

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek."
Isaiah 61. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

THERE is nothing attractive in the Gospel to a self-righteous soul. There is no music in the message of mercy, to the proud. But let one be in the condition God graciously sets forth as not despised by Himself, and the good tidings will be sweet indeed. The gospel is entirely fitted to the only ones to whom it is addressed. The Lord Jesus applied these words to Himself in Nazareth. But the acceptable year of the Lord remains, and the same characteristic is, as we have seen, to be ours. And the meekness does not cease when any receive His salvation. He adds "Take My yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly in heart," and "Blessed are the meek," for "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . meekness." If these pages do not help to such a blessedness of CHARACTER they are issued in vain. Our hearts long that this may not be so. An accurate magazine, but dead, powerless, fruitless, would be as much our dread as error.

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Jubilees of Scripture.

THE Holy Spirit's emphasis on "after the sabbath" is not only seen in connexion with the sheaf waved before the Lord (Lev. 23. 11), but also concerning Pentecost, which, according to Scripture (contrasted with Jewish tradition) was necessarily on the first day of the week (Lev. 23. 16), and thus

this was a jubilee of **days**, even as Leviticus 25 unveils the jubilee of **years**. Both were connected with the **possession** of God's blessings: this is made very manifest in the fulfilling of Pentecost as to the present dispensation (Acts 2. 1), in which we are encouraged to have the spiritual counterpart of the book of Joshua, in enjoying "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1. 14), and in victory. The parallels between days and years as to both sabbath and jubilee are marked, the latter being associated with the **land**, and thus typical of the soon-coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The characteristic of "that Day" will be rejoicing in the possessing of possessions (Obad. 17). "In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession" is the summing up of Leviticus 25. 13. Israel are, at present, in the lands of strangers, and thus in captivity: sin has brought an inverted condition, and Jerusalem is not a praise in the earth, but Isaiah 14. 1-3 must be fulfilled, and "the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. 2. 12).

Thus we realize the parallel between our spiritual jubilee in heavenly places, and the added earthly blessings of the delivered nation in that Day. In like manner, we are in the new covenant now, redeemed by Christ's precious blood (Matt. 26. 28, Heb. 10. 16-22), but there shall be the application to the house of Judah (Jer. 31. 31). The anticipatory blessing does not deny the completion, but is a firstfruits thereof, and thus a pledge, and the distinct characteristics of the two dispensations are before us, to increase our prayer and praise, in view of the fulness when our bodies, and the earth, will enter into the blessing.

In connexion with the number 50, it may be helpful to notice, by comparing Exodus 40. 17 with Numbers 10. 11, that the first sounding of the silver trumpets which spoke of redemption would seem to have been on a fiftieth day. And was not the step **forward** "at the mouth of the Lord" (Num. 9. 23), a realization of God's gift of that which the children of Israel were to go and claim? The emphasis on **passover** in the preceding chapter before the instruction as to the journeys would remind of this. Everything that we claim is ours because of **the Sacrifice**. This is ever taught in the types. It is in harmony, too, with the thought expressed above, as to the "**jubilee**" and possessions, that this very word is rendered "ram's horn" in Joshua 6. 5, 6, 8, 13, when Israel, with a jubilee-note, claimed, in the Name of the Lord, the first city; and this fits also with the silver trumpets of **praise**. Ours is not to be a life of dependency. Outward "circumstances" are not to be our primary thought. The remembrance and memorial before God (Num. 10. 9, 10), which must cause "days of (y)our gladness" (Num. 10. 10), should be most definitely emphasized. A jubilee-attitude is meant to be a jubilant-attitude, and Pentecost is not only the day after the sabbath, it is a **jubilee!**

"HE IS THE HEAD."

FIVE times is the headship of the Lord Jesus as to the church, which is His body, affirmed (Eph. 1. 22, 4. 15, 5. 23, Col. 1. 18, 2. 19), and five times in the New Testament is He described as the Head of the corner with regard to the spiritual temple (Matt. 21. 42, Mark 12. 10, Luke 20. 17, Acts 4. 11, 1 Pet. 2. 7). His headship is also seen in 1 Corinthians 11. 3, and 12. 21 makes us realize again His tenderness to His own. His headship of creation is unveiled in Colossians 1. 18.

It is plain that the glory of Christ is central in Scripture. O that it may be so in our lives. The Holy Spirit ever exalts Him, and that which does not exalt Him cannot be of the Holy Spirit.

How deep and impressive is the thought as to the body, for our physical frame supplies the fundamental illustration. **The Head is**

- (a) one,
- (b) vitally united to all,
- (c) above all,
- (d) controlling all, when in health,
- (e) expressing its (His) will through all,
- (f) feeling for all the members.

We also realize there is one spirit in our physical body, and thus spiritually we realize the One Head and the One Holy Spirit, in wondrous harmony, working through the many "joints and bands" and members.

The headship of the Husband provides the second illustration. He gives the name, and has the appointed responsibility, care, guidance, and oversight. Fellowship and dependence are beautifully set forth. There cannot be the full blessing without communion and co-operation. Again we learn the tenderness of Christ, and His love to His own. We cannot be truly blessed, cannot be "fruitful in every good work," apart from Him. He is the Head. Our glad dependence on Him is our glory and honour.

Privileges are ever responsibilities, and likewise responsibilities are privileges. It is so easy to have another standpoint, forgetting that every blessing means more is expected from us: and likewise to forget that difficulties and trials are truly blessed, being opportunities for faith, and love, and hope. We are too much occupied with things seen and immediate, instead of being occupied with Christ. "All things work **together** for good to them that love God."

The words of God are not only instruction; they are spiritual food; but food necessitates life, and personal partaking, and assimilation (Matt. 4. 4).

“That Evil Servant” and similar passages.

MANY are the children of God who have been rightly exercised, and (may we not say?) troubled over these searching passages. The witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirit is quite distinguished from a snug and self-complacent assurance, which may be based on a merely mental belief. There is nothing “easy-going” in the Christian life, though there is, and should be, confidence and the full assurance of faith. Some have inferred from such passages that it is possible for a true believer to lose the eternal life which is the gift of God, and to cease to be a member of Christ, so that the sealing of God “until the day of redemption” is withdrawn. This would, it seems clear, unintentionally falsify such Scriptures as John 6. 37, 10. 28, 18. 9, Phil. 1. 6.

Others, realizing that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, have applied the passages of judgment on the wicked servant to the millennium, and to a temporary exclusion, with heavy chastisement,—from both the kingdom, and its glories. The severe words of our gracious Lord must never be modified, nor must the edge of the sword be ever blunted. There are solemn “if’s,” and none of them is without power. Suffering loss is a reality (1 Cor. 3. 15), and any attempt to gloss over this, or explain it away, is to change the language of God, and remove that which is meant to search our hearts. Yea, if I am not concerned by the passages regarding the “evil servant,” there is something wrong in my spiritual condition. But this interpretation seems to lack Scripture evidence, for

(a) It would mean that a believer in resurrection continues to sin (e.g., Matt. 25. 24, 25), and that, far from taking the Lord’s standpoint then, he can be in direct antagonism, not saying one word of love, but employing language that he would shrink from uttering even in a low spiritual condition on earth.

(b) It would imply that a believer is associated with “outer darkness,” and with “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” words which are used seven times, and in contexts which seem to portray the ungodly and **continued defiance** (Matt. 8. 12, 13. 42, 50, 22. 13, 24. 51, 25. 30, Luke 13. 28 in the light too of Acts 7. 54). Peter’s weeping “bitterly” is quite different. Nor is there any thought or suggestion of deliverance from such outer darkness.

We cannot see the suggestion that Matthew 24. 51 signifies, “Appoint him his position **with** the hypocrites,” **though he is not one**,—but rather, since he has, alas, been one, i.e., a nominal professor.*

* The suggestion that all servants are present at the same time and place seems to forget that

(a) The time *is* dispensationally one, but the beginning and ending may be mentioned together, although a period intervenes, as in John 5. 28, 29, Acts 2. 17-19, Revelation 22. 12. cf. 2 Peter 3. 10.

(b) The wicked servant is in each case *last* (Matt. 25. 24, Luke 19. 20).

(c) The enemies *are* immediately mentioned (Luke 19. 27), but these are not present at the Judgment Seat of Christ, associated with the

But the setting aside of erroneous interpretations mentally is of no avail, unless we feel the sanctifying power of humbling truth. There is a Divinely appointed refusal to say **who** the persons are, or to use definite language, which the flesh would grasp and say, “I have come to Christ: so this does not apply to me.” Nothing can be more deadly, or deadening, than **truth** held in accord with the **flesh**. Truth is only applicable to the Lord’s redeemed, walking in the Spirit.

We firmly believe that all these passages are so worded to cause us to realize “assurance” is not revealed as a mental dogma, but an experience, and that, though the sole ground of faith is the finished work of the Lord Jesus, the enjoyment of faith, as assurance, is only intended as long as there is obedience, and that it is never permissible to infer from the **past**, without regard to the present walk, regarding one’s own salvation or that of another. This precious safety valve is full of spiritual helpfulness. O that our heart may feel its living force, and seek to please our Lord.

Matthew 24. 45 makes clear that one may be in a position of responsibility and prominence, and yet we are to consider the possibility of being unmasked as a hypocrite when the Lord comes. I grant that we have an “if” in verse 48 which is not in verses 45-47, and it is the same in Luke 12. 45. Therefore we cannot affirm this **will** be. But from **our** standpoint we are to realize the certainty of such a goal if there is such a path. The words do not, however, set aside the readiness in revival of **true** believers, for they are viewed as beaten, not beating.

As soon as a child of God finds a merely **fleshly** relief in the thought “These are not real Christians,” he is misusing God’s painful, but precious, truth. So is it with Luke 12. 47, 48. Here we have God’s principle of holiness. There is **not** the added wording here with regard to “that Day,” and the application to a believer may well be in this day, even as of Matthew 18. 34, 35, which is associated with the time of fellow servants, and debts and failures among believers. Does not 1 Corinthians 5. 5 give light on severe chastisement now? And Hebrews 12. 6-8 help.

If we begin to ask, “Is there equality?” or to determine the proportion of present chastisement and future loss, we forget that we know very little of the **relative** privileges of one and another. It is for Him Who alone has full wisdom and sovereignty to appoint how He will deal with each one in His family, for our truest profit, and for the manifestation of His perfect holiness. It is for us to be humbled, and ever to hear the rod, and to seek His humbling now, rather than loss and dishonour in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

(d) The place *is*, in a real sense, one, for it is the *throne* of the Lord, wherever manifested in His coming kingdom.

Personally we feel that the searching message to believers in the *seven unmentioned* ones after Luke 19. 19, has never been fully realized. It is intended to search us through and through.

The Balance of Truth.

HOW many errors have been spread through disproportion. How important that we should seek grace to set forth truth as God has unveiled it. Even in nature sugar and alcohol may be similar in elements, but proportion alters everything in the power and effect.

Grace never excuses sin, nor makes godliness unnecessary. "Salvation," the moment we believe, does not set aside the fact that "we were saved by **hope**." The words "hath everlasting life" do not nullify the striking statement "the end everlasting life." "We have redemption," but are also "waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body." There is distinction, but no contradiction: all is in perfect relation.

James 2 is by no means against Romans 4, but complementary. Neither chapter is complete without the fulness of Scripture, including the other. Correspondingly Hebrews 11 associates Rahab with faith, and James 2. 25 with works, and there is full harmony, for faith worketh by love (Gal. 5. 6). Let us, however, particularly observe the Divine testimony that "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (Jas. 2. 23) in connexion with Genesis 22. These exact ten words (in the Greek) without a single letter different are found in Romans 4. 3, 5 as a witness for justification by **grace** "to him that worketh **not**." Could any **seeming** contradiction be more remarkable, on the surface? But as soon as we see God's teaching here, many problems will be solved. Romans 4 rightly alludes to Genesis 15. If Abraham had no fruit from his faith in chapter 22, it would be a sad proof that the faith was dead. The setting aside of works as to justification is the beginning of works as to sanctification; and this is stated to search and stimulate us in James 2, which does not claim to be basal, but on a foundation, and with a sphere **already established**. Mark the words, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: **AND** he was called **the friend of God**." Here we find not the initial justification of a sinner, but the "**filling**" of that which has been prepared to **fill**, and to fill with that which is living (cf. Jas. 2. 26). Thus there is perfect harmony. A babe grows, a tree is expected to have fruit, the child of God shows that his faith is real. The ground of justification remains the same, but the evidence is fuller, and **must** be. And we reach the glorious climax, "And he was called **the friend of God**." This is parallel with John 15. 14, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now we can understand the words, "Thou **seest** that the **faith was working** with his works, and out from the works was the faith **brought to the goal**" (lit.). How simple is truth here: how important is our heart-realization and manifestation in the Holy Spirit.

Shall we take another example of the Holy Spirit's use of words? "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many (seeds); but as of One, and to thy Seed, Which is Christ" (Gal. 3. 16). But is not the very same word associated with a **great number**, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if **thou be able to number them**: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen. 15. 5, cf. 26. 4)? Here in the same context in Genesis is another problem. But it is equally rich in blessing. God does **not** speak of multiplied seeds, He reveals all blessed in **ONE** (Gen. 26. 4). There can be no permanent blessing outside Christ. Have we any other Scripture where the words "one" and "many" are together? Undoubtedly. We turn to Romans 12. 4 and 1 Corinthians 12. 12 (note also Rom. 5. 15). How blessed to realize that the Lord Jesus **cannot** be without His own, any more than the mercy seat without the cherubim, of one piece therewith (Ex. 25. 19, cf., too, John 12. 24). Thus the difficulties of Scripture are the reverse of contradiction; they wrap up God's truth, that each humble believer, with anointed eyes, should seek to behold, that we may rejoice in our Lord Jesus more and more, and glorify His Name.

"THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

Ezekiel 37. 11.

Scripture knows nothing of a blessing to **part** of Israel as such, before "that Day," only to the remnant in Christ (Rom. 11. 5). Hence the stress on Judah and Ephraim **together** in verse 16. Ephraim is not being blest as such in the present dispensation, but remaining in "graves" (verses 12 and 13). "Your **own land**" (14) is clearly emphasized: Palestine not Britain, or any other land. Then will the words be fulfilled, "the ten thousands of Ephraim" (Deut. 33. 17). In absolute accord with this, the blessing to Ephraim beyond other tribes is set before us in "that Day" (Jer. 31. 9, see Isa. 11. 13), and **NOT BEFORE**. Is not this a fact? Will not this be the "fulness of nations" of Genesis 48. 19, an entire contrast with the rebellious nations of the past (same word, and in the plural, Ezek. 2. 3)? In the first reference to one man and nations, we find Abraham's victory over "Tidal king of nations" (Gen. 14. 1, 9, 13-16): how fittingly do we find the same plural concerning God's servant, "Thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen. 17. 5). There is also the spiritual application of this, as Romans 4 indicates, but "in that Day," "a small one" shall become "a strong nation," so Ephraim's ten thousands will, indeed, be fulness of nations. But this is not now.

Faith never looks to disappointments, but **beyond** them. The Lord is greater than all circumstances, they only exalt Him, as He uses and overrules them all to His Own glory.

Jew and Gentile.

GOD emphasized Israel's separation, yet overruled, as in Jonah's sign to the Ninevites, to give striking types regarding salvation. The Gibeonites, who became the Nethinim of temple service unto Him, afford a remarkable example.

May we add several cases of those who had **one** parent of Israel, and the other from the Gentiles?

Timothy comes definitely before us (Acts 16. 1) in the Lord's work among the early churches. What a godly servant he was (Phil. 2. 20-22). A suggestive parallel as to the building of the earthly temple of Solomon is found in "the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre" (2 Chron. 2. 14). But a sad contrast is seen in Leviticus 24. 10-14, where "the son of an Israelitish woman (of Dan) whose father was an Egyptian . . . blasphemed the Name." Here we see the bitter result of "mixture."

Another helpful example of grace is seen in Boaz the son of Salmon and Rahab (Rahab, Matt. 1. 5). Nor was Salmon going away from God, inasmuch as Rahab was already changed, a believing woman. So was it in connexion with Boaz and Ruth. How wondrously, though a Moabite was not admitted, God brought a Moabite into blessing! He is gracious. There are other illustrations of His mercy to all nations. We must not forget Joseph's Gentile bride, and his sons, with the precious meanings of their names.

All these types, however, gave no warrant for mixed marriages (Deut. 7. 3, 4), nor for any marriage link or other partnership with unsaved ones to-day (2 Cor. 6. 14-18, "only in the Lord," 1 Cor. 7. 39), any more than God's overruling of Jonah justified his grievous sin, or any more than the bringing of water out of the rock in Numbers 20 "excused" the unbelief of Moses and Aaron. We cannot be too definite in godly separation unto the Lord.

The Holy Spirit dwells within the children of God. He does not only visit: He abides. And He dwells to lead, and teach, not coerce. He is willing to guide, and to make everything a ministry of good, to sanctify and use our varied experiences. He is not only an "influence" that we may avail ourselves thereof: He is a Person, Who is graciously waiting to enable us, and to employ our members. What a height of privilege and possibility.

"Then I will **command My blessing** upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years." Leviticus 25. 21.

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"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Matthew 13. 45, 46.

A Word of Introduction.

THE unspeakable love of the Lord Jesus to His own shines forth in the words above. Verily He gave up all for them. What is the fruit of OUR life—in OUR love? Are we devoted, or not? We think of Mary's alabaster box, and her very precious ointment. Do we value the Lord Jesus beyond all, or do we hold back anything from Him? The further unveiling that the redeemed now belong entirely to Christ must encourage the confidence of each child of God. We are not merely invited to share blessings, we are the Lord's personal possessions at fullest cost. He will never forsake those who were dearly bought, and who are now very dear to Him. Surely such meditations should awaken our gratitude. May our hearts overflow with love and praise to Him!

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"Evolution": What It Means.

"O Lord, how wonderful are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all." Psalm 104. 24.

THEORIES of men are always changing, but their basic tendency seems to be to exclude **God**, and to deny Him His glory. This may seem a drastic statement, but it is not surprising, for the enemy of souls has ever the same object. The first temptation was plainly on this line, and the three temptations in Matthew 4 were, though covert, one and all, an attempt

to persuade the Lord Jesus to break the principle of John 5. 19, 20.*

We have often felt a threefold contrast:—

	TRUTH.	ERROR.
Nature.	Creation.	Evolution.
Scripture.	Inspiration.	Development.
Salvation.	A new creation.	Reform.

Thus in all associations not only is the object the same, but the **method**. "Development" is Satan's constant theory. But in reality God is seen in every sphere, with His own **creative** and causative work. Men would dare to imprison God within His own laws of nature, or rather within their own conception of some of the laws, which He has permitted them to discover. But His miracles are hated. Men wish to be as God, and to know everything. Grace keeps us humble, yet withal lifts us to a height infinitely beyond "development's" **dreams**—even living union with the Lord Jesus eternally.

The fundamental attack of evolution is on **the fall of man**, and thereby on

- (a) the truth of Scripture,
- (b) man's guilt,
- (c) the substitutionary work of Christ.

If you admit "evolution," you drive out the revelation of a **fallen** race. Could an evolutionist have written Romans 5? Impossible. The whole character of "sin" is **changed** by this unfounded theory.

(a) It is no longer viewed as legal guilt, but as a defect to be eliminated by degrees.

(b) It is no longer regarded as that which necessitates the perfect Sacrifice, but that which is rather parallel with physical infirmities.

The results are many and far reaching. Among them we note

- (a) The lack of a broken heart.
- (b) The exclusion of a deep **Christian** experience:—one forgiven much loves much!
- (c) The absence of a ringing Gospel testimony.

The entire perspective is changed, and the tremendous losses cannot be overestimated. I have said "This unfounded theory," for it is nothing more. It

- (a) cannot produce **one** proof as to the past,
- (b) has no suitable illustration under man's notice in the present,
- (c) fails entirely to explain a **beginning**,
- (d) is crowded with missing links,

* This is the more evident when we see that all three things. (a) the miraculous supply of food, (b) the possession of the temple, and (c) the claiming of the kingdom *will* be His in the appointed time. This emphasizes the Holy Spirit's words, "His hour was not yet," and lays stress on John 2. 4, 7, 6, 14, 12, 48, etc.

(e) is composed of professed "inferences" which are, one and all, without evidence, but rest on "ipse dixit,"

(f) delights in that which is incapable of being put to the test,

(g) depends on arguments which would not be permissible as to any other subject, or, for example, in a court of law.

The faking of "proofs," and building up of a picture from a few scattered bones, as to none of which there is any certainty, is not only immoral, but has a demoralizing effect afterwards, and hinders the mind, already denying guilt in its true meaning, from clear and conscientious thinking. The moral consequences of this deadly doctrine are far greater than most realize. Moreover, if one is a preacher, the stretching of one's conception of truth to embrace evolution, AND YET continue professed adherence to Scripture, articles of faith, or trust deeds, can only bear evil fruit. That many are unconscious of much we readily acknowledge, and though this may rightly prevent a charge of wilful falsehood (and God only knows the heart), the subtlety and deceiving involved are in harmony with the whole character of Satan, and thus more are ensnared. This moral damage is more pervasive because less open.

But what shall we say as to those of us who are, by grace, brought to acknowledge God's creative rights? How grateful and humble should we be! How great is our responsibility to show the godly character accompanying such a belief. If we point out the demoralizing tendency of evolutionary theories, our life must adorn God's true doctrine, or else all our words are vain, and our creed is fruitless head-knowledge. The work of the Spirit of God in nature, Scripture, and our personal regeneration is a clarion call for the manifestation of the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit in our daily life. Thus will what we believe, and what we are, and what we do, harmonize to the praise of the glory of Him Whose Name we bear, and nothing short of this can be the aim of those made conscious of redemption by the precious blood of Christ.

"Occupy till I come" (Luke 19. 13). Does not the original rather suggest "while I am coming"? Where else are these very words found? In John 5. 7, "While I am coming another steppeth down before me." Hence, in the very parable to correct the erroneous thought "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19. 11), our beloved Lord emphasizes that we are to live constantly in the light of His coming. The word "quickly" is thrice repeated in the last chapter of Scripture. We are not to accept human reasoning, "All things continue," or "my Lord delayeth," but to be as men that wait for their Lord. Our labour is to be "while" He is coming, for there is no delay. The brief interval is appointed for a wise purpose,—the bringing in of His elect, and the exercise of His people's faith in godly preparation for the kingdom.

Some Thoughts on Service.

In John 4. 36.

OUR Lord's parallels from the field are very precious, bringing before us the living and growing nature of His own work. Sowing is not always easy (Eccl. 11. 4, 6), and there is not immediate fruit. The number of servants whom the Lord may use in bringing one soul to Himself is only known by Himself (verse 37). But there is to be glad willingness, and no envy or self-honour. The thought of true toil, and **continued** toil is brought before us through the word "wages." We see, moreover, that our gracious God is not unrighteous to forget. How contrasted is He with those of James 5. 4! But the thought of reward never excludes the fact that **grace** is the cause of our being able to labour (1 Cor. 15. 10), and we would ever be humbled. And at once the mention of fruit reminds us that we "cause" nothing (1 Cor. 3. 6, 7): how dependent we are on Him! O that our concern may be fruit, real fruit, **for Him**, and His "gathering": the reverse of scattering. The added thought of life eternal is precious, in contrast with earthly fruit. What a privilege to bring a soul to Christ, to possess life eternal. And then the joy! Joy is ever linked with harvest (Isa. 9. 3), and with the Lord's resultful work (Luke 15. 6, 9, Matt. 25. 21, 23). And how blessed will be the "together" then. No discord among His own then!

In this context we must notice the precious thought on service in verse 34. The words imply that the **purposeful** doing of the Father's will was ever the Lord's appetising food. There is a stress on the aim and motive as well as on the work itself, contained in the words "in order that." Further, this verse shows that all earthly food is to be **with the object** of strength for service (cf. 1. Cor. 10. 31). O that we may experience this increasingly in the power of the Holy Spirit.

DIVINE INSTRUCTION AS TO PERSONAL GODLINESS.

"Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Luke 13. 23, 24.

"Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed." Mark 13. 4, 5.

"Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto Him . . . Follow thou Me." John 21. 21, 22.

"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power, but ye shall receive power." Acts 1. 6-8.

Differences Among Children of God.

THAT "differences" in doctrine, and assembly order, and practice, do exist among true believers, we humbly and sorrowfully acknowledge. What can we do? What is the right attitude in loyalty to our one Lord? Is it to say, "They must exist"? Surely love to one another, because of love to our Lord, prevents such an unfounded assumption. What then? Shall we speak slightly of others, and imply **they** are all ignorant, and unconscientious, and unwittingly suggest that **we** alone truly seek the Lord's guidance? It would be a grievous sin indeed thus to judge the consciences and motives of dear children of God, although we **should** seek to be right personally, and **should** humbly believe that we are in the will of the Lord. Is there no other possibility? Failures must humble, but should not shut us up to discouragement. If children of God have been angry with one another a hundred times or more, that is no reason for the repetition of this. It is saddening to think that those who are born of and indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, and who pray and search the same Scriptures fervently, nevertheless seriously differ. This should bring us all to our knees, but never to despair. We realize, even in the history of the apostles, the effect of early upbringing and traditions. We notice how slow they were to take the gospel to men of another nation. And we are conscious how closely dross is often blended with gold. Washing will not separate them. These thoughts call us to feel our individual need for more lowliness, but they do not imply that the truth and will of God are unattainable. If we had fully opened our hearts, and were tender in overflowing measure, our Father would undoubtedly fulfil His words, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). Our defects do not make His promise untrue. The fault is not in "He will" but in our incomplete meekness. Every "disappointment" calls us to more bowing down before God, **NOT TO THE REACTION OF DISCOURAGEMENT.**

Sometimes a letter reaches me suggesting that because of some article in the magazine, the writer desires to receive **no more**. Explanation may be quite omitted. We can only wonder. Is it that the article has attacked the person and glory of Christ? No! Is it that the magazine has departed from the wish to keep to His will through and through? No! But the dear one is troubled, it may be the emphasis on believers' baptism, or by some prophetic interpretation, and hurriedly breaks off all contact. Such an attitude seems to the writer the reverse of Scriptural and helpful. It may be dictated by a **genuine** fear of compromise, but does it not illustrate the natural and human swing of a pendulum? How few stop to realize that they would have differed still more from the translators of the **Scriptures** in our language. But we own God's loving, overruling hand therein, and **this** goes far further. We would (and should) be very care-

ful as to what we **circulate**, but should we refuse to **read**, for example, that which may suggest we have misunderstood our Lord's instruction in the order of prophetic events? Unwillingness to ponder the differences of equally loving children of God may prevent our correcting some errors of our own, and may almost imply we are nearly infallible. Should not love rather mention the difficulty, and seek humbly to show those who are thought to be in error what is felt to be the truth, accompanied by a prayerful willingness to ponder, with open Bible and heart, any similar tender expression of prayerful thought on the same Scriptures? Cutting off, looking down on others, judgment of motives, angry words, sharp sarcasm, coldness, assumption that others must be wrong, offhandedness and interruption, refusal to hear, intimidation, insinuations—all these things are of the flesh, and against the love our Lord emphasized, against the exhortations of Ephesians 4. 1, 2, against endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the next verse, and against the meekness of wisdom of James 3. 13-18. Only as we judge these works of the flesh, definitely and altogether, can we expect the fuller growth in grace, and growing up into Christ in all things. Is it not so, dear fellow believers?

The Holy Spirit is living. The Scriptures are not confusing. Believers are truly children of God. There is every encouragement to act wisely and hopefully. If **only** pride, irritability, and hasty judgments and words can be kept out! Sometimes one believer is afraid to mention a difficulty, because of the sharp treatment he may receive. Why should children of God be so afraid of one another? "Ah," we think, "That statement is important, I wish 'A' would take it to heart." But we are **all** at fault. Have we not all **begun** to speak lovingly, and then ended impatiently? We have been a little "upset" because someone we loved **seemed** obtuse, or dense as to our interpretation. And instead of realizing he is a part of ourselves, a "member" of the **same** body, so that his joy is ours, and our failure is his, we have been inclined to think, and then to say, "He **will not** see it, he shuts his eyes." And, possibly, even as **we** are not always **fully willing** to weigh what others suggest, so it may be that our words **are**, in measure, as true of him as of **ourselves**, but the Lord has not given us authority to think or say them, for we do not see their hearts, nor is our tone "in the Holy Spirit." And the very "saying" may harden the one "of" whom we speak to others (though I grant he should not be hardened), and **deepens** our "honest conviction" that such is the case. So we make two barriers between us instead of one, and the second one is not only higher but broader: a barrier of "hard" feeling, and not only of explanation, and that in turn, leads to a third barrier, and so on. Thus divisions became sects, with the inevitable reaction later of "broadness" and "reunion," **instead** of humble dependence on the Lord, and return to His way more

simply as **children of God**, in one family. Is it too late to seek for revival? No, our Father has **promised** it. Is it then too early? Far from it. Love to Him cannot excuse one sin, nor postpone return to His will. We would at once delight in the unity which, as John 17 shows, delights the heart of Him Who loved and gave Himself for us.

Hebron.

EVEN place names can have an important message in Scripture usage, as Hebrews 7. 2 shows, and Hebron is no exception. It denotes "fellowship," and comes first before us in Abraham's pilgrim life (Gen. 13. 18).

It is remarkable that the two Old Testament servants of God mentioned in the first verse of the New Testament were first at Hebron and also at Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit's emphasis on the change of name is most definite as to Hebron (Jos. 15. 13, 54, 20. 7, 21. 11, Jud. 1. 10). The victory over "a great man among the Anakims" (Jos. 14. 15), and the change of his city to a place of "fellowship," was indeed a Divine work, and have we not precious spiritual parallels in our own experience? O that we may know more of real overcoming! Each of the last epistles of our adorable Lord in Revelation 2 and 3 reminds us of this vital need in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Hebron was unique in that it was a city of refuge, and, as such, Levitical. But it was more, the **priests** of Aaron's family lived there. Yet Caleb, the man of faith, had "the fields of the city and the villages thereof" (Jos. 21. 12). So there was the remarkable fuller "fellowship" between the kingly and priestly tribes, which we also see in connexion with the wife of Aaron (Ex. 6. 23), and likewise regarding John the Baptist (Mary and Elizabeth).

Ah, dear believing reader, have you and I a Hebron of victory over an Anak in our lives, and thus fellowship with God and one another? And do we rejoice in **the** Priest King, and thus are we ready to welcome others, even those who seek the more-than-typical deliverance from the avenger of blood, not only in a city or place, for a season, but **in Himself**, and for eternity?

Finally, 1 Chronicles 12. 28 may give us a helpful view of a hearty meeting in real fellowship preparing for David's rule at Jerusalem. "Hebron" suggests to our hearts, "That Blessed Hope" and "Thy **kingdom** come."

The Claim of the Beast.

IN Revelation 14. 9 we find solemn words regarding the **worship** of the beast, and his mark on **the forehead or hand**. In this we see a threefold claim,—the heart, the head, the hand! Satan seeks the affections, the minds and the activities. It is helpful to

realize the precious contrast, and the love of the Lord with heart, mind and strength (Luke 10. 27). The stress on worship is deeply impressive. It is sometimes thought that the tendency of the devil's work is always toward "irreligion." But is it so? The tares are like the wheat. Therein we see a temporary manifestation of Satan's plan. And the climax of this age will be worship, but how awful the contrast with that worship in spirit, and in truth, which God the Father seeks (John 4. 23). The emphasis on "the god of forces" in Daniel 11. 38, illustrates the same point. The natural man delights to have a worship of his own: we see this in heathendom. And when men cast the Lord Jesus Christ aside, how often they illustrate hero-worship. Man's character is the same throughout history, and there is a similarity in Satan's attacks.

And what shall we say with regard to our own present attitude in its holy negative, as well as its holy positive? It is blessed to worship God, and to have a body which is His temple. This involves a separation from the ways of the world. The Lord Jesus emphasized "denying"—saying No. Daniel "purposed in his heart" (ch. 1), and the "No" of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah was equally definite in chapter 3. Compromise never befits a believer. The Lord bought the whole, has a right to the whole, claims the whole, and we dare not seek to serve "God and mammon." O that our fully devoted attitude may spontaneously refuse everything that dishonours His Name. It is easy to say what we would do in a great emergency or temptation, but the important thing is rather, "What are we doing in a small one?" It is easy to be a "hero" when many approve, but the true test may be in the little things which show glad love to Him, or the fear of man.

"Sin no more" (John 5. 14): "Go, and sin no more" (John 8. 11). When the Lord Jesus healed, and when He dealt with those who had no need of bodily healing alike, He emphasized the fact of sin, and the deliverance and blessing given as the basis of, and stepping stone to, a new manner of life. Grace never excuses one sin. Are we redeemed? It is that we may bring forth fruit unto God. Have we received any signal mercy? It is that we may hate sin. And daily blessings are all with the same object. Sin is the great obstacle: it is guilt, crime, uncleanness, moral disease, and all else that mars together. O that we may heed our Lord's words, and seek victory in the Spirit.

Truth realized in daily life is fruitful to God's glory: what are we on the working days in home, and workshop, and office?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 3. 28.

A Word of Introduction.

THESE words of the Holy Spirit set aside all boasting in the flesh. Education and position count for nothing as to salvation. Nationalism and internationalism are alike laid low. The work is Divine and spiritual, a new creation. These words encourage each believing heart, and call for the manifestation of the heavenly calling. Though there are different spheres for brethren and sisters in Christ as Ephesians 5 plainly shows, and distinctions in arrangements between believing employers and employees, there is a wondrous unity as to the work of Christ, and as to brotherly love. The differences are those of Divine appointment, and thus godly harmony, as with the members of the body, not those of rivalry and antagonism. How beautiful should an assembly of God be, and how wondrous the united Christian standpoint. How our hearts long for His revival.

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Could a Universalist have written Hebrews 10. 13, 14?

OUR hearts rejoice that salvation is not only for a few: we read of "a great number which no man could number" in Revelation 7. 9, and many Scriptures emphasize the wondrous work of the Lord Jesus embracing those "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." But we must not be one-sided, nor silent as to the reality of judgment (Heb. 9. 27). The last book of Scripture mentions "the wrath of the Lamb" as well as "the blood of the Lamb," and the last chapter brings

before us those "without" as well as those who enter in through the gates into the city. All Scripture is harmonious in this testimony, and, if we overlook it, we lead men along the way of destruction. It is cruel to hold out a false hope, and to hide God's holy warnings.

The passages that emphasize grace most definitely often show the other side in the immediate context. For example, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him" (John 3, 36). And the message of Hebrews 10, 13, 14 is deeply impressive. The complete fruit of the death of Christ is a prominent theme of this chapter. Mark the words, "Once purged," "no conscience of sins," "sanctified," "perfected for ever." Such is the Divine testimony as to the covenant sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. How our hearts should praise and rejoice, for God our Father has given us "a strong consolation" (Heb. 6, 18). But how can those who maintain that the blood of the Lord Jesus was poured out for all without exception take the contrast of the two verses before us? Are there not His enemies? Will they not be His footstool? Is this reconciliation? Is this included in being "perfected for ever"? Is it not shown to be a permanent contrast? And the word "for" intensifies this interpretation. "FOR by one offering He hath perfected," etc. The context emphasizes there is no more offering. This in verse 18 is the joy of those who trust in Christ, but in verse 26 it reveals that there is no larger hope, for those who remain His enemies and adversaries. The time of reconciliation is now: salvation after death is a delusion and a falsity. O that we may hold the whole truth, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Confessed Too Late.

ACHAN had sinned. He had coveted, stolen, dissembled. Sin leads to sin, as we all sorrowfully know. He confessed the sin when he was found out, **not before**. He had still an opportunity when the families were being taken, and yet again when the household of Zabdi was taken one by one, but, in the awful madness of sin, he concealed to the last and repented not. God might have pointed straight to him. He showed a threefold longsuffering. This selection step by step was not a merely orderly arrangement. It gave definite space for repentance, even as God allowed this to Jezebel in Revelation 3. But, alas, the heart of both persisted in the sin. **Then**, at Joshua's command, he made confession, and the words that Balaam and Saul also could use ("I have sinned") came from his lips, but without avail. The time for **true** repentance was gone. How different was the "I have sinned" of the lost son in Luke 15.

There is a solemn "too late" in eternity, and souls are hurrying thither. Are those of us who know the Lord warning them? Are we buying up the opportunity to lead souls to Christ?

And there will be an awful "too late" when men have worshipped Antichrist on earth, for those who receive his mark will be doomed. We do not know as to others while living. Those who opposed the Lord Jesus contained in their ranks men guilty of an eternal sin (Mark 3, 29). But in general, when men are brought to anguish, before they are marked out by God as Achan was, they are those to whom we can turn with messages of gospel grace. And the general declaration of the gospel, "Come, for all things are now ready," is not to be withheld. Though the Lord only knoweth them that are His, He has sovereignly commanded the proclamation to every creation, but how earnest we should be in view of Achan's **CONFESSION TOO LATE**.

Overruling.

INASMUCH as God is God, there must be more of His **overruling** than we ever realized. Only that which is perfect can be directly and fully His work. Hence not only are the evil works of men, without exception, overruled, but also the complex actions of believers contain many ingredients which need and receive His overruling. The perfect life of Christ alone was without this need.

Overruling is very wondrous, for it never involves God's approval of that which He all-wisely permits. This is essential in connection with the **absoluteness** of His power as well as of His holiness. He possesses no attributes partially, all are unrestricted in Him. In this we find a confidence and restfulness. We may look fearfully at circumstances, and look into the future. **But**, at once God's overruling in perfection encourages our hearts. If He were in any way limited or dependent, or uncertain, our hearts would sink.

But a further result must be that we never excuse whatever God overrules. It may be that in our own lives He overrules lack of faith to teach us to more closely cling to Him afterwards, and overrules a saddening sin in word, or deed, or thought, to bring us to much deeper humility. Thanks be to Him for **the fruit** by the Holy Spirit's gracious application to our heart, but let us never excuse one iota of the sin itself. There is no complicity on His part, nor can we view the guilt as less heinous **because** of His twofold mercy in forgiving and overruling. Nor can we make light of that which has been overruled to bring us a further sense of blessing and subsequent **victory**. We marvel at ourselves that we needed to learn in so humbling a way, and long that we may henceforth be more able to perceive His will at once, and to be guided by His eye. So will there be the blessing to keep from sin, rather than to confess it after.

Contrasted "Nothings." "The prince of this world cometh, and hath **nothing** in Me." "Without Me ye can do **nothing**" (John 14, 30, 15, 5).

The Believer and the Inheritance.

THE privileges of a child of God cannot be over-estimated. The more we meditate on the glory of the Giver, and the cost of our redemption, and then on our natural state and utter unworthiness, yea, and our guilt, the more our hearts should overflow with true thanksgiving. God has not granted a reprieve, or approved a back door entrance into heaven. There is nothing like to man's natural attitude of "overlooking" a fault, or giving "another chance." It is not a release on parole that we have received. There is nought to be compared with the infinite glory of "the gospel of the grace of God." The precious blood of Christ has changed everything. There is no "make believe" but a wondrous reality. We are actually born from above, and made the children of God Himself, although against Him we had sinned. Yea, we are caused to become righteous, yea, "the righteousness of God" in Christ. Our welcome into His presence is complete, and our life is eternal. God Himself is well pleased and perfectly satisfied. Could anything be more remarkable? "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

The fact that our Lord Jesus did not only die for our sins but for us, makes clear there is something infinitely beyond the thought of transferred punishment. That could exist as to some sins and yet not all: that could take place without any result of real justification, that could be carried out without any essential fruit in our lives. But the fact of substitution is inestimably more wonderful, and it involves the end of our personal and independent relation to the holy law of God, so that we cannot be viewed, in this connexion, except in the full acceptance of our Substitute. And, secondly, His essential resurrection, as the Righteous One, includes our receiving of a new and eternal life, else His substitution would be proved to have failed. Thus the gospel ensures a moral glory in the entirety and eternally changed position and condition of those for whom our Lord Jesus died.

In this new relation as children of God we have an inheritance. This is definitely set forth in Scripture: "If children, then heirs, heirs of God" (Rom. 8. 17). The fact is emphasized by the Holy Spirit, "If a son, then an heir through God" (Gal. 4. 7), "That, being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3. 7). Romans 4. 13-16 is definite, "The promise . . . was not . . . through the law, but through the righteousness of faith . . . therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Hence we read, "He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that, by means of death . . . they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9. 15). Without any question, uncertainty, or limitation, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3. 29). This is again associated with our birth from above in 1 Peter 1, and we may well sound forth the words of praiseful joy, "Blessed be the God and Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible" (verses 3, 4).

But are there not conditional promises, and does not God train His humble people by His precious "if's"? Undoubtedly. Hence Titus 3. 7, just quoted, at once continues, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." And Romans 8. 17, rightly translated, conveys two distinct thoughts:

"If children, then heirs, heirs of God:

But joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together."

Do we believe this, and live accordingly?

We shall understand more fully when we realize that the birth from above brings us into God's family, and a relation to Him as Father which no natural man possesses, and which we did not possess before. In this position of wondrous favour our actions as well as ourselves have a new relation. They are rendered to our Father, and receive His pleasure or His disapproval, and thus we have His delight or His gracious chastisement. There is nothing penal within the family: there is no legal wrath on a "child": but there can be loss of communion, and of spiritual privileges, without altering our sonship, and without undoing the blessings which belong to all whom He will in no wise cast out. Chastisement may be brief and light, or it may be extreme, if there is a hardening in our character, to bring us back to Himself and His will. Hence the two aspects of our inheritance by no means clash. Together they preserve the balance of truth, and emphasize grace and good works in right position and proportion. The Holy Spirit always expresses everything perfectly, and Titus 3. 7 leads to 3. 8. It is our disproportion that often hinders. If we rightly perceive God's teaching, we shall more fully illustrate the precious words of Ephesians 4. 15, concerning growth up into Christ "in all things." Ephesians 1. 14 emphasizes the inheritance of which the Spirit is the Earnest, but Colossians 3. 24 brings before us the reward of the inheritance, in accordance with godly obedience. Neither invalidates or infringes the other. Each has its appointed sphere, and all truth harmonizes. All believers are included in Hebrews 9. 15, but if we would "inherit the earth" in that Day we are called to a holy contrast in this day. If we stand up for ourselves now, we can hardly say that we are fulfilling 1 Peter 4. 19. O that our hearts may be concerned to have respect unto the recompense of the reward (Heb. 11. 26), which will be the joy of our Lord.

"As the dew of Hermon (fruit bringing) . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Psalm 133. 3.

“And there came a Traveller unto the Rich Man.”

2 Samuel 12. 4.

THE Holy Spirit speaks by everything. The fact that David sank so low, and added sin to sin, to keep sin secret, is appalling. The enemies of the Lord have, indeed, sought to use the “great occasion” to blaspheme Him (2 Sam. 12. 14), again and again. God’s record of it shows that He does not gloss over sin, even when done by His beloved people. The Bible is not a story book. Everything is so humbling to us also, that we may be kept depending on God day by day. And what shall we say as to His gracious forgiveness of David, and the wondrous restoration, and the writing of Psalms 32 and 51? Surely we must feel, “Grace overflowed.” The blood of Christ is mighty.

And there is much more to speak to our hearts still. Nathan’s parable was striking and effective. Its broad issues showing the selfishness and callousness into which David, though usually loving, had fallen, cannot be mistaken. But that is not all. There were, doubtless, as in types, contrasts as well as parables, since Uriah was the one physically slain. But his wife was morally slain, and was under a death sentence when she was taken, to satisfy the king’s evil desire. Now mark the words, “There came a traveller.” Here is a most striking view of Satan’s attack. Temptation is not **always** with us in the same manner and degree. Sometimes we may feel we have **no** inclination to that which appears to have overwhelming power (whether as to anger, pride, selfishness or fear, etc.), at other times.

The traveller **comes**: he does not intend to stay long: only **long enough** to cause us to prepare a meal for the gratification of the tempting lust, of whatever kind it may be. O that we may be on our guard, by God’s grace, as to these sudden onslaughts of Satan. Let us not imagine that we are much stronger than David and Samson and Peter, in whatever way we are attacked. We need to “watch and pray.” There is always a preparation for failure. On this occasion “David tarried still at Jerusalem.” An idleness and lack of energy, when the Lord calls us to godly and urgent activity, is ever the enemy’s vantage ground. “There came a traveller.” The exact parallel with that which **should** have been done may not be clear at first. In the parable one’s own sheep would have been rightly slain. This may possibly suggest a **contrast** in the outworking, namely, the **mortifying** of something in ourselves instead of gratifying the travelling temptation with “food” to meet its craving. There is a holy contrast, of another character, in the parable of Luke 11. 5-8, where we have the unexpected visitor at midnight, and the provision from God. And this is vital. Let us bring everything to God in prayer, and only deal with the wishes and thoughts that come to us after we have sought unto our Father. Only thus shall we provide all to His glory, and our own true blessing.

A Few Thoughts on Rejoicing in Deuteronomy.

THE words of chapter 16. 15 impressed me. One translation renders it, “Thou shalt be **altogether** joyful,” and another, “Thou shalt be **wholly** joyful,” and yet another, “Thou shalt **only** rejoice.” How different are “the pleasures of sin for a season.” The book of Proverbs emphasizes how “bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterward his mouth shall be filled with gravel” (20. 17), but “the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (10. 22). The feast of tabernacles was meant to be a type of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus, hence the stress on “fulness of joy.” But, alas, Israel sinned grievously, and the words of the prophet were painful, yet needed, “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God” (Hos. 9. 1). Sin has bitter consequences indeed. But those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and seeking to please Him, are encouraged thus:—“Rejoice in the Lord **always**, and again I will say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4. 4). Not that we should have the careless joy which ignores sin around. There is a need in this present time to “rejoice with trembling” (Ps. 2. 11), and we are conscious of our own shortcomings, and would humbly confess our sins (1 John 1. 9), yet it is precious to know that “peace” is ever found with God’s own gracious and assured forgiveness (Luke 7. 48, 50).

Returning to Deuteronomy, we realize even from chapter 28 how God appointed to Israel a joyful service. The troubles there set forth would come upon them because—“thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart” (verse 47). Even as John 14. 15 impresses the fact that we cannot truly keep our Lord’s commandments without love as the mainspring, so is it here shown that outward conformity without joy is **vain** (Mal. 1. 13, 3. 14). God did not give the laws of the sabbath, for example, to be a burden, but Israel were to rejoice in His joy, and find pleasure in His pleasure, and “call the sabbath a delight” (Isa. 58. 13). And so should it be for us with “the law of Christ” to-day (Gal. 6. 2). How clear it is that everything depends on standpoint and wishes! That which is pleasure to the worldling would be anguish to a believing heart in harmony with the Lord.

The Holy Spirit **ALWAYS** leads to this harmony. The feasts of Israel were ever linked with appearing before God, and this with joy (Ps. 16. 11). And the joy was to be in the **home** (Deut. 16. 11, 14), and in fellowship **with others**. A selfish joy, that excluded the employee or the stranger, was itself excluded. And how we should delight in the unity of saints, and in **their** joy together. Fellowship with the world should be viewed as an entire contrast (Jas. 4. 4). Everything in God’s appointment should have been done among Israel with joy (Deut. 12. 7, 12,

18),—mark the words “before the Lord,” and “in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.” Nothing was to be done as a mere duty. “Thine heart shall not be grieved” is a deeply important command in chapter 15, 9, 10. Absence of joy spoils everything, and we rob ourselves, as well as others, whenever we rob God of this part of our obedience, without which the other part becomes only dead and formal. Let “before the Lord” be ever the characteristic of our joyful allegiance (ch. 27. 9).

Our gracious God delights in rejoicing in His people (Deut. 30. 9, cf. Zeph. 3. 17), and thus He delights in their joy. Only when there is disobedience is joy hindered. Hence the verse with which we commenced, as to the whole-hearted joy, unmixed with disappointment, and without harmful undercurrents, sets forth, as we have seen, His standpoint which will be soon blessedly illustrated when our Lord Jesus returns. But again let us impress on one another that we are now in the “new covenant” already with its “new song.” Then let the closing thought be that we may not deprive ourselves nor our brethren, nor withhold from our loving Father, the acknowledgment of the precious words, “**Glorious and honour** are in His presence; **strength and gladness** are in His place” (1 Chron. 16. 27—“strengthened . . . with joyfulness,” Col. 1. 11). What a testimony to the world will such an attitude be (Isa. 12. 3, 4).

“That ye may know what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12. 2.

“I thought,” and so I went,
My plan seemed wise and best;
But yet I was not sent,
How could my way be blest?
’Tis only well God’s will to know,
And when He sends to hear and go.
“I wished,” and so I wrought,
’Twas not an evil act,
God’s “time” was all unsought,
His presence thus I lacked:
’Tis blessed when His voice we wait;—
Before’s too soon, behind’s too late.
Self cannot choose the way,
Self cannot hold the rein;
First, and throughout the day,
God will make all things plain:
The will of God is always right,
His saints may well therein delight.

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“With him is an arm of flesh: but with us is the Lord our God . . . and the people rested themselves upon the words.”
2 Chronicles 32. 8.

A Word of Introduction

CONTEXTS of Scripture are very helpful. Hezekiah was a man of unusual faith (2 Kings 18. 5): why should not we be? Yet he compromised with Sennacherib in 2 Kings 18. 14, 15. We need much faith as to our “strong points.” God will not fail. In 2 Chronicles 32 the early verses emphasize great preparations, but God’s Name and prayer are omitted. Have we here the possible background of Isaiah 22. 8-13? In any case the delay in emphasizing the LORD is heart-searching. But when there was confidence in Him He answered prayer mightily. The principle of 1 Chronicles 5. 20 and 2 Chronicles 13. 18 applies to our spiritual warfare. Many times have we failed because we have unconsciously put our energy, experience and organisation in the first place, instead of realizing that we are NOT in charge. The will of the Lord is all-important. If we are humbly obedient and dependent, we shall be conscious of His might. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” We may well “lean,” with all our weight, on the words of the Lord.

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The Man who waited for God and the Man who did not wait.

WE call to mind Genesis 22, and how God’s servant Abraham would not withdraw his hand from the knife till he received a word from God. The simplicity of his faith is marked out by the words “I and the lad will go yonder, and we will worship and come again to you” (verse 5). There was no uncertainty.

He did not know how God would work, but he knew God would work, and the inspired commentary is "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Hence the man of faith could not withdraw his hand till God said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him." We call to mind the holy description of true dependence when the devil wished Christ to act **before** the time. The answer was definite, "The Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4. 4). He would not act first.

But Saul, (a solemnizing type of Antichrist in various passages), did not wait for God. He forced himself and offered a burnt offering (1 Sam. 13. 12). He blamed Samuel because, it seems, the seven days were **nearly** ended, but Abraham was willing to wait up till the last moment. **That** was faith. Israel were as a nation like Saul before God: they waited not for His counsel (Ps. 106. 13). And have not we the same danger? "Faith" is easy when the circumstances in which it must be exercised are in the future. But is it always real faith when we fail in the emergency when it arrives? Sometimes there may be our faltering, even after real and earnest faith: hence the encouragement of the Lord, with its tender rebuke, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Hence, moreover, the deeply important words, "If ye have faith **and doubt not.**" How we need grace to continue, and to believe God even when the last week comes, or even the final day of expectation, yea, the climax hour. Abraham trusted God beyond this, up to the last moment, nor is there one word to suggest Isaac's resistance. His question was answered, and the record thus suggests to us a wondrous type of Christ in His utter willingness. Yea, **He actually** died, for us. How precious was God's appointed type, because Abraham obeyed His voice, and thus sanctified Him (contrast Num. 20. 12) How different was Saul's failure, with its sad "afterwards" of continued haste (1 Sam. 14. 29), and growing self-will and heart-murder (1 Sam. 18. 11, 20. 31), reaching its goal in spiritism and suicide. The life of faith is, verily, a blessed contrast with the life of a man of this age. And what is our attitude? Do we trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not to our own understanding (Prov. 3. 5)? Do we rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him (Ps. 37. 7)? Are we willing to be silent that God may speak, or do we speak first? The failure of Matthew 16. 22 and 17. 1 is easier than we think. We stand up when we should sit, and run when we should stand in His counsel. The Corinthians sought to reign before the time. The apostle tenderly but firmly showed their Lord's will. May we be among those who are willing for Him to choose our inheritance for us, and willing that everything should be in **His** time. We would not lead, but be led. Faith is ever a **responsive** word: it is second. The Lord should be First, in all things He must have the preeminence.

"Sanctifying the Lord."

1 Peter 3. 15.

THIS command—this exhortation—is deeply important. Probably we should translate "Sanctify the Lord, **Christ,**" or, as the revised version gives it, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." The words are evidently reminiscent of Isaiah 8. 12, 13, and thus emphasize once again the Deity of our beloved Lord.

We ask ourselves, "What is the impressive meaning of this command?" The prayer of Matthew 6. 9 comes before us, "Hallowed be Thy Name," and we cannot forget Numbers 20. 12, "Because ye believed Me not, **to sanctify Me** in the eyes of the children of Israel" (see too Lev. 10. 3). We cannot **make** the Lord holy, **He** is infinitely so, but we can, and should, realise and manifest His holiness. And the word suggests yet more. We are to set Him apart from all, in thought and devotion: there can be no rival. He alone has bought us, and we belong altogether to Him. This is of the deepest moment in the whole of our Christian life. "Ye cannot serve God **AND** mammon." Compromise is perilous. None other can share with Him in possessing us. We remember the apostle's godly "jealousy" for the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 11. 2). There must be no divided affection. Our Lord is worthy of all devotedness and devotion, and He is fully entitled thereto. May we never hesitate nor draw back. To draw back even for a moment is sin.

The context in Isaiah 8 helps us. There we observe the contrasted standpoint of man. "**Associate** yourselves, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces," "**Take counsel together,**" "**A confederacy,**" "**Their fear.**" Such words indicate the constant human tendency to think of men and of earthly numbers. But, amidst all, the prophet was instructed to "Sanctify the Lord of hosts **Himself.**" And then we read "Let **Him** be your fear, and let **Him** be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary." As we honour Him, and fear to grieve Him, we shall realize the secret place of the Most High (Ps. 91. 1). It is a wondrous thought that when we sanctify the Lord He becomes a Sanctuary (Ezek. 11. 16), a Dwelling Place for His people. Amid the unrest and fear of the men of this world, the child of God is to be anxious in nothing (Phil. 4. 6). Why? Not because of what the believer is, but because of what the One Believed is.

The days also in which Peter wrote were not easy. But God was the Same as in the days of Isaiah. There were "manifest temptations" (1 Pet. 1. 6), and a "fiery trial" (1 Pet. 4. 12). Yet the believer was bidden to "sanctify the Lord." He was not

* This word seems to denote "conspiracy." Thus "the fear" of many around the prophet is emphasized. They dreaded Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel alike, but God's servant abode in God's promises, yea, found his sanctuary and resting place in God Himself.

to scheme for himself. It is a privilege to remember One Who committed Himself to Him That judgeth righteously (1 Pet. 2. 23), and to commit the keeping of our souls unto Him in well-doing, as unto a Faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4. 19). Is not God our Father worthy of our fullest trust? Is not the Lord Jesus still One Who ever lives to make intercession, and to succour them that are tempted? The present day may have trials comparable with those in which Isaiah and Peter lived. But is God less? There is, moreover, the personal application. The **individual** trials of the believer may be very real, but should he be fearful? Is not God still God, and still **his** God? Is not God nearer than circumstances, and are not they but opportunities for Him? Is there not often an illustration of His words to Moses, "Now thou shalt see what I will do" (Ex. 6. 1), and of His encouragement through Caleb, "They are bread for us" (Num. 14. 9). "Fear them not: for" is the message of Joshua 10. 8 (cf. 11. 6). Nothing comes as a surprise to our God. We recollect the words of John 6. 6, "He Himself knew what He would do." Romans 8. 28 is not a dead letter, and nothing can really harm those who follow, and imitate, their Lord (1 Pet. 3. 13). It is for us to **walk uprightly**, and to leave results with God (Ps. 84. 11). The men of this world are, indeed, in a pitiable condition: they know not what to do. But, in one sense, God's children need have no emergency, for they are His, and the work is His. The battle against this unseen enemy, Satan, is not theirs but God's. "The things which are seen" are by no means the whole (cf. 2 Kings 6. 17). God "is" (Heb. 11. 6). Be afraid of fear, and of trusting God and then **looking to man instead**. He seeks your fullest, consistent faith. Do not ask God to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel and then ask Hushai to do it, by a subterfuge. Do not put things in your Lord's hands, as it were, and then half take them out. "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as **Lord**." He is the Lord of your life, and He will undertake.

The position of "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2. 11) is thus marked out. Such have a heavenly calling. They are characterized by this. The men of this age cannot understand "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16). The believer cannot Scripturally be a politician. His standpoint must be altogether different from that of those who do not recognize God at all, or only recognize Him in "providence." He is our **Father**, Christ is our **Lord**,—everything has been changed for those who are a **new creation** (2 Cor. 5. 17). We think again of the young man who said, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" The believer acts upon the words, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" (Ps. 138. 8). Hence he cannot have **partnership** with the world in business, or societies, or mutual arrangements of such co-responsibility to the glory of God. He should desire to "sanctify the Lord" in everything, and to "seek first

the kingdom of God and His righteousness." To the one who does not know God this is foolishness, but to the believer it should become the natural attitude.

The verse continues, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." A right attitude to God is followed by a true politeness, and a godly testimony to man. "It shall turn to you for a testimony" was our Lord's own word about very difficult times. "Be ready **always**": a holy "always," because of a background walk with God (Col. 4. 6). Emergencies are to be met **not at the time but by communion with God first**. "Pray with me about this special problem," says one. If more prayer had been sought about the common round of home life, there would be more "readiness" to give a bright testimony. The men of this age will ask, "Why cannot you do this or that, and act with us?" Can you give a reason, and is it linked with the "hope"? How definitely "that Blessed Hope," and the coming kingdom of Christ affect everything. "Why do you not share in this?" The Lord Jesus sits "until,—" says Psalm 110. 1, and we must not "stand" in arrangements out of harmony with His attitude. The added words, "with meekness and fear" show the godly and humble manner of those who shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5. 5). We are "strangers" still. "Render therefore to all their dues . . . fear to whom fear," is the word of Romans 13. 7. The believer is to adorn God's doctrine in the manner in which he explains "the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3. 1). We can easily undo our words by our works, and the holy matter of our testimony by an unholy manner. A child of God should never be "uppish."

How can we maintain the meek, unresisting standpoint of a Christian with words that are not **meek**? This fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 22, 23) may well take us back to 1 Timothy 6. 11, 12, "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith**." The context in verses 12 and 13 is fitting, for it speaks of "the good confession," referring especially to the words of the Lord Jesus before Pontius Pilate, in John 18. 36, which we need to ponder at all times, not only in experiences in any measure parallel with Luke 21. 13-15. There we see the Hope as in 1 Peter 3. The Lord's "holiness" (1 Pet. 2. 9) is "among the nations" (1 Pet. 2. 12), and believers in the brotherhood of redeemed ones in the world (1 Pet. 5. 9) are to be a separate "family." "A good **conscience**" is deeply important, it is linked with "a good **conversation**" or "manner of life" (1 Pet. 3. 16) and belongs to God as 1 Peter 2. 19 literally signifies.

Dear brethren in Christ, whatever you are in business, wherever you are, is the **Lordship** of Christ really manifest not only in some things, but in all? Do not let there be a one-sided recognition of Him, but let the whole life bear one hall-mark:—

“Bought with a price.”* We notice how these same words which occur in two verses (1 Cor. 6. 20, 7. 23), have distinct, though related inferences:—

- (a) A positive and a negative (command and prohibition).
- (b) A right relation to God AND to men.
- (c) A call to an unchanging standpoint, of setting the Lord always before us, and a holy urging NOT to be diverted (“Become not”).

If we **only** say, “I cannot do this or that,” we miss the Divine positive emphasis. Here it is not a bare refusal. Our possession by the Lord Jesus prevents possession by another, but also fills us with positive privileges and responsibilities. As in 1 Thessalonians 1. 9, “Ye turned to God” precedes “from idols,” and as in Hebrews 13. 13 “unto Him” comes before “without the camp,” so is it here. We cannot rightly say, “I have a conscience against “this” (whatever it be) unless we first have a conscience for our Lord because “belonging to Him” (1 Pet. 2. 19 lit.). If we plead conscience in one thing and are unconscientious in others, do we not grieve the Holy Spirit? The remedy is not giving up or broadening, but let 1 Corinthians 6. 20 come before 7. 23, that there may be the living proof of His pre-emption, as the reason for any exemption, and thus there will be true witness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since the believer is a partaker of the heavenly calling, he cannot be of the world, or like the world, without beclouding the whole testimony he is chosen to bear. “They are not of the world even as I am not of the world,” words repeated by our Lord in John 17. 14, 16, are decisive, and encouraging. We cannot make a unity when He has set a division. The Lord did not speak of one class in the world, but of the world as a whole. A new birth from above is essentially heavenly, and the new creation must be really “new.” Happy are those who are like Abraham, who “was called the friend of God” (Jas. 2. 23), and who realize the dangerous contrast solemnly brought before us in the same epistle, “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4. 4). May we henceforth “sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself” (Isa. 8. 13), not only in a crisis, and enjoy the added words, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples” (verse 16). So would we “wait on the Lord” and “work for Him” (verse 17), for “He is Faithful That promised.”

* Booklet gladly sent.

The Lord does not promise any crown to those who love this world. The children of God are not viewed as children of this age. No verse of Scripture encourages us to be conformed to this age to get hold of the people.

“EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARETH FRUIT, HE PURGETH IT, THAT IT MAY BRING FORTH MORE FRUIT.”
John 15. 2.

DO we realize what our beloved Lord says to us? Every fruit-bearing branch needs purging. The word is “cleansing.” There is something unclean before Him that still needs Divinely gracious removal. This is written of every growing believer. It is not concerning those who wander, but regarding those who are pleasing God. Here is our Lord’s clear instruction against theories of “perfectionism.” We cannot be too humble. We would compare 1 John 3. 3, “Every man that hath this hope in Him (again a believer enjoying God’s will) purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

Observe the contrast, “He is pure.” He needed, and needs, no purifying. Correspondingly we do not read of the purging of the Vine, only of the branches. O that we may ever exalt our glorious Lord, and realize His sinlessness (1 John 3. 5, 2 Cor. 5. 21).

How precious is the purpose, “That it may bring forth more fruit.” The personal interest of our Father is with a very definite object. There can always be “more fruit.” And the increase of fruit is not reached by more information, or through mere stress on activity. “Abiding” is one thought: “purging” is the other. Yes, constant cleansing is needful if fruit is to abound, and the more we are cleansed, the more fruit there will be, to the praise of His glory. O that our hearts may realize the privilege of expecting this gracious experience. Let us never make light of chastening (Heb. 12. 5). It is all with a view to fruit for Him. Possibly we desire and pray fervently for ever increasing fruit? Are we willing then for His own chastening, or do we fret? May our hearts respond to all His will with increasing lowliness and devotedness. A purged branch is lovingly wounded: the wound is from Him unto us—that the fruit may be from us unto Him.

BE HUMBLE!

God Himself bore witness to Job that there was “none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil” (Job 1. 8). Yet overcome by circumstances he “opened his mouth” and failed (3. 1), and needed to be brought down to abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes (42. 6).

Of Hezekiah the Holy Spirit wrote that “he trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him” (2 Kings 18. 5), yet he, in fear, sent the Lord’s silver and gold to the king of Assyria (2 Kings 18. 14, 15).

Josiah was outstanding in godliness, and “like unto him

there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart" (2 Kings 23. 25), but he met death through failure to seek God's guidance in everything (2 Chron. 35. 20-24).

"Among them that are born of women," said the Lord Jesus Christ, "there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11. 11). Yet even his full confidence faltered in continued heavy trials.

If David, a man after God's own heart, turned aside in the matter of Uriah, and Solomon, blessed with abundant wisdom, wandered, have we not a reason to rejoice in the contrasted perfection of One Who was God yet became Man, and walked this earth, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4. 15), and have we not need to be very humble as to ourselves, realizing the need for dependence continually, yea, moment by moment, upon the Lord?

Faith and Presumption.

IT is so important to distinguish true faith from its counterfeits. Faith rests upon God, and upon His words: presumption rests upon man, and upon his ideas. Thus presumption is occupied with what "I think," whereas faith feeds on what God has said. Presumption, being self-confident, is proud: faith, being dependent on God alone, is humble. Presumption dreams, and is disappointed: faith rests, and is rewarded. Presumption changes according to circumstances and their appearances: faith has its eye upon the Lord, and believes Him against seeming probabilities. Presumption is excited, and often seeks to attract to itself: faith is calm, and is concerned for God's glory. We cannot have too much real faith, but we need grace to fight against all presumptuous imitations. The devil delights when presumption is dressed up as faith, but its true character is detected when a believer walks with God. We have a striking example of presumption in bragging Goliath, and a beautiful illustration of faith in the words and attitude of David. Or, let us think of Israel and their foes. "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry ground; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Heb. 11. 29). Do you and I realise the contrast here? "Assaying to do" speaks of self's trying without a word from God. And many are trying to do good works and gain salvation: they do not realize the blessedness of simple faith. But there is no room for pride in faith. Its ground, and power, and aim are all from God; and as He saves those who have nothing, so He sustains those who know the meaning of their Lord's words, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"If I were hungry I would not tell thee."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Psalm 50. 12, Matthew 5. 6.

A Word of Introduction.

It is a wondrous privilege to realize the unlimited power and wisdom of God. Yea, all His attributes are perfect in nature and unrestricted in nature and exercise. He is in nothing dependent on us, nor on the works of creation, nor on the laws of nature which He has appointed. We bow knee, and heart, and worship. We are the needy, hungry, dependent ones, and to us He says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 81. 10, 107. 9). It is our heart's desire that He may use these pages to encourage the joy of His redeemed in His truth, and then (wonder of wonders), though He is never hungry with the need which we experience, He deigns to delight in His obedient people's walk, and prayer, and conversation. The precious blood of Christ has brought a new note into heaven's praise which could not have come from unfallen angels. O that He Who spoke of the sacrifices as His food, with their precious types of Christ, may find in us and our service, a reminder and sweet savour of His Beloved Son.

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DENYING.

WE think of Peter. The denial was terrible, appalling, saddening, and he never meant to deny: far, far otherwise. He loved his Lord, and thought he would be faithful. There was affection, when he followed—even though it was afar off—but all was weakened by self-confidence, and the fall came after lack of watching and prayer.

Again we read the solemn words, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words," and again, "Whosoever shall

deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Which is in heaven" (Matt. 10. 33), and feel possibly that we should not thus falter. We should not retract, we should go to the stake. So we think. But what about daily business now? Have we any associations that deny the Lord Jesus? Here is a bookseller, a Christian: will he obtain a book that sets aside the glory of his Lord? It is easy to compromise, and the heart may say, "I am not responsible," and "Where shall I draw the line?" "I shall fail to pay my way." There are many more problems in daily life unto the Lord than many realize.

And what shall we say of the semi-denial of guilty silence? Sometimes we are not called to speak. There may be the witness of a godly manner. But are we always faithful in confessing our Lord, when we should say a word? Do we act as His purchase, or if we were even as others? Are we afraid to be different for His sake? Is our "dress" a denial that He has bought us? Do we wish to be as much like the world as possible, because we fear "the reproach of Christ"? Are we unlike Moses, who esteemed it to be riches? Would those who have worked with us a considerable while say, "I did not know you were a Christian?" We should not say of a fruitful tree, "I did not know what it was." Fragrance and fruit should bear their clear testimony. If we do not deny **self** to some extent we shall find we are denying Christ. He has a right to the whole of His purchased possession, and if in His temple every whit of it uttereth glory (Ps. 29. 9, marg.), every part of our life should make manifest that we are not our own, but bought with a price (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

"Faith Without Works Is Dead."

James 2. 20, see 17.

DEAD faith! Solemn words. We think of the expression. "The love of many shall wax cold." Dead faith and cold love. Even ghastly caricatures of realities are possible. We cannot be too impressed with such Divine language. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." How blessed is the contrast, "Your faith groweth exceedingly," "O woman, great is thy faith," "Faith which worketh by love," "She loved much."

God is Living, and He cannot approve of that which is **dead**. It is only a counterfeit. Profession is only a lying label unless there is reality. The statement, "deeds not creeds," has influence, alas, because many have claimed faith without possessing it. God hates hypocrisy. Faith, like a seed-grain, is living, and brings forth fruit. The smallness does not hinder. But a large mass of dead faith is only an encumbrance, it is a dead weight.

If by the grace of God, you have living faith, ask that it may grow, and expect it to grow, and look upward for much fruit. Fruit pleases God: fruit is what He sought and seeks. Fruit is the evidence of life. Fruit will be to your joy and His praise.

God's Dealings with Israel in 1 Samuel 12. 16-25.

THROUGHOUT we see His wisdom and His mercy. Israel had sinned grievously, for they had rejected the Lord (1 Sam. 8. 7). God did not however cast them off. He kept His covenant, but He also vindicated His righteousness and holiness. Psalm 99. 8 illustrates a deeply important principle. Sin is never excused. The wickedness of Israel was "great" in asking amiss (1 Sam. 12. 17, Jas. 4. 3). How important it is that our motive in prayer should be God's glory, and that our will should be within His.

In harvest time there is no rain in Palestine. God uses the night mist, rendered "dew," which is so precious (Ps. 133. 3). Hence the thunder was a definite sign, as to its time. But we would also remember its nature: "The God of glory thundereth" (Ps. 29. 3). The people had spoken instead of hearing God's voice ("the voice of the people" is not the voice of God, 1 Sam. 8. 7, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul," Ps. 106. 15). Now they heard the voice of God in a manner that suggested a storm and holy judgment. Do we not well to learn the lesson, and wait for God's counsel? It is blessed to hear His voice **before** we speak, and He still speaks through Scripture day by day (Rev. 2. 7).

It is helpful to see God's tenderness when Israel had persistently wandered. In Judges 10 He spoke in righteous severity, but when they were humbled, and said, "Deliver us only we pray Thee, this day," we read "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" (verses 15, 16). So was it when they owned "We have added unto all our sins this evil to ask us a king." At once we read, "Samuel said unto the people, 'Fear not.'" Ah, dear troubled soul, God can restore years caterpillars have eaten, and when the vessel is marred can make another as it seems good to Him, the Heavenly Potter (see Jer. 18. 4, Isa. 64. 8). You will not misuse this tenderness, will you? It is helpful to remember 2 Chronicles 12: The princes and the king "humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous" (6). At once we read, "When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves (mark the repetition of this word and observe the contrast in 2 Chron. 36. 12); I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance" (cf. Ezra 9. 8, similar wording). But there was a "nevertheless" of chastisement in verse 8, "that they may know My service and the service of the kingdom of the countries." And a striking symbolic reminder of this was the change of gold (glory) to brass (earthly) in the shields (9, 10, contrast Isa. 60. 17).

Next we reach the important command, "Turn ye not aside." It is repeated. There was, and ever is, such a danger of a temporary concern of soul in view of miracles seen in nature. When God grants blessing **after** departure from His path, it is

never to excuse further departure. There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared (Ps. 130. 4). And the word "vain" is likewise repeated, the very term in Genesis 1. 2, "without form." How confused is everything when any leave God out.

The reason for grace is next set forth, "His people" (cf. Rom. 11. 2), "His great Name's sake" (Ezek. 36. 22), "it hath pleased the Lord" (Isa. 46. 10). "His people" (another expression a second time). How often might the words be written, "Not for your sakes do I this" (Ezek. 36. 22). How wondrous it is that it pleased the Lord to make us His, and it pleased the Lord to bruise His beloved Son for us (Isa. 53. 10), and He will not forsake the work of His own hands (Ps. 138. 8). The confidence of Samuel is ours, but, as he, we would never misuse this to excuse prayerfulness or disobedience. Hence, "Moreover as for me, far be it that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." Do we realize the sin of ceasing to pray? This helps us to understand Ephesians 1. 15, 16, and we notice how God's dear servant mentions prayer here even more than teaching. That is put in the secondary position. The two are helpfully together in Colossians 1: 28, 29, for Paul was as Samuel, one who called on the Lord's Name (Ps. 99. 6). And indeed the two are ever linked (see Eph. 6. 17, 18). Thus we have the blending of God's grace and our personal responsibility, and the added fervent exhortation in verse 24 intensifies this. Well may we also seek to serve the Lord in truth with a whole heart, remembering how great things He hath done for us (Ps. 126. 2, 3). O that our lives and lips may henceforth show this, to the praise of His glory. Let us never forget the mercies we have received (Ps. 103. 2, Isa. 63. 7).

Why do we want to understand this verse of Scripture or that? Is it that we may please God in loving obedience? The mere knowledge in the brain avails nothing. If we only desire to explain to some one else, or to give an address, or because we do not like to be thought ignorant, what is the profit? Knowledge, without a holy motive, may become a positive danger. Let not our searching of Scripture be a bare duty, nor to find a theme for a meeting, nor to prevent worry because we cannot answer this or that, but let it increasingly be a holy concern for God's glory that we may receive, enjoy, and assimilate the food which He has graciously given, that we may go in the strength of that meat, and delight His heart of love.

It is easier to correct harshly than to mould graciously: easier to use the knife than to be patient as to the sore, easier to forget the water and the towel, when we wash one another's feet, than to be full of humility and tenderness. If we only realized a fellow believer is part of ourselves, yes, and a member of Christ!

The tenses of Hebrews 11. 17, 18.

EVERY word of God is pure,—perfect gold without dross (Prov. 30. 5). We thank Him heartily for our valuable translation, but sometimes in looking at the original we are at once made conscious of a richer fullness. It is not that the translation misleads, but that every human rendering is necessarily incomplete, in comparison, or rather, in contrast, with the perfect inspired words of God in the language He chose.

Here we read literally, "By faith Abraham HAS OFFERED up Isaac, BEING TRIED (TESTED)." From God's standpoint the work was thus viewed as accomplished, with a definite result and fruit, for that is the meaning of the tense. How graciously He ever honours faith's willingness. The next tense emphasizes the searching process of the trial: there was a continued confidence in the Lord. Abraham did not merely manifest a temporary and natural faith. How often an act is easy, but the abiding restfulness in the will of the Lord is the witness. The passage goes on, "and the one who welcomed the promises WAS OFFERING UP the only begotten." This imperfect tense (as it is called) next brings before us the action as incomplete, in the carrying out, for God graciously interrupted. Then we read, "As to whom it was said." Here is the simple fixed word of God, "In Isaac SHALL thy seed be CALLED," a definite future, of promise and prophecy. Thanks be to God for the accuracy, forcefulness and precious help of all that He has caused to be written for our learning. O that we may illustrate a faith and faithfulness corresponding with that of Abraham.

TWO VACUUM FLASKS.

One which I possessed was in poor condition outwardly: indeed, the case was perishing. But it kept the water for 15 hours so hot that I could hardly bear it. Another flask was in far better condition, but there was an appreciable loss in the warmth. Not so much loss, from the standpoint of use, if only kept for 12-15 hours, but sufficient to show there was not a perfect isolation: there was some definite contact with the colder surroundings, which had a gradually damaging effect. Have you learnt my parable, dear believing reader? Is your outward man perishing, but is there such isolation from the world that you are kept "fervent" for your Lord's glory? Or is there some hidden defect, not perceptible in a few hours it may be, but sufficient to hinder the condition of one "boiling in spirit" (Rom. 12. 11)? I do not mean that "luke-warmness" is reached at once; but—it will be. O that we may be devoted to the Lord, even though our "earthen vessel" be like Gideon's broken pitchers.

A Note On Romans 12. 6-8.

IT has been helpfully pointed out that the word "or" is only used for the first four of the seven gifts here detailed. Every Scripture number is striking. Seven is elsewhere thus divided into four and three.

It is evident that from verse 8 the thought is not of "gifts differing" but of the attitude which **all** ought to manifest to God's glory. Does the omission of "or" imply **this** in verse 8 also? It is true that all are to "give" unto the Lord. But the word rendered "ruleth" seems elsewhere to imply a **special** responsibility in God's gracious appointment. The added description, "He that sheweth mercy," employs a verb only used for God's action elsewhere, except in Jude 22, 23. It seems to indicate more than the graciousness which is to characterize each believing life, possibly a special gift of dealing with those who need "mercy" in restoring love (Gal. 6. 1 as well as Jude 22, 23 may help).

But why the omitted "or"? May not one thought be that whereas **the sphere** of exercise of the gift has been mentioned earlier (on, or in, teaching, etc.), the **manner** is now brought before us—simplicity, diligence, cheerfulness. Hence **this manner** is not to emphasize God's sovereign appointment, but that which belongs to **each** believer, and the Holy Spirit shows us that the gift is always to be exercised in accord with these helpful accompaniments. How important is this principle. A "gift" without corresponding godliness will not bring Him glory and honour. And the three words together give a beautiful view of the life that pleases Him. How we need, in all our daily details, to do **everything** with simplicity, diligence, and cheerfulness, judging all duplicity, laziness and grumbling. There is ever a blessed devotedness when the Holy Spirit has His rightful place in our lives, and thus the fruit of the Spirit is seen.

"In Honour Preferring One Another."

Romans 12. 10.

IT is so easy to be occupied with **our** spiritual things, and to be proud of that which would indeed be an encouragement if pride did not spoil the further knowledge of God's truth, the open door of service, or whatever the blessing is. How great is the privilege of telling others of Christ. But if "my Christian work" makes me regardless of others' service, (or even envious), however accurate in doctrine I am, what is the true profit? Have I no time to look "also on the things of **others**"? Do I wish the special blessings and answers to prayer to come to me, or through me? The Corinthians were filled with their "gifts," and thus used them without the primary thought of edifying **others**. Hence the striking words of 1 Corinthians 14. 27. The **natural** tendency for such a standpoint would be to **go on** with one's own speaking,

whatever others did, and to blame them. Observe also verse 30. The Holy Spirit's **principle** here applies as to many things, and not only the immediate subject. Am I willing for the Lord to "**interrupt**" me, and to use some one else instead of me? It need not be in a meeting. There are many examples of this. If I am not a "**member**" with my brother, so that we rejoice together (1 Cor. 12. 26), there may soon be friction. But there is no envy among members in a physical body, why should there be in that which is spiritual? My brother is part of my very life, as it were. Jealousy is when I view another as separate from myself, and I want "this" or "that" rather than that he should have it. But if we are one in Christ, it matters not whom the Lord uses. How much more I too need to learn this lesson, and the full meaning of this true unity.

A Clean Place and an Unclean.

Leviticus 4. 12, 14. 40.

THERE were **two** places "without," and they were quite contrasted, the one corresponds with Hebrews 13. 13, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." But the other was typical of that which is described where the word "without" comes the last time in Scripture, "Without are dogs . . . and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22. 15). At the present time the children of God are to be willing for rejection, they are to be "without" the world's politics and glories, and separated from the religious world, despised because of likeness to their adorable Lord. But they will not be "without" in that Day when He shall come—far otherwise: "they that were ready went in," and "blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." It is blessed to be willing to be "without" now, if we have, through grace, the blessed prospect of being "within" then.

It is not easy to suffer. We do not naturally choose a cross. But there is a **clean** place without the camp, yea, when it is unclean **within**. If the context in Hebrews 13 is prayerfully noticed, it will be seen the allusion is to the very passage before us in Leviticus 4. So there is no mere analogy: this is the Holy Spirit's teaching. It is for us to follow. We would not avoid or set it on one side. Redeemed by the blood of Christ we belong to Him, and we cannot belong to the world. A dual ownership is impossible.

But how solemn it is to be cast out from the marriage feast of Matthew 22 into outer darkness. The valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, the city of peace, was an appointed prefiguring of the place of separation from God (2 Thess. 1. 9). The closing verses of Isaiah 66 strikingly illustrate. How little we realize the meaning of eternal judgment. When one was "delivered to Satan" is was a fearful thing (1 Cor. 5. 5), and

in mercy that one was brought back via intense anguish. But the exclusion reminds us that the unsaved are, and remain, in the wicked one (1 John 5. 19). The description of such is those "that are without" (1 Cor. 5. 12, Col. 4. 5, 1 Tim. 3. 7). O that we may be more earnest to warn souls, while the Lord may be found (Isa. 55. 6).

"Excuses."

IT is easier to imagine that "excuses" are genuine "reasons" than we realize. Excuses for being late in rising and at a meeting, are amongst the commonest, and can seem to have so much in their favour. We would rise earlier, but we are not very well, or we seek to avoid warming a bedroom in the cold, and we can also meditate on the Lord while lying a little longer, and so we shall be fresher for His service after. Again, we have so much to do that is "unto the Lord" in some way, and we do want to just finish, and so are only a little late at the gathering. Or we are hindered "the last moment" by circumstances over which we, indeed, "have no control," and, moreover, the Lord enables a blessing to some thereby. All these things may be right, and legitimate, on one or two occasions, but, with self-deciding, we enlarge the scope, without any warrant from the Lord. Possibly "our last moment" hindrance is because we did not arrange to be a little before the time. One feels conscious of much personal need for more reverence in drawing near to God. How respectfully we treat a great man.

Openly evil "excuses" do not appeal to the growing believer, but he needs grace to detect those which are disguised. Satan's skill as an angel of light extends to excuses. Our "tenderness" to another may be because of indulgence of our own failures: were we more definite with him, conscientiousness would compel more firmness as to ourselves. And so is it as to all things. That which is "excused" may be overruled, and God may graciously bless the gold although dross is mingled, but let us not approve the dross. Rather let us remember that the true Christian life is simple dependence on the will of our Father for everything, and acting at once on His revealed will.

The Lord Jesus said: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14. 30): in contrast Paul wrote, "In me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18). Where then is the believer's confidence? Not in the flesh (Phil. 3. 3) but in Christ (1 Cor. 1. 31). He finds his joy in the words of grace, "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15. 4).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad: but after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

Matthew 26. 31, 32.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Lord Jesus is ever the Contrasted One. We realize the contrast of His birth, His life, His death. The sheep DEPEND on the Shepherd: He is contrasted. We see, too, the failure of the disciples. He never failed, and never fails, never! Further on, when others "sat," He fell on the ground in prayer (Matt. 26. 36, 39). But then He took THREE that they also might PRAY: theirs was a spiritual privilege: alas, they all failed. He is the Contrasted One! Yet our hearts rejoice that He has died to bring His own into living union with Himself, and, though the branches are still contrasted with the Root, for they are BORNE, not BEARING (Rom. 11. 18), and though the members are in like manner, contrasted with the controlling "Head," yet there is ONE LIFE. To emphasize this one life, and then the blessed dependence on Him appointed in daily walk, and the true "contrast" from the right standpoint of loving exaltation of Him, ("He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him," Ps. 45. 11), are these pages sent forth.

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The Holy Spirit's Work in the Book of "Acts."

THIS is clearly emphasized. The first chapter refers definitely to the Lord's commandments through the Spirit and to witness (verse 8). There is no thought of power without Him (Zech. 4. 6, 1 Cor. 2. 4). And His coming upon implies the position of God's dear children under Him, and gladly under His control.

In chapter 2 we have His manifestation on the "first day" of the week, the "Jubilee" of "Pentecost." (The thought of wind, fire and tongues may remind of 1 Kings 19. 11, 12). The thought of witness is in ch. 2. 32, 33, as in 5. 32. And we observe throughout the book that the activity of God's servants was fittingly in the Name of the Lord Jesus (e.g., 3. 16), and in the power of the Holy Spirit (4. 8, etc.). And the power was associated with "filling," for the Holy Spirit indwells and seals all believers (Rom. 8. 11, Eph. 4. 30), but, if He is grieved, how can He fill; and if He does not fill, how can there be the overflowing? If much of the "temple," as it were, is shut off from Him there cannot be the parallel with Exodus 40. 34, 35, and 1 Kings 8. 10, 11.

The arranging of all by the Holy Spirit is emphasized in connexion with all the missionary service, and the Great Assembly alike. In connexion with sending forth, we have the words "Separate (unto) Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (13. 2), and, when there were Divine restrictions as to the field, He appointed these (16. 6, 7, see 21. 4). Were there overseeing brethren to care for the flock locally? The Holy Spirit has made them such (20. 28). When there was a going forward, that had not been realized, to the Gentiles also, the Spirit bade Peter go (11. 12). And is He not the Same to-day, even as our Lord Jesus is the Same? Should we not have a deep concern for His direction? We cannot usurp His position. We would not. Every attempt to act in human wisdom is not only failure but sin. How blessed is the encouragement which He is willing to give, as well as leading (9. 31). May our hearts ever read the whole book in heartfelt consciousness that the Holy Spirit is a Person, yea, that He is God, indwelling, and working through, believers still. Human scheming and man-made organization are worse than a poor substitute for His representing of the Lord Jesus in the individual believer, and in the service of the gospel and of the assembly. The opening words ("The former treatise" = "the first word") remind us that there was not only the finished work of redemption (John 19. 30) by the Lord Jesus Christ for His own, but a work of doing and teaching which He began, and which the Holy Spirit came purposely to continue. That work is not yet completed. May it be ours to be humble instruments, used by Him, "vessels of mercy," with the "treasure" of the gospel of the glory of Christ, to "hear" His Name (9. 15). We need not be apostles, we are not apostles. The lowly, background child of God is indwelt by the Holy Spirit even as one who preaches to many. The great need is that our whole body should be yielded for His gracious control, and willingly subject to Him. My need is your need, your need is mine. Can we not help one another by more prayer for one another?

Early Assemblies and their Meeting Places.

If we desire, by grace, to return simply to the will of our Lord, and thus to principles and practices of the New Testament, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot fail to notice a striking contrast with the normal arrangements to-day, even regarding the place of meeting. Christendom has for centuries erected great and grand edifices unwarrantably, and has described them as "churches." This attitude was so definite that for centuries these were among the most costly buildings. Indeed, when we consider their number, we may add that **nothing else** was parallel. The treasured best examples of the architect's skill, in different styles, were the "cathedrals" and "churches." Of late "commerce," with its prophesied development, is taking a leadership as to this, but the change is comparatively recent. Moreover, among those professing the Name of Christ, there has been a tendency of many toward plainer buildings, even as decorations and stained glass windows have been laid aside. Whenever this is in recognition of God's appointed simplicity, we rejoice. The thought that God is **worthy** of the most costly things has been sadly misapplied. Undoubtedly He possesses and is worthy of all, but many were the ecclesiastic buildings erected and beautified by those who were themselves ungodly and cruel, rather reminding us of Matthew 23. 29. Not only so, but even if the gifts are those of His children, He desires these for what He has **appointed** (cf. Ex. 36. 1), and would He approve of the glory of **earth's** display, with commanded missionary labours held back? Yet more, outward display appeals to the senses (cf. 1 Sam. 16. 23) and so is **out of harmony** with the spirituality and simplicity which is His revealed will in a dispensation contrasted with that of Israel, and wherein we are specially reminded that we walk by FAITH, and that God is not receiving that which is of the goodness of the flesh.

The tendency toward plainer buildings is encouraging when it is

- (a) begotten of a definite desire to please God;
- (b) coupled with a devotedness to Him which gives freely for that which He approves.

If the meeting room is plain and the home worldly, there is a call for heart-searching. But may we not go even further? Has the Holy Spirit indicated the will of God as to buildings, on the line of present day arrangements at all? If not, should we not return to the plan of God at the beginning?

Where did the early Christians meet? There is no question as to this. Though the temple courts were a **rendezvous** (Acts 2. 46, 5. 42) where also, as we see, God granted opportunities to bring His gospel before souls, they were not the meeting places for worship. How could they be in view of Matthew 23. 38? Nor is there any suggestion of an assembly for worship therein.

The breaking of the bread and the prayers are the description of certain assembly privileges in Acts 2. 42. and we have no hint of the temple or synagogue, but an expression rendered "from house to house." Undoubtedly the word "house" is here (but only **once**). There is, moreover, a contrast with the temple. In like manner we find prayer in a **house** in Acts 12. 12. The breaking of bread in Acts 20. 8 was in an upper room, reminding of the Lord's arrangements when it was instituted. What word is joined by the Holy Spirit with the word "church"? Is it not the word "house"?

"The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16. 5).

"The church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16. 19).

"Nymphas, and the church which is in his house"

(Col. 4. 15).

"The church in thy house" (Phm. 2).

Is there any other building? This is important. Can we find any OTHER WORD thus associated, so that some may reply that this was only an occasional arrangement? We cannot. Similar expressions will intensify our realization that God has a message for us here. E.g., "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church" (Rom. 16. 23). We have not only thought of one town, but of Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Laodicea, Colosse places far apart, in Europe and Asia, where there were both Jewish and Gentile believers. The testimony is always the same. Moreover, there is no limitation to the "beginning."

Let it not be said that the believers could not afford anything else. At Jerusalem many sold houses and lands, and there is no suggestion of special poverty if the whole of Romans 16. 23 is read ("chamberlain of the city"), nor does Philemon appear to have been poor. Must we not say that this arrangement was by no means a mere "circumstance," far less an accident, it was normally the **will** of God? Would we not wish to continue therein, unless **He** has shown us that it is changed to-day? Human reasoning and expediency can never weigh against our Lord's revealed will.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

There was "not a man" to till the ground (Gen. 2. 5), and God provided the first Adam: there was not a man to stand in the gap in Ezekiel 22. 30, God the Father sent the Last Adam: so in connection with holy and righteous judgment in the future deliverance of Israel (Isa. 59. 16). The helpless one at Bethesda said, "I have no man," when the One Who, Greater than man, had become Man, was the very One Who asked, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5. 6, 7).

Service unto the Lord is not to be work for Him done in our way, but His work done in His way.

Moses and Christ.

WE thank God for Moses, but he is Divinely contrasted with the Lord Jesus, as Hebrews 3. 5, 6 well illustrates, "Moses . . . as a **servant** . . . Christ as **Son**." The gospel of John helps in this connexion, wherever the two names are definitely placed together. The first occurrence is chapter 1. 17, "For the **law** was **given** by **Moses**, grace and truth (be) **came** by Jesus Christ." The contrast is not only as to the **message** but as to the **manner**. The law was divinely "given" it was holy and just and good. Moses was the mediator. But grace was not only given: the Mediator of **grace** and truth must Himself be full of grace and truth; and accomplish everything, that the grace may actually flow out to lost sinners. Hence the Lord of Glory came, and these precious qualities were fully manifested in Him, and there was perfect harmony. The "giving" of gospel grace rendered necessary His atonement, for grace must reign through righteousness.

In chapter 1. 45 we have an allusion by one, who had himself been found, seeking to find another for the Lord Jesus, and he spoke with new-born fervour of the One of Whom Moses wrote. Yes, the Lord Jesus was **the One** on Whom that servant of God set his hope.

The next passage (3. 14) is well known. It adjoins "John three sixteen." But how blessed to realize its unveiling of the way of salvation. The serpent of old was for Israel, the Lord Jesus is for all nations. The serpent was only once lifted up and then out of use (2 Kings 18. 4), the Lord Jesus, once uplifted, **remains**, the one Saviour, the One Hope, year after year. The serpent could not save **till** lifted up, and our Lord Jesus must be lifted up on the cross, bearing the curse, on the tree. But can we not go further? The sentences are Divinely varied. Is there not a Divine purpose in this? "As, so":—but we do not read, "As Moses lifted up, so the Son of Man lifted up." Moses prepared the appointed serpent: he could give nothing of himself. But Christ did **not** lift up a thing: the active is strikingly changed to **passive**: **He Himself** was lifted up. How blessed is this second passage. The faithful servant of God obediently showed a type: our adorable Lord became fully the Antitype. Nothing was outside Him, nothing apart from Himself, every blessing is in Him, and "we preach Christ crucified." Well may our hearts rejoice.

Our third occurrence is chapter 5. 45-47, where we have the testimony of Moses to the Lord Jesus, and the need, yes, the **need** for receiving the Old Testament. The words of our Lord Jesus cut at the root of higher criticism. "If ye believe not His writings, how shall ye believe My words?" Again it may well be asked—"Can there be found a prayerful student of the types who had the slightest leaning to the higher criticism?" The message of Moses ever exalts our beloved Lord. But this passage also shows the contrast already given. Moses represents the law,

and thus accuses. The Gospel of Christ delivers from judgment. As in the epistle to the Hebrews, HE Himself is the Great Contrast throughout.

In chapter 6. 32 Moses is connected with the type, which met Israel's need, but he neither gave it, nor was he the food, nor could that food abide. In all these particulars the glory of the Lord Jesus shines forth. He was given and He came down, He gave Himself! What wondrous love,—and for us.

In chapter 7 Moses is again associated with the law, and circumcision is mentioned (verses 19, 22). It is deeply important to remember the words of Genesis 17. 13, "My covenant shall be in your flesh." How blessed is the putting off of the flesh, in the enjoyment of that which is born of the Spirit, in Christ Jesus. And circumcision is contrasted with life and salvation in John 7. 23: it gave nothing.

In chapter 8. 5 the scribes and Pharisees referred to Moses. Yet once more we see the condemnation of the law. But we at once behold "the One That is without sin" (verse 7) by Whose work there is salvation for condemned sinners. Thus again the glory of the Lord Jesus shines out (John 1. 14).

The final reference to Moses is likewise by opposed men of Israel (ch. 9. 28, 29). Their claim was false. They brought the servant of the Lord into a contrast with the Son of God, which was not just. But how rejoiced would Moses have been in the blessing to the healed man, as John the Baptist was glad when his disciples went after Christ (John 1. 35-39). Everything in Scripture exalts Him: may our daily life also be filled with the same exaltation! Life eternal is ever joined with a living knowledge and living faith in Him (John 17. 3, 20. 31).

TAKING THE PLACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Antichrist will defiantly put himself forward instead of Christ, but this is not the thought on our heart now. Is there not a message for me? Is it possible that something takes the place of the Lord in my affections, and "Lovest thou Me more than these?" is the question I need to hear? Is it not possible that someone takes the prominence that the Lord Jesus should have, so that I unwittingly follow him, and am swayed by him more than by the One Who bought me? The result of this attitude has often been sectarianism; and little movements have been centred round "a man." And the men may have been godly, and may not have wished this, but the result is a rut, with all its spiritual hindrances. I am well aware that the other sad extreme is possible, and commoner in some circles, namely, independence under the claim of being led by the Holy Spirit, so that the "gifts" of a risen Lord, as evangelists and pastors and teachers have not been rightly recognised and esteemed (see 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13, Heb. 13. 17). It is a wondrous privilege to be kept by the Holy Spirit from the swing of the pendulum, and it is only possible as we are at our Lord's feet.

"CHRIST JESUS."

Believing that every word of Scripture is in the right order, and full of meaning, I was suggesting a list of passages in which the Authorised Version renders "Jesus Christ," where the Holy Spirit seems to have given us the order "Christ Jesus." Almost immediately a brother handed me such a list. (There are some other possible cases, and any questions as to any verse, and the MSS. will help).

Romans 6. 3, 11, 23, 15. 16, 17.

1 Corinthians 1. 4.

Galatians 2. 16 (second) 3. 14, 5. 6.

Ephesians 3. 1.

Philippians 1. 1 (possibly), 8, 26.

Colossians 1. 1.

1 Timothy 1. 1, 2, 4. 6, 5. 21.

2 Timothy 1. 1.

Titus 1. 4.

Philemon 1.

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

(Ex. 27. 1-8).

The Place of Purging.

The Means of Mediation.

The Position of Praise.

The Refuge of Repentant Sinners.

The Way of Worship.

The Source of Sustenance.

The Root of Reviving.—E.K. (Outline of address).

A HOUSE OF GOD.

An assembly is a house of God, a spiritual house of living stones, wherein the Lord's will is the law of the house ("stewardship,") and wherein nothing is **commanded** which is against that will, and nothing **forbidden** which is according to that will. Failures of believers in the past, and present, to live up to their confession, may, alas, lower the standard of living in the house, and our hearts should be concerned daily and more intensely as to **this** (Heb. 3. 13), but let us also remember that if the principles and commands of the Lord Jesus are definitely excluded, and the traditions of men made obligatory, the gathering is not a house of God at all, and can have no claim on a humble disciple. A personal salvation and desire to please the Lord should be followed by a definite concern to be united with believers **only** in that which can be truly regarded as a house of God (1 Tim. 3. 15), and **then** the holy seeking after the godly **condition** which harmonizes with the godly **position**, and in which the Spirit of God can work out in individual, and in the whole assembly, a likeness to Christ, is deeply important.

Postponement.

“AND the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? Because He humbleth himself before Me I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house” (1 Kings 21. 28, 29).

“Thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord . . . and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shall be gathered unto thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place” (2 Kings 22. 19, 20).

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility” (Dan. 4. 27).

“God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He said that He would do unto them; and He did it not” Jon. 3. 10 but Nah. 3 shows there was the judgment later).

How wondrous is this unveiling of God's dealings. Eternal blessings in Christ Jesus are not before us here. The subject is **earthly** blessing, and we see how much depends on that which men often, alas, despise, namely, a humbling before God. If only this attitude to God had been more realized, how many lengthenings of tranquillity might have been granted, to many more than Nebuchadnezzar and than Nineveh! But, infinitely beyond this, our hearts long that many souls may seek the Lord Jesus, and have **eternal** life. Yet we would not forget that the very sparing and the temporal mercy give the wondrous opportunity to hear His Gospel again. Hence we would never underestimate these. Moreover, the call of God to humbling before Him is a call to that which **ALONE** is fitting in recognition of His overruling and His providential authority, and all else is virtually a denial of His Godhead, and thus an adding to sin. O that men would recognize that **God** is God, and that **He alone** is almighty, and that none can stay His hand (Dan. 4. 35). O that there were repentance before Him, in the experience of many, even today. We remember the searching words, “The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and wisdom shall see Thy Name: hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it” (Mic. 6. 9).

“Madness is in their heart while they live” (Eccl. 9. 3):
“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1. 7).

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“Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He shall lift you up.” James 4. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

SCRIPTURE is not a book of philosophy. God speaks therein to the heart. The attitude of the heart toward Him is all-important, for out of the heart are the issues of life (Prov. 4. 23). Men of the world are afraid of humbling: they think it betokens weakness. But the history of a saved soul begins with humiliation, and continues with humiliation. The path of humility is the path of blessing. As soon as we look to ourselves we ruin ourselves. It is so “natural” to have confidence in the flesh, and its arm (2 Chron. 32. 8). But those who are in Christ Jesus are a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17), and thus their principles are quite different from those of the world. The Lord Jesus said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17. 14, 16): that is the work of His grace. He also said, “Ye shall not be so” (Luke 22. 26), setting forth our responsibility as believers to act accordingly—responsibility through the work of His grace. The Holy Spirit never leads to pride, and our Father never blesses it. “God RESISTETH the proud, but giveth grace unto the lowly” (Jas. 4. 6). “Not popular ideas,” do you say? But they are our Lord's will, and precious indeed: and to help to a corresponding walk, and not to mere head study and knowledge are these pages sent forth.

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Human Reasoning, or Faith.

GOD has given wondrous faculties to men, but men often misuse them. The hand may be employed to serve God or self: and so is it with all the varied members. The ear may listen to lies, and the mouth may utter iniquity. Thus the natural man

acts in accord with his own will and way, and the need for him, as a fallen creature, is a new creation, a new life. Reason is a marvellous gift, but reasoning often shows man's own unreasonableness, since he leaves God out.

We are made conscious of this when we behold the first great "unity" of men, in Babylon where the last "unity" also will be centred. The idea of a "name" was the glory of man: the thought "lest we be scattered" was before them. But the fear of the wicked came upon them (Prov. 10. 24). They took counsel without God, and their words could not stand (Isa. 8. 10).

Again and again we see the fallacy and the folly of human reasoning in the pages of Scripture. We remember Jeroboam and how he "took counsel" to prevent the ten tribes returning to the house of David (1 Kings 12. 26-28), and the result is ever before us through the impressive words "Jeroboam . . . made Israel to sin."

But what about ourselves? We all need to be humble. Departure from simple faith is easy, as when David said "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 27. 1). Just as in 1 Kings 12. 26 we find the wording, "said in his heart":—"with the heart man believeth," and with the heart man "disbelieveth." Everything begins in the heart. How needful that our heart should fully trust in the Lord (Prov. 3. 5).

Abraham knew nothing of human reasoning when the Lord commanded him to offer up Isaac, concerning whom it had been said "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," for he accounted that God was able to raise him up. Moses knew nothing of human reasoning when he told Israel to go forward though the sea was in front and Pharaoh behind. Rather let us say—God was in front, and He Himself knew what He would do.

How often we follow fears and cares. We look to men, and are even scared by circumstances. Human reasoning would ever seek human means and guarantees. It is natural to try to "insure" and "secure" this or that, but have we not often forgotten the God of our salvation (Isa. 17. 10), and the Lord our Maker (Isa. 51. 13)? Do we always have respect unto Him Who long ago arranged all in such wisdom that faith to-day should be our response (Isa. 22. 11)? If we cease from man (Isa. 2. 22) and from our own wisdom (Prov. 23. 4), and trust in the Lord, He will not fail. God still looks to those who tremble at His word (Isa. 66. 2).

"The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" is a solemnizing statement in Joshua 9. 14. The suggestion made in Acts 21. 23, 24 seemed a wise one from the standpoint of human prudence, but we have no reference there to enquiring of the Lord. The Holy Spirit has been graciously given that He may graciously lead, and if He

leads there must be those who are led, not compelled or dragged, but gladly led, and such should all believers be. God overrules our omissions, but we desire not to be merely overruled channels. Rather would we be instruments and living branches in the bringing forth of that which is fruit unto His glory.

Two Distinct Spheres.

ROMANS 12 and 13 become very helpful when read together prayerfully. In the former we find many privileges in the sphere of those who are "one body in Christ," in the latter their relation to the present age and the powers that be, and thereby the contrasted sphere of those in authority is set before us. We observe the repeated use of the name "God" alone in this connexion in ch. 13. 1-6, for there is no reference to such as acting within the Lordship of Christ for His redeemed.

How important it is to know just how those who are in the Lordship of Christ should act in all circumstances of this present age, and toward those who are in the realm of His providence, in accord with the impressive and withal comforting words, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4. 25). It is so natural for us to overlook the two spheres, to ignore one of the two, and either to act forgetting that we, as redeemed ones, are in "the kingdom of the heavens," or, on the other hand, to deny God's over-sovereignty, even in the times of the Gentiles.

The different standpoint of the two chapters is realized when we observe that in the former we have the presenting of **our bodies** (ch. 12. 1), whereas in the latter we read of tribute, custom, fear and honour (ch. 13. 7). Our "bodies" belong to the Lord, since we are "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 20). The appointments of chapter 13 keep back a child of God from everything defiant, revolutionary, or disrespectful, even should the authorities be openly pagan and evil, and persecuting, as when Paul wrote. But the rendering of "dues" **never** encroaches on the primary and **all-comprehensive** rights of the Lord Jesus. By the "mercies of God" we realize our "reasonable service." Everything for us must be within "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, WILL OF GOD" (ch. 12. 2).

In accord with this distinction we notice some definite contrasts, the Holy Spirit's use of the same words, etc., making them simple and clear:—

For believers:	For authorities:
"That which is out from you" (lit.),—	A sword
Peace (12. 18).	(13. 4).
No vengeance (12. 19).	Vengeance
	(13. 4).
No wrath (12. 19, "Give place to—i.e., make room for—the wrath," i.e., God's, cf., 1 Pet. 2. 23).	Wrath
	(13. 4).

In ch. 12. 19, with regard to ourselves, Vengeance belongs to God, and it is future ("I will repay"): in ch. 13. 4 it is delegated to men, and present.

Our attitude to an enemy is to "feed" and to overcome with good (12. 20, 21): that of those to whom God has entrusted earthly authority is to punish evil (13. 4, cf. 1 Pet. 2. 14). "God's ministers" in 13. 4 have quite a different sphere from the ministry of 12. 7. "Love" is not mentioned in 13. 1-6, but it is appointed to believers in the sphere where God's redeeming love has placed them (13. 8, 10), and this attitude is to be maintained although the sad condition of this "present evil age" is realized,—"the night" (13. 12). The added "Let us" (twice) makes clear the heavenly calling. Amid all, the believer is at all times to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," the Rejected One. Whose Name is omitted from chapter 13. 1-6, since as to all earthly "authority" He is now waiting on the Father's throne (Ps. 110. 1, Rev. 3. 21). The "until" of the Psalm shows the attitude appointed for those made to sit with Him (Eph. 2. 6).

A Hint as to Genealogies in Scripture.

WE have by grace realized that "all Scripture" is given by inspiration of God," and that even in the inclusion of ordinary genealogies, God has appointed just how many generations should be given and what should be omitted. We may not always understand "why," but our understanding is limited. His wisdom is unlimited. We have also learnt to value the deeply important instruction of words of comment in between as 1 Chronicles 1. 10, 2. 7, 4. 10, 5. 20, 6. 49, etc. May we now look at this chapter with another thought? There are many who would criticize the shortening of a genealogy elsewhere, or say that those of the same name must be the same person, or those of other names different persons, whenever such contentions would disparage Scripture. We know, even in ordinary history, it is far otherwise. There are various kings of England with the same name, and the same names can easily be repeated in the same or inverted order. Moreover, a father and son may have the same name, and a second name may also be used to distinguish one of them. These simple facts would often answer critics. But is the Scripture treated FAIRLY by man to-day? The human heart has a bias, the more manifest because of the aim of the god of this age.

Turning to 1 Chronicles 6 we observe in the genealogy of verses 4-15

- (a) **thrice** Azariahs (9, 10, 14);
- (b) **two** Amariahs (7, 11), etc.; and thus
- (c) **three** generations have **twice** the same order of names:—
 - (i) Amariah
 - (ii) Ahitub
 - (iii) Zadok (7-9, 11, 12).

Ezra 7. 1-5, compared, silences any Jew from objection to the Divinely shortened genealogy of Matthew 1 (observe "all" is only applied to one section in Matt. 1. 17: Scripture does NOT contradict itself).

Further, in 1 Chronicles 6, **Izhar** (2) is also named Amminadab (22), a name with a meaning ("my people are willing") that emphasizes sadly the attitude of the sin in Numbers 16.

In the graciously spared line of Korah, from which both Samuel and Heman sprang we see that

Eliel (34)	is	Eliab (27)
Toah (34)	is	Nahath (26)
Zuph (35)	is	Zophai (26)
Mahath (35)	is not thus named before,	
Joel (36)	is	Shaul (24)
Azariah (36)	is	Uzziah (24, cf. 2 Kings 15. 1, 2 Chron. 26. 1).

and again in this line we find three Elkanahs. How definitely such simple facts in one chapter speak. There is no thought of passages far off from one another with "alleged discrepancies." Here is one chapter, where all was, and is, before those concerned on one page. If only those who criticize Scripture were fair, and humble, and more ready to acknowledge their mistakes and limited knowledge!

But is there not a further message for us as believers? Do we not need to train our children to see the wondrous character of Scripture? And is there not also another practical message as to our daily walk? Are we always fair to fellow believers? Do we not sometimes draw inferences, and talk to others about contradictions in their words and actions, which may be only apparent? Have we been too ready to misunderstand, and to sow discord among brethren, and to speak evil one of another? If only the tongues of believers were always their "glory" (Ps. 30. 12), and glorifying God!

"PUTTING UP WITH IT" ?

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." James 1. 2.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Matthew 5. 11, 12.

"They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name, and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts 5. 41, 42.

"If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye." 1 Peter 4. 14.

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." Acts 16. 25.

This is much more than "resignation," is it not? Do we sometimes fail to illustrate joy in the reproach of Christ (Heb 11. 26, 13. 13-15), and in all His legacy in John 16. 33?

Early Assemblies and their Meeting Places.

(Concluded)

The emphasis becomes greater when we see that the expression "the church in their house" is literally "the church according to their house," i.e., the gathering was a miniature, and representative of the great gathering. We recollect the idiom "The gospel according to Matthew, according to Mark," etc. This leads us to mention that NOWHERE do we find the church of a land (there is nothing of nationalism—nor of denominationalism—in the words of Scripture), nor do we read of two or more "churches" in one city. All believers in one town were expected to be **together** with one fellowship, one discipline; and further, the loving harmony of believers in other towns was to be maintained by the gracious work of the living Holy Spirit, operating **special**ly through the "gifts" in the church for the fitting together of the saints (Eph. 4. 11, 12). Evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, are **nowhere** said to be a foundation (Eph. 2. 20), rather we would connect them with the words, "till we all come into the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4. 13), calling to mind, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry, FOR I (an apostle) am now ready to be offered" (2 Tim. 4. 5, 6.) "But could all the assembly in one town meet together in a house? Would not a special larger building be desirable?" To such questions has not the Holy Spirit provided an answer? We believe He has. In Corinth, Gaius was the host of "the whole church," but such language is **not** employed as to believers in Jerusalem, Ephesus, or Rome. Have we any intimation regarding these? We have seen there is no suggestion of different "churches" in one city, even when thousands believed. Now we can read Acts 2. 46, "Breaking bread according to (per) house," NOT from house to house, nor "at home," but exactly the **same** preposition is used for the "church according to the house" of Aquila and Priscilla, or another godly brother and sister. The contrast with the temple is marked. Any believers acquainted with God's "passover" arrangement in the **rooms of houses**, and with the Lord's appointment of the breaking of bread then, would readily perceive the suggestion. The fact that the same preposition throughout, with the word "house," **always** seems to have this helpful thought is confirmatory. In Acts 5. 42 we read, "In the temple and according to (per) house," and in ch. 8. 3 Paul arrested children of God "according to the houses." May not this indicate where the believers assembled? Acts 20. 20 seems parallel in Ephesus where the believers were evidently numerous ("publicly and according to

houses"). Does not Romans 16 helpfully corroborate? Many other believers are mentioned beside those in the church "according to the house" of Aquila and Priscilla. And how are some described?—

- (a) Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and Olympas, and all the saints which are **with them**.
- (b) Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and all the saints which are **with them**.

We do not know how many "houses" were needed, nor how many believers were usually gathered. Where God does not give us a "rule," we dare not add one. Any regulations that lose the simplicity associated with the present working of the Holy Spirit bring in formalism and bondage. Sometimes helpful hints are granted, to assist us in applying the godly principles of love, and holy order. For example, the stress on the "cup," being one, implies a contrast with a very large number. Our beloved Lord appointed with eleven present, evidently after Judas had gone out (John 13. 27). We find about an hundred and twenty in an upper room (Acts 1. 15). Five thousand is the largest number of believing brethren in Acts (ch. 4. 4), and may there not be a type in Luke 9. 14 (especially when we realize the fulness of Christ's work for the twelve tribes of Israel after this dispensation, pictured in the twelve baskets over, and nothing lost—John 6. 12, 39)? If so, may not the appointment "by fifties" (Luke 9. 14) suggest the little gatherings? Actually the people sat by hundreds and fifties (Mark 6. 40), but the command **mentions** the smaller number. I need hardly say I do not state this for proof, but only to help us to rejoice if a small number as eleven are together, or if the Lord grants a room for a hundred. But the "homelike"ness of this precious parallel with the Passover would rather encourage to avoid **much larger** numbers, and it may be fifty brethren (for males alone were counted) would bring near the hundred, and sometimes beyond it. A far larger gathering seems likely to be a hindrance, but there is no "number" or rule, provided the one cup and the principles of the Lord Jesus are preserved. How many of us would rejoice to see fifty brethren not only gathering in several houses, but even in **one** house, in various towns to-day, willing for the Lord's appointed symbols and His will throughout, for though the symbols cannot be changed to His glory, their exactness, without love to Him in all, will be vain. How blessed is the promise of revival, and how earnestly we would depend on the Holy Spirit for all the appointments.

But we come again now to the thought of a godly **home** as the background. This is important. There is no thought of a special building. Where we find testimony there may be "the school of one Tyrannus" (Acts 19. 9), and we do not wish to say one word as to what is "forbidden" beyond what Scripture says, but we should like to return more and more to the Holy

Spirit's suggestions with unforced readiness. "Houses" are before us when there is an assembly context. May we not look to God for this, even though it goes against the present day tendency toward that which is more elaborate?* How much that is musical and worldly would have been kept out, if believers had never departed from this gracious provision? The enlivened effects of blessing in the emphasis of all our homes, and also in the more personal care of children of God, will likewise prove fruitful, and there will be more often the suitable assembly in a locality without a longer journey than necessary.

Our hearts long for the promised reviving, and this meditation leads us to pray for all believers to gather alike. The word "Impossible" is of no weight against the revealed will of God. The real difficulty is, as in 1 Corinthians 1. 12, "I." If "I" wish to cling to anything for which I have not Scripture, whoever "I" am, "I" raise a barrier, and the only appointed unity is delayed. But is anything too hard for the Lord? The suggestion that this is "Ideal" or "Utopian" forgets that we are not dealing with philosophy, but with our Father's words, and that the Holy Spirit is living and indwelling, so that the will of God should be our prayer and aim. Any other reason will only bring together those unprepared. Humility is essential. Whatever "others" may think, or the study of "past history" may urge, "God is." If I say "Others are unwilling" to cover the fact that "I am unwilling," it is sin.

* We need not infer that the accompaniment of debt on a large building, with man's method of meeting it, and of worldly advertisements, of exemption from rates (involving, normally, a notice board, NOT concerning the Lord Jesus) are essentially linked with the departure from the standpoint the Holy Spirit brings before us. They have often entered. But even when they are jealously kept out, we would desire believers to seek grace that "gospel halls," however simple, may not be erected, for assembly gatherings, but that there may be the complete return to the way of the Lord regarding "houses." And where other arrangements exist, is it not possible to find the Lord's solution? He is tender, as we shall find, if there is in us all an honest heart wishing to please Him.

Lot's wife looked back: it seemed so small a thing to do: it brought so great a result. As a moment's slip physically can bring lasting distress, so we cannot be too concerned as to the effect of brief sins, and those which many underestimate. The godly realization of this, however, is NOT to lead us to despondency because of the past, but to fuller humble dependence as to the present. God is both gracious and faithful. He loves to comfort the discouraged.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matthew 6. 21.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN are we made conscious how "time" goes on, and "that Blessed Hope" is, repeatedly, a week NEARER (the appointed "Breaking of the Bread" each Lord's Day evening emphasizes (his) or a month NEARER, as these pages come again into your hands. Are we all living in the light of this? Are we INDEED a separated people because we are "in Christ Jesus"? Separation without the heavenly standpoint is vain. "Separation" as a theory or profession is empty. "Our principles," however "sound" they are may become cold and powerless and lifeless, unless we realize we belong to Christ. WHERE is our treasure? What do we REALLY value? I sometimes find how much a tiny thing has temporarily drawn me, and I cannot say why I wanted it. O that our beloved Lord and His will may be ever first, and that the magnet of His grace may affect all our daily use of strength and time and money. He seeks our heart, our heart is His by right; is it not His by affection? To emphasize this standpoint and His glory is the object of these pages, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

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The Found Son.

WHEN we meditated on the Parables of the Lord Jesus,* we realized anew how full they are of Himself, His work and its fruitfulness. We rejoiced to see what He has accomplished

* Eight booklets by God's grace. Readers desiring these for prayerful reference and use, to His glory, who have not yet obtained, are encouraged to ask for them. As with the smaller publications, we would rejoice humbly to record God's faithfulness to encourage faith. Hence the poorest reader, as well as those privileged to co-operate as to expense, is welcome to write. There is no commerce, only "fellowship," as He leads.

for His own, and what He has made them to be for Himself. The **goal** of each parable would be a profitable study. Just as John's gospel **leaves** the once-blind man in the attitude of adoration ("Lord, I believe, and he worshipped Him"), and brings Thomas likewise to the exclamation of praise, "My Lord and my God," so the believers are seen, in the climax of the parables, as fruitful wheat, as those within the garner, or as a pearl possessed by their Lord, or, yet again, as those entering into His joy. The conclusion is ever precious, and the found son of Luke 15 is **with** the Father, and there is no hint of severance. But the varied descriptions of the blessings he received become increasingly delightful. The Father's first word is "Bring out." The robe is ready,—**waiting for him**. There is no doubt as to fitness and fitting. We recall the "Bring out" contrast as to Adam—"Sent out," "He drove out,"—albeit even then the type was provided to preach the gospel ("coats of skin"), even as the promise of the Seed was given amid words regarding "dust" and "death" (note Ps. 22. 15). The robe was necessary for the **living** one (Luke 15. 24), even as in the marriage feast (Matt. 22. 11, 12). The sinner cannot stand before God in his own clothing, nor can he help to provide it. The material, the making, and the very act of clothing were (and are) all in free grace. I have often thought of a blessed spiritual contrast with a frequent advertisement, "Customer's own material made up." Ah, man will make according to our order and at our expense. God has provided everything. Blessed be His Name! The robe is complete, and it removes our shame. Fear and shame are marked in this connexion both in the first and the last book of Scripture (Gen. 3. 10, Rev. 3. 18, 16. 15).

Next we find the ring for the finger. Ah, dear child of God, God desires you to **feel** that He loves you. The ring suggests intimacy. Even the arrangements of the world as to engagement and marriage suggest this. There is an absolute contrast with the thought of severance. How much this means when we realize that the lost one had just before been in a far country. And he had fed swine. No ring is fitting for swine (Prov. 11. 22), nor for a swine herd. The first ring of Scripture is kingly (Gen. 41. 42), and it was given to one brought out of the prison,—given as a token of the highest exaltation. When Haman too had the king's ring he felt he could accomplish anything, but it became Mordecai's (Est. 8. 2), and was used to seal the royal documents of deliverance (Est. 8. 10). How can the returned prodigal have any other wish than to do the Father's will? Is there not a parallel when we act **in the Name** of the Lord Jesus? Look again at the ring. Where does it start? and where end? It has no beginning nor end. "I have loved thee with an **everlasting** love" is God's message of grace (Jer. 31. 3). Fear is thus banished. The ring is not to be put away, but to be ever before the eyes, on the very hand, that God's love may be our confidence

and joy, and manifested to others. 'Tis grace unmeasured! And there are no angles to cut or wound: the ring is a perfect one. And what else? There is a further "gift,"—"Shoes on his feet." The priest and leper were alike claimed altogether—ear, hand, foot. **Doing and walking** are alike to please God. The feet are bound (the word "shoes" is from this root) by a bond of love: even as the ring unites, as a full contrast with a "chain" of unwelcome law. Love is on both sides now, for "we love Him because He first loved us." Why "shoes," we ask? The son can be trusted to go out, he will not go away, as of old. He is not to enjoy his privileges only within the house; he is to have a sense of loving responsibility for those outside. The saved one is to **go forth** and do the Father's will. Every believer should be a "missionary" in this sense. (Are our feet shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace, Eph. 6. 15)? Whom are we seeking to lead to the Lord (John 1. 41, 45)?

But what is the climax of all? 'Tis joy in **the sacrifice** (as the word "kill" denotes). The once-accomplished work of the Lord Jesus can ever be freshly realized. And the joy is not only the son's, it is the Father's. The blessedness of the words "Let us" cannot be over-estimated. In Israel's types of old the priest partook **with God**. That which is His delight now becomes our delight. His joy should be our joy. The "food" in the sacrifices for God was a picture of Christ. And the priests (and the worshipper in the peace offering) partook with Him. And is not the same aspect blessedly before us in the New Testament (New Covenant) parallel of 1 Corinthians 10. 16? There is joy in **each** part of Luke 15. It is the Shepherd's own joy, in the first place, it is the Father's own joy here. Thus we behold God's personal delight in the blessedness of each redeemed one. He does not save in part, but altogether: He does not only deliver, but bestows all His riches of grace, and leads to all never-finished rejoicing therein as well as the possession. The fact is a happily **realized** fact. The Holy Spirit ever brings before us this fulness of grace, and the gladness that the Lord Jesus has appointed for each saved soul. This attitude will ever be an impressive testimony to the world. May it be ours in overflowing measure, because of infinite grace, and the blessedness of our new experience "in Christ Jesus" to-day.

Grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21): there is no unrighteous indulgence in the way of salvation. God is perfectly satisfied. Grace without righteousness would be impossible because He is holy: righteousness without grace would only condemn us. But blessed be God, "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and "mercy and truth are met together" upon Calvary. Ah, my soul, thou canst well rejoice, thou canst do nought else **in Him!**

Different Spheres of Male and Female.

THIS is recognized in God's appointments in nature, why not in **grace**? Any refusal to acknowledge in the former would be sin, why not in the latter? Distinctions in the former do not ignore the fact of a common **life**, on the contrary they are the background for harmonious recognition of this, and God's own blessing thereby. Why should it not be so in the arrangement of grace? It is so, if only we have a responsiveness of love to His good and acceptable and perfect will.

The distinction, though in some ways accentuated by the fall (Gen. 3. 16), antedated it (1 Tim. 2. 13, 14), being part of God's **original** appointment. It was in connexion with unfallen man and unfallen woman that He used the word "help" (Gen. 2. 18, 20), and this is distinguished from independent authority or initiative, but it is a term of honour. In accord therewith the appointment was with a view to Christ and the church (Eph. 5. 32), not simply with a view to subsequent arrangements in a **fallen** world. There is an inherent distinction according to God's plan, and this is the glory of both male and female. To deny it would surely shut one's eyes to God's teaching. 1 Corinthians 11. 7-9 again refers to man **before** the fall.

Our subject is not primarily "silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 14. 34), as if there were a mere repressive negative. Far otherwise, our sisters have wondrous and unique **positive** privileges in the will of our one Lord. I am not to be envious because I am not an angel, or a seraph, or because I am not one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, or because I was not alive in the days when He walked this earth. The Lord has a fulness of blessing for each one to fill the sphere where He has placed that one. He has His own perfect plan. We may be sure that we shall find hundreds of privileges beyond what we have ever reached. We shall never lack opportunities if only subject to His will. The failure at Corinth was that every one said "I" (1 Cor. 1. 12), and thus wanted to be "**something**" independently.

Apart from the stress on woman typically, as a type of His "church," full of instruction as to the full blessedness of their manifold privileges, we have many godly women in the New Testament dispensation, and find much entrusted to their care, and delighting the Lord in their activities. Let us emphasize and enjoy the Holy Spirit's encouragements, and we shall never find "bondage." The first genealogy unveils God's grace to Gentile women, and His use of them in Old Testament times. Mary, a woman, was chosen and **highly favoured** in a way that no man can ever parallel. Rome's sad perversion does not alter this uniqueness. It would seem, too, that clear and gracious instruction as to sphere has been granted in this very connection. In John 2. 3, 4 she received an answer of deep importance, and Mary lovingly learnt the lesson, at once, taking an immediate attitude

of dependence, including a similar privilege with that entrusted to the women on the resurrection day, namely, telling others of the joy of receiving the Lord's instruction appointed for them. The history of the gospel, opening with John the Baptist, born a little earlier than the Lord Jesus, gives thereby a delightful view of Elizabeth's unquestioning faith, and godliness.

The references to believing women by the Lord Jesus, are noticeable, and we have **no parallel** in His dealings as to women, with the stern words to the Pharisaic doctors,—to the **men** who misled the people. The crime of rejecting Him is emphasized in connexion with men: no woman appears as directing any attack or outcry against Him then. And in the resurrection His first two appearances were to godly women, and to such He specially granted a message of unique responsibility, for those whom He called "My brethren."

Likewise throughout the Acts and Epistles are we not reminded of God's gracious blessings to, and through, believing women? We remember with joy there was a Priscilla as well as an Aquila, and Dorcas was "**full of good works.**" Nor can we forget the prayer meeting at the house of Mary the mother of John, and the opened heart and house of Lydia. In the epistles we find such as Phœbe, Lois, and Eunice. Verily the Lord has always had godly women to bring Him glory, and, as we have observed, some of the **strongest** commendations of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels were of women, even as some of the highest words of true praise used by the Holy Spirit through Paul in Romans 16. There they occupy a two-fold precedence, before a man is mentioned, and later in the chapter our hearts rejoice in a Mary who bestowed much labour on Paul and others, and this wording is again employed in verse 12. The privileges of sisters are never overlooked, and again in all epistles we notice that the holy words of rebuke are mainly against **men**. It is delightful to remember how much the earlier believers, even as we ourselves to-day, have owed, in the personal Christian life, to holy and devoted women.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

"He for our Profit."

Hebrews 12. 10.

OUR Father is, indeed, loving. He is not a taskmaster. Have we ever, alas, felt irritated with someone, and then **tried** to see what there was with which we could find fault? There is nothing of this attitude in our Father. How easy it is when once we have a fixed opinion of another to read all his actions in the light of our estimate. If we think highly of him, we tend to explain that which may or may not be wrong from the "best" standpoint. But if "against" him, it will be easy to be "sure" that he meant something wrong. How many evils are increased

by this bias of the human heart. How blessed to realize our Father has no bias, no imperfect judgment, no prejudice. He is not looking out to criticize us: He is appointing all for our good.

Sometimes Job seemed to feel that God was treating him hardly. But there was a new standpoint when he spoke of God the thing that was right: that was "the end of the Lord" (Jas. 5. 11).

Some dear children of God seem to misrepresent their Father. They harshly blame themselves, with the language of remorse, and whatever trial comes they are "occupied" with God's reproof therein, and seem to describe Him as if He approved of sleeping on a spiked bed, and as if He were like those of an unloving and unlovely character, always complaining. Such will readily own that they deserve chastisement, and may never say one word against His chastisement, but they depict Him as if He was "all-chastisement." In a happy earthly home, the father's work is not only to punish. A loving parent is not speaking all day of his son's faults, or continually reminding him of them by gestures, as if that were the only way of correcting. God is not unloving, His loves draws us to hate sin. He directs our eyes to His Beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may thus learn to hate sin (2 Cor. 3. 18). There is perfect proportion in God's dealings. A true father has not the rod always in his hand. I know there are many believers who do not feel His chastening enough, but their sin is not to be answered by another, that this represents our Father's character, unattractive and harsh. He seeks our confidence, our love, our childlikeness, not our tormenting fear (1 John 4. 18). His proportioned chastening is all in love, and joined with myriads of other dealings, in His grace and wisdom, for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. How blessed is all of this.

The Unity and Harmony of Assemblies.

"As in ALL churches of the Saints."

"As I teach everywhere in EVERY Church."

1 Corinthians 4. 17, 14. 33.

SOWING discord among brethren is hateful to God (Prov. 6. 14, 19). But our heart's desire is more than a mere negative. We long to experience more and more fully the holy harmony which the praiseful note, and the types, of Psalm 133 must impress upon us. The theory that believers can agree to differ, not in spheres of harmonious service, but in doctrine and standpoint, is entirely against the gracious instruction of the Holy Spirit. The suggestion, which has been made, that denominations are like the varied shops in the same line of business, is an appalling disregard of God's will. The thought that we can "attach ourselves" to this meeting, or another, and that every

one is entitled to "his own opinion," is quite against the testimony of Scripture. We grieve that the Holy Spirit's instruction as to Christian women has been set aside with some lightly uttered words, as if it was only Paul's personal view, or as if the Corinthian epistle was only meant for the Corinthians. There is a sad lack of humility and reverence to-day. It is remarkable that this is the only epistle which has such repeated emphasis on the unity of assemblies. Apart from chapters 4. 17, quoted above with 14. 33, we have 7. 17, 11. 16, 14. 36, 37, and, illustratively, 16. 1, 2. Different human names for companies of believers, and different arrangements as to baptism and the Lord's Supper, with a varying discipline, are the shame of God's dear children. When we enter a town and see towering buildings at different street corners, and mission halls and other organizations interspersed, we have painful reminders that the appointed manifest unity of unworldly believers is not to be seen. There is not only a falling short—but hardly anyone thinks anything of the entire contrast with our Lord's will. Many glory in that which is their shame, and unite in "federations" that take for granted the different movements, and add partial identification, with the added sin oftentimes of yet further broadening. The thought of all true believers in a town being united in the simple, yet rejected, will of the Lord seems forgotten by most, impossible from the standpoint of the majority, and hardly ever made a matter of humiliation and prayer among any of us, as it might well be.

There is no SCRIPTURAL WARRANT for TWO unassociated meetings in a town. Nor can an "established" or "national" or "denominational church" be found anywhere in Scripture. Shall traditions rule, or the Lord Jesus Christ? Think one moment, dear child of God, are there **two** baptisms in Scripture? One of believers and one not? One with immersion, and one without? Were there gatherings at Jerusalem, or Ephesus, or elsewhere which only included some of the believers? When Paul sent to "the Church of God which is at Corinth," was there **one** assembly there, or not? Has God ever given any permission for "new" principles to set aside His revealed harmony? Is it not amazing that some of us have become **used** to expecting what we never find in Scripture, and have lost all concern as to what is found there? If we were Romanists and believed in traditions and development to **alter** the principles of Christ, we might understand this attitude. But we claim that we believe the Scriptures. If anyone teaches against inspiration we are rightly alarmed, but are not many of us **acting** as if there were no inspiration? Do we not need a reviving, that we may break down everything that is not of God's appointment? In another sense than that of Haggai 1. 4, 9 there is the emphasis on man's "houses," and the house of God is forgotten. And the underlying cause is always the same. And the Divine reproof there is ever applicable. Is there not a call to go back to the

place "at the first" (Gen. 13. 4), and to remember the "pattern" (Ex. 25. 40)? Should it not be true that each assembly is a miniature of the whole, and that those gathered in one should be recognized in all? And should not the unity be more than external, even vital and fresh, with devotedness, that the words may be illustrated, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13. 35). "Impossible" do you say? Yes, if we look to the flesh, and to human skill. But is not the Scripture **one**, and is not the Holy Spirit of God **living**, and is not **all disunity** an evidence of severance from Scripture and lack of love's yieldedness to Him? The remedy is not reorganization, but a deeper sense of the purchase of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6. 19). "With God all things are possible."

THE MIXED MULTITUDE AND ISRAEL.

(Num. 11. 4).

"The mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting" (Num. 11. 4). How often trouble breaks out among the "mixed multitude." We may have numerical increase thereby, but the loss is real. A choir or something to get hold of the people may paralyse all! The "mixed multitude" will soon turn aside, and wish for the things of Egypt. And influence in the wrong direction is deadly and powerful: it spreads like an epidemic. Hence we at once read, "And the children of Israel also returned and wept, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" There is a solemnizing thought in the "and." The "mixed multitude" **awakened** the disappointment: where there is anything combustible do not bring a match. Let us not forget how one sinner can destroy much good (Eccl. 9. 18). O that we may not say one word to turn others aside, nor lead others into company where they will be thus tempted. When the ten spies drew back, the majority, yea, all the people sided with them, and when Judas said, "Why was not this ointment sold?" (John 12. 4, 5), quickly others of "His disciples saw and had indignation saying, To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. 26. 8). The "mixed multitude" became more influential than those who were grateful and contented. And so it is normally. A grumbler can soon hinder the joy of a whole gathering. Hence the people added, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely." God wants us to remember Him, not Egypt's fare. He gave His people a special day of remembrance of His lovingkindness (Deut. 16. 3), but they forgot, and remembered that which gratified their taste instead. Is the message without a meaning and warning, in love, to us?

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"The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Isaiah 35. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

WE have no doubt as to the literal and complete fulfilment of Scripture. God's promises are not bare words, and His prophecies are not vague generalities. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" Simple faith is a precious possession. Human reasoning is miserable when it dares to criticize or to cast distrust upon GOD'S declarations. But though we expect the fulfilment of Isaiah in the earth, we are not unmindful of its application to our experiences to-day. The sinner is indeed a desert, and there becomes a blossoming abundantly. In like manner the subsequent verses are now illustrated spiritually whenever the sinfully lame man leaps as an hart, nor, thank God, do we doubt His power to grant anticipations of "the powers of the age to come" in this body of humiliation. It is so important that no future fulfilment should shut our eyes to the fact that God IS, and the spiritual blessings are quite as much miracles as those which are physical. How thankful and praiseful we should be. Should there be DESERT and WINTER in our testimony? Surely not!

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"And I of Christ."

1 Corinthians 1. 12.

THE Holy Spirit's emphasis of the same expression twice has been before me, e.g. ch. 6. 20 with 7. 23. In these passages He indicates first the inference of love and positive activity and devotion unto the Lord, and then, in the second, the inference as to men, the negative aspect of denial and separation. This order is remarkable and impressive.

I was helped in finding the very words of ch. 1. 12 in 11. 1,

but with an entirely different context. In the first chapter "I am of Christ" is with a stress on "I," a boasting, a severance from others who bear the same Name. Thus the Holy Spirit shows us the tendency of the heart to use right expressions in the wrong way. One can appear to be emphasizing the Lord, when all the time self is the actual centre. One of the best known examples is in Numbers 16. 3, "All the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." Beautiful words, true from one standpoint, but quite misapplied. Such self-exalting is among the gravest dangers. And do we not need to pray lest we so deceive ourselves, and think we are spiritual when we are really seeking our own will and way? Let us ever apply God's searching messages to ourselves before we realize their wider force.

"I am of Christ." "I" is the first word, and it is emphatic. Strangely we spell this pronoun with a capital letter. Why? And why do we call it "the first person"? "Every one of you saith, I" was the trouble at Corinth. And this has been the case since. Is it not striking that the Holy Spirit led Paul to take up the same expression, and use a plural?—"Ye are of Christ" (ch. 3. 23, cf. Gal. 3. 29), and "They that are Christ's" (ch. 15. 23). It is well ever to remember our brethren. We cannot omit brotherly love without serious spiritual loss.

There is, as already mentioned, a beautiful and dependent "I am of Christ" in ch. 11. 1. The apostle desired to show the will of the Lord, and to be conformed to Him in everything. To him to live was Christ. There was nothing "original" in Paul. His supreme desire was to be an imitator of his Lord, a reflexion of Him, a reminder of Him, one who would bring Christ before others, so that all would think rather of the Lord than of the servant. O that this may be our attitude in the gracious power of the Holy Spirit.

Remarkable Twofold Emphasis.

EVERY word of God is pure gold. And the context gives an appointed setting. How much we lose because we do not wait in His presence and expect more from Him. If the Lord Jesus repeated parables, as, for example, those of the Mustard seed and Leaven (Luke 13. 18-23 seems plainly a different context) there was an emphasis, and He gave a fuller evidence of the close link between those two parables. This helps in the interpretation. We do not know if the suggestion holds good that the threefold quotation of Habakkuk 2. 4 gives three different examples of primary stress, viz., on "the just," "shall live," and "by faith," but we do know every word will bear a much fuller emphasis than we have hitherto realized, and it is sometimes well to read a verse several times, stressing a different word on each occasion.

Some examples of repetition are remarkably placed in different contexts: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" is associated in Galatians 5. 9 with evil doctrine, and in 1 Corinthians 5. 6 with evil practice. Surely this is not strange. Does not doctrine mould practice? and practice affect doctrine? Do not the deeds of the Nicolaitanes introduce the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes? Does not this mean much to us? Does not the Holy Spirit show us thereby the importance of "the acknowledging of the truth which is according to godliness" (Tit. 1. 1)? There are many who belittle doctrinal error. Here is God's solemn warning. All evil is a leaven,—working stealthily in the dark, spreading, and gradually changing all to a likeness with itself. Do not let false teaching be excused, it is sin, and leads to practical sin. How instructive too is the Holy Spirit's repeated use of the words "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." In 1 Corinthians 1. 31 He brings them before us concerning the glory of the Lord Jesus in choosing and calling us Himself: in 2 Corinthians 10. 17 the same words emphasize the removal of all pride when He sends His own forth. Thus in (a) salvation, and in (b) service, He alone is worthy of praise. Even so, 1 Corinthians 15. 10 begins with "by the grace of God I am what I am," and ends with "I laboured . . . yet not I but the grace of God which was with me." Is not this important? If we emphasize sovereign grace to guilty sinners and yet become proud of our Christian activities, we are quite out of harmony with our Lord. Do not let us only boast of sovereign grace as to some things, but as to everything good.

The words "Ye are bought with a price" are repeated. And why? Is there not deep instruction here again? In 1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20 the theme is "the temple of the Holy Spirit," and our positive glorifying of God. In 1 Corinthians 7. 23 the trivial round and common task of daily business are before us, and the negative inability to allow a man to usurp the place of God: "Be not ye the servants of men." Thus the Divine words look in both directions, that we may grow up into Christ in all.

Another link with the epistle to the Galatians (5. 5) is in 1 Corinthians 7. 19, showing how faith, which worketh by love, ever keeps the commandments of God (John 14. 15). Faith is never idle, and love is never lawless. And a yet further passage (Gal. 6. 15) reminds us that this standpoint is not natural, but in the new creation. Thus faith is not of the flesh, nor can it exist as a dead thing. This explanation of the new creation as "faith which worketh by love" may well remind us of the golden grain in the epistle of James (a living faith, 2. 26), in perfect harmony with Romans 4, and with the citing of Abraham and Rahab in Hebrews 11. 17, 31. Paul never suggested faith without works after it, and James never implied faith with works before it (Jas. 2. 22). "Dead works" alone (Heb. 6. 1) precede and living works succeed. But living works are not the cause of the life that causes them.

We often associate the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and the Aramaic and Greek words "Abba Father" uniting Jew and Gentile in Christ, occur in both (Rom. 8. 15, Gal. 4. 6). Observe the emphasis on the Holy Spirit and sonship (as "adoption" should be rendered) in both, and on the "crying" which intimates a fulness of intensity. But there is also a precious distinction with its message. In Romans "we cry," in Galatians 4 **the Spirit** cries. Thus the two expressions together illustrate the words "with one spirit" (Rom. 8. 16), and His very gracious "helping" (Rom. 8. 26), when there is "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20). O that you and I may know more of what this means. It is possible, and surely it is God's will. O that this comparison of two passages may lead to our fuller prayer-life.

The message of Hebrews 12. 29 is brief, but impressive, "Our God is a Consuming Fire." To which passage in Deuteronomy does the Holy Spirit allude, to 4. 24 or 9. 3? Possibly we should reply, "To both." The former is a holy warning to Israel against idolatry, and the latter shows the going before of the Mighty God to make a way for Israel against their foes. And is there not the same twofoldness in Hebrews as to the millennial kingdom, and those who are labouring as they press forward to enter into that rest? Will not the Lord appoint the clearing of the heavenlies (Rev. 12. 7. 8), but is it not vitally important for us to realize His fire as to all of us who profess His Name, lest we ever make light of sin? while in Deuteronomy, it is helpful to see that the Holy Spirit connected the seventh day there with deliverance from Egypt (5. 15). Whereas in Exodus 20. 11 it is reminiscent of creation. This has often been pointed out. Israel were to remember the creative power of God and His redemptive work alike. And have we not a similar need? Strikingly, too, the first day of the week now is founded on **redemption** accomplished, and associated with the **new creation**.

Doubtless there are many further passages which will come across the reader's path, illustrating these twofold messages of our God regarding certain words. For example, the testimony from heaven, "My Beloved Son" in Matthew 3. 17, follows the type of resurrection after accomplished atonement, and in 17. 5 is found with the type of the coming kingdom (cf. 16. 28). The resurrection reminds of the Lord's Day, and the kingdom of "the Day of the Lord." One was first on the third **literal** day, and the other will occupy the third thousand years, the symbolic third day of Hosea 6. 2, and both have as their foundation the **death** of the Lord Jesus. The prayerful student will be on the look out for such helpful meditations remembering that all Scripture is nourishing food, and is our practical daily walk. Quickening to perceive helpful thoughts, and ability to explain to others are in vain unless we seek living communion with God, and the practical carrying out of His will to His glory.

Different Spheres of Male and Female. (Continued)

Our hearts then would realize once more that "silence in the churches" is not to be the central subject. The enemy's subtle attack in the garden of Eden was by making the prohibition (of that which seemed desirable) the occupation of the mind, and he aims to-day at producing the same tendency. May believing women be the opposite of Eve! The wondrous **positive** gifts of God in Eden were ignored, and there was a wish for the **one thing** that God, without explaining all, had wisely forbidden. Let us not be led astray, but remember the blessedness and the wealth of possibility in a life rendered and surrendered to the Lord. The Holy Spirit ever opens a fuller view of the true service to which our Lord ever invites. When He Himself came into the world, did He not delight in a path that seemed a background one, as to land, and city, and occupation, till thirty years had passed? Was the limitation to Palestine a repression? Was the absence of preaching year after year an absence of fragrance in His perfect life before the Father? O that we may hate every thought of self-choosing, and we shall know the privilege of "being," and of being used, as God wills.

Why do we find so few Timothies? Is it, from the standpoint of our responsibility, because we have not encouraged and honoured the loving and time-filling attitude of Lois and Eunice? Why are brethren often shrinking from service? Is it because we have not let our sisters know how much we esteem their help and their strengthening? In some spheres of earthly business there has been the appointment of women, with resultant unemployment, and much neglect of domestic economy and home life,—shall not we avoid a parallel in spiritual things? Have not dear children of God often been carried away by the tendency of the **times**, and urged a similarity in the assemblies of the saints? But is not that a mistake? The Lord's principles do not change: we still rejoice to be as **first century** "disciples," if we are walking in the Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy 5 has much to teach us from the Lord. It emphasizes the outstanding beauty of "a widow indeed," as Anna, in verse 5. But is there not also a beauty in the record of service in verse 10? Here we read of privileges which are very dear to the Lord, else why are they so fully mentioned? Why are **other things** not mentioned? These "good works" (cf. ch. 2. 10) are well-pleasing indeed. For what did our beloved Lord commend women in the gospels? We think of the **faith** of the **Gentile** Syrophenician as of the Centurion, but the special actions before us, apart from this, were personal devotion to Himself whether in Luke 7 or John 12. It is in these things there is the excelling of our sisters. Mary is not remembered in the gospel for what she preached but for what she did (Matt. 26. 13). When the twelve were with the Lord we know for what

they were chosen (Mark 3. 14) : is there not a precious force in the immediate reference to devoted women in another sphere (Luke 8. 1-3, cf. Matt. 27. 55)? The sad **underestimating** of this service has been a sinful, and (I might almost say) cruel hindrance among children of God. The Corinthians were all ready to speak in chapter 14, but were they as ready for the little things of chapter 13, and specially for those in verses 4-6, and are we? "Thy Father Which seeth in secret" will not reward according to publicity. We have undervalued that which brings untold blessing!

There are some who still quite misunderstand the message of Galatians 3. 28 that in Christ Jesus there is neither male, nor female. They forget it is speaking of **salvation**, and rather think of **service**. The Holy Spirit always distinguishes. The one body has a common life, but all members have distinct functions. In service there is a real and great difference between various brethren. "Are all apostles?" If 1 Corinthians 11. 1-16. 1-4. 34-38, 1 Timothy 2. 7-15, are only the words of Paul, inspiration is gone. But if he speaks as "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2. 7), and we have God's inspired message, there is an abiding difference between male and female in the working out of the Lord's will, quite as definite as in nature. We must either accept this, or ignore Scripture: we must either delight in this, or reject Scripture. Is the home altered because husband and wife are **one** "in Christ," or is the husband still the head of the wife (Eph. 5. 23)? As in the home, so in the assembly, everything is fitly appointed. There is harmony, not entire similarity. Each one as he is **called** can in this also abide with God. Why is this emphasized not only in one passage, but in the various passages mentioned? Is it not because the Holy Spirit foresaw there would be a misconception, and did He not imply that some, even claiming gifts, would set themselves against "the commandments of the Lord" in this very matter (1 Cor. 14. 37)? Now, what shall our attitude be? If I stiffen my back, I shall be in collision with God, **even though I talk spiritually**, as those in Numbers 16. 3, who said "All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Is not this the feeling of to-day? Is not the ground dangerous? If I wish to obey because I "must," I shall introduce a bondage, and others will soon feel it too. Our sisters can be the means of richest blessing in a meeting if they only grasp firmly the privileges God gives them. Joy in obedience is the only way to avoid a sense of restraint. The Holy Spirit's "freedom" on the line of His revelation in Scripture, is blessed.

What then does 1 Corinthians 14 appoint? Does it refer to silence from "chattering," as some have suggested? Surely such an idea is quite out of place in this solemn context, and in the light of the other uses of the word "keep silence" in verses 28 and 30. There we find:—

(a) no idea of talkativeness,

(b) silence as to ministry with the voice, in the assembly.

These two cases deal with silence on **certain** occasions, but does not verse 34 refer to **all** occasions in the churches? Several questions may be asked earnestly and rightly—

(a) Does this include leading in prayer?

(b) Does this affect "Amen" at the end of another's prayer, and joining in singing?

(c) Does it concern conversation before, or after, a meeting?

It is a joy to provide serious questions, not with the thought of argument, but love to the Lord and His will. We would ever welcome, too, the meditations of others who accept the words wholeheartedly. Concerning (a), is not the subject of the chapter **that which ministers to the edification of the saints in the assembly?** And not only is "a psalm" included in verse 26, but prayer in verses 15-19. Hence, would it not seem that leading in prayer there, is not God's will for our sisters? Is this a regret? True, I should not have appointed thus, from my natural standpoint, and you would not have chosen this, but are we not both willing for **His Will?** The difficulty comes in if either of us resent the Holy Spirit's words. May I add that brethren need much grace to be prayerful, else they cause hindrance, and may be largely responsible for the misunderstanding of this command by others. It is deeply important to be a true help in a gathering. If I omit to do what I should, I may produce a wish to fill a gap in others.

As to (b), the references to prayer, speaking, and asking a question are to (i) individual action, and (ii) taking an initiative, or, as we may say, leading. Can we therefore **extend** the aspect, without Divine warrant? There is no suggestion that "the law" limited the "Amen" (Neh. 8. 2, 6 with Ps. 106. 48). And would not this include singing the praise of God **unitedly?** That does not seem to be the **individual** activity which is the subject of the context. And is a word out of place as to the need for a **more hearty** "Amen" to-day?

"(C)" is not unimportant, for **conversation** can often hinder worship: we do not always realise, nor always show we realize the majesty of God. Talking up till the last moment, and any lightness in speaking together after, must usually affect deep blessing. Suffer the word of exhortation: I wish to apply it to myself. Yes, these thoughts are for males as much as Christian women. As to the special question before us:—is not the assembly the church?—the building is not. Hence when the "assembly" is over, godly conversation of little groups, though in the same room is not forbidden. How could it be when the "church" was "according to a house"? There was **no special building**.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

UNFEELING.

HOW easy it is to be hard and almost feelingless. How different was our beloved Lord when He had compassion on the multitude and on the bereaved widow, and wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and over Jerusalem. How different too was Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians with many tears, and told, weeping, of the enemies of the Cross of Christ. O that we may feel more. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12. 15).

Let us remember that words of sympathy are not necessarily sympathetic. They may be said instead of felt. It is so easy to satisfy ourselves if we express sorrow. O that our words may never be a substitute for that of which they should be the precious fruit.

Unguarded words may cut and wound. Not without a deep reason and meaning has the Holy Spirit said, "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health" (Prov. 12. 18). O how often, unthinkingly, we may have been willing to wound those whom we really love. A bitter word may leave a wound that takes hours to heal, and we may not have meant it. But pride may be unwilling to confess, or we may persuade ourselves it will do no good. How we NEED the prayer of Psalm 141. 3.

It is true our feelings are limited, and God graciously hides many sorrows from us. He desires that we should "rejoice in the Lord alway." Even when one had grievously sinned, the Holy Spirit indicated, through the apostle, a concern that he should not "be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. 2. 7). Was not that gracious, and a definite encouragement still to those who know they have sinned against Him?

Let us seek grace to avoid onesidedness. A kind father can be a harsh master. A rigid and relentless man in any sphere of business, where he has authority, may have a delight in philanthropy. How believers need to be a contrast with all these anomalies of character, which so often lead to self-deceit.

And, further, let us have a deep feeling for God's feelings, and His glory. O that we may realize what it means when we grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4. 30). It is a great privilege to please God, as Enoch did. He is not far off, and indifferent: He takes a loving, personal, daily interest in the details of each one redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

The Coming of the Lord has no "ifs," and our expectation should have no hesitation.

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"Thy Father, Which seeth in secret, shall reward thee."
Matthew 6. 4, 6.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the grace of God we are enabled to praise, even amid trials. Circumstances do not alter praise—God IS. These pages are meant to be a testimony for Him, and to emphasize humbly His love and His will. The desire of His children is to do all in His sight, that He may be more real to them than the things of earth. God's interest in His own, and His beholding of each one in all the small details of the daily walk, must ever encourage our hearts. The privilege of pleasing Him, even if the work be trivial, and unseen by men, or despised, and even misunderstood, is that which is set before us. This magazine fails unless it glorifies God, and unless it makes His approval the great concern; unless our Lord's "Well done" at the Judgment Seat of Christ becomes dearer to us. Pride and worldly organization and human esteem are a dishonour: our Lord's will alone is blessed.

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The Philippian Jailer and His House.

THE keeper in the prison in Acts 16 affords as remarkable a case of sudden conversion as the dying thief. To those who believe that salvation is a miracle this is not strange. The divine record as to blessing immediately in the home is full of instruction, and has doubtless led many parents to expectant and prevailing prayer.

We notice the promise in verse 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Here is the opening statement, without any seeking or mention on his part apparently.

Next we read, "They spoke unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." This "all" is

emphatic, and those who would read "infant baptism" into such a passage would seem to the writer to be sore pressed here. There is evidently the suggestion that the ministry was definitely addressed to as **many** as we afterwards find baptized. The third statement is, "He was baptised, and **all his**, straightway." To separate this from what has gone before would seem unfair, the more so because the consistent testimony of Scripture is, as in Acts 18. 8, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptised." There is no case of proxy faith. He who confuses circumcision and baptism surely overlooks that in an earthly nation natural "infants" would be parallel with spiritual infants in a spiritual nation.

The fourth and last declaration of the Holy Spirit is "He rejoiced, believing in God with **all his house**." The four last words represent **one** in the Greek, and as it comes in between, it may link both with "rejoiced" and "having believed." Let us, therefore, recognise the translation which may be chosen by a believer who feels this approves "**household baptism**" of infants also: "Rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God." We heartily agree as to the emphasis on a parent's responsibility, and expectation that **all** "his" will be saved, yea, and saved in early life. The claiming of faith is beautiful. But the interpretation which would apply "baptism" to infants, **because** of this passage, not only sets aside the stress on personal faith in the Divine appointment elsewhere, not only overlooks the spiritual accompaniments (e.g., in Rom. 6), not only fails to deal with the entire silence of Scripture as to even one case of infant immersion, but also seems to forget the force of **each** of the four expressions here. There would be a misuse of the words as to "speaking" if they were applied to those who could not understand (Neh. 8. 2, 3). And must we not feel that the "joy" here is the intelligent rejoicing of faith?—else the passage is robbed of its meaning.

If it be said, "Why is the verbal form 'having believed' singular?"—we would remind that the **other** verbal forms "be saved," "was baptised," "rejoiced," **are exactly the same**. Yet the accompanying words show that the others **shared**, or they are meaningless. Let us show the privilege of a father and his influence, and the way in which the obedient action of **one** is to lead to that of others, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 110. 1). What a striking contrast is found, as to the beginning of the present dispensation in Luke 24. 49, "Tarry (sit) ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." God is graciously manifesting mercy to-day. The enemies are not now being laid low. "Be patient" is His loving will.

The Scripture and the Word of God.

SOME time ago (February and March, 1939) we sought to learn the deep importance of the ministry of the written truth to our hearts in the living power of the Holy Spirit, through prayerful pondering of God's own use of the expression "The Word of God." A few sentences from the brother whose conversation had helped me earlier to this meditation are now before me; may I pass them on?—

"The Scriptures can be read, the Word can be heard.

The Scriptures can be searched, the Word of God searches.

When one reads the Scriptures, the Word of God may be heard, or may not (according to our condition of heart).

When one **searches** the Scriptures, it is with a view to discovering what the Word of God is (i.e., a living power in its application).

The psalmist read the Scriptures, but he hid the Word of God in his heart.

The Bereans received the Word, but they searched the Scriptures.

Copies of the Scriptures could be burnt, but it would be impossible to burn the Word of God.

The Scriptures could be snatched out of your hand by men, but the Word can only be snatched out of the heart by Satan.

The Lord Jesus **always** called what was written by a suitable name, such as Scripture, Law, Prophets, Psalms, or He spoke of the writer, such as David, Isaiah, but **never** called what was **written** the Word of God. (It is written in the Scriptures because it is the Word of God.)

Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, but defective in the Word of God (until Priscilla and Aquila had helped him).

The 'Scripture' always refers to something written, but the 'Word' is sometimes the **Name of a Person** (the Lord Jesus Christ).

'The Word of God increased'—the Scriptures remained the same during this period.

The Word of God was preached. The Scriptures preach (Gal. 3. 8).

'Every Scripture is inspired of God,' just as 'every Word of God is pure.'

The Scriptures and the Word are not synonymous terms by any means. They are very near to one another.

The question is asked 'Can we say "Thy Word" if we have the whole Bible in view?' and the answer given is 'It is **inadvisable** because never so used in Scripture.'

'But if the Bible is a revelation from God, what difficulty can there be in calling it God's Word?' None at all, in that respect, but surely the Author of the Book, and the inspired writers knew best how to describe it."

Our heart's longing is that these extracts may lead us all more and more to **hear** the Word of God with the tone and deep application of the Holy Spirit, in a heart opened even as Lydia's (Heb. 3. 7, 10, 15).

An Act of Sin and a Condition.

THE Holy Spirit always emphasises the purity of an assembly of God. Sin is never excused, but there is wondrous wisdom (Divine wisdom) in dealing with everything. We look at the solemnizing words of 1 Corinthians 5. 11, and see they deal with a character and condition of sin. There should always be the holy desire to prevent this state: Galatians 6. 1 illustrates such spiritual concern. The same aspect is before us in Hebrews 12. 13. Healing, not exclusion, is God's emphasis. The first and second admonition of Titus 3. 10 are parallel with the action in Matthew 18. 15-17. Observe the added words "Knowing that he that is such is subverted, **and sinneth**, being condemned of himself." The present tenses are suggestive: they speak of a condition.

1 John 2. 1 helps us, "If anyone have sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Here it is not "If anyone sinneth": an act of sin is before us. When there is continuance, we have no proof of salvation at all (1 John 3. 8). It is true, indeed, that every act tends to repetition, and goes forward toward a condition. Hence a holy watchfulness over one another, "lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3. 13). But it is ruinous to confuse the two, and to regard an action as a state. It is this which is entwined with imputing motives, and it will perpetuate division, and harden instead of soften character. One sin excluded from the Garden of Eden, and one sin would involve unchanging separation from God. One sin would make the precious blood of Christ necessary, and it is indeed true that he who commits one sin is "a sinner." Who could excuse one untruth, even when in fear? But a hurried **branding** of the one who thus sinned as "a liar" (a **characteristic** word) may stimulate **further** sins of other varieties.

How wondrously God has shown us "grace" in dealing with an Abraham after his sin in Egypt and in Gerar, with Rahab after her utterly wrong statement, and with the lost son on his return. In bringing a soul to see sin, to view sin rightly and to confess it, and in accepting the acknowledgment of sin without self-righteously hindering the awakened soul—these things need one who is spiritual (Gal. 6. 1), and thus tactful. It is here that we often fail. We often increase sin in our dealing with sin.

An act of sin may be momentary, it IS a fall. The results may be far reaching. A sudden yielding to temptation, even

within, should humble us, as Romans 7 shows. But there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared (Ps. 130. 4), and confessed sin is not to be viewed as sin unconfessed. An unforgiving spirit is as grievous as the sin of the one who needs forgiveness, if not more so (Matt. 18. 35; Mark 11. 25; 2 Cor. 2. 10, 11). Self-righteousness, although **linked with** much obedience in outward act, is a state that may be a more grievous condition of sin, in the sight of God. How blessed it is to **remember** our need of Hebrews 4. 15, 16, and God's appointment in Hebrews 5. 2 when dealing with sin, as well as the holy hatred of sin. "God, I thank Thee, I am not as other men" reveals a danger even for a believer in looking upon, and speaking about, the sins of others. Humility, and a sense of our own unworthiness ("Considering thyself," Gal. 6. 1) must ever be felt, as well as held theoretically. Let us remember that the zeal of a Jehu (2 Kings 10. 16) was not that of a Phinehas, but may be linked with a personal "departing not" from sin (2 Kings 10. 29). "Acts" of impulsive "obedience" linked with a state of dormant self-content can never glorify Him Who dwells with those of a humble and contrite spirit (Isa. 57. 15). The Holy Spirit always leads to humility, and never to pride.

Different Spheres of Male and Female.

(Concluded.)

If then the Holy Spirit has decided this distinction of male and female, as to an assembly gathering, whenever the local church comes together as such, what other spheres are found in which sisters may speak when the Lord appoints, as well as be silent? To add to His words is as serious as to take from them. Our desire is the **true** freedom, namely, glad harmony with our Lord's will throughout.

It may be said, and rightly so, that 1 Corinthians 11. 1-16 **presupposes** sisters speaking. Plainly this is not a matter of the "Amen," precious though that is, but of **personal** activity in the Lord. If any reader suggests a contradiction with ch. 14, it can only be through carelessness. There is no mention of an **assembly** in the earlier passage. In ch. 14 the sphere is specifically indicated, thus the difference between men and women is one of action. In ch. 11 the very same actions are appointed for both, but the difference there is one of **clothing**. Let not any of us suggest that this is a small matter. The will of the Lord is never small. Have we any indication of the "sphere" in this passage? There are two expressions which may help:—(a) "unto God" (verse 13), (b) "no such custom" (verse 16). These seem to indicate **when** there is the approved doing of that which is before us. Hence it need not have anything to do with a "meeting": the principle evidently applies

even when any are **alone**. As a brother would not pray alone and in private with covered head, a sister should not with head uncovered. It is God's will there should be a **distinction**. Plainly He does not wish to **restrain** private prayer (note 1 Tim. 5. 5), but the "custom" should be observed,—unless we feel ourselves able to change the Divine "Ordinances," or "traditions" (verse 2). None of us would **presume** thus to do. It is our glory to be obedient. But may not the words include actions **before others**? I think they do, for the essence of "prophecy" was to reach others, with edification, exhortation, and comfort, and there is no expressed reason to limit the prayer to one's closet. Indeed, the Holy Spirit's appointment of silence in the **churches** is linked with the thought that the **home** is **not** a place for silence (1 Cor. 14. 35). In the home, the **manner** of doing all is important, but the fact of freedom in **speaking** there is presupposed. It is noticeable that we have records of believing men prophesying, praying in meetings, or in publicity in the present dispensation, but have we of believing women? Hence we would be careful not to overlook the Divine principles of "helping," not leading, but the multiplying of rules and the creation of bondage, as to that which is in the home and homely, would be out of keeping and sinful. The Holy Spirit approves of Priscilla as well as Aquila expounding to Apollos the way of God more perfectly. But they "**took**" him first: there was the **home** aspect. If I came to a meal with you, I should expect your believing wife to speak at the table, and in like manner I should rejoice in her praying after, even though several were present. It would be your home, and though a home has a parallel with an assembly, it remains **your own house** (1 Tim. 3. 5). If any reader thinks I am wrong, I would prayerfully ponder any suggestions, for we only want God's will, do we not?

What if the thought rises up, "Shall I pray or not?" If one has any personal doubt,—do not act—but do not make doubts, nor condemn those who treat a **home as such**, provided there is a godly recognition of the husband's "headship," typifying that of Christ, there also, and the godly denial of all forwardness. **We brethren have just as much need to beware of this**. And if any say "What about the covering?" The Holy Spirit definitely implies this, even as He indicates that no believing woman should adopt the fashion of cutting hair **as a man**. But the hair is **not** the covering, which signifies an **act** of obedience not only the constant possession of that which even a self-respecting unsaved woman should retain.

"When does the home circle become a meeting?" you may ask, "And what about prayer meetings?" One would desire to write consciously of personal need for God's instruction always, and simply as one who has received mercy to be faithful. If the decision were to be my natural one, (or yours), I should incline to remove "restrictions." But we want to be willing for the

will of the Lord, and there is, in one sense, no "restriction" to an obedient believer. The Lord always gives the **true** "open door," and "our" alterations are the real restrictions. No one will lose by doing His will.

1 Timothy 2. 8 does not name a "church" gathering, but says "in every place." Does not this seem to suggest a limitation to sisters? We cannot say the word "men" here is the one used for mankind, it is the **other** word, and indicates "males" exclusively. As we have seen, this passage intimates **some** Divine distinction between men and women, and **especially as to prayer**. Is it simply as to clothing? That is the subject in 1 Corinthians 11, and clothing is mentioned here, but if that were the only distinction would not the expression be somewhat different? It is **not** "I will that males pray in every place . . . in like manner also women,—adorning themselves,"* but the words "adorn themselves in modest apparel" do **not** qualify the word "pray," but take its place and become a substitute for it. Hence it would seem that **this** godly clothing is not only an accompaniment, but the **special** distinguished appointment of the Holy Spirit here, something that is **as dear to God as the prayers of the males**. Thus the neat dress of a sister is not a restriction but a privilege: it is not a mere denial but a positive adornment and joy in the sight of God. Some do not like to be baptised at once, but afterwards they find a delight in the act. May the same happiness be granted to dear sisters in a definite break with the fashions of the world.

What then does "in every place" imply? Does it mean sisters can only pray in **some** places? That would harmonize with 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. Any gathering of an assembly as such would be unsuitable. It is possible we should also read with 1 Corinthians 1. 2, and recollect that where Israel were too few in number for a synagogue there was a place of prayer, and it may be that 1 Timothy guides us to meeting before an assembly was Divinely planted (to which clearly ch. 3 refers). When shall we then say? We only want God's will. The stress on leading in prayer here is plainly on **brethren**, even as on teaching. Could we limit 1 Timothy 2. 12, and say "a sister may teach a Bible class of brethren, but not speak in an assembly?" Would it not appear therefore to be in accord with the principles our loving Heavenly Father has set before us to expect that brethren would thus serve the Lord in prayer and teaching alike, "in **every** place," and sisters in the **home**, or in other forms of conversation (e.g. sick visiting), or in opportunities among themselves (Tit. 2. 4)? They will not find this path too contracted. Door after door of privilege will open when there

*I.e., not parallel grammar with "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." This would have been easy, and flowing, but the Holy Spirit has NOT written thus! He has mentioned two contrasted actions and given one to males and the other to women.

is love's willingness, and the loving care of the home will lead to more godly brethren and the training of godly children, and the heartfelt prayer with them, will mean the Lord's "gift" of Timothy and others for the fitting together of the saints (Eph. 4. 12). The Lord Jesus did not find 30 years at Nazareth too narrow: there is ever a fulness of privilege when we are in glad and unstinted harmony with Himself.

There is a Divine reason why in the Old Testament angels are described as men, and priests and kings and psalmists and elders were males, and in the New Testament the Lord Jesus had a purpose in arranging for the twelve and the seventy, and we find no reference to sisters as evangelists, teachers, angels of assemblies or elders, nor were they used to write the N.T. Scriptures. The reference to brethren in God's service in Acts 13. 1 is God's will, their names are definitely given. If He chooses you for one form of service has He not plenty of other forms of service for those who delight in His will? We never need think we shall lack privileges of occupation for Him: none of His own need be unemployed, and all that He appoints is priceless. That which is menial is not trivial when it is done in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Do not be occupied with what you can't do, but with what you can. A brother can no more be one of the twelve than a sister to-day: but we do not say, Why? We thank God for their ministry: what is given to one member of Christ is for all, and we rejoice together (1 Cor. 12. 26). The Lord Jesus said His servants would not finish going over the cities of Israel till His coming (Matt. 10. 23), and we shall not complete our privileges in this "little while." Let there be an assembly in which believers realize "to every one his work," and there will be brightness, fresh anointing and power, the conscious unity of the body, and fruit to the glory of God. It shall be, it must be, when the Lord Jesus and His words are in the right place.

If any believers have any questions, these will be welcomed in the spirit of loving concern for His will in which they are sent.

(We hope to reprint these articles in a booklet, for prayerful use. The theme is deeply important in the fulfilment of God's purpose in the Body of Christ, with its many members).

The varied trees in Eden were "pleasant" and "good" (Gen. 2. 9), but, alas, Eve seems to have specially seen as "good for food" from her standpoint that which God had shown to be not good for food (Gen. 3. 6). How deadly it is when we leave His standpoint, and choose our own!

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"A chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name." Acts 9. 15.
"We are His workmanship." Ephesians 2. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

"GOD hath spoken," and we rejoice. God has graciously made us His own possession—His choice, His redemption, the work of His Holy Spirit have all been manifested in this wondrous privilege. And now we are His. Our life belongs to Him. Our object should be to please Him. We could not and cannot "do" anything in our own strength, but we can do much unto Him, for He works within. It is His will that we should glorify Him: His will has become our will. All else is vain. Our desire is that these pages may emphasize a life unto Him, and that we, and believing readers, may truly bear His Name Who died for us, and that the "vessel" may be filled to overflowing. This magazine is worthless unless it leads us all to our Lord, and to "fruit," spiritual fruitfulness in the Holy Spirit.

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"Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days . . . at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh." Daniel 1. 12-15.

"Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven." Malachi 3. 10.

It is easier to talk about truth than we realize, especially if the temperament inclines to argument or to giving instruction. But knowledge of truth is nothing in itself, though it may become a means of blessing. But it may also become a cause of judgment. The head knowledge of God's love and righteousness is not necessarily sanctifying, as 2 Peter 2. 20 indicates. Indeed, in some ways acquaintance with truth may be more perilous than error, for it may deceive others that some are true believers,

when there is no real love of the truth, and may even help to deceive further the one who is content therewith, whereas the deadly consequences of false doctrine might have been used to cause a consciousness of danger. But how blessed to remember that if there has been a mere mental interest in God's revelation, it is not too late to seek Him in humility. And O that those of us who have, by grace, a consciousness that we are in Christ, may experience more fully **delight** in His truth, and be filled with praise.

“THEY SHALL BURN IT WITH FIRE.”

“THOU SHALT BURN THIS CITY WITH FIRE.”

Jeremiah 38. 18, 23, margin.

HAVE you thought what this means? When **wicked** men do **wicked** things, we too may be partly responsible. Such may be the sinful instruments of their own sinful desires, but God's **permission** may be because of **our** lack of a right attitude to Him. Zedekiah was said to “do” what his sin occasioned. There is no such thing as mere chance. God **can** hinder everything, and can Himself be hindered in nothing. If there is judgment in the city we dare not say that God is outwitted by human ingenuity or taken by surprise (Amos 3. 6). He has a message for you and for me in **all** that is happening. Nothing comes without the permission of God. **WHY** then does He permit? There must be a reason. He must have some message that is deeply important. If men are occupied with **other** men and **their** wickedness, they fail to hear God's voice to **themselves** (Mic. 6. 9). As long as Israel saw only “Sennacherib” (Isa. 10), they missed **God's** instruction. When they saw His hand and owned themselves evil, as in 2 Chronicles 12. 6 there was hope.

“What is God saying to **me**?” is the all-important thought in every personal and collective experience. The Lord hath a controversy (Jer. 25. 31, Hos. 4. 1). And this is not vague. He speaks in everything to each one of us who have ears to hear. For individuals, and for believers generally, and for nations, this is a Divine principle.

How often we have increased and multiplied our troubles by **complaining** of them instead of seeing what **God** was rebuking by them. If there is an attitude of godly repentance there is blessing to the individual. And there is a parallel in God's dealings with men generally. Absence of repentance brings all to trouble: it is complaining of **God**, and His message through circumstances.

The psalmist was graciously delivered from his fears. We often endure our troubles before they come, unless we enjoy childlike faith.

The Book of Revelation and Its Refreshment to Believing Hearts.

HERE we have not a book of mysteriousness of puzzles and enigmas, but a real **Revelation**. All centres around the Lord Jesus, all leads up to His near Coming. It is a book of joy and encouragement: and, if we are in a right condition of heart, shall we not realise this?

Specially have I been thinking of the believers in the actual churches in proconsular Asia among whom the book was first sent. What did it mean to such? The theory that it spoke of a remnant distinct from saints of the present dispensation quite takes away the power and comfort. They were troubled by those who said they were apostles, by a synagogue of Satan, by Nicolaitanes and those who held the doctrine of **Balaam**. The reference to Jezebel and fornication again, and the added instruction of chapter 17, show plainly the great peril, even fellowship with the world, and the denial of the undivided affection of the Bride toward the Bridegroom.

When this is grasped, the nature and meaning of the book is more fully seen. O that it may be realised! God hates worldliness. The church cannot be the world, and the world cannot be the church, and an admixture is the devil's aim, but an abomination to the Lord. The parallel among Israel was sternly condemned (Deut. 7. 3, 4) and condemned as harlotry (Ezek. 16 and many passages). This must be felt more intensely in view of the completed glory and the full unveiling of the work of the Lord Jesus.

The testimony of the book of Revelation is against **all** worldliness. God's dear children are strangers and pilgrims. They are bought for Him. Is this manifested? The state has its sphere in God's providence, but the church has its entirely distinct sphere in His grace, and to mix them is sin. The world goes on under God's longsuffering, but the church is chosen and brought out of the world “in Christ Jesus,” and there cannot be partnership. Hence rejection and suffering was the portion of the early church when this was maintained, and Constantine's organised corruption of that which professed to be “the church” was the attempted burial of its pilgrim testimony. But God maintained a persecuted people, largely unknown, throughout the so-called dark ages. They suffered, but they were not destroyed: and even in the darker days of anti-Christ they will be sustained as Revelation 12 shows. That which the devil approves is not the church: he sows tares, not wheat: he will give his throne to the beast that bears the woman of Babylon, but pursues the woman who brings forth the man child. Satan hates the Gospel of the Glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4. 3, 4) and hates simplicity with a view to Christ (2 Cor. 11. 3). He seeks “Christ and —”, anything

and everything to divert the Bride from her only affection. Are we attracted aside? O that it may not be so. The Holy Spirit leads the Bride to say "Come," and the Lord Jesus answers that call.

The book of Revelation, like the epistle to the Hebrews, deals with those discouraged, amid loss and strain, by unveiling the heavenlies, and showing that the persecution times are appointed and limited: God foreknows all: the sealed book shows this. The limited character is brought out by all the references to time: "ten days" (2. 10), "five months" (9. 5), "an hour, and a day, and a month and a year" (9. 15), "forty-two months" (11. 2; 13. 5), "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (11. 3; 12. 6), "a time, and times, and half a time" (12. 14). There is NO LONG period till we reach the sixfold emphasis on the thousand years in chapter 20. This seems a startling witness against the year day **interpretation** (I do not deny **parallels**, in God's wisdom, but these were not revealed, or deducible till afterwards, i.e., the Holy Spirit kept believers ready for the Lord's return, if **He willed**, in their lifetime, John 21. 23).

The object of the book is not primarily that we may prepare charts, but that we may be separate from the world, and realise that we are appointed to afflictions (1 Thess. 3. 3), which will soon be past. The call is one to devotion, and devotion is to a person, and that Person the Lord Jesus. The clarion call is against all compromise. Clerisy, and infant "baptism," and the erection of grand buildings are not isolated circumstances: these have all been part of the enemy's plan to break down the simple separation of saints. The reference to Balaam is sadly illuminative. He could **not** curse, but he won by whoredom and "joining" (Num. 25. 1-3; 31. 8, with Rev. 2. 14). The Holy Spirit graciously uses the **last** book of Scripture sent from a land of exile, to encourage to the enjoyment of the Kingdom and patience in "Jesus" (Rev. 1. 9). Yes, "HERE is the patience and faith of the saints" (Rev. 13. 10, 14. 12). The climax in chapter 19 is "the marriage Supper of the Lamb," and "His wife hath made herself ready," and the marriage aspect is again seen in chapter 21. The **last** conversation concerns the Coming of the Lord Jesus, and the **Bride** is emphasized (Ch. 22. 17-20). The denial, by some, that the church is the Bride may become more serious than at first appears. O that our hearts may realise the present practical power of the last book which God has been pleased to give us.

The Lord does not make light of our trials, but He does cause His believing people, as Paul, to call their trials light (2 Cor. 4. 17), as they realize the blessed contrasts in their Lord, and His infinite power, wisdom, and love.

Seventy Times Seven.

The words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18. 22 are His own judgment as to an unforgiving spirit. And is not this often our grave peril? Is it not frequently a great hindrance in prayer, else why is this so definitely mentioned in Mark 11. 25? The added parable in Matthew 18 shows how little we realise what we have been forgiven. Peter's question assumed the fault would naturally be on **his brother's** side, not on his. Has there not been something akin to the taking by the throat of verse 28 among children of God? O that we may learn the lesson to love as never before. "Seven times a day," says Luke 17. 4. "Seventy times seven" is the message before us. The Lord Jesus was not using mere hyperbole: He meant what He said. Men always seek a limit: we cannot put up with "too much." O how little we realise how He has been patient with us. Human logic prevents the realisation of the words "endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath" (Rom. 9. 22).

May there not also be a reference to the Old Testament, and more than one? In the family which culminated in Lamech and his sons, and the flood, the **last** words are "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." Lamech's language was full of pride, as if to trifle with Cain's sin (Gen. 4. 23), and to make himself stronger than God to execute human vengeance with weapons of brass and iron (verse 22). Truly the earth was "filled with violence" (ch. 6. 13). There was nothing of love, pity or forgiveness.

But this is not "seventy times seven": it is an enlargement of God's second recorded emphasis of the number "seven" (the first was the Sabbath, "made for man," in loving care). The full thought of "seventy times seven" we find in Daniel 9. 24 ("weeks" are "sevens": note ch. 10. 2 margin explains that weeks of **days** are there intended as if to indicate the contrast just before)). In this passage we behold God's loving-kindnesses (Isa. 63. 7). Well had Daniel said, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him" (Dan. 9. 9). And the unveiling of grace is wondrously bright in the foretold bringing of blessing to delivered Israel in the exact completing of our forgiving God's "seventy times seven" and **then** the fountain will be opened to Israel for sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13. 1), and Jerusalem will become a praise in the earth. God will not fail. The message to Peter, and to us, also, becomes fuller and deeper as we realize the entire contrast with Lamech, and the natural man, that is appointed, and God's purpose in our loving manifestation of a conformity to Himself in His ways with Israel.

Faith is never anxious: anxiety never believes.

“The Lord is with thee”
“The Word of the Lord came unto Nathan.”

2 Samuel 7. 3, 4.

THERE is evidently an intentional contrast between the two verses. What is the Holy Spirit teaching us? Surely we shall receive **much** help.

First, we realise that it is not enough for one to be a man with whom God can rejoice to be, but God's definite word and appointment are so needful. The general aspect of walking with God, though blessed, does not make unnecessary the seeking of His definite will.

Secondly, we learn that the wish to please the Lord, and a loving emotion are not sufficient evidence that we know the will of the Lord for us at that time.

Thirdly, we see that the advice and co-operation of a godly friend, though precious, do not make sure our perception of His purpose.

Fourthly, we feel how important it is that we should not advise others, however earnest they are, in accord with our impression, but should seek to know the will of the Lord.

Fifthly, we are brought to realise God's grace in correcting if we have made a mistake in judgment, but are truly open-hearted for the will of God.

A general associated principle is—Not the Word without the Holy Spirit, nor the Holy Spirit without the Word, should be our expectation, but the wondrous harmony of the Holy Spirit and the Word (Hag. 2. 5).

Ministry that Glorifies God.

It is a privilege to realize that ministry is by no means limited to preaching (see 1 Pet. 4. 11). We think of those who ministered to the Lord Jesus of their substance and of “the fitting together of the saints to the work of ministry” (Eph. 4. 12). We are deeply concerned at such expressions as “going into the ministry” (there is no “the” in 1 Tim. 1. 12), and “going into the church.” Christendom is not united with Christ, nor representing Him.

But when there is a definite call to preach the gospel and to build up the saints, far be it from us to undervalue this part of ministry (Col. 4. 17, 2 Tim. 4. 5). It is precious beyond measure. The privilege of declaring the Gospel of the Grace of God to one or to a hundred is great, the joy of leading a soul thereby to the Saviour is beyond the fleeting joys of earth.

How important that we should preach aright, and in the Holy Spirit. The Lord described Paul as “a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name” (Acts 9. 15), and in accord with this he truly said “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1. 23),

and “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor. 4. 5). Christ the Foundation, Christ the Theme, Christ the Centre of this ministry! How could it be otherwise?

Our hearts long that we may not only hold fast the faithful word (Phil. 2. 16), but also be in a condition to “adorn” His doctrine at all times. The words of 2 Corinthians 6. 3 are searching, “Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed.” It is a real honour to bear the name of Christ, and the principle of Isaiah 52. 11 still applies.

Even as the prayer of the upright is God's delight, and whoso offereth praise glorifieth Him, so is every part of acceptable ministry before Him. We think of the “living sacrifice” of Romans 12. 1 and of the gifts of the Philippians, “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (Phil. 4. 18). This inspired language, referring to the sacrifices, even as in 1 Peter 2. 5, and Heb. 13. 15, reminds us how everything that delights God is in the Name of His Beloved Son, and a reminder of Him. Nor is this strange, for all that is of ourselves has been judged, and all our acceptance is in Him. Our past history was only sin, and legally it has been blotted out, so that we stand before God simply and solely because of our Lord Jesus, accepted, and justified in Him, having become the righteousness of God in Him. This is not a matter of attainment by a selected few: this is the portion and blessing of all in Him. There can be no justification in Him that differs in degree: He “was raised again because of our justification.” That which was His through His substitutionary work, and in His representative character, becomes ours since He fully represented us. It is this wondrous identification which the world cannot understand. The “mystery,” known only to those “within,” refers to our relation to Christ, which is joined with His substitutionary work for us, His redeemed.

The preaching of a grace-saved and grace-taught believer should be thoroughly affected by this wondrous fact. “In the Name of the Lord Jesus” means so much. The ministry of which the apostle speaks in 2 Corinthians 3 causes “epistles of Christ” (verse 3), and 4. 4 shows it is “the gospel of the glory of Christ.” Hence in ch. 2. 14 we read “God . . . maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge (the knowledge of Christ) by us in every place.” Every place was an opportunity to exalt Christ, no place was an opportunity to exalt Paul. The next verse declares “We are a sweet savour of Christ,” nothing else. We remember the apostle's determination to know nothing else but Jesus Christ, and to know Him not as One Who was a Teacher and Leader, but as “One Who hath been crucified”: 'tis through His precious blood we know Him as “Christ Jesus the Lord.” A mixed message is ever a failure. We cannot serve God and mammon, nor can we preach Christ and self. And God-appointed ministry is “among them that are saved

and among them that perish." There are ever the two classes, and only two, for some believe the things that are spoken and some believe not,—but the message is the same. The sun that melts the clay hardens the wax. And "we are unto God a sweet savour" wrote the apostle. The thought of success before men was not his: the rejected messenger, rejected because of faithfulness, and not because of self's eccentricity, was equally "a sweet savour of Christ" to God. Among men who believed not the servant of God was a savour of death, and the result was death, even as men wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3. 16). The gospel, even as the law (2 Cor. 2. 16, Rom. 7. 10), can be made a ministry of death in the experience of those who deny their lost condition. But the savour was still the sweet savour of Christ "unto God," and moreover, to believing ones there was "a savour of life," and the result was life in their blessed experience. The tremendous contrast is impressive. Well might Paul ask—"Who is sufficient for these things?"—finding the answer in the glad words, "Our sufficiency is of God" (3. 5). But here he refers to the fact that he did not tone or water down the message to please men. The "for" of ch. 2. 17 is important. The new wine must not be changed to old that men may say, "The old is agreeable" (Luke 5. 39). The enemy would ever modify truth, as the woman leavened the meal, but an unchanged gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1. 16), and this alone is "a sweet savour of Christ," for the preacher* is "in Christ," (2 Cor. 2. 16), the preacher is what he speaks ("we are," "we speak"), for everything is because of Christ, and there would be no preacher and no preaching, were not both acceptable in Him! "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!"

* Exception having been taken to "A Sweet Savour" (May, 1939) I have pondered anew. I regarded "we" (in 2 Cor. 2. 15) more widely (as "we" of 3. 18, 4. 6, 16, 5. 1, 20, 21) rather than with ch. 2. 17, 3. 1, 6, and thought of what "we are," since "in Christ," distinct from what God's servants do—"maketh manifest by us," "we speak" 2. 14, 17). Kindly criticism may be helpful and constructive. I now feel "for," and "we are not" (2. 17), and the context emphasize the aspect of *ministry* in 2. 15. Hence I should not now use this passage to prove what the youngest believer "is" in Christ. (The emphasis on the fire and acceptance remains, nor can we deny that the speaking "in Christ" prevents us disconnecting accepted service from what each accepted believer has become in Him). Thanks be to God, prior to previous privileges of growth in service, we were viewed as justified in Christ's being justified (Rom. 7. 7 marg), and that which is His, on our behalf as the accepted Sacrifice is ours in Him—though brought to Him but yesterday. Yes, God's unspeakable delight in His own is because He has seen them represented by the Lord Jesus, with Whom they *died*, and were, from His covenant standpoint, then justified (Rom. 4. 25).

cf. 39/33

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