamental question must ever be, Can we say God is with us? Are we in the line of His will, and in communion with Him?

The earlier verse is striking, because Abraham, the man of faith, "asked" for the cities of the plain, in dependence upon God, and they were not spared. He did not ask beyond a certain limit. At least he sought to be within God's will. Lot, who had wandered, received his request for Zoar. But we find no encouragement. Lot feared to remain in the city and dwelt in a cave. The man who drew back from a tent, and settled in a house in the cities of the plain, became homeless. Thus our failures bear painful fruit. But his request for Zoar was heard. God is gracious. Yet as we hear the earlier command we are concerned. "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; *escape to the mountain.*" (Gen. 19. 17).

We ask ourselves, "Is it not possible to receive our request, and *thereby* leanness in our very souls, because we do not ask God more definitely *how* He would have us pray?"

How beautiful is the comprehensiveness of grace. How rich and full are God's promises. For example in Psalm 121, after the stress on the personal note, we have many "duplications." The Lord *neither* slumbers, *nor* sleeps. He is not only Keeper in general, but also "*thy Shade* upon thy right hand." *Sun* and *moon* are both restrained. *Day* and *night* are alike to Him in His loving care. He preserves from *all* evil, and preserves the whole person ("*thy soul*"). He not only looks after *going out* but also *coming in*. He does not forget the present ("this time"), but His love likewise knows no end ("for evermore"). How refreshing is all this to a needy believer, God is Faithful, still faithful TO-DAY.

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

John 21. 22.

EVERY part of every utterance of Christ is a jewel. Here we have twelve words in the Holy Spirit's own language. "If" tells us we are not to know all! "I-will" * reminds of our Lord's precious "will," and loving interest, and His right to arrange. "That he" shows His watchfulness for us personally. "Tarry," or "remain," brings before us the attitude of His obedient people. "Till" indicates that He can appoint a time of waiting, but will not fail. "I-come" expresses our hope, and, by its meaning, suggests a contrast with death, and, by its tense, the certainty of "that Blessed Hope" and its nearness in our experience. "What?" is a question word to awaken searching of our ways. "To" reminds us that we are to be concerned as to that which He directs towards us;—we are to be responsive rather than originative, might we not say? "Thee" has the precious personal application once more. "Follow" makes clear the other part of the Christian life: "waiting" is only one aspect: these two are entwined spiritually. "Thou" is an emphatic pronoun, that we may not delay because of others, or only go with a crowd, forgetting personal, yet humble, attachment to the Lord, concerning His will for us. "Me" is the all-authoritative word, telling us not only of our personal privileges, but of His own personal affection, and willingness for us to follow, and His desire that He Himself should be central in our life. O that it may be so.

The message brings out strikingly the contrast between death, and the Lord's Coming. It emphasizes that we are not to choose, but be ready for His will, and to know that He is arranging for all His people throughout the dispensation. It indicates that since we have not been told otherwise, it is befitting to live looking for our Lord's Coming in our lifetime, and He has not told us that we shall die. The gracious rebuke of curiosity, and the indication that a "natural" occupation of mind with the duties of others, will take our mind off following Him, must not be overlooked. Loving care for others is distinct, and the command, "Feed My sheep" inculcates this holy interest in the same chapter: such activity is His will, and for His sake. The deduction of the disciples in verse 23 shows how quick we all are to "draw inferences," and how easy it is to make a mistake. May every "if" of our Lord be as dear to our hearts as His "shall's."

* Where two or more English words are needed for the Greek, I have used a hyphen between them.

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"Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; . . . they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And the Lord appeared unto Abram . . . and there builded he an altar unto the Lord . . . and he removed . . . and pitched his tent . . . and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the Name of the Lord."
Genesis 12. 4-8.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

ABRAM—whom, thanks be to God, we know more readily as Abraham, because of grace adding "within"—was a man of faith and obedience. He jattered sometimes: it was not "till his father was dead" that he fully followed the Lord's call to Canaan. And when famine arrived, he went down into Egypt, and needed to be brought back "unto the place of the altar which he made there at the first" (Gen. 13. 4). But his normal attitude was dependence on God and confidence in Him: Such biographies God has given to stimulate our faith. Circumstances may change, we may not be called to go to another country, but we never get beyond the need for faith's simplicity and unworldliness. Riches may not be ours in the present dispensation, as they were Abraham's, and thus our path may be easier, but the way in which he remained a pilgrim, with every incentive (arising from wealth, and victory over hitherto victorious kings) to settle down, must awaken our gratitude to God, and our loving determination that we also will remain unworldly pilgrims to-day.

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The privilege of serving the Lord in little things is larger than the greatest honours of earth, yea, it is of a different character altogether, and infinitely greater.

Some Gracious Warnings.

- "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land" (Exodus 34. 12).
- "Ye shall destroy their altars. . . . lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land" (Exodus 34. 13-15).
- "They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me" (Exodus 23. 33).
- "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul" (Proverbs 22. 24, 25).
- "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Proverbs 19. 27).

We are apt to overestimate our strength of character, and to run into temptation. Is it wise? May we not go further? Are we permitted to run such risks? God has, in infinite grace, brought His people out of the world's Egypt, and given them rich spiritual possessions. It is for them to own gladly the separation to which His attracting love invites.

We are influenced by what we tolerate. If we seek to consecrate to God the "best" of Amalek, an Amalekite will rise against us. We cannot improve on God's arrangements. We cannot go on hot coals without being burned. It was to a godly man that Paul wrote, in the Holy Spirit, "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4. 16). We remember how Solomon was beloved of his God (Neh. 13. 26), and how in wisdom he surpassed all, yet neither he nor Samson could stand against "love" that wandered from the Lord! Samson "loved," and said "I love thee" (Jud. 16. 4, 15). "King Solomon loved" (1 Kings 11. 1): backsliding begins in the affections: hence the unchanging and unchanged order of the words, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14. 15). It is a joy to turn men to One Who was essentially the *Wisdom and Power* of God, and Whose love was perfect. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," our beloved Lord walked this earth, with absolute affection toward the Father.

When Manasseh cast out the images (2 Chron. 33. 15), he did not, as Josiah, destroy them, and Amon could bring them back. We need to make a definite separation not only for our sake, but for the sake of others. May this be our attitude to the glory of God. Let us take heed "what" we hear (Mark 4. 24), and where we go, and seek those who are the Lord's friends as ours.

It is easier to exhort others in circumstances different from our own, than to become an example, humbly, yet definitely, when in the same circumstances. To modify God's will through sympathy is not well-pleasing, but to lose sympathy in mental application and unloving enforcement of His will is equally displeasing, and against His loving will.

The Parables of the Debtors.

(Continued).

The second difficulty is met by what we have already seen. From God's standpoint none owe a little, but all are 10,000 talents in arrears. Thus there is tremendous scope for the one who has been least engulfed in outward sins, to realize his many evils, yea, ten times five hundred. There is no thought of blessedness in sin that grace may abound, but the Lord is dealing with us from the experience-standpoint, and showing the blessedness of a *humbling sense* of sin. Moreover, with graciously holy and gentle reproof He shows the danger threatening those who have not fallen into open sin. Satan has temptations suited to all, and he seeks to misuse every "privilege," against the Lord. This message is of deep importance to check pride, and to lead to lowliness those brought up in Christian homes, and to show one aspect of the godly training needed there, that the *many* advantages may not be counteracted by shallowness in the recognition of personal guilt, and the great sinfulness of *seemingly* little sins, when great privileges have been granted beyond those of others. The word "other" signifying of another kind in verse 41 rebukes *our* easily nurtured pride, as well as Simon's.

It is important to feel that none but forgiven debtors can ever enter heaven. No "merit" will be imagined for a moment when the praises burst forth "Worthy is the Lamb That was slain." But here, and now, do we not need a deeper and fuller sense of the "Debt?" God had an original right to our obedience and devotion, and we rendered nothing. But, brought to realize this, we adore Him and admire the grace that has forgiven. And let us observe that the Lord Jesus emphasizes *Himself* as the Creditor. As in other parables, He is Central. The field belongs to Him. The royal feast is made for Him. He alone is the Good Shepherd. And thus we realize that sin is against Him: His Godhead shines before us, and He would lovingly attract love to Himself. There is no rival claim to our love, as with God or mammon, for He is God. He never separates Himself from the Father in a way that would ignore His essential Deity. He emptied and humbled Himself, but remained Himself. And he seeks not only our knowledge of a creed, but our personal love. O let us remember this. His resurrection question rings in our ears "Lovest thou Me more than these?" and yet again, "Lovest thou Me?" And the last book of Scripture sounds forth, near its beginning, the precious words, "Unto Him *That loveth us*, and loosed us from our sins" (Rev. 1. 5). And what, ah, what, shall be our response to Him to-day?

Ere we leave this narrative, let us see the gracious stress on "faith" and "peace" in verse 50. Must you say, dear

reader (for it may be there is one who knows not the joy of forgiveness), that your debt remains a burden? It is well not to make light of it. Would that there were more tears and not less. 'Tis the rocky ground hearer that receives with "earthly joy." There is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth. But tears, though precious, are not to shut out the sunshine of grace. The Lord makes His rainbow of covenant love to meet the troubled sinner's eye; and there is the precious invitation to faith. He demands nothing. He gives all. Frank forgiveness is His prerogative, for the glory of Deity and the glory of atonement are alike His. Will you not believe Him, and into Him? Then taking Him at His word, you too may enter into peace, for He gives peace (John 14. 27), and appoints peace for His own, and even for such as you. The debt is removed, that you may love the Creditor Who has become the Giver; yea, He has brought His own into living union with Himself, beyond the types and pictures of salvation, for no parable can exhaust the fulness of His work, nor will eternity outlast it. But it is not only for eternity: He welcomes and saves—to-day.

Having studied praisefully our Lord's messages as to the frank forgiveness of sinners, and still seeking to find the precious fruit of such love in our lives, we are prepared for His further reference to debts. We notice the margin of Luke 13. 4. The present-day tendency is ever to obscure this thought of a debt. Accountability and stewardship, before God, are commonly put in the background, and self becomes central. Even redeemed ones need to be on their guard lest salvation be viewed primarily from the standpoint of personal safety than from that of the glory of His Name. Moreover, we all do well to remember the message of Matthew 6. 12. There is nothing against "grace" in this petition. It does not speak of the primary, and unchangeable legal settlement and forgiveness, but of the Father's forgiveness in the home, parallel with the *third* debt of Matthew 18, even as "our debtors" would remind of the *second* debt there. Our sins, as trespasses against law, *have* been forgiven, but the family fellowship is in a new sphere, and is associated with a right and forgiving condition of heart, which humbly owns a need of being forgiven too, and, thanks be to God, which finds His fatherly forgiveness, and its experience and enjoyment.

We come next to our Lord's words in Luke 16. 1-12. the tendency to misuse and weaken the word "parable" may well make us on our guard against definitely employing it here without explanation. But even if the Lord Jesus referred to one specific man, He meant the message to apply to us also. Hence, whether an individual narrative is allegorized, or whether we have a direct parable, the message is the same to our lowly and attentive hearts. The question is first one of

stewardship and its responsibility. And two debtors again are thereby before us. But let us never forget the primary message of stewardship, and the parallel with the lessons of the "Talents" and the "Pounds." May our Lord's warning and exhortation come with living power to each believer.

The steward was accused. By whom we are not told. Luke 18. 7 may give the key, but the angelic ministry of Acts 12.23, as well as Hebrews 1. 14 may well imply (with Daniel 10. 12 and Zechariah 1) that these heavenly servants have a deep interest in God's arrangements (1 Tim. 5. 21). The steward was accused "as one wasting." Wasting is not only in the far country (Luke 15. 13). This is deeply important. We call to mind the servant who kept the unused pound safe, but in a napkin. Here the aspect is different, but in both cases there is nothing for the Lord. If only we realized more that wasting is stealing, and leads to a loss of stewardship, even as in Revelation 2. 4, 5 leaving of first love leads to a holy threatening of the removal of the lampstand! We, as Israel of old, are not in authority, but we are under authority (Matt. 8. 9), and are among those having responsibility. Let us seek grace to use time, and all alike, to His glory. The context here suggests a special thought of Israel, and the particular view of their trusteeship is explained as that of the oracles of God (Rom. 3. 2). It is easy to misuse this exceeding great and precious stewardship. Nothing can be viewed as a personal right. Whatever we have, and are, belongs to God. The Holy Spirit ever emphasizes this.

The steward is called, and the plain, searching question is put, "How is it?" or more forcibly, "What is this I hear concerning thee?" We remember God's questions to Adam, Eve, Cain, and Jonah. He gives space for repentance (Cf. the mercy of Judges 2. 2) "What is this?" A saddening "this"; precious privileges and opportunities had been misused: happy are we if we "do His commandments, hearkening unto *the voice of His word*" (Ps. 103. 20). The expression "I hear" reminds of Genesis 18. 21, and, by contrast, of Exodus 3. 9. What does God "hear" concerning us? Happy are we if we are in fellowship with Him, and can say, "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning" (Ps. 5. 3), and if the Lord hearkens and hears our words of love together, because we think on His Name (Mal. 3. 16). The steward was evidently away from his Master, and herein is the peril at all times.

No answer is revealed, and the words soon follow, "Give an (or the) account of thy stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer steward." There *is* removal from "stewardship:" we must distinguish from everlasting salvation. Stewardship may exist apart from salvation, as with Israel, Balaam and Judas (Heb. 6. 4-6), and may be given after salvation, and be taken away (see Rev. 3. 11). This is a deeply solemn subject. Nor

would we speak lightly of "eternal salvation." Grace never made a man careless, and the Lord Jesus saves His people from their sins. To assume salvation while choosing to wander is to trifle with covenant love, and its precious revelation by the Holy Spirit.

And what would *our* "account" be? How could we rightly describe our use of whatever the Lord has entrusted? It may be time: it may be influence: it may be money (for trusteeship is not limited to wealth: it may be a home with precious lives to train for Him: it may be health, no mean privilege. What would our truthful "account" be? Let us not put aside the searching question. And what if we hear the words, "Thou mayest be no longer steward." They might be rendered, "Thou hast not power." Who can stand against the Lord? Let us not regard such privileges as a freehold.

Let us think again of Israel. They were blessed, and to them pertained varied privileges (Rom. 3. 1, 2, 9. 4), which the majority did not esteem. "The Kingdom of God" had been given to them (Matt. 21. 43), and the vineyard with its capacity for fruit, was theirs. The message of Matthew 21. 33-41 is parallel with that of Luke 13. 6-9. There is ever the same thought of "responsibility." The people of old rejoiced in their pride (Zeph. 3. 11), and said "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7. 4). They regarded their city and temple as their own, and despised others. Nor has it been otherwise with Christendom. Nor has it been altogether otherwise with true children of God. Pride has come in unawares, and it has worked with cankering corruption. We may have used the doctrine of grace against responsibility, at least *in measure* parallel with the sin of those who have turned it into licence and lasciviousness.

The steward spoke "within himself:" there was no confession of sin. He was agitated as to his position, not as to his iniquity. Thus he showed the same disregard of God that is shown by every undischarged debt. "Self" is a tremendous power. Small wonder that he afterwards dared to alter the debts of others. "I cannot dig," he said, and this word is elsewhere associated with the "work" of a building (Luke 6. 48) or a garden (Luke 13. 8). He owned, yet without sorrow, the fact that he could not render acceptable work. How precious is the building of God's appointment, and how rich the fruit of the Lord Jesus. And His dear people are privileged to work well pleasingly on resurrection ground. But what is the alternative, if a man cannot work to secure a legal righteousness? Should he not come as a heart-broken sinner, and own his utter need? This is the deepest humbling of absolute poverty. But the troubled sinner begs for mercy, nor does he beg in vain. But the pride of man regards this as

intolerable. "To beg, I am ashamed." If only he had been ashamed of the sin instead!

It is here that the thought of "his Lord's debtors" comes in. As steward he was entrusted with a concern for their accounts, and yet he shows, by his very question, a wrong attitude. He *asks* what they owe. The hint is searching. If we have any stewardship for God, we should realize the responsibility of sinners to Him, and be troubled at the debt. His interests should be ours. But we find the reverse attitude manifested here. It may be said, "Why should so much be said about *stewardship* in that which is written regarding *debts*?" Should it not be impressed on our hearts that the *two* are linked. The payment of wheat and oil was a "stewardship,"--how many eastern arrangements are made thus, in connexion with the letting out of land. And thus a number of parables are brought to one focus, and, as we realize anew man's unfulfilled responsibility to God, our hearts again praise Him for the precious Substitute of His provision, and the wondrous merits of Him in Whom we are accepted. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!" Then, on the new basis, a new trusteeship is given to disciples, and the redeemed one who is concerned that he himself may render unto the Lord has an exercise of soul, and is enabled, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to tell "his Lord's debtors" of the One Who paid the debt which neither they nor he could ever meet.

And now let us consider the present description of that debt the more fully. The first debtor says, "A hundred measures of oil." It would seem that we have a truthful answer, and it affords a remarkable type. "Oil" in Leviticus is a picture of spirituality and devotedness, and man ought to be devoted to God. Yet there is no evidence that even a part of the oil had been presented. Certainly the sinner has done nothing, and given nothing. All the "debtor" passages, and the "no fruit" parables, emphasize this humbling thought. The utter ruin needs utter grace, or else there must be utter hopelessness. The amount is striking, "an hundred measures." "Ten" is the first double figure number, and suggests apparently fellowship:⁴ squares usually intensify the thought, and this is ten squared. Man should render fruitful service unto God, with the devoted fellowship of all that is within him. The offering of Leviticus 2, portraying the Lord Jesus, shows His perfect attitude. But men are in debt, aye, and know it, yet are often, as in this case, unmoved.

⁴ Cf. "an instrument of ten strings," "ten curtains," "ten virgins," "ten servants." A solemn contrast in the fellowship of Antichrist's ten kings (Rev. 17. 12). "Ten" was the smallest number Abraham named in Genesis 18. 32, and Israel to this day delay certain acts, when gathered, unless ten males are present.

And there is a lesson in the second debt, for "two" are selected, as elsewhere, with the striking "witness" of that number. 'Tis a reminder here of the witness of God's law against men. Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, wise and foolish, are all involved, and as *two* witnesses were required for "proof" the Law emphasises the sad unimpeachable "evidence" that all are debtors. None can gainsay the fact, though they may awhile ignore the consequences. The nature of this second debt has a message for our hearts: "A hundred measures of wheat." If oil speaks of devotedness, wheat reminds of righteousness, and of fine flour contrasted with the chaff of men's own way. All of us ought to have been obedient, but none of us have obeyed. The wheat is here seen to be a debt, not a gift: a responsibility, not an optional present. And there is no hint here that one omer has been paid. Rather there is the clear testimony that the whole of the hundred measures remained unpaid. The condition of a sinner is solemnizing. He should have rendered much to God, and God's provision of wheat and oil in Israel's land (Deut. 8. 8) afforded merciful instruction as to these duties. But they failed and all have failed alike. In the parable of the husbandmen (which is also a debt-parable), those entrusted with privileges rendered *nothing*. Nor were we better.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

BALANCE.

If we are occupied with our failures, and ever talk of them, though we may set forth sound doctrine as to the evil of the flesh, we are not walking with God. If we are speaking of our victory in a way that ignores our falling short, we are lowering His standard. We need grace rather to view our Lord more by living faith (2 Cor. 3. 18), that our victories may not be a goal, nor hide our constant need of our Lord's intercession, and that we may not, on the other hand, settle down to failure, as if a new life and the indwelling Holy Spirit still left us as those who walk strengthlessly in the flesh. A holy balance of heart and mind, in the sanctuary, will put the Lord in His right place, or rather acknowledge His right place, and then self-occupation will be changed to a humble experience which sees Him as the Source of all that pleases Himself, and also as the One Who made atonement for all that is displeasing. Thus Christ will become Central, and after this our heart would humbly seek.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
neither shall fruit be in the vines;
the labour of the olive shall fail,
and the fields shall yield no meat;
the flock shall be cut off from the fold.
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
*Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.*"

Habakkuk 3. 17, 18.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

GOD IS! Amid disappointment, and change, and uncertainty, we would emphasize Himself, and find our resting place in Himself. It appears as if Habakkuk was caused to view all the normal sources of supply, and to face their failure calmly—because God fails not. It is with a desire that we ourselves, and others who know redemption by the precious blood of Christ, may have the same faith, and quietness, and confidence, and JOY—that these pages are humbly sent forth. GOD IS!

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Concordance to the Inner and Outer Life, and the Members of the Body in Proverbs.

In a meeting I suggested the value of a Concordance to the parts of the body in Proverbs, and their use for the Lord (and the danger of misuse against Him). It was handed to me with unexpected quickness, by one who had been at our meetings from childhood. Gratefully accepting, I felt we ought to add the "soul," &c. It is important to realize the Holy Spirit's stress on all that is within God's people. The "heart" means much more than a physical organ, but the physical members are to be devoted to Him, and the very

bones to praise Him. We do not claim completeness, and any suggestions will be welcome. The word "face" illustrates the difficulty: it sometimes denotes the front of an inanimate thing. But I hope sufficient evidence has been produced, to encourage all of us who can humbly say we are God's redeemed people, in the realization of practical holiness, and in the use of our members for Him. Beautiful indeed are the words of Romans 12. 1, 2, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this age. But be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

ARMS. Zeroa.

31. 17 She strengtheneth her arms

BACK. Gav.

10. 13 A rod is for the back

19. 29 Back of fools

26. 3 Fool's back

BELLY. Beten.

13. 25 Belly of the wicked

18. 8 Parts of the belly

18. 20 Man's belly . . . be satisfied

20. 27 Inward parts of the belly

20. 30 Inward parts of the belly

26. 22 Innermost parts of the belly

BODY. Sh'er (see "flesh").

5. 11 Flesh and body consumed

BONE. Gerem.

17. 22 A broken spirit drieth the

bones

25. 15 A soft tongue breaketh the

bones

Etsem.

3. 8 Marrow to thy bones

12. 4 Rottenness in his bones

14. 30 Envy the rottenness of bones

15. 30 Maketh the bones fat

16. 24 Health to the bones

COUNTENANCE. Panim

(see "face").

15. 13 Cheerful countenance

16. 15 King's countenance

25. 23 Angry countenance

27. 17 Countenance of his friend

EAR. Ozen.

2. 2 Incline thine ear to wisdom

4. 20 Incline thine ear to My say-

ing

5. 1 Bow thine ear

5. 13 Inclined mine ear to them

15. 31 The ear that heareth

18. 15 The ear of the wise

20. 12 The hearing ear

21. 13 Stoppeth his ears at the cry

22. 17 Bow down thine ear

23. 9 In the ears of a fool

23. 12 Apply thine ears to the

words

25. 12 An obedient ear

28. 9 He that turneth away his ear

EYE. Ayin.

3. 7 Wise in thine own eyes

3. 21 Depart from thine eyes

4. 21 Depart from thine eyes

4. 25 Let thine eyes look right on

6. 4 Give not sleep to thine eyes

6. 13 Winketh with his eyes

7. 2 Apple of thine eye

10. 10 Eye causeth sorrow

10. 26 As smoke to the eyes

12. 15 Right in his own eyes

15. 3 The eyes of the Lord

15. 30 The light of the eyes

16. 2 Clean in his own eyes

16. 30 Shutteth his eyes

17. 8 Eyes of him that hath it

17. 24 The eyes of a fool

20. 8 All evil with his eyes

20. 12 The seeing eye

20. 13 Open thine eyes

21. 2 Right in his own eyes

21. 10 No favour in his eyes

22. 9 A bountiful eye

23. 5 Wilt thou set thine eyes

23. 6 An evil eye

23. 26 Thine eyes observe My ways

23. 29 Redness of eyes

23. 33 Thine eyes shall behold

25. 7 Thine eyes have seen

27. 20 The eyes of man never

satisfied

28. 22 An evil eye

28. 27 Hideth his eyes

29. 13 Both their eyes

30. 12 Pure in their own eyes

30. 13 Lofty are their eyes

30. 17 The eye that mocketh

EYELIDS. Aphappim.

4. 25 Thine eyelids look straight

6. 4 Slumber to thine eyelids

6. 25 With her eyelids

30. 13 Eyelids are lifted up

FACE. Panim

(see "countenance")*

7. 13 Impudent face

7. 15 To seek thy face

21. 29 Hardeneth his face

27. 19 Face answereth to face

*Rendered variously e.g. "favour"

in 19. 6, 29. 26, "person" in

18. 5, 24. 23, 28. 21, "presence"

in 17. 18, 25. 5, 6, "sight" in

4. 3. Occurs also in 14. 12, 16.

25 (to the face of a man), 22.

29 ("before"), 25. 5 ("before"),

25. 26 ("before").

FOOT. Raglayim (dual).

1. 15 Refrain thy foot

1. 16 Their feet run to evil

3. 23 Thy foot shall not stumble

3. 26 Keep thy foot from being

taken

4. 26 Path of thy feet

4. 27 Remove thy foot from evil

5. 5 Feet go down to death

6. 13 Speaketh with his feet

6. 18 Feet that be swift

6. 28 Feet not be burned

7. 11 Her feet abide not in her

19. 2 Feet sinneth

25. 17 Withdraw thy foot

25. 19 Foot out of joint

26. 6 Cutteth off the feet

FINGERS. Etsba.

6. 13 Teacheth with his fingers

7. 3 Bind them upon thy fingers

FISTS. Chopnayim.

30. 4 Wind in His fists

FLESH. Basar.

4. 22 Health to all their flesh

5. 11 Thy flesh and thy body

14. 30 Life of the flesh

23. 20 Eaters of flesh

Sh'er (see "body").

11. 17 Troubleth his own flesh

HAND. Yad.

1. 24 Stretched out My hand

3. 27 Power of thy hand

6. 5 Hand of the hunter . . . hand

of the fowler

6. 10 The hands to sleep

6. 17 Hands that shed . . . blood

10. 4 Slack hand . . . hand of the

diligent

11. 21 Hand in hand

12. 14 Recompense of a man's

hands

14. 1 Down with her hands

16. 5 Hand in hand

17. 16 The hand of a fool

19. 24 Hand in bosom

21. 1 Hand of the Lord

21. 25 His hands refuse to labour

24. 33 Of the hands to sleep

26. 6 Hand of a fool

26. 9 Hand of a drunkard

26. 15 Hand in bosom

27. 16 Ointment of his right hand

30. 28 Taketh hold with her hands

30. 32 Thine hand upon thy mouth

31. 19 Her hands to the spindle . . .

her hands hold . . . distaff

31. 20 Her hands to the needy

31. 31 The fruit of her hands

Yamin.

3. 16 In her right hand (also

"left hand." Heb. s'mol)

4. 27 To the right hand

Kaph.

6. 3 The hand of thy friend

31. 13 Worketh . . . with her hands

31. 16 Fruit of her hands

HEAD. Rosh.

1. 9 Grace unto thine head

4. 9 Thine head an ornament of

grace

10. 6 The head of the just

16. 31 The hoary head

20. 29 Old men . . . the grey head

25. 22 Fire upon his head

HEART. Leb.

2. 10 Wisdom entereth . . . thine

heart

3. 1 Heart keep . . . command-

ments

3. 3 Table of thine heart

3. 5 Trust . . . with all thine heart

4. 4 Thine heart retain my words

4. 23 Keep thy heart

5. 12 My heart despised reproof

6. 14 Frowardness in his heart

6. 18 Heart that deviseth wicked

6. 21 Upon thine heart

7. 3 Table of thine heart

7. 10 Subtle of heart

7. 25 Not thine heart decline to

her

8. 5 Of an understanding heart

10. 8 The wise in heart

10. 20 The heart of the wicked

11. 20 Froward heart . . . abomina-

tion

11. 29 To the wise of heart

12. 8 Perverse heart . . . despised

12. 20 Deceit in the heart

12. 23 The heart of fools

12. 25 Heaviness in the heart of

man

13. 12 Maketh the heart sick

14. 10 Heart knoweth . . . own bit-

terness

14. 13 In laughter the heart is

14. 14 The backslider in heart

14. 30 A sound heart

14. 33 Wisdom resteth in the heart	21. 1 King's heart in the hand of the Lord
15. 7 Heart of the foolish	21. 4 A proud heart
15. 13 A merry heart . . . sorrow of the heart	22. 11 Pureness of heart
15. 14 Heart that . . . hath understanding	22. 15 In the heart of a child
15. 15 Merry heart . . . feast	22. 17 Apply thine heart unto
15. 28 Heart of the righteous	23. 7 Thinketh in his heart . . . his heart not with thee
15. 30 Rejoiceth the heart	23. 12 Apply thine heart
16. 1 Preparations of the heart	23. 15 Thine heart be wise . . . my heart shall rejoice
16. 5 Proud in heart	23. 17 Let not thine heart envy
16. 9 Man's heart deviseth his way	23. 19 Guide thine heart
16. 21 The wise in heart	23. 26 Give me thine heart
16. 23 The heart of the wise	23. 33 Thine heart . . . utter perverse
17. 16 Seeing no heart	24. 2 Heart studieth destruction
17. 20 A froward heart	24. 17 Let not thine heart be glad
17. 22 A merry heart	25. 3 The heart of kings
18. 2 His heart may discover itself	25. 20 Songs to an heavy heart
18. 12 Heart of man is haughty	26. 23 A wicked heart
18. 15 The heart of the prudent	26. 25 Abominations in his heart
19. 3 Heart fretteth against the Lord	27. 9 Rejoice the heart
19. 21 Devices in a man's heart	27. 11 Make my heart glad
20. 5 Counsel in the heart	27. 19 Heart of man to man
20. 9 Made my heart clean	28. 14 Hardeneth his heart
	28. 26 Trusteth in his own heart
	31. 11 Heart of her husband

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"When I see the Blood, I will PAUSE Over You."

Exodus 12. 13.

CONVINCED that the usual translation somewhat obscures the glory of God's grace I would seek to give briefly some reasons for the rendering proposed above.*

1. The tendency to imagine different roots for like words in Hebrew seems to me an undue "reaction" from the earlier idea that similar spelling always implied the same root. The Hebrew word "passover" contains three letters (P, S, CH): the same three are found in the verb employed in 2 Samuel 4. 4, 1 Kings 18. 21, where the idea is plainly "halting,"—an inability or hesitation to go away. It occurs also in verse 26, where the rendering "leaped" has no basis in the passage, or elsewhere, but is an inference, apparently, from the erroneous translation in Exodus. Rather, they "halted" upon the altar: possibly their intense fear, and the woundings which certainly came after (verse 28), compelled "limping" as the R.V. margin suggests. But in any case there seems the Holy Spirit's allusion to verse 21, and the sad "halting" there. Exactly the

* I might have used some other word to denote God's gracious tarrying over the door, as if He could not move away;—wondrous is the hint of love,—but the sound of "Pause" is so near "Pass," that "Pause-over" seems the best way to impress on most of us God's precious teaching.

same verb appears to be found in Exodus 12. 13, 23, 27, and in Isaiah 31. 5. The last passage surely gives us the key. A bird protects first by flying, and then by *spreading abroad* the wings (Matt. 23. 37). There is no thought of passing on: that would *remove* protection.

2. There are no words in Scripture from this root to denote "going by"; but, on the contrary, the word "lame" (e.g. (2 Sam. 9. 13) has related spelling, and surely sets forth a delay, not a springing forward.

3. Exodus 12 has a different word altogether for "passing through" (verse 12),‡ and there is no hint in the chapter of going by the houses, and leaving them. On the contrary, when the Lord paused over the house we read that *He would not suffer the destroyer to come in* (verse 23). If there were merely the suggestion of the destroyer noticing the blood, this would seem unnecessary. Why is the Lord's own gracious hindering work recorded, and why do we read "He will not permit," or "grant," unless there is the beautiful suggestion that He Himself paused over the door?

4. This inspired language brings out the passover parallel with the day of atonement and the Holiest of All. Both are associated with one special day, and then a week before (God after, in the two peculiarly emphasized months of Israel's years, and both suggest, I would submit, that God *dwells* where the blood of the sacrifice is applied. God set His Name in the Most Holy Place: He did not pass by. And in Exodus 12 He deigned to "see" the type of His beloved Son, in Whom He ever finds infinite delight.

5. The parallel in a believer's experience is confirmatory. If our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, does not God dwell therein? Is there any suggestion of going away, after seeing?

6. Eating in Israel's feasts was specially "before the Lord" (Deut. 12. 7): it would be fitting therefore to view His presence and interest. The Holy Place in like manner was said to be before Him, for neither veil nor door could shut out His beholding.

7. Subsequent references to the passover, etc., may, without giving a proof (is any more "proof" needed?), at least helpfully illustrate. For example, in the related chapter (Ex. 13) we find that the redeemed ones are *claimed* for the Lord by the continued offering of a lamb. "Mine" is the Lord's word in Numbers 3. 13. The pausing over the door was appropriate, as Isaiah 31 set forth the parallel, on the part of a bird when claiming its young. In Numbers 9 the wilderness partaking is at once followed by the reference to the Lord's presence in the cloudy pillar, and the first partaking in the land leads up at once to the reference to the presence of the Captain of the

‡ This, moreover, is linked with the smiting, not the delivering, in verses 12 and 23 alike, and yet again in 27 the contrast is implied. Observe, too, the same contrast of language in Micah 7. 18.

Lord's host (Jos. 5. 10-15). Again, the passover was not to be kept afterwards except "at the place which the Lord" chose "to *place* His Name in." The passover blood was always to be close to His dwelling. John 1. 29 seems to allude definitely to "the Lamb" of Genesis 22 (first mention), and Exodus 12. And, where the Lamb was, there was the "abiding" of the Spirit of God (verse 33). May our hearts enjoy everything that glorifies Him Who died for us.

The Parables of the Debtors.

(Concluded)

Is there no hope? We call to mind the rejected alternatives in the steward's mind, digging and begging. When the debt was not paid, the gracious appointment in Luke 7 was frank forgiveness. The unrighteous steward knows nothing of this. He urges a compromise. But the law allows of no compromise, and the gospel provides no compromise. Matthew 18 and Luke 7 have alike witnessed against such a deadly theory. The one who was "ashamed" to own his personal need, and "beg" for mercy, could not declare the one way of escape for the guilty.

His proposition was meant for his own advantage, and "peace"; a worthless proposition, yet giving, by contrast, a wondrous display of the gospel of the grace of God. "He said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty."* We may easily overlook the six things here before us. Let us mark them out.

- (1) "Take
- (2) Thy bill
- (3) Sit down
- (4) Quickly
- (5) Write
- (6) Fifty."

"Take" or almost, "welcome." Poor welcoming, when there is no authority—and when there is no removal of the debt, no forgiveness, no security. "Thy bill": it remains "thine": and remarkably the word "bill" is rather "letters," and suggests the law, inasmuch as it is the very term of John 5. 47, Romans 7. 6, 2 Corinthians 3. 6. There is nought but legal condemnation. "Sit down": as if to take a rest, but there is no rest in the treadmill work of self. "Quickly": as if in fear of what may happen afterwards, and yet with a vain speed, as if pretending the blessing could be immediately bestowed. "Write": God *has* written the bill already:—the only hope is blotting out: it is not for man to write, and if he presumes to write he cannot but write his own judgment. "Fifty": "Fifty" is not "an hundred," but the *other fifty* are enough to condemn:

* A gospel tract with this title gladly sent.

and thus we have here a miserable compromise, a lie, and an empty hope. He who has nothing and can do nothing, is no nearer the payment of one than of the whole. Nothing but pure grace can meet the sinner's need, and this shines out in the gospel. "Welcome,"—not a bill, but a receipt (Isa. 40. 2)! Not the letters of debt, for the "handwriting" against the guilty one is taken out of the midst (Col. 2. 14), and instead there is the Name of the Saviour which redeemed ones can present in prayer. The precious result is the writing of God's laws in their hearts (Heb. 8. 10). Ah, there is a "sitting down, for are not the Lord's own made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 6)? Well may they, as David, sit before the Lord in adoration (2 Sam. 7. 18). And this grace is both now and for ever: "quickly" indeed may the anxious sinner come, and, instead of "writing fifty," he may read the sure words of covenant love, "It is finished." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift." What a precious gospel we have whereon to rest: what a precious gospel we have whereof to tell. We would never return to the unjust steward's compromise, but rejoice in One of Whom it is written "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2. 10). The Holy Spirit has given the witness and now causes the witness within (1 John 5. 9, 10).

The other debtor was dealt with in a similar way. There was no other proposal. *The debt remained*, though it was "reduced," yet without any guarantee. Sin was added to sin, and one sinner, made, or helped, another to sin. "So they wrap it up" (Mic. 7. 3). The proportion is different—"eighty," as if to emphasise the authority of the one speaking. But there is no authority except to declare what God has declared, and to bind that which has been bound in heaven. Nominal Christianity has struck on this rock. It has sought authority on earth and it matters not whether the centre be self or the pope, there must be ruin. Peter himself learnt the precious contrast. 'Twas not God ratifying his decision, but his approval of God's decisions, that gave authority,—"What God hath cleansed" (loosed in heaven first), that *call not thou common*" (Acts 10. 15).‡ How blessed to declare a full gospel on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of writing "eighty," redeemed souls may *sing*, "Unto Him That loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be the glory" (Rev. 1. 5, 6). The *last* recorded word of the steward was a lie. Happy are those who know the truth, and can bring others to Him Who is the Truth.

The added application to the Lord's people is deeply precious. They are bidden to use the things of earth, as a trusteeship, for Him Whom they love, and in view of His Coming. "The lord (not Lord) commended the unjust steward," as one clever for himself, but believers are to realize

‡ Leaflet available.

that when they seek the encouragement of "that Day," they are both exalting *their* Lord, and attending to their own true interests. It is foolish, as well as sinful, for a child of God to be worldly, and to use the things of earth for himself. Unfaithfulness will bring loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ. But this part of the subject partly belongs to another series of articles, which would include the Pounds and Talents. Yet we would not pass it over here, for there is a holy consciousness of debt in the new sphere where God has in grace put us. And Matthew 18 has impressed this on our receptive hearts, that, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we may render again for every benefit, and view nothing as our own. In so doing we shall also bear a right witness to those who still have the great debt of sin, before God's throne, which we have been graciously forgiven.

In closing it may be well to refer again to the Parable of the Husbandmen. They were responsible to give the fruits in their season (cf. Song 8. 11), but Isaiah 5. 7 was illustrated, and God was robbed (Mal. 3. 8). And we have no thought that a part of the debt was paid, or that it was settled afterwards. One remarkable point in all these parables is that we find either complete forgiveness, or judgment. There is no ordinary payment, or compromise, or plan of instalments. This is of the deepest importance in the realization of the gospel. There is nothing *between* our own waywardness, guilt and doom, on the one hand, and the glorious contrast, even the reception, as poor guilty ones, of an entirely free salvation. There is no third alternative. Thus all the "debtor" passages make clear the marvellous grace of God, and welcome poor and helpless sinners to Himself. These parabolic messages are full of encouragement to those who feel their need, and of joy when we rest upon God's frank forgiveness. And not only is a believer's rejoicing encouraged thereby, but we have gracious guidance as to gospel proclamation. We have a real Saviour of Whom we can tell, and a real salvation has been brought about by His finished work. We do not find the flood without the ark, nor have we a parable of wrath without mercy. All Scripture points to Christ, and His redemption, and our grateful hearts may once more say, with a love that will never die out, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift," for in Him "we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

"If the Lord will," we hope to reprint, as a companion booklet to **Parables of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 13**, which some readers may not have yet seen, but which deals with deeply important subjects in these times which the Holy Spirit Himself has described as "perilous."

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"It is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, Elect, Precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."
1 Peter 2. 6.

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"Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the Sin of the World."

John 1. 29.

EVERY redeemed one should rejoice when such words sound in his ears, or meet his eyes. Wondrous, indeed, is the love which has abounded to poor, lost sinners. The work was not our work, the glory is not our glory: the Lord Jesus Christ has finished that which He came to do, and praise should overflow, joined with loving testimony concerning Himself, in Whom we are accepted, and in Whom we are complete.

And, as we give thanks to the Father, we shall do well to meditate on the words which the Holy Spirit has written. Acknowledging the verbal perfection of the inspired record, we feel sure that John was Divinely moved to use this name for the Lord Jesus, and to use here the word "sin" in the singular. Mental word-study can never take the place of heart-nourishment, but spiritual word-study is to God's glory, and contributes to the food of God's dear people.

We rightly ask, "Where is a sacrificial lamb *first* before us in Holy Scripture?" Genesis 4. 2 refers to the flock, and we have thus, at the outset, in connexion with the *first* man whose faith is recorded, an emphasis on salvation by sacrifice. Indeed, the epistle to the Hebrews records this as the *first act* of faith in its encouraging list. But the Holy Spirit has not

used the word "lamb" in Genesis 4. We must go on to chapter 22, and here, in a narrative of faith, Abraham's *first utterance* concerning God's gift contains the word "lamb." "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (verse 8). But the exact rendering is more impressive, "God will see for Himself *the Lamb* for a burnt offering." The prayerful reader will see that four words are common to both passages, for "behold" is the usual verb "see." Thus we have in both the name of *God*, and *seeing the Lamb*. In Genesis, God sees. In John redeemed ones are called to see: and love ever rejoices in that which rejoices His heart. The English omission of "the" in Genesis is a great loss, for "a ram" in verse 13 was not "the lamb": hence the future is still found in verse 14 "The Lord *will* see," "It (rather, He) shall be seen." We notice thereby that the word "see" is prominent, and "shall be seen" may imply the very thought that others shall behold Him Whom God has beheld with full approval.

And where is "the Lamb" next? A Concordance will help us, though our minds may already have turned toward Exodus 12. There is a striking emphasis on many lambs, yet the singular is preserved, "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it." "A lamb," "the lamb," "your lamb." Here we have a precious type, and then the Divine explanation is given, "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pause (not, pass) over you" (verse 13). Again there is the "seeing" of "the Lord's Passover," and the delivered people have the joy of the token: they see what God has seen.

I have been thinking over some of the aspects of the precious work of Christ set forth by the passover and the day of atonement. Both are mentioned in Hebrews. Passover concerned the firstborn (Heb. 11. 29), and was a question of life instead of death for *persons*. There is no primary reference to special sins, but to the fact that the persons were themselves members of a family under a death sentence, with sin imputed and inherent. Hence the reference to "birth," and the need of a work which deals with *all* the guilt, as well as the activities. The continued narrative in Exodus 13 enforces this, for there we find the redemption of the firstborn as a necessity, quite apart from their actions. The grateful believer, remembering Matthew 21. 5, will feel the power of Exodus 13. 13, "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of men *among thy children* shalt thou redeem." We see the solemn alternative,—redemption or a broken neck. Thanks be unto God for redemption. And believing parents do well to claim the underlying thought of the words "among thy children," and to fulfil the commandment (with promise) of Proverbs 22. 6. The "ass" emphasizes typically unclean-

ness of nature, by *birth*: the dog and the pig represent the choice of sin in daily life (Matt. 7. 6, 2 Pet. 2. 22), and are not associated with sacrifices.

And now we turn to Leviticus 16. The day of atonement lays special stress on consciousness of *sins*, and not primarily on sin. Its background was the evil *action* of Nadab and Abihu, and the Holy Spirit refers to the transgressions and sins of Israel (verses 16, 30, 34). There seems to be no mention of "sin" in the singular. True, "death" is before us, as in Exodus 12, but it is death linked with activity against God. And the Epistle to the Hebrews has the same message, "In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of *sins* every year: for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away *sins*" (10. 3, 4). There is a wondrous wealth of teaching in all typical Scriptures, each passage exalting the Lord Jesus and every aspect of His work is precious. We know but part. It may be added that passover deals with bringing out, atonement with bringing in: passover is associated with the wilderness walk to God's glory: atonement reminds us of acceptance and cleanness before God, and in His presence. At least, this seems God's relative emphasis, though there is no opposition, and each contains much of the teaching of the other, for the work of Christ is One, and how can we "walk" unless we abide in His presence? How can we enjoy our acceptance if we settle down in the Egypt-like world?

The passover and day of atonement alike were God's provision for a chosen earthly nation. The gospel reveals a Saviour for sinners from among all nations. Hence the emphasis at the end of Matthew on "all nations" (28. 19), the end of Mark on "every creature" (16. 15), and at the end of Luke on "all nations beginning at Jerusalem" (24. 47). The testimony of the Holy Spirit through John is the same. The Antitype exceeds the type, and Gentiles are saved. The passover chapter mentions "the stranger," with a precious gospel hint (Ex. 12. 48), yet the contrast with Egypt is evident. An *earthly* nation was marked out. But John's gospel places that very nation as part of "the world" (1. 10), and grace is not national, an earthly temple is no longer the centre. The "tabernacle" of Exodus was for Israel, but "His own received Him not" is the sad message of John 1. 11, followed by the "but" of a new creation, and the "as many as" are the "we" of one redeemed company who beheld Christ's "Shekinah" glory by living faith (1. 14). This is the only place where John the Baptist speaks of "the world" (1. 29) and the next mention by the Holy Spirit is 3. 16, where we have the contrast with Nicodemus' nationalism. 'Tis God's grace to those who are redeemed out of every nation. Not universalism, but a bringing in of "*sheep*" not from Israel's fold (John 10. 16): the Lord's fulfilment of chapter 6. 37.

Genesis 22 is helpful in this connexion. The lamb there was instead of one person, but the one person represented the Jewish race,—all descended from him. But the Lamb of God is for believing Gentiles also: even all “given” to Christ as John’s gospel again and again shows, to prevent theories of universal salvation. The type bore its preparatory message, for “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” is joined with “In thy seed shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed” (Gen. 22. 18), and thus that very chapter also at once leads on to remind of grace to Gentiles.

Now we can realize the force of John 1. 29. John himself “beheld” (verse 34), and Christ came to be “manifested” then to Israel (31),* but the salvation was to be wrought for sinners of all nations. As we have seen, the passover particularly deals with their persons, and the day of atonement with their sins. The two are always related. The redeemed people are forgiven all their sins, but the first aspect emphasizes electing grace to those of all kindreds (Rev. 5. 9), the second unveils a personal sense of many iniquities, and a humbling before God.

This breadth of grace is wondrous, but we dare not pervert it to universalism. We have just seen “redemption” has its “out of” in Revelation 5. 9, and in Hebrews 12. 23 the “firstborn” of the Passover are those whose names “have been written in heaven.” There is no suggestion that any for whom the lamb died were left in Egypt, and the Holy Spirit expressly shows that the wide type seen in Isaac by no means conflicts with election (Rom. 9. 7). The contrast is with nationalism, not with the Divine choice and sovereign power, without which none would be quickened, and found among the called of Jesus Christ. All setting aside of election tends either to the exaltation of fallen man, or to a deadly universalism, but the Scriptures never set aside this sovereignty of grace to those who *would* never come to Christ otherwise. All Scripture harmonizes with all Scripture, and each individual of the great multitude has a personal Saviour. How blessed is a personal experience of Him. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”

* In Hebrews 9. 26 we find literally, “the ending of the ages,” a difficult expression, but “the ending of the age” in Matthew 13 appears to refer to the last 3½ years of this dispensation. May not “the ending of the ages” speak of the transitional time between the manifestation of the Lord Jesus at Jordan and His death, about the same length of time, and which had characteristics of the new dispensation (e.g. baptism, though completing the old)? The four days of Exodus 12. 3-6 may be hinted, and the words “Looking upon Jesus as He walked” with the added reference to “the Lamb of God” (without the words of bearing sin) may help us. In His life He was the Lamb, but He did not bear sin till He became a curse. Appropriately Hebrews 9. 26 mentions “the putting away of sin” as the goal of His manifestation here, and adds the bearing of sins, the day of atonement type in verse 28. All the pictures of the law are focussed upon our glorious Saviour.

Concordance to the Inner and Outer Life in Proverbs. (Concluded.)

	Lebab.	26. 23 Burning lips
4. 21	Midst of thine heart	26. 24 Dissembleth with his lips
6. 25	Her beauty in thine heart	27. 2 Not thine own lips
	Libbah.	LIVER. Kated.
21. 2	Lord pondereth the hearts	7. 23 Strike through his liver
24. 12	He that pondereth the heart	LOINS. Mothnayim.
	Nepshesh (see “soul”).	31. 17 Girdeth her loins
28. 25	Of a proud heart	MARROW. Shiqui.
31. 6	Of heavy hearts	3. 8 Marrow to thy bones
LEG. Shoq.		MOUTH. Peh.
26. 7	The legs of the lame	2. 6 Out of His mouth . . know- ledge
LIP. Saphah.		4. 5 The words of my mouth
4. 24	Perverse lips	4. 24 A froward mouth
5. 2	Thy lips may keep know- ledge	5. 7 Words of my mouth
5. 3	Lips of a strange woman	6. 2 Words of thy mouth . . words of thy mouth
7. 21	Flattery of her lips	6. 12 A froward mouth
8. 6	My lips right things	7. 24 Words of my mouth
10. 13	Lips of him that hath un- derstanding	8. 8 Words of my mouth
10. 18	Lying lips	8. 13 The froward mouth
10. 19	Refraineth his lips is wise	10. 6 Mouth of the wicked
10. 21	Lips of the righteous	10. 11 Mouth of a righteous . . mouth of the wicked
10. 32	The lips of the righteous	10. 14 Mouth of the foolish
12. 13	Transgression of lips	10. 31 Mouth of the just
12. 19	The lip of truth	10. 32 Mouth of the wicked
12. 22	Lying lips	11. 9 Hypocrite with mouth
13. 3	Openeth wide his lips	11. 11 Mouth of the wicked
14. 3	The lips of the wise	12. 6 Mouth of the upright
14. 7	The lips of knowledge	12. 14 Fruit of his mouth
14. 23	Talk of the lips	13. 2 Fruit of his mouth
15. 7	The lips of the wise	13. 3 Keepeth his mouth
16. 10	The lips of the king	14. 3 Mouth of the foolish
16. 13	Righteous lips	15. 2 Mouth of fools
16. 21	Sweetness of the lips	15. 14 Mouth of fools
16. 23	Learning to his lips	15. 23 Answer of the mouth
16. 27	Lips as burning fire	15. 28 Mouth of the wicked
16. 30	Moving his lips	16. 10 His mouth transgresseth not
17. 4	Giveth heed to false lips	16. 23 Teacheth his mouth
17. 7	Much less do lying lips a prince	16. 26 His mouth craveth
17. 28	He that shutteth his lips	18. 4 Words of a man’s mouth
18. 6	A fool’s lips	18. 6 Mouth calleth for strokes
18. 7	Lips . . the snare of . . soul	18. 7 A fool’s mouth
18. 20	Increase of his lips	18. 20 Fruit of his mouth
19. 1	Perverse in his lips	19. 24 Bring it to his mouth
20. 15	Lips of knowledge	19. 28 Mouth of the wicked
20. 19	Flattereth with his lips	20. 17 His mouth shall be filled
22. 11	The grace of his lips	21. 23 Whoso keepeth his mouth
22. 18	Fitted in thy lips	22. 14 Mouth of strange women
23. 16	Lips speak right things	24. 7 Openeth not his mouth
24. 2	Lips talk of mischief	26. 7 Parable in the mouth of fools
24. 26	Shall kiss his lips	26. 9 Parable in the mouth of fools
24. 28	Deceive not with thy lips	26. 15 Bring it again to his mouth

26. 28 Flattering mouth worketh ruin
 27. 2 Not thine own mouth
 30. 20 Wipeth her mouth
 30. 32 Hand upon thy mouth
 31. 8 Open thy mouth
 31. 9 Open thy mouth
 31. 26 She openeth her mouth

NECK. Garg'roth.

1. 9 Chains about thy neck
 3. 3 Bind them about thy neck
 3. 22 Grace to thy neck
 6. 21 Tie them about thy neck

Oreph.

29. 1 Hardeneth his neck

NOSE. Aph.

30. 33 Nose bringeth forth blood

TOOTH. Shen.

10. 26 Vinegar to the teeth
 25. 19 A broken tooth

M'thall'oth.

30. 14 Their jaw teeth

THROAT. Loq.

23. 2 Knife to thy throat

TONGUE. Lashon.

6. 17 A lying tongue
 6. 24 Tongue of a strange woman
 10. 20 Tongue of the just
 10. 31 The froward tongue
 12. 18 Tongue of the wise
 12. 19 A lying tongue
 15. 2 The tongue of the wise
 15. 4 A wholesome tongue
 16. 1 Answer of the tongue
 17. 4 A naughty tongue
 17. 20 A perverse tongue
 18. 21 Power of the tongue
 21. 6 A lying tongue
 21. 23 His mouth and his tongue
 25. 15 Soft tongue breaketh the bone
 25. 23 Backbiting tongue
 26. 28 A lying tongue
 28. 23 Flattereth with her tongue
 31. 26 Her tongue the law of kindness

APPENDIX.**LIFE. Chaiyim.**

3. 2 Length of days and long life
 3. 22 Life unto thy soul
 4. 13 For she is thy life
 4. 22 Life unto those that find
 10. 11 A well of life
 11. 19 Righteousness . . . to life
 12. 28 Way of righteousness . . . life
 13. 12 A tree of life

13. 14 A fountain of life
 14. 27 A fountain of life
 15. 31 The reproof of life
 16. 15 King's countenance is life
 21. 21 He that followeth after mercy findeth life

Nephesh (see "soul").

13. 3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life
 13. 8 Ransom of a man's life

SOUL. Nephesh (see "life").

2. 10 Pleasant unto thy soul
 3. 22 Life unto thy soul
 6. 30 To satisfy his soul
 6. 32 Destroyeth his own soul
 8. 36 Wrongeth his own soul
 10. 3 Soul of the righteous
 11. 17 Good to his own soul
 11. 25 The liberal soul
 11. 30 Winneth souls is wise
 13. 2 Soul of transgressors
 13. 4 Soul of the sluggard . . . soul of the diligent
 13. 19 Sweet to the soul
 13. 25 Satisfying of his own soul
 14. 10 Bitterness of his soul (marg.)
 14. 25 True witness delivereth souls
 16. 17 Preserveth his soul
 16. 24 Sweet to the soul
 16. 27 The soul of him that labour-eth (marg.)
 18. 7 Snare of his soul
 19. 2 The soul without knowledge
 19. 8 Loveth his own soul
 19. 15 An idle soul
 19. 16 Keepeth his own soul
 19. 18 Let not thy soul spare
 20. 2 Sinneth . . . his own soul
 21. 10 The soul of the wicked
 21. 23 Keepeth his soul . . . trouble
 22. 5 Doth keep his soul
 22. 23 Spoil the soul
 22. 25 Snare to thy soul
 23. 14 Deliver thy soul from hell
 24. 12 Keepeth thy soul
 24. 14 Wisdom unto thy soul
 25. 13 The soul of his masters
 25. 25 To a thirsty soul
 27. 7 The full soul loatheth
 28. 17 The blood of any soul (person)
 29. 10 The just seek his soul
 29. 17 Delight unto thy soul
 29. 24 Hateth his own soul

SPIRIT. Ruach.

1. 23 Pour out My Spirit
 11. 13 A faithful spirit
 14. 29 Hasty of spirit

15. 4 Breach in the spirit
 15. 13 The spirit is broken
 16. 2 Weigheth the spirits
 16. 18 An haughty spirit
 16. 19 An humble spirit
 16. 32 Ruleth his spirit
 17. 27 An excellent spirit
 17. 22 A broken spirit
 18. 14 Spirit of a man . . . wounded spirit
 20. 27 The spirit of man
 25. 28 Rule over his own spirit
 29. 23 Humble in spirit

The Contrast between Christ's Call in Mark 1. 17 and 20.

THE Scriptures are a wonderful book. The details that the Holy Spirit has graciously recorded are precious food. The Lord Jesus called four disciples in two families, (a deep encouragement to brothers), and called them in the midst of their daily work. It is a privilege to be busy, and blessed to "lose" something for Christ's sake. Just as the well provided a background for his message in John 4, so here He referred to the fishing. Everything was rich in its meaning to Him. To Simon and Andrew He said, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Ah, all things depend on their relationship to Him. How much is wrapped up in the words "After Me." And our "becoming" is the fruit of His "making." It is precious to see that His *last* words to Peter, in John 21, were the same, "*Follow thou Me.*" There, too, we have a fishing scene, but the One Who appointed the gathering of fish, spiritually, has a further work for His people, even the feeding of His sheep. The "fish" are caught that the old life may be dealt with: the sheep picture His people who need the new life to be sustained. Gospel work and service among believers are alike important for His Name's sake.

In Mark 1 there was a glad and prompt forsaking. A little further on, James and John were in a ship. They were mending their nets, and our hearts are impressed with the fact that there is no suggestion of a spiritual *parallel*, as there had been with the fishing. *The Gospel net needs no mending.* Thanks be unto God for this. This has been a message of power to our hearts. The Lord's silence is eloquent. Thank God for a gospel that never fails.

And the description of obedience, moreover, is in different words, "They left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants." The test for one is leaving nets, for another it is the willingness to make home ties secondary,* and to leave a more comfortable position ("the hired servants"). Apparently these had a little more prosperity in the world (note also John 18. 15). But everything must be laid aside if it stands in the way of the Lord Jesus. In each case there is the refreshing testimony of the Holy Spirit, "They followed *Him*," "they went after *Him*." May He be exalted, and central, in our lives also.

* Not an indifference to right responsibilities (Mark 7. 10-13).

A Few Meditations concerning the Address on the Mount.

THE opening word "blessed" (or "happy") reminds of Psalm 1. 1; and, in measure (a different word being used) of Deuteronomy 28. 3. The closing words "Great was the fall of it" lead up to Revelation 14. 8, 18. 2. The first promise mentions "the kingdom of the heavens," and the first command is "Rejoice." There are over fifty precious commands, some of them very definitely "with promise": most are positive, though there are negatives, "Do not sound a trumpet," "Take no thought" (anxiety), "judge not." The Lord Jesus asks about fifteen questions, specially with the object of encouraging faith. We have spoken of promises already, and how many are given to God's people, with the object just mentioned—the definite stimulus of faith. So is it here. "They shall" occurs with holy repetition, and we call to mind "All those things shall be added," and again "It shall be opened," "How much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." Faith never lacks promises, never!

A concordance to repeated words and expressions would be helpful. May we prepare a background for this? The word "Father" comes 17 times* (11, your Father, 5, thy Father, once, our Father): in 10 places the thought of "heaven" is related, and in most of the others we have His beholding in secret. "Heaven" is emphasized 23 times (including "heavenly"), and six of the occurrences of the word "Kingdom" are in the term "the kingdom of the heavens" (5. 3, 10, 19, 20, 7. 21).‡ "Blessed" is easily found in 9 precious statements. Among the 14 occurrences of "I say," 5 are associated with "Amen" or "Verily" (5. 18, 26, 6. 2, 5, 16), 6 are joined with the emphatic pronoun "I," which occurs nowhere else in this address (5. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44): the other verses (5. 20, 6. 25, 29) equally have the impressive "unto you," setting forth the Lord's loving authority to His disciples. "Reward," not for self's glory is before us in 5. 12, and the contrast is implied in 5. 46, 6. 1, 2, 5, 16, the three last passages repeating the verb "They have back" or "to the full." Poor indeed are earth's "rewards." Happy are those who enter into the threefold message about treasures (6. 19, 20, 21)—the same verb occurring to emphasize the thought, as with all cognate language.§ God's gracious interest in the background life is seen in the sixfold reference to that which is secret (6. 4, 6, 18). May this be dear to our hearts.

* "God" is only found in 6 verses.

‡ "Kingdom of God" for a special reason in 6. 32.

§ "Treasure—treasures," cf. "feared a fear" (Ps. 14. 5); "be ashamed a shame" (Isa. 42. 17). Somewhat similarly "rejoice with joy" (John 3. 29); "he prayed with prayer" (Jas. 5. 17):

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

*"My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth."*

Psalm 121. 2.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

GOD is Real! To the writers of Scripture He was a Reality, and a Very Present Help (Ps. 46. 1). There was no thought of a mere Influence, of a Supreme Being afar off, of an unknown Power. God was a Reality to His people in those days, and He is a Reality still. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is" (Heb. 11. 6), "God is known" (Ps. 48. 3, 76. 1). There is so much artificial profession to-day. Many claim a religion, and "it" is the centre of their confidence and hope. Their own beliefs and actions are the ground of their "security." A personal living, loving God and Father is unknown to such. But these pages are sent forth with a desire that writer and reader may KNOW God more and more (John 17. 3), and that our life may be in loving dependence on Him, and in conformity to His will. Is not this the precious fruit of salvation by the precious blood of Christ? Salvation is not a theory. A new life is not a bare religion.

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Some Aspects of Manifest Fellowship in Breaking Bread.

IT is a deeply important thing that children of God should be able to speak together frankly. Many unities and friendships are maintained by agreed silence for fear of offending. Our hearts long that love may be deeper. Many oft wish to ask one another an earnest question. "If I were present on the

Lord's Day evening would you feel free before the Lord to welcome me at the Breaking of Bread?" I am glad if, by grace, any avoid the expression "Would you 'allow' me to break bread?" So many questions, among those who own Christ's Name, are put in a way that implies the matter has been judged before asking, or that there is a friction of heart, or even bitterness, against the conscientious attitude of others. More love to Christ would remove such a mode of speech. The tongue is often used to hinder manifest Christian unity. One word can be ugly, and poison all the conversation.

Thanks be to God, if we agree that His will and words are authoritative. If we put *sentiment* in the place of His will as to doctrine we shall deny His wrath, and if we act thus as to practice we shall be tossed to and fro. The true love is to keep His commandments (1 John 5. 3), but we need grace to remember a loving manner should ever be maintained.—"nourished" (shall we say?) by communion with Him. The thought "Would you welcome me?" may suggest that the Lord's Supper is, primarily, an expression of general affection, and that it stands as an isolated action, so that believers can meet for this in a convention, and return happily to the denominational barriers they have erected, or approved. I frankly recognize the wish to please God often entwined with this attitude, and rejoice that, in His mercy, it is often overruled to cause a deeper desire after unity. But is not this method an expedient, without Scripture foundation? Was not the breaking of bread in a *Scriptural assembly*? Is it not in 1 Corinthians associated with the "church"? Is not this the teaching of the Holy Spirit for the whole of the present dispensation? Is not anything else an addition to the appointment of the Lord? To welcome "to break bread" seems an idea foreign to Scripture. To welcome to all the privileges, and responsibilities, of an assembly of God is Scriptural, but why do you or I wish one without the *others*, or why, conversely will you offer me one, yet unwilling for my participation in a "Church meeting," without *further preliminaries*?

Does not this partial "welcome" hide up the root failure? We ought not to gather differently if we are members of Christ. I know the theory that different "shops" exist without bitter rivalry, but I find no Scripture that suggests such a parallel. In a land one government is appointed, and in a city the thought of different assemblies is never contemplated in Scripture, except to condemn it, and all believers everywhere should be united—not only in the Person of Christ (blessed be God for this) but in principles and actions to His praise.

A limited "welcoming" perpetuates many differences. It is a mistaken application of loving wishes. Shall we not be humbled before God to find why we are not *always* united? To say "We are united *in Christ*" only increases our shame

that this is not *manifest*. To add "Such unity is not possible" is to doubt the Spirit of God, and modify Scripture to our opinions. It may, at first, seem more comfortable to continue our own arrangements, and yet "break bread" together, now and then, in a kindly way, as if nothing were the matter, but I would humbly suggest that this is not the Lord's will to deal with differences. Would it not be better to get down before Him in humiliation, that He may be rightly exalted in the carrying out of *His will*!

If you or I "break bread" with any others we treat them as an assembly of God, and, in doing so, disapprove of other gatherings, on "other lines," (if I may use the words), and with other accompaniments in the vicinity. Whether we "mean" this or not, beloved, our action means it. And what if another gathering was in the locality, and the meeting with which we broke bread came *afterwards*, did it not introduce schism among the Lord's beloved people, and do not we continue this? And is not unity dear to His heart? Possibly someone suggests, "That is the past," and I know we are not to spend our time on history instead of pleasing God to-day. But the differing arrangements are *not* the past. They exist, and are you not perpetuating them in the *present*? *Ought* not the Lord's people to meet alike, so that two or more gatherings in a town are only different "houses" of *one* assembly, as we find in Acts 2? Where has the Holy Spirit appointed anything else? This is not a mere ideal: it is the revealed and unrepealed will of God. Should we aim at anything else?

If any suggest that we are welcome to break bread with *them*, are we not thereby disapproving of other local meetings? And, vice versa, if you are not sorrowfully feeling that such meetings contain arrangements which wrongly shut you out, and yet break bread with us, are you not inconsistent? If there was *no reason* for our separate gathering, we grieved the Holy Spirit by so doing, and lapse of time does not sanction or sanctify a sin. How we all need to be humbled? These questions cannot be put aside by a mere *semblance* of unity. Our hearts would cry out for the Lord's revealed will, and for love in the mode of obedience.

May I, tenderly yet earnestly, point out another matter? Some dear children of God would say, "He put no hindrance, you do." This claim is not according to the will of God if their action involves a believer in one, or more, of at least four responsibilities:—

- (a) The acceptance of their meeting, when *other* gatherings are found in the locality, which they, by their separation, set aside (This has been explained more fully above).
- (b) The approval of the Lord's *Supper* in the morning.
- (c) The use of *leavened* symbols, as to which *not one*

word of command, or example, can be found in Holy Scripture but only in the usage of godly men. and the general acceptance of others:—a use which, moreover, excludes, or makes unnecessary, the symbols our adorable Lord employed in His unalterable words of gracious teaching and request.

(d) The excluding (in practice) of tender believers, simply because they feel they *dare not change* what He took, and thus the (unwitting) attempt to violate their conscientious concern for His words.

Can it be said that no "barrier" is erected, when these are set up? Affectionately I would plead with God's dear people to remove this reproach at once, and to refuse, with loving firmness, to be a partaker in these things any longer, for they must grieve the Spirit of God. Let us all seek a humbling before our Father, and a tender conscience in reality. They we may expect His reviving.

SOME "CONTRAST" PARABLES.

THE Holy Spirit shows remarkable contrasts, as well as parallels, in the appointed types of the Old Testament. e.g., the redemption money was paid by the persons themselves, the manna partaken by the people soon bred worms and stank, the sacrifices were never raised from the dead, the temple itself was destroyed. In accord with the designed incompleteness of each and all of the "shadows," we often find the appointment of a twofold type, e.g., Noah *and* the ark, Isaac *and* the ram, Moses *and* Aaron. Yet even such fall far short, and the epistle to the Hebrews seems especially written to indicate the glory of Christ beyond all the graciously given pictures of Himself and His work. Thus we read of many priests, made without an oath, and not suffered to continue by reason of death. We see, moreover, the priests standing, and not sitting, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices in which there is a remembrance made of sins, showing that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. All such contrasts were designed—they were not unperceived "defects."—designed, in love, to be a foil for the fuller display of the majesty of the Son of God. And are we surprised when we find a similar object in the parables? It is evident that the Lord Jesus is Central in these. If there is a Foundation, He is the Foundation-Rock. If there is a Sower, He Himself is pre-eminently before us. If there is One beyond others Who gives and acts and appoints, He is That One. Any rare exception has a special purpose; for example, in Matthew 22 God the Father is seen making a feast, and searching among the guests, but our hearts are taught to realize that it is a

Marriage Feast for His Son, Who is thus exalted, though unseen in the narrative.

Inasmuch as our adorable Lord transcends anything of earth, and transcends it infinitely, we are conscious that every parable must suggest a contrast. But some seem to have this thought in their very warp and woof, and these are particularly in the Gospel record according to Luke. The first we approach is in chapter 11. Here we behold "the importunate friend." The parallel is in the intensity, the contrast is in almost all else. And this makes the Divine stress on the intensity the more remarkable, and shows how definitely our Lord approves burning fervency, and a promise-claiming expectancy in prayer. We little realize, however long we have known the Lord, the tremendous influence placed in our hands by the privilege of humble prayer within the line of God's will. We live as if bankrupt, when we might be spiritually rich beyond conception. Prayer is to be a remarkable business of life: the writer feels his own shortcoming as he writes, but this is not to be misused to cause silence as to the possibilities through power in prevailing prayer. If every reader realizes that it is not from the standpoint of pride or attainment, but with a humble desire to help fellow-believers to reach the privilege God has set before us, it is surely a responsibility to emphasize this. Remarkably the gospel which contains parables of importunate prayer records the personal prayers of our Lord Jesus with regard to His baptism (Luke 3. 21) and His transfiguration (9. 29).

In Luke 11 we have the petition in verse 5:—

- (a) It is based on friendship, not relationship: equality, not dependence.
- (b) It is limited to a request for lending. The loaves are wanted for "use": the word "give" is excluded.
- (c) The number of loaves asked is a small one: it is but "three."
- (d) The request is delayed till the last moment: the emptiness is not felt before.

The reason is found in verse 6:—

- (a) Nothing is asked for personal need.
- (b) An unexpected emergency is urged as the sole reason for unseemly disturbance.
- (c) An acknowledgment of helplessness is made, without any thought of sorrow or humiliation ("I have nothing").

The answer occupies verse 7, and is most impressive.

- (a) It begins, in the Greek, with the negative.
- (b) It denies relationship, "My children" are contrasted with the intruder. ("Me" and "my" three times: "with me" implies "thou art not mine, thou art away from me").

- (c) There is an unwillingness to be "troubled" (the same idiom is found in ch. 18. 5, Mark 14. 6).
- (d) Stress is laid on the shut door, the time ("now") and the bed.
- (e) A further negative is joined to the word "can"—"I cannot"—not physical inability in itself but because the will was opposed.
- (f) The word "give" occurs for the first time, linked with a "not."
- (g) The last word of refusal is "thee":—a personal rejection.

Verse 8 assumes that the petitioner persists, and, last of all, for his own peace, but without any love, the unwilling "friend" rises, and gives as many loaves as are needed. The sidelight on the selfishness of the human heart, and on the hollowness of much friendship is humbly important.

We should never have thought of such a parable. We should have urged continuance in prayer by some other language. But One Who never erred has chosen this message to deal with our hearts, and to remind us that our persistency in supplication is to be just as real as if our Father were unwilling to give, although His reason for seeming hesitation is entirely different. We thus have a precious sidelight on any apparent absence of answer awhile, that we may not be discouraged nor cease praying, *unless* we have the Lord's own indication in that direction (2 Cor. 12. 8, 9), or learn that the petition we thought to be according to His will, when we asked it, is actually against that will.

The contrasts in verse 7 seem pressing upon us for immediate notice, that they may be noticed and felt, in the gracious instruction of the Holy Spirit. Our Heavenly Father loves to encourage: He neither begins nor ends with a repelling word. Ah, we have already seen the primary contrast which the Lord Jesus deigns to utter on both sides of the parable (verses 2 and 13). Our "*father*" is intimately related, because by grace we are His children. The petitioner here is sharply distinguished from the family, but we have been brought *into* the family. Blessed be God for such grace, and its fulness. Far from spurning our prayers, He welcomes and commands them, whenever we are in a condition to ask in faith; and, even when we have wandered, He lovingly draws us back. He does not view our supplications as a "burden," but the prayer of the upright is His delight (Prov. 15. 8). In one sense there is no shut door with Him, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10. 19). And, further, He Who still keeps His beloved people neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. 121. 4). He does not need to rise, and no "cannot" is found with Him. He rejoices to give because He is "our Father," as Matthew 7 also impresses upon

slowly learning hearts. And the epistles continue this gracious ministry, for they contain the prayers of God's servant addressed to "the Father." Yet the deeper realization of this name, so graciously revealed and declared (John 17. 26) seems often absent to-day (Rom. 8. 15, Gal. 4. 6).

It is striking to notice in this gospel that there will be a rising up to shut the door (Luke 13. 24). The contrast is solemnizing—only those who are sheltered by the precious blood of Christ have the right of access now, and the glorious prospect of that Day. We cannot be too thankful, or too earnest, if we are thus privileged. The glory of the gospel of grace is its freedom on the one hand, and its fulness on the other. The measure of God's love is seen in the gift of His Beloved Son, and are we not convinced after such a Gift that He will, with Him, freely give us all things?

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"A Cup of Cold Water Only."

Matthew 10. 42.

THE value of an action is not its magnitude before men, God beholds the giver, and what the giver possesses, and what he *retains* for himself. The motive and the manner also are before God. We are often led astray by appearances (John 7. 24). It may be that we have imputed wrong motives to others, and have highly esteemed ourselves. "If we would judge ourselves" is a gracious message of mighty and searching power (1 Cor. 11. 31). Unconscious, or semi-conscious, self-exaltation, especially when we see the failures of others, is more common than any of us think. But the Holy Spirit never leads to pride, and we ought to experience more the leading of the Holy Spirit, and not only hold correct doctrine regarding Him and His work.

The precious words of Matthew 10. 42 remind us of the attitude of the Lord Jesus when He "looked up" (Luke 21. 1), and "beheld *how*" the money was cast into the treasury (Mark 12. 41). He knew exactly what the widow possessed. Her gift cost her much more than the others. He Who understood Mary's alabaster box entered fully into this devotedness as well. It is refreshing to see His references to godly women, and to their giving up. And such have been found since, to His glory, in refreshing contrast with the hearts that spend on fashions and display.

We observe also that the apparent unimportance of the one receiving does not make the love less. Rather it seems to intensify that love, as unto the Lord.* "*One of these little ones.*" How definitely the Lord cared for the little ones that believed in Him (Matthew 18. 6). Nor is He changed. There may be a spiritual contrast with Babylon's minions and little

* This thought is the more emphatic after the mention of a prophet.

ones (Ps. 137. 9), but in Matthew there seems to be a hint of physical littleness also, and why should we not expect the salvation of children more definitely? Why should not such become disciples?

"A cup of cold water." Just *one* cup to *one* person, but noticed by Christ. And it was "merely water." Yea, and the water was cold. True, this suggests refreshment to a thirsty soul (Prov. 25. 25), but also indicates there was no strain in getting it ready. And this thought is emphasized by the word "only." The Lord's interest in that which seems so small is one special topic of this chapter. Not one sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed (verse 29), not one hair is unnumbered (30). The message of Matthew 6 has been often before us, that believers may realize God's regard for their food and clothing,—and in "all these things" (Matt. 6. 32, 33). 'Tis the same thought here of the interest of our Father in everything of His people's life.

The word "only" may grammatically go with what precedes or with what follows (e.g. see Matt. 5. 47, 9. 21), and possibly, like the words "in love" (Eph. 1. 4) and "in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1. 19), it looks both ways,‡ and also emphasizes the privilege of recognizing a disciple, and giving on that ground (cf. "because ye belong to Christ," Mark 9. 41), though it is the privilege of believers to give to enemies also, and to do good to *all*, even when specially thinking of the household of faith (Gal. 6. 10). Indeed the special subject in Matthew 10 is not only the giving but, as in John 12. 8, the exaltation of the Lord. Thus there is an identification here: the motive is love because of Christ, brotherly love, that love which the Holy Spirit associates with the words "one another." And this brings a wondrous joy to a "shut-in" believer, and a background child of God. Matthew 10. 41 shows that love's attitude identifies, and the Lord shares the reward (cf. 1 Sam. 30. 10, 24). All cannot go forth to preach in foreign lands, but all can take the Lord's appointed share, and, by love's prayerful enthusiasm, and co-operation, can truly become partners. But how much this suggests as to godly concern, lest we become identified with the broadness of to-day (2 John 11). The privilege of the Lord's appointed opportunity is great. Prayerful concern not to be associated with societies and schemes which leave His path must be our hearts' desire. And He *will* direct in this too. He *will* enable. His intense interest in His people, seen in this very passage, encourages our confidence in Himself, that we may experience His gracious guidance still (Ps. 143. 8, Prov. 3. 5, 6).

‡ "Before Him in love," "in love having predestinated": "ye do well that ye take heed . . . in your hearts," "in your hearts knowing this first."

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"In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of
sins every year." Hebrews 10. 2.
"This do in remembrance of Me." Luke 22. 19.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

"BY the grace of God"—these words are not merely documentary to a child of God—we are what we are, and can send forth another message of grace and truth. How wondrous is the love of God that makes it possible to speak to Him, and of Him! In a ruined world, and although we ourselves "were by nature children of wrath even as others" (Eph. 2. 3) we can now say "Our Father," and all is because of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Thus there comes the privilege of pleasing God (Heb. 13. 21), instead of pleasing men (Gal. 1. 10), the privilege of accepting, rejoicing in, and assimilating His own words, given and applied by the Holy Spirit. These pages are sent forth that those who own Christ's Name may remember and realize more the realities that are in Him, and in the Scriptures for those who love Him, and therefore wish to keep His commandments (John 14. 15).

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Romanism and the Scriptures.

A Romanist questions my acceptance of the Scriptures. He says "The Church gave you the Bible." But may I not reply that God used Israel to be the custodians of the Hebrew Scriptures (Rom. 3. 2), without giving them any right thereby to interpret, still less to add their traditions? May we not see a parallel? The Hebrew Scriptures were handed down by those against whom they witnessed, and the Greek

Scriptures likewise. Romanism has many parallels with Judaism in its departure from truth, and in its traditions.

It may be the Romanist goes further. He says, "How do you know you have the books rightly handed down?" He may even dare to criticize the Scriptures in his zeal for his own religion. The argument cuts against himself. Does he tell me the "church" gave me the Bible, and yet did not preserve it, or hand it down rightly?

"Why do you exalt the written words against the Living Teacher?" he asks. If he means the Holy Spirit, I would answer, "I do not." The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures, He never differs from them. Remarkably we read, "As the Holy Ghost saith" (not "said"), and "The Holy Ghost is a Witness." The written words are employed by the Living Teacher. But my concern is whenever a self-assertive "living teacher" goes against the written words. By so doing, such a teacher belies his claims. I suggest that a divergence between the two is a proof that one is faulty. What did the Lord Jesus do when the Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat? Did He not say continually, "It is written," and "Have ye never read?" and similar words? He tested the human teacher by the unchangeable written words. Writing was granted with a view to an appeal afterwards (Isa. 30. 8), in view of false teachers whom Christ foretold as coming.

The Romanist says, "I accept the church." I ask him, "How do you know there is a church?" If he says, "Because the Church says so," he at once leads to the point that such self-testimony must be well authenticated, and consistent, and thus he cannot blame us for solemn investigation. If, on the other hand, he replies, "Christ promised such a church," he knows about the church, and the promises of the Lord Jesus, from the Scripture. Why does he assume that he interpreted those passages right, before he went to Romanism, and then at once gave up his right to interpret? The whole position is illogical. There is only one true attitude. Test everything by the Scriptures: if it agrees, well. If not, whatever be its claims, or antiquity, reject it. And be concerned that there should be the meekness which God will instruct (Ps. 25. 9). I grant, that, by the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit, I do accept what the Scripture says of itself. But this is not arguing in a circle when the claims work out rightly. The thought that personal witness must argue in a circle, and that it would seem to prove the basis from the inference, is quite fallacious, as to the one case when everything harmonizes *if* the claim is received. The test then becomes the evidence. I have a machine and the book of instructions that accompanies it. I see the book's testimony, that it is an explanation of the machine, and feeling that there is no evidence against this, and that it meets my need, I work

accordingly, and nothing is out of place. If I act upon the book, the machine works. With the Scriptures, the proof is still stronger for the element of miracle comes in, and is, indeed, central, since the Holy Spirit is living and working, and draws us to Christ and to the written Scriptures.

If Romanism claims to be prophesied as "the church" in Scripture, it must harmonize with the Scripture. To say that men can infer that it is the foretold representation of Christ and depicted as such there, but that they must not prayerfully infer whether it is in accord with the Scriptures, is quite inconclusive. If none are competent for the second inference, neither are they competent for the first, and they must ever remain in dismal uncertainty. So sad is the lack of foundation to which Romanism brings a man by denying the personal work of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of the written Scripture.

SOME "CONTRAST" PARABLES.

(Continued.)

Yet we are bidden to be as earnest as if the door was closed. And in our *experience* it may be (verses 9, 10, Matt. 7. 7). Our Heavenly Father does not always explain why He keeps us waiting. Daniel, in chapter 10, was called to go through three weeks' expectation; and, if God appoints three years, His will is perfect. Moses was forty years in the back of the desert, yet the time was not lost. But if we become listless or forgetful in prayers that have been graciously brought before us, and laid upon us, we lose a blessing. Only *via* intensity can we be in a condition to use the wondrous supply "as much as we need." Here is God's training for His trustful people.

Ere we leave this practical message it is well to notice that parabolically it comes after the Good Samaritan. There we behold a helpless man delivered without asking, and everything done for one who had nothing but needs. As soon, however, as we are brought into the experience of a new life, we are called to *ask*, and to "continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving." In the narrative the prayer-parable follows Mary at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Importunity is not the only part of our life. We must wait before Him to know His will, if we would learn the power of prevailing with God and man, and the immediately preceding words contain the disciples' prayer in contrast with vain repetition (cf. Matt. 6. 7-9). And therein we find the request for daily bread. May it not be the Holy Spirit indicates thereby further precious lessons from our beloved Lord? Let us not only ask for "a friend," but let us be conscious of our own emptiness. And,

further, let us not delay till the last moment, though grateful for God's emergency love, but let us seek to live in a condition to help others, even if they come at "midnight." If we serve the Lord in usual things, we shall be more prepared for unusual (Col. 4. 6). Midnight prayers and praises are a helpful study: we remember the psalmist (119. 62), and Paul and Silas (Acts 16. 25): and verily it is now nearing the world's midnight. Though we should urge petition for ourselves that we may have the needed spiritual food, yet there is a further encouragement here to seek unselfishly for others, and to intercede unwearingly for them, even as the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends (Job. 42. 10). Thus are we instructed in the "what" as well as the "when," and the "how" of our prayers, that we may ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and "receive," that our joy may be full (verse 10, John 16. 24). Our Heavenly Father desires us to expect much from Him, and there is never a time when we cannot count on His loving interest. If above one has suggested that the prayer should be day by day, and not only when a sudden trial comes, it is a joy to be mindful of the mercy that welcomes us equally in such an emergency, whatever be the difficulty, whatever be the hour. Our Heavenly Father would not have us send others away empty, who look to us, though we feel our own need, and say "I have nothing." Can we not look to Him that we may have a word in season to speak to him that is weary, and that we may have lips to feed many, though we feel ourselves so unworthy, and, as to material resources barren? He would encourage us at such a time to anticipate His enabling, nor shall a lowly believer have confidence in vain. The Holy Spirit will enable, in our experience, that which is impossible otherwise (Luke 11. 13). It is well to feel "I have nothing," but it is well to *pray* expectantly in full view of the overpowering need. God is greater than the emergency. I can find no words more suited to refresh the weary but humble servant of God who would minister God's truth, and who, though conscious of God's resources and the wealth of Scripture, feels personal insufficiency, and cries "I have nothing." God will not fail. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble" is a message with a myriad of applications, for God is both living and loving to-day.

The dream of old was doubled to Pharaoh that he might realize the certainty (Gen. 41. 32) and it is not without signification that we find a second parable in Luke 18 of the same character. Again it behoves us prayerfully to notice the exact language. The persons brought before us are "a certain judge" and "a widow." There is no relationship. The judge is in one city alone, his power is limited: but even there he complains of being worried. He breaks the first commandment ("which feared not God") and with it the second ("neither

regarded man"), and boasts of his attitude (verse 4). His intense selfishness shines out:—"Lest by her continual coming she weary me." The Lord Jesus describes him as a judge who was "made," as it were, "of unrighteousness" for the expression is stronger than in the English translation. A parallel is found in "the steward of unrighteousness" (Luke 16. 8, and "children of obedience" (1 Peter 1. 14, see Eph. 2. 2). The link with Luke 16 is impressive, for we at once think of the Scribes and Pharisees (note Mark 12. 41). Thus the passage contains a holy reproof of evil around in the very place where the Lord Jesus spoke.

Now we begin to feel the force of the contrasts. God is not limited to one city, nor is He ever wearied by multitudes of His Own who call upon Him. He is the One Who has none beyond Himself to honour, Who has no one to fear, and *yet* He tenderly regards men. And has He not revealed Himself as specially concerned with the interests of the fatherless and the widow? But those who belong to Him, viewed spiritually, are the reverse of widows and orphans (1 John 3. 1, see John 14. 18). He is the *Righteous* Judge, but to them He is more than this, He is their Father, Who will judge every man's work (1 Pet. 1. 17), and thus cause tribulation to those who trouble His beloved people (2 Thess. 1. 6).

But there is a further thought. We have seen that God's people are related to Himself, and He Himself has described them as the bride of His Beloved Son. The widow is thus a complete contrast, to reveal His love the more. Hence, with expectant faith, the redeemed of the Lord, without the trembling and distance which the widow felt, can draw near. They do not fear that an Ahasuerus will hold back his golden sceptre. Nor is their prayer limited to a cry for deliverance. They rejoice to love and praise Him to Whom they are dear, since they are His own elect (7). We seem to find a wealth of contrasts, but the appointed parallel *still* remains. We are to be as intense in prayer, as if the answer seemed impossible except to desperate earnestness. Although we have a definite promise, but yet there is to be fervent prayer (Ezek. 36. 37). "Continual coming" is before us in verse 5, or "one coming unto the end" (cf. Matt. 10. 22, John 13. 1), and we remember the principle of 1 Peter 2. 4 "To Whom coming," and again "Pray without ceasing." "Weary" is an unusual word: it is found in 1 Corinthians 9. 27, and indicates "striking under the eye" until there is a bruise, but, blessed be God, His eyes are upon the righteous and His ears open to their cry (Ps. 34. 15). Rather, if we do *not* come, we "weary" (Isa. 43. 23, 24).

A further thought, we have an "adversary." The singular is important. We call to mind Matthew 6. 13, and realize that the believer is never viewed as vindictive. We are to love those who hate us, and pray for them; but there can be no

compromise with the arch-enemy. Hence the link of *prayer* and *conflict* in Ephesians 6 and elsewhere, and the precious message of James 4. 7, 8 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

Thus we look forward to the promised avenging of God's elect, when the accuser of our brethren shall not only be cast down (Rev. 12, 10) but bound (Rev. 20. 2, 3), and then confined in the Lake of Fire for ever (Rev. 20. 10). The attitude here has therefore a close parallel with the disciples' prayer already noticed, and we realize the concern of a believer that he may not be defeated in the present conflict with spiritual principalities and powers. And do we not find that prayer is the climax in that context also (Eph. 6. 18)?

It is solemn to realize that those who continue in the way of sin will share the doom prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25. 41). Hence the thought of this holy vengeance brings 2 Thessalonians 1. 6 to mind, yet it is not for believers to avenge themselves (Rom. 12. 19) but to commit themselves to Him Who judgeth righteously (1 Pet. 2. 23, 4. 19). Whenever we pray "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" we realize a little of what this means for those who despise Him; and giving place to "THE wrath" implies a holy recognition of God's righteousness in punishment. It is, however, deeply important to see that the elect are not said to pray "Avenge me," but are simply characterized as crying for help (Heb. 4. 16). This also seems part of the gracious contrast appointed as to our mode of prayer. The parallel is again the intensity, as found in the words "Day and Night."

"Though He bear long with them" seems a little difficult. A more literal rendering would be "And He is long-suffering over them." As a rule "longsuffering" reminds us that there could be sternness against those to whom longsuffering is shown, and their failures are emphasized. Here we should have anticipated a reference to His longsuffering toward the world as in Romans 2. Nor is this overlooked, but evidently the primary thought is longsuffering to His beloved people. James 5. 7 may be produced by some to show that the word can be employed (unusually) without the suggestion of failure in the part of those to whom it is manifested. But is this so? Does not the type there refer to the land, and its slowness in producing fruit since the fall? And thus we learn from Luke 18 that the seeming delay in God's intervention is because of our spiritual need (cf. 1 Pet. 1. 6). The trials and tribulations are God's longsuffering to us, that we may know godly repentance, and growth and fruitfulness. This is a deeply helpful thought. The elect cry day and night, but their Heavenly Father will not remove the enemy before the appointed time. The wrath of men, and of the arch-enemy himself, cannot destroy the redeemed. But our felt need is

our strength, and our Father is training us through all. Yea, He is LONGSUFFERING, for we might well be cut off, as the disobedient prophet, and those at Corinth. This passage becomes thus a striking help as to permitted strains, and God's use of the end of this age will be similar. The great tribulation is not His wrath, but man's wrath, under Satan's instigation, overruled for the good of the Lord's redeemed. Thus Luke 18 is closely parallel with 2 Peter 3. 9, where the longsuffering is definitely said to be towards God's people that they may be brought to repentance. And thus we anticipate the precious revival, promised for the present dispensation, in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit.

But a day will come when speedily, and with events in rapid succession, God will arise on behalf of His loved ones. But what will be the effect when such are caught up to meet Him in the air? Will there be then a change "on the earth" among the ungodly who thus have evidence of God's interposition? Will He after that event "find the faith on the earth"? Nay: Antichrist will but stiffen his rebellion, and men will unite with the adversary against the Lord of Glory. Such is man. This allusion to those "on the earth," parallel with the many passages in Revelation which describe the earth-dwellers (e.g. 8. 13, 11. 10, 13. 8, etc.), gives the key which exactly fits the lock.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

Some Unexpected Words.

THE Scriptures give us God's own clear view of inner experiences. Sometimes this fact is suddenly brought before us. Human character has many paradoxes, and we have God's own unveiling. For example, Peter spoke on the transfiguration mount, and made very definite proposals, "for he wist not what to say" (Mark 9. 6), and how often we have spoken because we have not known what to say. How gracious is this warning, and how it searches our heart, that there may be a holy silence, when "we know not what to say."

Again, how beautiful is the tenderness of Luke 22. 45, "He found them sleeping for sorrow" we should have explained more ruggedly, and possibly attributed to lack of sorrow. But the Lord is exceedingly gracious. Many times have we accounted for the failures of others in the unkindest way, instead of the most loving? O that we may be more gracious in our thoughts—and, it may be added, a little more severe to ourselves at times. it is easy to excuse self and

blame others, and thus to use divers weights and divers measures. But do we not desire to be honest?

Further, there is a keen analysis of an inner paradox in Luke 24. 41, "They yet believed not for joy." The power of feelings is thus manifested. Even joy needs to be in the sphere of God's will, else will it bear strange fruit. And this is evident with Rhoda in Acts 12. 14, "She opened not the gate for gladness." We all agree that she ought to have opened it. Did it not seem unkind to keep Peter so that he "continued knocking"? But "feelings" have no logic, unless in holy fellowship with a mind subject to God's will. Feelings of joy may become unthinkably unkind and selfish; and "love" is just as uncertain, unless it is love in the truth. These gentle hints of the Holy Spirit are a wondrous help to prayer that we may grow up into Christ in all things (Eph. 4. 15), and that all that is within us may bless God's Holy Name (Ps. 103).

God's Plan of Grace.

The wondrous grace of God shines forth in every part of His plan for His people. No created being, no archangel was sent to deliver: the Son of God, the Lord of glory Himself came. The bearing of Divine wrath was not put on one side: His holy justice would allow of no compromise, and thus, in infinite grace, the Lord Jesus took the place of guilty sinners, and became a curse (Gal. 3. 13), and the worthlessness and weakness and wickedness of those saved shows forth grace the more fully. And the eternity and height of their blessing once again display the matchlessness of grace. We can only adore, and wonder, and rejoice.

Revelation 15 affords a striking contrast with Daniel 3. But in the heavenly scene we have the glory of God, and the beauty of worship, and the harps are used in holy praise alone. And, (solemn is the thought), the "burning fiery furnace" of man is removed, but sin cannot be merely removed, there is righteous retribution, and the lake of fire is before us in the inspired record that we may warn men of the peril of their own way, with holy longing for the salvation of souls from all "people, nations, and languages." Thanks be to God, for a glorious gospel, and for a free salvation by the blood of His Beloved Son.

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"The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." Hosea 14. 9.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

"THE grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared." How wonderful to be "accepted in the Beloved." But can we overlook the priceless responsibilities wrapped up in such amazing love? Has not a prince a responsibility to the king, whose son he is, greater than that of the subject, even though he may not be subjected to the same rules, and though he may, and does, see the king's face, without any to hinder? The dignity does not remove responsibility, but intensifies it. The ancient proverb NOBLESSE OBLIGE has a fuller meaning with regard to a child of God than any one else. Made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, the redeemed one has a responsibility to walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called, in the constantly enabling power of the Holy Spirit. The ways of the Lord are for our holy walking; and he who misuses the word "love" to plead for lawlessness, and who avoids his Lord's Will, by the plea "not under law," may well question if he knows anything of salvation at all.

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God's Use of Means.

GOD is sovereign. He can do, and has a right to do, whatever He pleases. There is only one thing He cannot do, that is, He cannot sin, He cannot deny Himself. It is important to realize that, in creation and in salvation alike, He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1. 11), and thus He can use means, or dispense with them. We read that

"by the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33. 6). And again, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (verse 9). And this stress on His word is often before us, *e.g.*, "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1. 3), showing that the continuance is similarly associated with His word. Certain specific cases are emphasized by the Holy Spirit, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1. 3). This is, it seems to me, the allusion of Hebrews 11. 3. "Through faith we understand that the ages have been fitted together by a word of God" (lit.).¹ As to the stars we are reminded that God "bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40. 26). The thought of God's voice commanding nature is thus frequently impressed upon us, and Job 38 illustrates, with its humbling grandeur. In verse 11 the proud waves are addressed (cf. Mark 4. 39), and in verse 12 we read "Hast thou *commanded* the morning since thy days?" --and again in verse 34, "Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds that abundance of waters may cover thee?" True these latter verses are questions rather than statements, but they afford a refreshing contrast to the present day attitude which would seek to shut out God from the very creation which He Himself has created.

The "WORD" of the Lord Jesus in healing is a helpful study (Matt. 8. 16), and He commended the centurion who in faith laid stress on this (Matt. 8. 8-10, cf. John 4. 50). It is instructive to see that on some occasions the diseased were brought to the Lord, on others He went to them, and for yet others He worked at a distance. Sometimes He spoke without touching, sometimes He spoke and touched, sometimes He touched, and sometimes He was touched by the hand of faith, and we know not if He spoke a direct word of healing or not. Though this helps us much as to spiritual parallels, and the differing experiences of those who are saved, lest we strive to compel that which becomes a rut, we observe the stress upon Himself in every case, and the need for personal relationship, and, moreover, the usual prominence of His commanding WORD. So it was in each case of raising from the dead.

As to the provision of our daily needs, God usually employs ordinary means. We call them ordinary because they are regular, but actually the growing of the wheat is no less extraordinary, and miraculous, than the giving of the manna. In any case we are utterly dependent on Him. That which is

¹ The translation "worlds" in Heb. 1. 2 and here may at first seem more justifiable than "world" in Matt. 13. 39, but it is the same word, and I question if we have the warrant of the Holy Spirit for its adoption here, when we compare Scripture with Scripture.

man's production is a living miracle's use of miracle: that is all. Though God can keep a Moses alive forty days and forty nights without eating (Deut. 9. 18), and can cause an Elijah to go in the strength of one meal for a similar period (1 Kings 19. 8), He expects us normally to pray for and partake of "daily" bread. In like manner, though He Who giveth to the young ravens that cry, can cause them to bring His servant bread and flesh. He usually appoints that we should buy that which is sold in the market, or obtain through some other normal channel.

In spiritual things, our sovereign God does not bind Himself to use a human voice. The "question" in Romans 10. 14 gives room for His own direct working,² but puts the responsibility on His people to fulfil Matthew 28. 19 with living urgency, and, in the building up of His people, though He can dispense with means, yet the Lord Jesus gave gifts, some of which were foundational (Eph. 2. 20), and some of which seem to definitely remain "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12). And, indeed, the thought of a "personal" leading, that ignores brethren in Christ, seems foreign to the loving emphasis on the means appointed: "All the body by JOINTS AND BANDS having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2. 19, cf. Eph. 4. 16). To put aside His use of means and expect a special independency is to exalt self, as many do when they make the written Scriptures secondary, or even still less prominent, and imagine revelations individually.

And what shall we say as to the weaknesses of the human frame? To how many dear children of God the thought comes searchingly, "What *means* of healing am I to seek when the Lord permits physical trials?" Let us gladly seek to learn the first lesson that "healing" is not the primary matter, but His glory, and hence the learning of His lesson, for there is no mere chance with Him. He has a purpose, else the affliction would not be allowed to touch us, nor even to "come near." Undoubtedly ONE lesson may be that sometimes we have "feared" and not exercised faith (Ps. 91. 10), and that the remedy is to be found in faith's simple expectation that He will act. But let us remember that faith is not limited to one act: we are to LIVE by the faith of the Son of God, and to WALK by faith. Hence to expect "healing" while overlooking other parts of the walk of faith would often be a wish for the removal of precious chastisement, rich with fruit. If Paul had been delivered from the thorn in the flesh he would have "gained" physically but "lost" spiritually (2 Cor. 12. 7); and we too should have lost. Hence it is deeply important to be quiet before God whenever physical trials are ours.

² This is the more evident in view of verse 17, and Eph. 2. 17.

They may come through ordinary circumstances,³ but God has definite messages in everything, and we wish to hear His voice. Possibly He calls us aside from the bustle of our own way. Possibly He teaches us our dependence on Himself, and gives renewed force to the words of our adorable Saviour, "without Me ye can do nothing." There may, indeed, be several parts of gracious instruction entwined. May we each have an ear to hear!

But the question now comes: "How shall we seek to deal with the physical strain, after we have thanked God for it and sought to learn what He is teaching? Shall we do nothing else,—nothing physical?" The Holy Spirit certainly emphasizes definite spiritual exercises in James 5. 13-16, and, in this context, specially appoints the use of prayer, provided it is the prayer of *faith*. After the Lord's intimation in 2 Cor. 12. 9 the prayer of faith could hardly have been offered. It is often overlooked that the Holy Spirit uses a special word for the "sick" in Jas. 5. 15, only found elsewhere in Hebrews 12. 3. 1 John 5. 16 has a similar message as to the body, and the real power of prayer. And we need to emphasize this, even if we do not find elders, in days of weakness. The Holy Spirit has not said "the prayer of the elders" but "the prayer of faith." Within the one limit of God's Will, faith has a tremendous power, and though many of the miracles of healing in the New Testament were rather upon those who came to the Lord for the first time, or those who are not known to have been serving Him, and though Timothy had frequent infirmities, and Trophimus was left at Miletum sick, we dare not say it is always God's Will to chasten His devoted ministering people in the same way. Epaphroditus was raised up, and in any case we are never called to mere passivity in God's Will, we are to will to do His Will, and to be earnest to find out what it is.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

³ It is important to remember this, and to judge the sin of carelessness. If I unnecessarily stand in a draught, I may catch cold, and one lesson may be God's loving testimony against forgetfulness, which probably marks the same life in many ways. In like manner, if I am indifferent to the repair of my boots, whenever God has granted money for this, I cannot rightly ask Him to remove the consequences. So as to unsuitable food, or late rising with hurried partaking of a meal, and a thousand other little things, prayer is not to be viewed as an easy way out of the difficulty.

It is well to mention these "details"—they are not trivialities—since the hairs of our head are all numbered, and God Himself cares for the body, it is wrong for us to make light of our trusteeship. The principle of "nourishing and cherishing" is Divinely approved (Eph. 5. 29). This must be carefully distinguished from pandering to it. We are not to count our life **dear to OURSELVES**, but we are to hold it carefully in trust for the Lord, that the body may be presented a living sacrifice, and the members as weapons of righteousness. Unfitness for service through our own indifference is quite distinct from the scar through suffering for Christ's sake.

The Devil's Promises.

THE devil delights to make promises. "Ye shall not surely die" illustrates his devices. And when he dared to attack the Lord of glory he gave a commandment with a promise, But the Holy One unmasked the iniquity, and used the sword of the Spirit with power. The man of sin will be a complete contrast. He will be glad to work miracles for his own "advantage" (Christ's refusal is seen in Matt. 4. 4), and receive from Satan the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them (see Isa. 14. 19), and, apparently, cast himself down from the temple pinnacle (Dan. 9. 27)* obtaining all at the price of worshipping the dragon and approving this worship (Dan. 11. 38, 39, Rev. 13. 4). Such is the revealed climax of civilization.

But the message of Holy Scripture is deeply practical to-day. Has not Christendom illustrated the sin of Eve (cf. Matt. 13. 33, the changed food), and fallen in the temptations where the Lord Jesus stood unmoved? Has not Christendom sought the Kingdom before the time? The history of Romanism is unmistakable, and the daughters of the harlot of Revelation 17 are to be found in "churches" established by the world, and joined therewith. O for true heartbrokenness as to the travesty of the Lord's appointment.

There may not have been the open demand, "If thou wilt fall down and worship me," but Satan, disguised as an angel of light, has obtained more allegiance than any of us realize. The Lord's will is not followed. The Lord's narrow way is not kept. The Lord's commandments are not obeyed. Success has been secured at the expense of disobedience. But is it "success"? Numbers without God are merely ciphers. One soul is precious when "in Christ Jesus," but myriads of tares are vain, and hay and stubble will not abide the fire. O for a heart-searching revival that there may be no desire for earthly advantages and apparent prosperity, but simple willingness for God's Will. Everything that aims at ruling now, instead of the path of rejection, is not of God. The Holy Spirit never contradicts His own written words, and every leading against them, however emotional and seemingly earnest, has another source. The flesh, with its "goodliness" (Isa. 40. 6), acted upon by the enemy "transformed" (2 Cor. 11. 14), must give us the saddening key to much religious history.

But the message of the Holy Spirit as to Satan's devices is personal. How often we have sought the easier path, and desired certain apparent results, instead of a complete willingness to wait God's time. The enemy's attack on the Lord Jesus was, throughout, an attempt to urge acting before the time. We, as much as the Hebrews, have need of patience (Heb.

* A literal translation helps.

10. 36). To be willing to be misunderstood, and refused: to lose apparently open doors, and numbers:—the flesh resents the humbling way of God. Surely we need grace that we may never listen to the syren voice of temptation to take things into our own hands. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Success is not success without Him: rejection is not failure, if with Him.

SOME "CONTRAST" PARABLES.

(Concluded.)

And now we return to another "Contrast Parable," which concerns "that Blessed Hope" (Luke 12. 36, 37). The words "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord" show that there is a parallel. This is in the believers' attitude. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." The added words at once show that the other part is in an appointed contrast. "I say unto you that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12. 37). In other words, our Lord is the opposite of "their lord" in verse 36. And this instantaneously removes a difficulty which has perplexed many. "*Their* lord" returns from the wedding, *our* Lord comes to welcome His people unto the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." We can picture the contrast. The eastern servant might well be anxious as to the return of a master, after the festivities of a wedding. He could hardly expect love and consideration. What if there were drunkenness, and disregard of others? How different is our Lord! This is the point of the message. It will be observed that as in the parables of Luke 11 and 18 the contrast is in the One Who gives and controls: the parallel is to be found in the attitude and intensity of the Lord's people. It is evident that the Lord Jesus Christ hints a danger into which the enemy would seek to make us fall. And what is that danger? Is it not the misuse of grace? Because our gracious Lord is not an unjust judge, and because He comes to welcome us, shall we be less earnest, or less prepared? The peril of misusing His love is the Divine teaching in the warp and woof of all these parables.

And we find a helpful illustration, and corroboration in Luke 17. 7-10. This seems to show us that by God's grace we are on the right track. The parallel is less fully explained, but its meaning is, I think, clear. Albeit we rightly say, we are unprofitable servants,¹ the Lord does not thus speak of those who seek to please Him. Rather, He says "Good and faithful servant." And in the light of Luke 12 we seem to

¹ Distinguish from "unfaithful." We cannot bring the Lord profit because of His own we give to Him; but we can be faithful.

see the precious surprise of the future. Might we not anticipate that after our ploughing and shepherding, (two helpful parts of service), He would expect us in that Day to provide something more for Him? But has He not deigned to unveil that He will come forth and welcome His own into His banqueting house? He has nothing for which to thank us, yet He will not say to us "Afterward thou shalt eat and drink." In striking contrast the words shine forth, "Until that day when I drink it new *with you* in My Father's Kingdom" (Matt. 26. 29), and again, "That ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom" (Luke 22. 30). Such is grace, and thus every one of these related messages emphasizes His love altogether beyond all that we receive from the fickle men of earth, or could hope to receive even from the kindest. And "grace" is thus set forth by the Holy Spirit, that we may not be proud and self-reliant, or misuse the mercy received, to become gradually less and less earnest in prayer and daily life. Our watchfulness should be as real as if we dreaded our Master (though, by grace, we do not), and love should be stronger than terror, with an intense desire for His joy and glory.

We repeat that, throughout these contrast parables, which seem to make two "pairs,"² the message is one. The believer is to present a likeness to those of this world in their fullest earnestness. The cause with them may be sudden emergency, or fear, or great trouble. The *cause* with redeemed ones is quite different. But the intensity is to be felt and manifested. Our gracious God never withholds unlovingly, never acts unjustly, never proves a hard Master. Every passage reveals His glory by contrast. But we are not to "take advantage" of His perfect love. Moreover, for our training He graciously deals with us at times in a way which we cannot understand, and which the enemy will suggest is evidence of neglect, or indifference. But His silence and seeming delay are set forth by these parables as to be expected, yet never to be resented, or attributed to anything except love. The practical bearing of these messages on our attitude, under God's unexplained dealings with His own, is now becoming evident, and we realize gratefully, in the Holy Spirit's enabling, the way in which every word of Scripture is addressed to believing hearts, that God's beloved children may trust in Him at all times, and never complain of His gracious refining and moulding, in order that there may be a vessel to His own joy and glory.

² We call to mind the mustard seed and leaven: the hid treasure and pearl: the two parables of rejected invitations to the feast, etc.

The Holy Spirit always glorifies Christ, and takes of the things of Christ, and leads believers to say "Come" with the bright hope of His loved Appearing.

What is Our Object in Gospel Testimony,

IS it the glory of God, in the salvation of souls? Ah, how often we must own, that much of self comes in. But do we not desire that He alone may be exalted? If so, this affects the mode of preaching and the accompaniments. The writer had this forcibly brought before him, when hearing that some had remarked of the plain gospel tracts issued, that they would not convert even a dog, and that anecdotes and pictures were wanted.

The statement was truer than those who made it meant it to be. Human methods are seeking conversion, but the conversion of a dog means that he will turn again to his own vomit (2 Pet. 2. 22). So many seem afraid to drop usual attractions, and afraid of anything except a shallow work. God's work is deep, God wounds and He heals. We are not in His service to convert those whom Scripture describes as DOGS, but to seek the SHEEP going astray (1 Pet. 2. 25), whom the Lord thus characterizes, even before they knew Him, inasmuch as He foreknows them (John 10. 16). Never would we misuse His mighty grace to excuse laziness. We should be as earnest as if everything depended on our labours. Our Lord has shown this principle in the parables of importunate prayer, but we need to realize His authority and control, and to keep out methods of our own, and to be very dependent upon Himself.

Human schemes will bring numbers awhile, and may seem successful. But the only building which will stand the Lord's test is that which is joined to hearing His sayings, and doing them (Matt. 7. 24). This is of vital importance. If we use worldly means, and rely upon stories, pictures and music, any faith such produced will not stand in the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2. 5), nor will it abide.* Natural faith is not spiritual. The message of Galatians 1. 10 speaks impressively to us all, however long we have known the Lord, and however much we have sought in the past to serve Him. If we please men, or please ourselves, we are not the servants of Christ. () that our will may be within His will, and responsive to Him; for the Holy Spirit never leads to anything else. The words of Luke 16. 31 bear a solemn witness to those who would use any method that is not Scriptural. And let us recollect that the sow washed and the dog turned, may not only turn again, but if there is the saddening climax of Matthew 12. 44, 45, are we not responsible, if we have left the Lord's plan for our own?

* Our hearts readily acknowledge Philipians 1. 18, and that God may, in sovereign love, overrule, and bless and refresh souls, as in Numbers 20, even though the methods are wrong. But to misuse His overruling in order to defend departure from His revealed will is one of the most common, and sadly resultful, sins of to-day.

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