

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Faith without works is dead."

James 2. 25, 26.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the grace of God we would ever press forward—God's grace is a living test of all our spiritual love and fruit. May we not only know the truth mentally, but experience His loving power in all our daily life and "walk." These pages are not only to help study and preaching but to seek His glory in a practical all-embracing experience,—all for Him. Yes, all the week days are unto Him. Business must not be cut off from our spiritual worship. The Lord's Day is to lead to the ordinary working hours, and nothing is "ordinary" if in the power of the Holy Spirit. The HOME belongs to Him. The smallest details can please Him. It is our earnest desire that the faith of God's elect may, like Abraham's, still be seen in the living works that fill such faith, and that thus the Lord's redeemed who read these pages may still be as Abraham, who "was called the friend of God." Is it possible? It is!

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The Deeper Consciousness of Blessings.

Why am I manifestly blessed in many ways? I might be a cripple: I might be lying on my back, year after year. I might have consumption—am I grateful for all? Ah, says some reader, "You are free from these complaints, but I am not." Beloved fellow believer, do not be discouraged. *You, too, are blessed.* Notice the word "manifestly" above. Can you not glorify God in the fires, and give a witness that others cannot give? And the Lord is able to heal. Never leave that confidence. If He does *not* thus act, thank Him for His love, and wisdom. Whatever reaches those who love Him is best for them "to-day" (Rom. 8. 28), and He has not said what He will do tomorrow. Trust Him.

But to return. Let me ponder praisefully whatever God grants "me." Here is a believer who has children with sound minds. Has such an one realized what it is to have one of feeble mind in the family? Or do we recollect to sympathize with the problems of those who have an ailing husband or wife, month after month? Then we realize the strain others have through an unexpected and sudden accident—possibly in a train? *We* might have been in it. The whole life has been changed. Or do we feel for those whose night's sleep is usually disturbed by watching over sick and suffering ones? Yet others are seeking a situation suitable to their physical power, but they return time after time rebuffed, it may be. How privileged am "I," if possessing regular employment. Again, others spend hour after hour seeking a residence. Am I grateful for a quiet dwelling place? Moreover, not a few are in "Displaced Persons' Camps" with noisy surroundings and uncertainty as to the future. Have I praised God for the freedom I have from such trials, and have I prayed for such, and sought from Him as to whether I can help to lighten the burdens of any, and make a painful path easier?

When I return from a seemingly "fruitless" journey, I feel ready to grudge the time, and to be disappointed, instead of praising God for what He has to teach me in patience, and in sympathy with those who have made many such journeys, whereas I may have received so often many encouragements in going forth, and attaining, what has been humbly sought. If everything was waiting for me, I should become selfish, and an "open door" *may be* a ship going to Tarshish rather than an answer to prayer.

Even little things, day by day, are precious. Look at the many believers who have the strain of a waiting queue to obtain food for which they would not wait but another's requirements demand. Or there is a transport queue, and a painfully crowded vehicle, in going to and from business. And while we speak of these things let us all, in our fresh arrangements, seek grace that we may not, for seeming financial gain involve ourselves in loss of time, and nerve-calm. Let us weigh up all and avoid unnecessary journeys, and loss of quiet times with the Lord thereby, and avoid distance from spiritually helpful gatherings, lest we be tempted to stay at home. So many trials we have *made for ourselves*, and then we complain. The simple life may be financially poorer, but it is richer before God, and His will is the only true profit and success. Let the attitude of praising God for all be cultivated, and let there be a quicker perception of little realized mercies, and a deep gratitude for those unknown altogether, and a tender and gracious feeling for others, with their burdens, and life will become brighter, and fuller. We are so ready to complain when we are not full of thanksgiving to God. Everything is spoilt when there is a lack of praiseful gratitude.

ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued)

We want that which is spiritually "good" and truly pleasant, and can only find such joy in the Lord. From the 51 occurrences of this word we select a few:—

"That I might see what was that *good*" (2. 3).

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

"There is no *good* in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do *good* in his life, and also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the *good* of all his labour, it is the gift of God" (3. 12, 13).

"There is nothing *good* than that a man should rejoice in his own works" (3. 22, cf. 5. 18, 8. 15).

"Who knoweth what is *good* for man in life?" (6. 12)*

How blessed is the deliverance and lifting up from uncertainty and man's earthly and temporary good to that which is heavenly, spiritual and eternal. "One event," even death, is before us "under the sun" (2. 15, 16). "Life" is used (with its earthly and limited signification. The 23 occurrences|| illustrate this, e.g. "the days of his vain life," "madness is in their heart while they live." What a contrast with the "eternal life" of the gospel. Indeed, this seems so with almost every (repeated) key word. The "portion" of a man is physical and transitory (2. 10, 21, 3. 22, 5. 18, 19, 9. 6, 9, 11. 2), and we feel the blessedness of "the Lord is the Portion of mine inheritance" (Ps. 16. 5), "God is the Strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever" (Ps. 73. 26, cf. 119. 57). So as to "the gift of God," it is here material and passing away. "That every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God" (3. 13), "Every man to whom God hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God" (5. 19). How different is "If thou knewest the Gift of God, and Who it is That saith to thee, Give me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee **living water**" (John 4. 10), and again, "The Gift of God is everlasting life, in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6. 23).

In 2. 12 the writer "turns" himself to obtain yet another view. And such an attitude is continual. There is seeking, seeking, but *not* finding. How different is the message "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found," "Seek, and ye shall find." Indeed, we might notice that the 17 occurrences of the word "find" contain much disappointment in 3. 11, 7. 14, 26, 8. 17 and in the central passage 7. 28, 29, but there it is lit up by one of the hints of God's aim in the whole book—one Man (not one woman) is found in a thousand, even our Lord

* "Who knoweth?" is found also in 2. 10, 3. 21, 8. 1, and "not knowing" in 8. 7, 9. 1, 11, 5. 6.

|| 2. 3, 17, 3. 12, 4. 2, 15, 5. 18, 20, 6. 8, 12, 7. 2, 8. 15, 9. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 19

Jesus the *Contrast* with the first man who was made upright, but wandered. If the 999 remaining are viewed in the light of Zechariah 13, 8, 666 becomes the number of rejected (and rejecting) "man." Surely this is no accident, but the intention of the Holy Spirit Who has co-related "all Scripture" (Rev. 13, 18). We are conscious in Ecclesiastes 2, 12 that no other philosopher can go further: all will inevitably reach the same uncertainty. Earth's maze has no human clue. Verse 13 is true and reasonable, but it solves no problem, it brings no peace. We need Him Who is the Wisdom of God.

"I saw." The 40 occurrences of this verb* emphasize the standpoint yet once more. How different when "the Lord showed" Zechariah (Zech. 1, 20), or asked "What seest thou?" in Jeremiah 1, 11. And this may be an opportunity to call attention to the remarkable relationship to God throughout the book. As Esther omits direct use of His Name altogether, Ecclesiastes is one of the three Old Testament books *without* the covenant Name "Lord." The other (Song of Songs) is, however, characterized by names of intimacy ("My beloved") for the Bridegroom, also the unusual word of 6, 6. ("Flame of Jah"). But Ecclesiastes always maintains a distance: God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." He is feared, but there is no closeness, as in the Psalms, nothing of "My God." And when we remember 1 Kings 3, 5-14 the extraordinary fact is that there is no seeking of wisdom from Him (James 1, 5). When prayer is before us, it is not worship, nor petition, but one's own vow as to what oneself will do (Eccl. 5, 1-4). There is no confession of sin, moreover, and there is no longing and joy in salvation, though there is an unquestioning record of God's judgment (8, 11, 12, 14). This is all in *appointed* harmony with the purpose of the book, to shut man up to his need, and to bring us all to see, by contrast, the blessedness of a covenanted salvation by grace, and the nearness to God, which is ours in Christ Jesus. As soon as we recognize this, everything is impressive, and we feel ready to say that Ephesians, for example, is *designed* by the Holy Spirit as "a commentary of contrasts," where we have blessing with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ, not under the sun, in accord with a choice to sonship, and a wondrous redemption, that we should be before Him. Our natural works (Eph. 2, 9), and all "Vanity" (Eph. 4, 17), are set aside. Instead of uncertainty there is assurance now, and instead of a wisdom that increaseth sorrow we have "the Spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* in the *knowledge* of Him," and the opened, and satisfied "eyes" of the heart (Eph. 1, 17, 18). The wording of the contrasts is too evident to suggest mere coincidence. The Holy Spirit *never* forgets words He has written before when He wrote others. We draw near as thankful worshippers to our Father now that we are "in Christ Jesus."

*Also rendered "have experience" (1, 16), "enjoy" (2, 24, 3, 13), "consider" (4, 1, 4, 15), "behold" (8, 17), "regard" (11, 4), "look" (12, 3).

There is, and can be, nothing of this in "Vanity of vanities."

Another helpful key may be found in Ecclesiastes 2, 18. There is no thought of "a building of God, eternal in the heavens." Life after death is not denied: "God shall bring every work into judgment" is *reasonable* inference. But there is no *knowledge* of blessing and of the coming kingdom: these need revelation. Earthly goods, and "the man that shall be after me" are the limits. And that "vanity" is seen once more, and the heart is caused to despair (2, 20). How can it do ought else? The man who "rejoices" amid earth's chaos lacks wisdom: he is superficial, and not a deep thinker: laughter is madness.

How great is the change when instead of the heart caused to despair (Eccl. 2, 20) the Lord puts gladness in the heart (Ps. 4, 7), and all the days are full of blessing God (Ps. 90, 14, 145, 2). There is a floodtide of blessing, and a floodlight of heavenly guidance (Ps. 119, 105).

And what shall we say as to Ecclesiastes 3? "Time" is another word with 40 occurrences (rendered "always" in 9, 8, and "due season" in 10, 17). It is associated with "chance" in 9, 11, and thus "rule" and seeming "irregularity" are alike before the writer. The constant succession of all is emphasized by the opening words "A time to be born, and a time to die." Throughout the *goal* is death (6, 3, 4, 7, 1-12, 5). The contrast in Ephesians is the death of Christ, and our life in Him. The first Adam went from life to death, in the Last Adam we pass out of death into life (John 5, 24). Ecclesiastes, as we have seen, logically recognizes the necessity of judgment after death (Eccl. 3, 17, 8, 11) but it can tell nothing of the glories of resurrection-likeness to Christ: this springs out from grace and by redemption, and realized through revelation.

The end of chapter 3 deals with the body and the dust (20). That is visible. But only a *question* is possible as to the invisible. "Who knoweth?" "Wisdom" necessitates an acknowledgment that man is more than a body, but "Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of men? Doth it go upward? And the spirit of the beast? Doth it go downward to the earth?" The only thing possible is to enjoy one's portion now—if there is no revelation. Nature reveals a Creator (Ps. 19, 1-4, Rom. 1, 20) and One Who is beneficent (Ps. 145, 15, 16, Acts 14, 17). Why not then rejoice? The grim fact remains, however, that the sin of *others* comes to frustrate this joy, and a sense of *one's own* sin and failure must make this logic another blind alley. The joy is withered, the key to the maze is not found. And chapter 4 explains this. "Oppressions" lead to "tears" and men cannot rejoice in their portion. "Evil work" spoils the rejoicing (Eccl. 4, 1-3). And not only so. It is disappointing to be ignorant as to the one who shall inherit (2, 18, 3-22), but to labour for oneself is to store up the *outward* without giving an *inward* power to a soon dying man that he may enjoy the store

(4. 8). Everything would be too short (6. 3), even though life should be more than *double* the longest span in Genesis! There is a hopelessness—*unless* that which is *eternal* can be received, and again we have the only key, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have *everlasting* life.” All hopes of encouragements prove to be a mirage, *till* we find Him. All outside Him, however attractive for a moment, is a bubble and the bubble bursts. Hence the refrain, “This also is vanity and vexation of spirit,” so different from that which ends each section in Romans 5-8 “In (or through) Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 5. 11, 21, 6. 11, 23, 7. 25, 8. 39).

Another aspect of vanity now comes before us (Eccl. 4. 7-12). The writer has shown the inability to know *who* will come “after,” and *what* will come “after,” but he now comes to the question of two together, and of fellowship. Isolation, as in Genesis 2. 18 is incomplete, and this is more manifest when earthly life is brief, and everything involves toil. Two can help one another. But there is a background of “falling.” The help is because of failure, and likewise in verse 11 because of the constant loss of power in the human frame. And the further danger of attack is seen in verse 12. There is no *real* encouragement, as there is when two or three are gathered together in Christ’s Name in Matthew 18. 20. There is nothing to last. Old age is a constant spectre (verse 13), and another takes one’s place (15). All pass off the scene (cf. “in his stead” Gen. 36. 31-39).

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

CONTRASTS.

“THE pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11. 25), for “there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14. 12), and there is that which attracts at first but “at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Prov. 23. 32). “Dainty meats” are lost (Prov. 23. 6, 8) and the mouth “filled with gravel” Prov. 20. 17), and one mourns at the last “when flesh and body are consumed” (Prov. 5. 11), and “the end of that mirth is heaviness” (Prov. 14. 13). But “with Thee,” says the believer, is “the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light” (Ps. 36. 9), and “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16. 11), for “the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Prov. 10. 22-, and “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4. 18). How grateful we should be for our prospect: “As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Ps. 17. 15).

The “Patience of Hope.”

“All Scripture” is perfect, since given by inspiration of God, and thus we have some unexpected beautiful *blendings* of thought. For example, “Rejoice with trembling” (Ps. 2. 11) “Follow *meekness* . . . *fight* the good fight of the faith” (1 Tim. 6. 11, 12), “All His saints are in Thy *hand*, and they sat down at Thy *feet*” (Deut. 33. 3). “Praise is *silent* for Thee O God” (Ps. 65. 1, marg.). How many felicitous and heart-awakening expressions of this character could be gathered. Meanwhile, we would rejoice in the binding together of *patience* and *hope*. The holy buoyancy of hope is united with the submissive restfulness of patience, or “remaining under,” as the root meaning suggests. We think of the exhortation “Let us run with *remaining under*” (Heb. 12.1). The believing life must ever be twofold:—“If we *hope* for that we see not, then do we with *patience* wait for it” (Rom. 8. 25). And the word “waiting” implies an *expectation* stretching out, as it were. Thus we find there is no laziness in patience, nor is there irritation at the *seeming* delay, when the hope is that which maketh not ashamed because the love of God is poured out in our hearts: (Rom. 5. 5. Everything is in harmony when God works. Restfulness, not restiveness, befits the saint. Im patience criticizes God. Patience praises Him. Our waiting time does not choke the hope, nor does the hopefulness diminish the yielded delight to God’s will and way.

OUR PRAYERS.

God does not **need** our prayers
To cause His love to flow:
His love precedes, and shames our cares:
’Tis blest **Himself** to know!
Our prayers God does not **need**
To save a sinner lost:
And yet He loves our prayers to heed,
Though Christ paid **all** that cost.
God did not **need** the word
Of one who once drew nigh:
“Pardoned according to thy word,”
He deigned to make reply.
And prayer is mighty still—
To plead, not change, God’s love,
And bring **us** where His loving will
Pours blessings from above.
Prayer is the fruit of grace,
And prayer has gracious fruit:
’Tis thus we seek, and see, His face,—
His love the hidden root.

“ Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.” Colossians 4. 6.

NOT “ always with salt, seasoned with grace.” How helpful is each verse of Scripture. It is harder to speak to the glory of God than any of us realize. Apart from words which are essentially evil, and statements that are untrue, malicious, and frivolous, there are many utterances which have a wrong tone, an unwise object, or are quite untimely. And it is possible to **begin** a sentence in the Spirit and to **end** in the flesh. It is, moreover, easy to speak on the spur of the moment, or when irritated, or merely because of a talkative tendency, or to go on “ talking and talking ” about nothing — nothing of real value to the heart of hearer or speaker.

When we come to realize that the Holy Spirit has characterized the tongue as a glory (Ps. 16. 9, Acts 2. 26, Ps. 57. 8), we dread lest it should be a fire, an untamed beast, a bitter fountain, an unbridled horse (James 3, 2, 6, 8, 11).

A few applications may illustrate some dangers. To impute **motives** is wrong, and to **generalize**:—“ You have made up your mind already: you **always** act thus.” Again, “ That is a **lie** ” suggests evil intention. If something is not according to fact, why not say, “ That is not quite accurate,” or “ Is that so? ” or in some way seek to “ win,” not to “ provoke ”? What is the spiritual gain of stirring up sin in others? Their impatient reply does not justify us in rousing up the evil within. Love seeks to cover, to bury, to restrain all wrong. How definitely, too, one sees the tendency to pride in us all. The wording, “ Every sensible person knows,” or “ I do not doubt your conscientiousness, only your **inability** to understand even simple things ” or “ You **lack** all logic ”—may wound, but we dare not plead that others ought to be “ humbler.” We should be lowly enough not to ruffle, nor to assume our own logical acumen. To take advantage of “ superior education,” and make others “ look small,” is disgraceful. Let us think what we should desire to be done to us, and let us never speak without loving care for the hearer and **his** blessing, not our own pleasure and exaltation. All language which emphasizes “ I ” is wrong. A pedestal for self is the ruin of likeness to Christ. Let us remember Him, Whose mouth was, and is, most sweet, over Whose lips grace was poured, and like Whom never man spake.

God’s trustful children do not put vague words or human meditations, or any human reasoning between Him and them. And O that sin and waywardness may not come between, as a cloud or even a light mist.

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“ When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.” I Corinthians 8. 12.

A Word of Introduction.

THE rich young man was tested in his claimed love to a neighbour by something concrete, immediate, material. Vague generalities are often spiritual in word, and INTENTION, but unconsciously insincere. “ He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen ? ” I John 4. 20. It is our desire in these pages to encourage ourselves, as well as “ one another,” to that growing in grace which is a “ growing up into Christ in all things,” and which never forgets “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME ? ”—“ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME,” and yet how often we fail in this. Reality, reality, is our need ! And the Holy Spirit does indwell. O that we may not mislead, or wound, fellow saints, nor cause Christ’s little ones to stumble (Matt. 18. 6). We would not only exhort you ; exhort us when you write a letter. Let us be practical. Our Lord is coming soon.

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ECCLESIASTES.

(“ Koheleth,” Heb.).

(Concluded).

The writer now gives the advice as to prayer, and this we have already pondered. The thought of a sacrifice, a Saviour, and fellowship with God being all omitted, we can well understand how the climax is a fear of God’s anger (verses 6 and 7) and the subject is soon changed, without a word of *praise*, or thanksgiving. There can be no Book of Psalms, no “ Praise ye the Lord ” under the sun. This constant changing of subjects is characteristic of the innate restlessness of the investigating mind. The immediate return of thought is to the oppres-

sion of the poor. And we observe that the "I" is altered to the "thou" of instructing another. There is now no surprise at the disappointment: "Marvel not." Life is of such a character that "abundance" increases vanity, and takes away sleep. Only when we see above the sun can there be growth in wisdom *with joy*, and addition of heavenly possessions with real gain. "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. 10. 22). Surely the reader realizes, more and more, the background of the book is that man has fallen (7. 29), and so everything has become disjointed, and the need is a revelation which man cannot "find" and a redemption which man cannot make. In the Lord Jesus we enjoy both. He is the Appointed Key to this book.

Joy is desirable, and the writer seeks it. Ecclesiastes 5. 18-20 says "to enjoy the good," "to rejoice in his labour," "the joy of his heart." God has emphasized joy. The beauty of nature, the rich blending of colour, the sensitiveness of the human palate, the playfulness of the young animal—all illustrate this. But one cannot detach the *present* from the *future*, and the *physical* from the *moral*, and so everything is spoiled. Nothing can be isolated from the fact of *sin*. "There is an *evil* under the sun" (6. 1), "one sinner destroyeth much good" (9. 18), and the "rejoice, O young man" ends up with "God will bring thee into judgment" (11. 9).

We might continue through the book in the same way, selecting for example, the following words in chapter 6 :—

- (a) "With vanity," "in darkness" (4)
- (b) The questions of verses 6, 8, 11, 12,
- (c) "The soul is not filled" (7 margin)
- (d) "As a shadow."

Chapter 7 is more like Proverbs in its wording. It contains sound wisdom as to the foolishness of folly, but it never brings relief, because it knows not the Power and the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1. 24), till the glimpse in 7. 28, and at the end.

Hence the need for limiting even investigation, because of the limitations of the investigator (7. 10) But it is important to see the statement of 1. 15 is now changed to a question in 7. 13. There is room for God to do what man cannot. This is the negative of truth, its positive is in the Epistles, "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6), "What the law could not do . . . God sending His own Son . . . condemned sin . . . that the righteousness of the law might be filled" (Rom. 8. 2-4). The gospel is characterized by the word "full" as completely as Ecclesiastes by its absence. Does not the writer realize now how inappropriate is the argument of those who use this book to teach soul-sleep or annihilation?

But now we have a problem—"Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why should thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why

shouldest thou die before the time?" *Such* words do not befit the law or the gospel. In Christ we cannot be too obedient, or too fully blessed with wisdom from above. But in the sphere of *men*, without revelation, a climax of scrupulousness will only bring to a burden. What does this signify? That life is a contradiction till one finds Christ. It contains *impossibilities*, and the glorious fact is that when a sinner truly feels "I ought to do this and that," and sees that all is beyond him, and will only bring overstrained body and mind, he is lovingly caused to behold a Saviour. God never hides Himself from a broken heart, wherever found. His love is to sinners of all nations. Sin is realized in the chapter as in the very warp and woof of man (20), and its inwardness is shown (22). The tendency of the heart is to blame others for what we too have done (21). The writer is honest, as well as clear-sighted. There is nothing of atheism, nor of hypocrisy in this investigation. *But* the sin is to be restrained, there is no Psalm 51 here. There is no such confession of sin, needing and seeking a Saviour. The "Just One" in Whom we are made the righteousness of God" is not found by human thinking. But—here is a hint of deepest value—it is in this chapter, where the searching is deepest, and the root of evil is seen that "One Man among a thousand" is found. Why? Christ is here! The "Man" is not himself, not a fellow creature, not the first man (verse 29). It is, I submit, plainly, "the Second Man from heaven." Does this contradict the character of the book? *No*, it is God's witness that when a man is at the deepest, to own sin honestly, God will not leave him without revelation of His beloved Son. This enables us to say to those who object that they cannot understand, "If you really do what *you can*, with real honesty, we are convinced God will make known that Glorious One Who has become our Life and our Lord." This is a refreshing thought and in no other book could it have been more appropriately found.

There is a great amount of repetition in Ecclesiastes. And this becomes wearying, because it is the repetition of disappointment (note 12. 12). But all this is part of the very *plan* of the book. It is meant to weary, it is intentionally full of questions unanswered (all might be collected), and the same disheartening words keep on coming up. Again we would remind the reader that atheism is illogical (Ps. 14. 1). Nature leads to God (Rom. 1. 20). Hence the acknowledgment of Him in Ecclesiastes 8. 12, 13 again is *not* revelation. All else would be folly. There must be a judgment, but there is inequality here (14). That which is *seen* does not fit with what is morally certain, hence the background for a needed unveiling. We see but parts of God's ways (Job 26. 14), the secrets of wisdom are indeed double to that which is (Job 11. 6). But God has revealed His ways in our Lord Jesus.

The spectre of death is again in the warp and woof of chapter 9. The forgotten memory and the perished love and

hatred, have nothing to do with annihilation. The burden of Ecclesiastes is what is *seen*, what is "under the sun," and the limitation of inquiry is clearly expressed, "Neither have they any more a *portion* for ever, in anything that is done *under the sun*." Life and labour "under the sun" are the defined subject (verse 9).

For Koheleth to pronounce on things unseen would be out of harmony. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol"—deals with that which is *visible*. No one sent from Hades is seen among men: spiritualism is rightly refuted: that involves demoniacal personification. Man cannot *complete* his *earthly* labours, blessed is our "Blessed Hope" (Tit. 2. 13) after death. We see the dust: *logic compels* recognition of *something more*: but that cannot be seen, and it acts no more "under the sun." The only reasonable inference is that the invisible spirit returns to God (ch. 12. 7). But this involves no share in "devices" or "wisdom" under the sun. How blessed is revelation,—and Philippians 1. 23 and 1 Peter 4. 6: and blessed is our "blessed hope" (Tit. 2. 13).

"Time and chance" (Eccl. 9. 11) seem written on history, calling for One Who, knowing all, will appoint all rightly in eternity. It is "an evil time" now, and he who is limited to his own knowledge must feel the uncertainty. And ingratitude is oft illustrated (9. 15, 16). So the wise man is forgotten, even as the sinner is not remembered (8. 10). The *incompleteness* of that which is visible and present is ever before us. How grateful we are for "the substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things *not seen*." Faith affords a happy contrast with human disappointment, when it is simple trust in One Who is trustworthy.

Chapter 10 illustrates with proverbial brevity the unsatisfactory condition of earth. Little things do much harm, ointment is soon spoiled, a man's wisdom fails, folly is set in great dignity, and babblers pour forth words, food is misused, slothfulness brings decay, and money has too much influence. A philosopher can *see* all this, but how can he right it? How can he deal with the root, with the heart? Again we are shut up to the gospel, and a *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17).

Chapter 11 has some bright shining, referring to God's work in nature. A thoughtful man finds much encouragement here. The confusion of man has not removed God's beneficence in the gift of food. The book has already again and again referred to this. There is thus a balance in the outlook, but nothing of earth can satisfy. *The shadow of the days of darkness hangs in front* (11. 8): "all that cometh is vanity." Hence the joy of the young man (11. 9), and of the days of youth (12. 1), will not remain. The "evil days" are ahead, and the pains and strain of old age are described in the wondrous figurative language of chapter 12. 3-6, where hands, legs, teeth, eyes, hair, spinal cord, brain and heart seem all before us with the solemn climax of death,—the visible dust returns to the earth (Gen. 3. 19). The only reasonable

inference that man has a spirit is maintained, but the return to God Who gave it is all that the writer can say. Revelation is needed to enjoy the present joy of Philippians 1. 23.

And so we reach the closing paragraph (ch. 12. 8), preserving the unity of the book with its opening repetition of the words "Vanity of vanities." Words of truth, and moral rectitude are important, but "weariness of the flesh" abides. We need words of grace and truth, and a personal Saviour. "Fear God and keep His commandments" give the "whole" of *man*. But salvation causes us to know Him as our *Father*, and to rejoice in His will from the heart, and the prospect of beholding our Lord's glory (John 17. 24), and being presented with exceeding joy (Jude 24, 25) far transcends the logical, but sombre, view of every work brought into judgment (Eccl. 12. 14). How thankful, indeed, should our hearts be that God, Who is rich in mercy, has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 4, 6). Truly God hath shined in our hearts to give that which is infinitely beyond the pleasant beholding of the sun (Eccl. 11. 7), even "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6).

Baptism and Salvation.

A LETTER strongly states that I have spoken of immersion as having *nothing* to do with the salvation of the soul, and then Acts. 2. 38 is quoted. May I explain? I am convinced that three *usual* interpretations are not the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

- (1) Some would apply the passage to another dispensation: but has this any *Scriptural* warrant?
- (2) Others would so link baptism and salvation that, unconsciously, they imply that the one who comes to be baptized is, up till that time, dead in sins: hence they open the door for the "baptism" of those unregenerate and thus the dangerous error of including infants.
- (3) Yet others seem almost *afraid* of such verses (cf. 1 Peter 3. 21) because of sad misrepresentation, and deadly theories of "baptismal regeneration." May we not humbly seek and expect God's gracious instruction?

Baptism is "the *request* of a good conscience" (lit.) in 1 Peter 3. 21, so it shows there is life within *first*. It saves *typically, figuratively*, according to this precious verse, and the parallel with the Ark is given. The history of Noah shows that he was a quickened believing soul first, and the sad story of Ham indicates that outward deliverance is not inward, and not eternal.

Have we not the Holy Spirit's key in Acts 2. 40? "Save yourselves FROM THIS UNTOWARD GENERATION." Baptism is *external*, it concerns the outward salvation: it deals with the body. Being baptized in the *Spirit* is contrasted, for that leads to the *infilling* of the Spirit: and the Lord's Supper

typically deals with that which is within, being received as food: not so water baptism. This is not salvation from the wrath of God, but from *fellowship with the world*. O that believers would realize this aspect of salvation. It is seen in Philippians 2. 12-16. But, alas, many can pass through waters of immersion and resume their fashion-dictated clothing, a sad travesty of the pilgrimlike testimony of God's children. In baptism those already saved *within* set forth their prayerful determination to be saved *without*, to walk as saved ones. Remarkably the type in Exodus 12-14 illustrates this. The applied blood of the Passover lamb saved from God's wrath that night, but when Israel passed through the Red Sea they were saved that day out of the hand of the *Egyptians* (Ex. 14. 30). They were the *other* side of the sea, away from the world-nation. And redeemed ones need to show this resurrection-separatedness. If we live as the world, and walk as the world, and talk as the world, our baptism is denied and falsified. Hence immersion, in obedience to our risen Lord has much to do with our responsibility, and with this aspect of manifest salvation from "this untoward generation." O that we may each realize the practical power of the true interpretation of this verse. The enemy has sought to transform a witness of holy separation into a bone of contention, or a mere act of ritual. May we experience God's victory in our lives against these evils.

COMPELLED.

Compulsion is not a favourable word with many. The human heart loves the thought of "freedom," though the meaning is not known till one is born from above, and "in Christ" (John 8. 31, 32).

It is helpful to ponder various *forms* of compulsion that we as believers, may learn more and more, God's way of victory in our daily life. Almost all among us feel a tendency sometimes to stay in bed a little longer, or to fall into some kind of slackness, in which we are not restful that we are truly pleasing God. Hence the theme is deeply practical. May we seek and experience God's grace in overcoming and in "living out" His loving will.

Compulsion may be external, and physical. An iron hand may drag a prisoner, while he struggles against the force that he cannot resist. Again, it may be external, in origin, but mental and moral. For example, human law may compel and forbid actions, with the threat of penalties for disobedience, which deter, since far heavier to bear than the appointed course of action. Through fear of punishment and of disgrace, a man may be forced to do much. This moral compulsion, though, external in its source, becomes accordingly internal, in the response but that is not always willing. It is not absolute, for some will flout Divinely appointed authority, and there are also cases of Christian conscience, unable to *obey*—though respectful,

submissive, and uncomplaining. Or the rule may be authoritative in a place of business, or as to unions and federations. In this case, there is no compulsion to which the believer *must* yield: he can surrender his situation, and trust God simply rather than sin.

Again, the compulsion may come through a logical realization of consequences:—"If I do not work, I shall not eat," or a parent may say, "My children will have nothing." In this case the force of circumstances contributes a (varying) part of the compulsion—physical need and inner affliction provide their quota. And there may also be a real delight in activity, and dislike of idleness, so that this may be almost all *internal* compulsion.

There is another variety of semi-compulsion when a man is the slave of habits and passions, and "feels compelled," it may be, to drink or to utter angry words. How blessed is the joy of devoted obedience, when "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5. 13), and when the appointment of God is a law written on the heart (Jer. 31. 33), so that His will and ours coincide (John 7. 17). This is the precious union of the external and the internal, with its deliverance from the indecision of a distracted mind; The restfulness and peace in harmony with God's revealed purpose must ever be our loving desire, if we are abiding in Christ, and walking in the Spirit. In our beloved Lord's life we see the "must" of glad readiness (John 3. 14, 4. 4, 9. 4). There was no holding off, "I was not rebellious neither turned away back" (Isa. 50. 5). May our walk be more and more as His, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God which has laid hold of those who believe!

Some Common Errors as to Prayer in Gatherings of Saints.

Certain dear brethren feel they cannot find words to say enough, but the *brevity* of *simple* prayer is often much more helpful.

It is a mistake to seek well-rounded expressions, or special terms and tones. Be natural, be childlike.

In like manner, it is not usually the Lord's will to appear to *preach* in prayer. Especially is it a hindrance to all to appear to make up for the omissions of one who has just spoken by mentioning a string of other Scriptures as if to complete or correct his address. Yet more manifestly harmful is the tendency to preach "at" some one, or ones (though flattery and commendation are equally dangerous), or to repeat "your" argument, and standpoint, when a subject has been prayerfully pondered, and some feel that even "you" are not quite Scriptural.

Do not go through the details of controversial conversations with words as, "Thou knowest that we" etc., rather let

there be loving evidence of seeking God's guidance, oneself also, and all the fulness that He has in store for all His own.

Do not use prayer to give an account of varied experiences, and do not let anything in prayer suggest pride, or self-centring. This may be unconscious—but look for discerning wisdom, and let there be a holy breath of love, and a remembrance of "all saints," as well as "all men" (Eph. 6. 18, 1 Tim. 2. 1), with a consciousness of one's own limitations, and limited sphere. And let there be *more worship*, more seeking of God's glory and intense desire that His Name may be hallowed (Jude 20).

PERFECT FAITH.

"FAITH is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "He that cometh to God must have faith that He is." We might therefore infer at once that our Lord's life on earth was one of absolute faith and confidence. John 5. 19 implies one aspect and Hebrews 2. 13, quoting the Psalm, definitely states His full trust. It was this that men mockingly brought against Him (Ps. 22. 8). And the Holy Spirit, after enumerating some pilgrims to whom God gave witness and good report, regarding their faith, presents our adorable Lord as the climax example:—"Looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of *the faith*" (Heb. 12. 2, "our" is in italics here). He, Who was the Truth, always rested in the absolute truthfulness of the perfect appointments of the Father. It is well to recollect the expression "the obedience of faith," and that the same word is used for unbelief and disobedience. Thus our beloved Lord, as our *Forerunner* Who never delayed (Ps. 119. 60) is our Perfect Leader, that we may follow and imitate, with willing love. We should manifest a *fulness* of confidence in all that the Holy Scriptures say as to the past, present, and future, regarding what God has done, is doing, and will do, and all that He has arranged for us to do. "Faith" is a heavenly power, a privilege, a responsibility, and a delight. May our faith grow exceedingly (2 Thess. 1. 3), a faith which worketh by love (Gal. 5. 16).

If we unwisely speak too long, there will be a closing of some hearts when we begin to minister, for the thought will rise up in "Will he go on at length?" We may blame **them**, when we should rather seek grace, and wisdom, and humbling, for ourselves.

It is easy to put forth a number of facts and expositions in prayer, to impress the hearers, instead of being impressed ourselves to speak with **God**. The notes on Scripture may be excellent in themselves, yet they may hinder **prayer**.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"In Thy presence is fulness of joy: At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

THE music of praise is the fruit of redeemed lips (Heb. 13. 15). A hope-less life is hopeless: it is mere existence. Faith, living faith, embraces promises, and, mounting above circumstances, rejoices in hope of that Day. The cultivation of a cult, or the maintenance of mere orthodoxy or the arrangement of activity can never be THE centre or aim of a yielded, and presented life. The believer seeks God's presence, God's will, God's purpose, God's glory. His pleasure becomes His people's pleasure. The psalm before us shows this attitude perfectly set forth by the Lord Jesus. That His redeemed may follow Him in the path of simple faith and glad obedience, in united and personal separation from this age, and its ways and wishes, are these pages again thankfully sent forth.

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Are the "trumpets" literal in fulfilment?

THE trumpets are suitably "warnings" of the coming battle. Thus the hail is literal as in Exodus. I have been impressed with the *third* part and God's limiting mercy. The first *vial*, however, is equally linked with the earth, but there is no one-third limitation. So the second trumpet and second vial (each on "the sea"): how solemnly God increased the marks of judgment. You will notice "fire" in all the first four in some way or other, and these are the ones associated with one-third (7 is often 4+3; 12=4×3 as Rev. 21 shows, four sides).

The fifth trumpet I accept as literal—evil powers let out from the abyss (the angel has the key: as God allowed a wicked Sennacherib in Isa. 10, so He can permit evil spirits

power to punish men. Cf. deliverance to Satan in 1 Cor. 5). Returning to the second and third—there is no difficulty in a mountain being moved, nor a star, remembering that the Holy Spirit uses the same word for a “fixed” star and a “shooting” star so that there may be anything between the sizes of these included. Some heavenly “body” is burnt up in part, and brought into the sphere of earth’s attraction. The references in Matthew 24, 29 seem later. The trumpets in Revelation 8 are premonitory, *before the Day of the Lord*. There are always *parallels* in God’s dealings. It is solemnizing in chapter 9 to see torment five months and yet no sign of repentance. Men wish to escape torment, not sin. The appearances of these evil powers is not strange when we recollect the Holy Spirit with the form of a dove, but here these evil powers have horrible forms reminding of a ruined earth. The stress on locusts and stings and scorpions all show what sin has brought.

As to the vials the prophet saw these in vision; picturing *quick* judgment (shallow phials), not earthly “vials,” but seen in heaven, and this indicates God’s visualizing to His servant the *storing* of appointed judgment.

BELIEVING PRAYER.

PRAYER is not a means of getting what “I” like, but of seeking God’s own perfect will; not an attempt to obtain a blessing lazily, but the pouring out of the heart before God. It is, in the experience of a happy believer, quite contrasted with ritual or form. There is no “distance” of approaching an unknown supreme Being, but reverent intimacy of children of God speaking with their Father. Prayer is not a vague, indefinite “something” but a spiritually enjoyed *communion*. And it is not limited to requests. Entwined with loving petitions there is ever thanksgiving (Phil. 4, 6, Col. 4, 2). Worship, too, is God’s graciously revealed seeking: rather let us notice that He seeks “worshippers” (John 4, 23, 24), for He delights in the whole person, and not only in what we bring to Him. His love is toward us, and He is waiting to bestow on us more and more of that which He has prepared as soon as we are more and more ready to receive this. O how blessed it is to be a child of God, and how wondrous are our privileges. May our hearts go out in love to Him and may our prayer life ever be deepened to the praise of His glory. Times of prayer do not exclude the ejaculatory uplifting of the heart, but that privilege should never make us unmindful of the longer seasons of definite waiting upon God. Thus will He be glorified in the all-round growth of spiritual life, and our experience will indeed be “praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20).

The Lord never encourages unbelief or despondency, but stimulates faith that is the witness against presumption as well.

Over-Organization, a Sign of Selfishness.

WHY is there so much “planning”? Is it not often because men cannot trust one another? Thoughtlessness and carelessness, or self-centredness combine to cause continual problems, and men seek to rectify by regulations, rationing, and multitudinous bureaus. We would not suggest that there is *no* “planning” when love exists. But the disease of the human heart is ever being manifested, and so many things are sought by rules and restrictions which ought to be spontaneous. Much organization is a human attempt to curb the human self-will. It is essentially external. A healthy living organism works harmoniously from within: it is *God’s* contrast with man’s organization.

Nation cannot trust nation: hence millions of pounds are wasted in control and prosecution, if not in *destruction*. Class cannot trust class: hence the interminable conflict of capital and labour, and the attempt to regulate in measure. Smouldering fires are not *put* out. Man cannot trust man: hence legal and police provisions—elaborate and costly. Love is the centre of God’s law, but the absence of it is largely the background of man’s law. The human race is *fallen*. Regeneration and a new creation are the only ground of blessing. The Millennium has not come, nor can man bring it in.

The results of war make the evil more *evident*: that is all. Disorganization of man’s dead international machine causes trouble after trouble, and the remedy is often worse than the disease, or aggravates it or transfers it. Man cannot trust his fellow. The ruined heart is essentially selfish. Hence, whether one be a capitalist or a communist, he cannot appreciate the standpoint of others.

Large dividends and strikes are alike symptoms, and many will do, or omit, certain actions, regardless of *final* consequences and *others*, because of *present* determination to protect *themselves*. Such is man by nature and practice.

How blessed to turn from all this to behold the Lord of the glory Who gave Himself for us! And how wondrous should be the effect of grace in believers. Not only should they be outside strikes and Stock Exchanges alike, but outside the spirit of this age. Union with Christ emancipates from the bondage of man’s unions, and unification. Separation is a reality. The believer should honour authorities, he should realize the impossibility of lasting blessing before Christ comes, and happily illustrate the pilgrim life, with a living love to others. The will of God, and not “success,” should be his joy: the will of God is *true* success (Jos. 1, 8). The address on the mount is not meant to be popular, but only the redeemed who seek to fulfil it can have true “peace.” A selfish world is *restless*. The Lord gives calm and joy.

The Coming of the Lord is not a theory for an academic discussion, but “that Blessed Hope” for daily life.

The Deep Importance of the Holy Scripture.

The New Testament opens with the repeated stress on the words "That it might be fulfilled," referring to the authority of God's written message. And the last chapter of the last book emphasizes, more than ever any other, "the sayings of this book," and the peril of adding or taking away one word.

Again and again in the New Testament we find PROOF of whatever is set forth, simply by a Scripture quotation: that is ever *final*. A doubt is never regarded as rightly possible.

When our Lord Jesus met the tempter in the wilderness, *each* time He Himself used the Scripture.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus declared that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35), and that Moses wrote of Him (John 5. 46), that they all testified of Him (John 5. 39), speaking of the law and the prophets and the psalms (Luke 24. 44). On the cross He quoted Holy Scripture; two or three times (Matt. 27. 46, John 19. 28, 30).

The addresses in the Book of Acts are full of Scripture, and likewise the Epistles. Thus in the testimony to the unregenerate and in the encouragement of believers alike, we find this holy emphasis.

The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they searched the Scriptures daily, and therefore many of them believed (Acts 17. 11, 12). The *longest* psalm is full of stress on the Scriptures, and constantly shows the intense delight of God's servant in them. It was when Daniel was meditating on the Scriptures that he was moved to a beautiful prayer, which is followed by a fuller revelation of Messiah, and a repetition of the testimony that the one who thus loved Scripture was himself greatly beloved (Dan. 9. 2).

We remember the words "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by *inspiration of God*" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). In all ages, and in growing up unto the completed salvation the words of God are essential (1 Peter 2. 2, 3).

In view of all this, what shall our immediate attitude be? Shall we neglect them, or prayerfully feed on them (Jer. 15. 16)? Shall we become irregular, or shall we esteem the words of God's lips more than our necessary food (Job 23. 12)? So many dear children of God, through lack of "purpose of heart" only "intend," and get no further, but falter in carrying out, with corresponding spiritual loss. So many presume to "procrastinate." Quoting Scripture with the striking emphasis on the Holy Spirit, and His *present* working, the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks to our inmost heart-feeling, "wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, *To day*, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (3. 7, 8). May our living, loving response lead to revived freshness of experience, and Christlikeness in

the whole attitude, and little things, of godly living, and to earnest witness, in the Holy Spirit—to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

The Believer in Holy Antagonism to Sin

(In 1 John).

"And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth* us from all sin" 1. 7.

"If we *say* that we have *no sin*, we deceive ourselves." 1. 8.

"If we *confess* our sins . . ." 1. 9.

"If we *say* that *we have not sinned*, we make Him a liar."

1. 10.

"That ye *sin not*" 2. 1.

"If any man *sin*, we have an *Advocate*." 2. 1.

"He is the *Propitiation* for our sins" 2. 2.

"Your sins are *forgiven* you" 2. 12.

"He was manifested to *take away* our sins." 3. 5.

"Whoso abideth in Him *sinmeth not*." 3. 6.

"Whoso is born of God *doth not commit sin*; for *His seed* abideth in him; and he (or it—the seed) *cannot sin*, because he (it) is born of God." 3. 9.

"Whosoever is born of God *sinmeth not*" 5. 18.

There are also other words as "unrighteousness" and the reference to special examples of sin as lying, and the believer's holy hatred thereof, and his honest concern as to the sins of others (5. 16). But we notice above so much that speaks to our heart as to the complete saving work of our Lord Jesus, and the result in a *new* life which is God's "seed," and which never fails, so that, though we would humbly acknowledge that sin is in us, and humbly confess our sins, yet we would ever expect to experience victory, and to realize that we cannot continue in sin, or be characterized by this, but by a definite overcoming contrast, in the power of the Holy Spirit. What possibilities are found in the believing life! Glory be to God.

"LITTLE MEETINGS."

DRAISE God for saints in villages, and elsewhere, willing for little meetings on the happy line of His will, and to His glory. There are some special difficulties, which call for special prayer. When all know one another intimately, the enemy seeks to produce disparagement and friction. But shall we not have the victory over this?

Further, only one or two brethren (usually) can minister helpfully the word of grace, and these feel much *their need*, for continual freshness.

It is far, far easier to preach to strangers, and in a new place, where the message and manner will be less usual, and thus more "naturally" appreciated. Those of us serving often

in one sphere should examine ourselves lest we become dull, or think "anything will do" for a "little meeting," or lest we brood over the undervaluing of our labour by those who hear our ministry so frequently. This is not always easy for *them*. We are not without our repetitions, mannerism and defects. Let us sympathize with *them*.

The same voice, the same accent, the same expressions may so naturally become flat. The hearers would rejoice to hear God's message through other helpful saints, and not *wrongly*. They know us *well*, and possibly our lives do not in everything uphold our utterances. Every little inconsistency is seen in a "little meeting." Let us seek more grace, and more power. We all need to be more conscious of our limitations, and more earnest to give our best, even to a handful.

There is an attraction in large gatherings, and in variety of speakers and of manner. To hear hundreds sing *together*, and to have fresh voices in prayer must be affecting. There is a stimulus, there is a brightness and it is not all to be viewed as natural excitement, though part may be. God has given us a body, and He uses "*means*" to refresh even those who are deeply spiritual. And younger and weaker believers may soon feel the absence of enthusiasm and scope in a "little meeting" which seems to need much more spiritually than a larger one. Remembering these things let us pray for much more personal enthusiasm and brightness, and true overflowing, and intimate nearness to the Lord, pray for enlargement of "little meetings" without broadening, and pray for "one another," in the Holy Spirit.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Genesis 1. 3.

God spake, and it was done:

Commanded—it stood fast!

He is the Mighty One,

His plan and work will last:

And in our hearts the light He gave,

And deigned rebellious ones to save.

God speaks, and *is it done*

In our obedience still?

Redeemed by His dear Son,

Do *we* reflect His will?

Is there a joy that ne'er delays,

That gladly walks in all His ways?

God speaks— it *will* be done,

Our Lord will come *again*;

The foe may fight, but none

Can war with Him sustain:

Our glorious Lord will take His throne,

And reign in peace, earth's King alone!

ANNOYED.

IT was not that I was deeply angry, it was only "that the action was 'annoying,'" and I was "annoyed." We use this word, and also "irritated," to extenuate a wrong *feeling*. It may not be expressed, but *it is there*. Who am I, that I should be annoyed? I should be too high, AND too low, to be irritated. Too high, for are not saints in restful communion with God? Too low, for I am nothing, and have no rights to vindicate: in myself I deserve *nothing*. Too high, for the believer should live above circumstances. Too low, for the one who has been crucified with Christ has judged the self-life as condemned, and he who is as the off-scouring of all things (1 Cor. 4. 13) sees God's gracious humbling in every difficulty, with a view to His lifting up in due time. Sanctified trials are stepping stones to glory. Why should I be annoyed, if I *know* that God is over all, and working out His purpose? Why should I be annoyed, if the test will bring honour to Him, and blessing now, and in that Day to myself? If I shrink from the path of *victory*, I shall lose the reward to lay at His feet. Why should I be annoyed if a man of this world, whose vain ascendancy is but for a moment, gives me a very temporary rebuff? I can afford to suffer the loss of a tinsel farthing of present reputation, since all saints have unlimited wealth in a sure and heavenly bank. Why should I be annoyed, when I am so far better off than the one who annoys? He harms himself rather than me. Should I not pity, and love? May not a soft answer turn away wrath, and break the bones in blessing, and even "win," the most unlikely? "Annoyance" is a sign of weakness and of cowardice: therein lurks the fear of "a man that shall die." Unchanged calm is a token of true strength. "Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace" (Isa. 26. 3).

But how can I conquer worry? You cannot—in yourself. Argument will not do it; *saying* "I will not worry" does not stop the inner gnawing; *indifference* to annoyance is only another sin; proud contempt is evil. What then is the deliverance? Rather "In Whom is the victory?" "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me" is the inspired answer (Phil. 4. 13). You and I cannot be self's victors over self, but we can be victorious in *Himself*, and we would trust Him more, and trust Him simply, and trust Him now. The Living Lord has living words, and we would live by the faith of Him Who liveth in us (Gal. 2. 20).

Worry is a thief: it robs us of praisefulness, it robs God of glory. It takes away our joy, our peace and our testimony. It makes life a burden instead of a privilege. Why do any of us choose a burden, and set aside the blessedness of simple childlike trust?

PRIVILEGES.

WE are all naturally inclined to grumble, but when we are born from above it is natural to the new creation to give thanks. This is a blessed privilege.

We often fail to realize the many mercies we have received, and do receive. Are we not in a measure of health beyond many? For every member—for our seeing, hearing, etc., for our faculties and mental abilities—we should give thanks. We were born in a land where we received education, and so can read, and where the Scriptures exist in the vernacular. And we were born amid surroundings of unhindered reading of God's truth. Some of us were reared in a believing home. Others had no opposition there. Yet others, though opposed, were thereby strengthened. Many of us were brought to Christ early in life. God granted to us Christian friends who advised, encouraged, helped. A meeting or a magazine may have been used of God to His glory in our lives. And how many unknown privileges have been ours, in the Holy Spirit's impression on our heart of some verse of Scripture, leading to godly separation, growth and fruit, and in His preservation from such friendship, or teaching, that might have lead us astray. Nor would we forget the many times we might have entered a vehicle, meeting an accident, or, during war time, have been permanently injured, by a slight deflection of a bomb. Our unknown privileges by escaping dangers are often more than those of which we know. "Often"?—"Always"—infinitely more. Are we thankful as we should be?

Even trials are privileges, permitted in love that we may learn patience, grow in grace, and be able to encourage those in other trials, with the comfort we have received from God. Our whole life is one of privilege, if centred around the greatest privilege, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour. To Him be glory.

Illness is not ill, if we realize that God permits for a purpose. It is not sin, but because of sin it has come into the world, even as death. It may, or may not, be through special sin (see John 9. 3, James 5. 15). To view it, apart from everything else, as something of which we would get rid is wrong: yet merely to wish to retain it would be neither natural, nor spiritual. The right attitude is expressed in gratefulness to God for His permission of it, and His lessons in it, and prayerful desire to learn these, and then, if God will, to be relieved of that which strains, unless its continuance will cause more fruit for Him.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised." Jeremiah 33. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

FOURTEEN times do we find "the days come" in this, the longest book of Holy Scripture (FIVE books of Psalms are together, 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150). And every time we have a "Behold" (or "Lo"), that the eyes of our heart may be open. God has given "exceeding great and precious promises," and new "days" will be granted, and Palestine again become "the land of the Lord," Jerusalem "a praise in the earth," and Israel His inheritance. We rejoice in the certainty of His words, and would now live as those who are moved by a living faith today. Our pilgrim attitude, our happy expectation, our prayerfulness are alike marvellously stimulated as we realize God's realities. With this object, to God's glory, are these pages sent forth, with gratitude to Him Who for our sakes died and rose again, and in Whom we have "become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

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"LET NONE OF YOU SUFFER AS A MURDERER, YET IF AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED."

1 Peter 4. 15, 16.

A CHRISTIAN is the reverse of a murderer, a thief, an evil doer, a busybody or interferer. The believer has a worthy Name by which he is called (Jas. 2. 7), and the other literal rendering is, "Let Him glorify God in this Name." We not only call on the Name of the Lord, but are called by His Name. We are privileged to bear His Name (Acts 9. 16). It is usual for a bride to receive the husband's name, and this removes her own (cf. Ps. 45. 10).

Ezra 2. 61 refers to a contrast, but these sought their register in vain. Blessed be God, those who are a new creation in Christ Jesus will not seek in vain. They have been "bought with a price," and are His. He will not forsake the work of His own hands. The word rendered "called" in Acts 11. 26 is used in Scripture only for a Divine declaration (e.g. "warned of God" in Heb. 11. 7). It is not what we call ourselves, but what God calls us that counts. The apostle was deeply concerned that children of God should not be blamable (1 Pet. 2. 20), but only suffer for righteousness' sake (1 Pet. 3. 14):— "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2. 12).

The responsibility to maintain the reputation of our Lord is real. We should never drag down His honour to the dust. He is "worthy" (Rev. 5. 12), worthy of all. Our concern should be lest His Name be blasphemed by our failures (Isa. 52. 5), lest any should mockingly say, "These are the people of the Lord" (Ezek. 36. 20). Rather should we be as Daniel (chap. 6. 5), and Mary (Mark 14. 3-8). Let it be our joy to adorn God's doctrine, that others may have no evil thing to say of us, except it be falsely (Matt. 5. 11, Titus 2. 8, 11).

When believers hold, consistently and at all times, an altogether higher standard of business integrity than men of the world, when their whole character is upright and gracious, when they never complain of circumstances, but in everything give thanks, when they walk in wisdom toward them that are without, when they never use their tongues angrily, nor sharply, nor as a piercing sword, but their speech is "always with grace, seasoned with salt," then will there be a manifest revival among saints, and a very fruitful witness to those who at present know Him not.

EXCUSES.

HOW easy and natural they are. We blame "circumstances," and "others," or extenuate failures because of our limitations and bodily strain. Then we look round and see that many, whom we esteem, have done "this" or "that," and so, comparing or contrasting ourselves, we make yet further excuses. A holy confession and frankness before God, an unwillingness to "overlook," yet a gracious deliverance from a brooding remorse, an openhearted repentance, with realization of God's forgiveness and delivering power—these are needed today. Yes, they are needed—in our lives personally, that there may be a fuller spiritual growth, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

Sin:—Direct and Indirect Results.

HAVE we ever thought how different everything would be if SIN were not in the world? National barriers and misunderstandings, personal estrangements and suspicions, language problems and time-wasting mistakes, diseases and death accidents and defects of hearing, sight, etc., fears and anxieties are, one and all, the results of SIN.

And how the use of *time* would be changed if there were no diseases to heal, no weak ones to attend, and visit, no burials, no cemeteries—no wars, no legal quibbles and quarrels, no trade disputes, strikes, or unfair dealings, nor possibilities of these if unchecked—no fires, losses, breakages, wearing out, or dirt, and so forth. How many hours we all spend on our own defects and those of others, and on the multitudinous results of SIN.

These things are not realized by many. But how wonderfully God overrules them in the fallen condition of men. He overrules disease and weakness to teach human sympathy. He appoints ill effects of indulgence, whether on food or other things, to deter, or prevent automatically, the varied forms of gluttony. He ordains time-taking occupations, else men would not know how to use leisure, but misuse in vain luxury, in restless and "pleasureless pleasure," in lust, and wantonness. The "brake" on sin is often mercifully granted by the bitter effects of sin.

Thus, moreover, God shows men their own evil and failure, and draws many a poor lost soul to the only Saviour of sinners. How many have felt their need on the background of illness, loss, disgust with the disappointing attractions of earth, and depression. God mercifully brings men to an end of themselves that they may seek His face, ere judgment falls (Heb. 9. 27).

We have thus referred to the direct and final consequences in judgment and wrath. Likewise we remember the more than overruling effect in God's grace, even the precious coming of the Lord Jesus into the world, to live the only sinless life, and to die for the lost, bearing the judgment of sin for such (2 Cor. 5. 21), that those who are brought to believe in Him might be saved and united to Him, and experience even now the power of His resurrection, and a life of victory amid evil. Glory be to God for His great grace.

"Principles," instead of a personal Lord, must never be the reason for our actions, else all will tend to become formal, and we shall gradually be more concerned about our consistency with our own previous attitude than with pleasing Him now. Our reputation must never take the place of His glory.

Why am I ever weary of that which brings glory to Him
Who gave Himself for me?

RELAXATION.

OUR Heavenly Father has appointed relaxation. He giveth to His beloved sleep (Ps. 127. 2). A workman could not continue arduous labour for 18 hours daily at a stretch. One may omit sleep in emergency of care for the dying, but could not keep it up. The sabbath was made for man with the thought of *rest*. God's appointments are wise. We forget these in much "mechanized" modern life, but human wisdom often shows itself to be folly. And believers, though renewing their strength, need some relief. Even our beloved Lord though going about and always doing the will of the Father, was not continually in an intensity like to that in Gethsemane. He sat on the well of Samaria, when weary, and *slept* in the boat. True rest is not waste.

"Relaxation." We think of severer bodily injuries when the nerves are tense, and there is a fall. Relaxation would have helped. But, though we should always be free from the nerve-strain of worry, we need the *Lord's* own arrangement, in relaxation as well as in work. It is frequently called "re-creation," a beautiful word, though usually misused. WE cannot "re-create." Alas, that the world's idea is normally mad pleasure; but a non-stop dance, and indulgence in sensationalism or wine, are alike the reverse of recreation and recuperation.

Quietness is unpopular among men. If we visit a fair for gospel testimony, and notice the amusement of *whirling* "carriages," jostling into one another. The world is excited, feverish, mad.

Believers need to be prayerful as to *their* mode of relaxation. Some have chosen "light" reading, to their harm, and have given a saddening example. Others have been off duty, and joined in frivolity in the social season. The "relief" has not been in accord with godliness. The over-strain, dulness and hard solemnity of some who have felt they must be always studying or working, and who have forced weary limbs and minds beyond God's will in nature, are a beacon, but must not be made any reason for sinful *reaction*. We have thought of those who have appointed, in monasteries, (a) "fixed hours;" (b) rising almost at midnight; (c) the reading of a religious book to all at meal times; (d) silence as to homely talk, and so forth—with the inevitable reaction of pent up nature, or a mental breakdown. *The* remedy is true spirituality which sanctifies the *little* things, and can eat and drink to the glory of God, which can enjoy the loving play of a child with its parents, and can be refreshed by frolicsome young life in animals, and can realize God's blessing on a long walk.

These things can be made holy, not cast out as wasteful, provided they do not hinder seasons of worship, or of meetings, or make the Lord's Day like to a week day, or become dispropo-

portionate, but are ever "in the Spirit." In *all* circumstances our gracious God will guide the yielded life, for He has revealed the encouraging fact that "the meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way."

The Right Hand and the Left.

THE infant cannot distinguish his two hands (Jonah 4. 11) : how wondrous is the gradual growth of knowledge : so should it be with the spiritual infant (1 Pet. 2. 2, 3). When we grow up in the Lord, we should ever know the *right* ear, hand and foot (Lev. 14. 14, 17), and the *right* side (John 21. 6) of *His* appointment.

In another sense, however, we need to be kept from *any* turning out of *the* way, even that which *seems* to be right (Deut. 5. 32, Jos. 1. 7, see Prov. 16. 25). This has a bearing on Isaiah 30. 21 and God's preventing love if we *begin* to turn, though observe the voice is "behind," for we have *then* failed to be guided by His eye (Ps. 32. 8).

In Matthew 6. 3 we are reminded of *our* own left hand, and the danger of the unjudged self life with its pride. O that we may have victory in the Holy Spirit. 1 Chronicles 12. 2 gives a bright aspect, the *all-round* fitness of some of David's helpers. We probably find *our* limitations in the use of the left hand, but how we need the spiritual devotedness and ability of *all* our faculties to God's glory !

" THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT."

2 Corinthians 9. 15.

Nature is rich, its fulness none can measure,
 But greater far the riches of God's grace:
 "In Christ" we have how infinite a Treasure,
 And no comparison can e'er take place.
 Thanks be to God ! He gave His Son, redeeming
 A ruined people, now His own for aye,
 And none too much their Lord can be esteeming ;
 His love, His work will never pass away.
 Thanks be to God ! our *life* should be devotion.
 Unspeakable His Gift ; yet we would bring
 All praise to Him, though but a drop of ocean,
 He welcomes when of His dear Son we sing.
 Unspeakable ! Beyond *our* love's expression !
 Eternity will not exhaust *His* love !
 He is the Theme, the Joy of our confession,
 And soon Himself His own will meet above.

“EXCEPT THE CORN OF WHEAT . . .”

John 12. 24.

THESE well known words have a deep meaning for you and me, if we are children of God. The primary reference is to the Lord Jesus, suggested by an overlooked “the”—“The Corn of Wheat”—is a joy to those who themselves are part of His “much fruit.” And since our life is His and the fruit of His finished work, no power of Satan shall frustrate His covenant love. Then there comes to our heart a realization of the privilege and joy of resultant fruit for Him. The “much fruit” of John 15. 8 is blessedly associated—a holy contrast with the “no fruit” of Matthew 21. 19, Luke 13. 6, 7 and John 15. 2. But John 12. 25 must not be overlooked. The basis and background of life that *abides* is death. In Adam we see life leading to death. In Christ we behold life by *His* death. And the effect of this principle is found in the godly experience of redeemed ones. He was our Substitute, and we have been crucified with Him, that we may now live in Him (Gal. 2. 20). But the death with Him needs to be realized. If the natural worldly life is still encouraged, there cannot be fruit. Only as we daily live on resurrection ground (Col. 3. 1) can there be this result unto His glory.

The Missionary bearing of this passage is thus felt. True service is not commercial propaganda. We know Christ as our Substitute first, and then as our Lord and Example. He died bearing the wrath of God, and also was the object of man’s attack. *God’s* judgment was on Him that we might be free; *man’s* judgment on Him shows we are *not* to be free from bearing His reproach (Heb. 13. 13). Fruitful service is a renunciation of popular ideas. Men call it “unearthly” and “too sacrificial.” True missionary labour gladly gives up. The willingness of saints to suffer is precious. God’s work flourishes as there is the contrast with human schemes of so-called success.

Our Needs, and How they are Met.

JOHN felt a need “I have need to be baptized of Thee” (Matt. 3. 14). How blessedly is this fulfilled (1 Cor. 12. 13). It is well to be conscious of our utter dependence. The Lord spoke definitely against the contrary attitude (Matt. 9. 12, Luke 15. 7), and we remember Revelation 3. 17.

But how great the joy to have a constant sufficiency, because of the gracious supply of all fulness in Christ (Col. 2. 9). We rejoice in John 13. 10, and the complete blessing, making saints meet for the inheritance.

We praise God too for Divine teaching to preserve from error (1 Thess. 4. 9, 5. 1, 1 John 2. 27). Nor would we forget the glorious future (Rev. 21. 23, 22. 5). “I am” was the answer to the disciple’s fears on the sea, and to John’s in Revelation 1. 17, and it is still the answer of love to us. Where

the Lord is, there is no want. “They need not depart” (Matt. 14. 16). Why? Only *five* loaves. “Bring them hither to Me” (verse 18). “Out of *His* fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Saints should never become needy as those in Hebrews 5. 12. May we as a result of mercy, show mercy, and, since our needs are met, ever illustrate love to “one another” (Acts 2. 45, 4. 35, 20. 34, Rom. 12. 13, Eph. 4. 28, 29, Phil. 2. 25, 4. 16-19). Physically, and spiritually, how much we may do, to be a blessing to fellow saints, for Christ’s sake!

Man’s Thinking, Contrasted with God’s Unveiling, Our Lord’s Own Witness.

MEN think: but *their* thoughts are not God’s thoughts (Isa. 55. 8, 9). They are too low, they are not heavenly, they are of the earth, earthy and earthly (John 3. 21, 8. 23, cf. Matt. 16. 2). Men could see in the Lord Jesus “a great Man” (Matt. 16. 14), and so can modern Judaism, and Mohamedanism, and Unitarianism—and Atheism also. But all is vitiated. A revelation is needed, a heart-revelation, to perceive the *essential* glory of the Lord Jesus. “Thou art *the* Christ, *the* Son of the Living God.” There is none other to whom these words can be applied. The Lord Jesus is not the first among equals, but altogether beyond others. *They* are created, *He* is the Creator, *they* need salvation, *He* is the Saviour. His commendation was always associated with a realization of *His* glory, and absolute faith in His power, (Matt. 15. 28), a willingness to love Him more than all earthly love (Matt. 10. 37), a willingness to follow Him at all costs (Luke 9. 57-62) and a devotion that appeared to men extreme (Matt. 26. 10-13). Only thus can He be really known and honoured.

And *then* we behold, and hear, His testimony as to Himself and as to the Church. “The Rock” in the Old Testament is a Name of God, not of a man. It is His glory, and not the description of doctrine. Not Peter’s confession, but the One Whom he confessed, is the Rock, the One Rock. And observe how the Lord Jesus sets forth Himself *always* in relation to His people, He is the Foundation—the Rock:—He is the Builder—I will build:—He is the Possessor—My Church. We rest on *Him*, we live because of *Him*, we belong to *Him*. All is His glory. The *Church* is neither the Foundation, nor the Constructor, nor the Owner! He is All in all. And He will not be without His redeemed; blessed be His Name.

To see a fallen man as “the Rock” is the sin of Romanism: to suggest true *doctrine* as the Rock is out of harmony with the context. The stones of the Church are persons, the Foundation is a Person. ’Tis not truth without *the* Truth, but all truth realized in *Himself*, and all confession centred in Himself. We can never love, know or exalt Him too much!

The USE of a Language, and its Spiritual Suggestions.

WHEN we talk in our mother tongue there is a freedom of speech, and we express accurately what is in our heart, But how often when one learns *another* tongue there is initial hesitation—and occupation of mind with the grammar, and with the constant fear of a mistake. Is it not so in the spiritual life? If we are born from above and walk with God, should there not become manifestly a happy *freedom* in expressing His will, by life and lip alike? Should not the language of God have become our own language, and should we not be at home in His appointments? If we are continually uncertain, or even if the great fear of making a mistake is uppermost, is there not an occupation with things instead of the spiritual freshness which comes from *communion* with God, and *living in*, and by the words of His mouth? O that there may be a godly concern to adorn His doctrine by a holy contrast with awkwardness.

The stultified Christian life will not be a joyful one, nor will it attract to Him, even though it has much outward accuracy. We must not, however, forget that those who employ their mother tongue easily may, through ignorant upbringing, through carelessness or unwillingness to be corrected, or to use a standard dictionary, fall into errors. How important then that young believers should grow in godly surroundings, and that we all should welcome correction, and, when doubtful as to truth, not delay to refer to the "standard" authority of God's own written words.

Further, the fullest knowledge may be hindered by a nervous stuttering, and spiritual intelligence may be unexpressed through a depression of heart, and spiritual nerve strain. Moreover, the best language may be marred by a harsh manner, or a grating voice, or an accentless monotony. How precious, therefore, is a condition of present spiritual health that heavenly wisdom may not be presented in an uninviting manner. So let us seek to grow up into Christ in all things (Eph. 4. 15).

Often we omit something and then, drawing an "inference" of our own, become somewhat **one-sided**. We read other Scriptures in the light of this condition and next misunderstand other beloved brethren. Next there is a rift, and soon a permanent cleavage, with a measure of wrong "feeling." O that God may prevent this and that we may seek grace to judge these tendencies and all that leads to our "divisions," in the gracious (and ever present) ministry and power of the Holy Spirit.

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The Student of Scripture.

Founded by Percy W. Heward, Edited by E. Kirk.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."
1 Thess. 4. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

ALL our readers will, by the time they receive this issue, have heard of the "home-call" of the beloved former Editor of this magazine. He had prepared for the present number, but, as many have desired a permanent record of the proceedings at the interment of our brother's body, all that had been made ready for printing has been held over in order to find space for such a record. May it be to the praise of God's glory, and the comfort of His children.

The "Sowing" of the body of a brother beloved,

PERCY W. HEWARD,

IN

The City of London Cemetery, Ilford,

ON

May 13th. 1948.

ABOUT one hundred and fifty friends from many parts assembled at the meeting room in Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, and a similar number gathered at the graveside.

Brethren from Switzerland, London, Mansfield, Ullesthorpe, Stockport, and Glemsford, led in prayer, and the Scriptures read were First Corinthians 15. 34—57, Philippians 1, and Romans 8. 28. Hymns Nos. 97, 103 and 11 were sung.

Addresses were given in the afternoon by Mr. C. P. Bennett, in the room, and Mr. E. Kirk at the grave-side; in the evening, Mr. W. Ellis ministered to those gathered in the meeting room.

ADDRESS BY MR. C. P. BENNETT.

THE TWO BODIES (1 Cor. 15. 40, 41).

How comforting it is to children of God to contemplate their Heavenly Father's provision for their glory. This is especially so when the mortal remains of one taken by death are still in their midst. The Holy Spirit uses natural things to illustrate this provision, as, There are four kinds of flesh—on earth—Three kinds of glory—in the heavens (verses 39, 41), and two kinds of Bodies, one Celestial (Heavenly), one Terrestrial (Earthly), and while still living, both have a distinct glory. This is declared in 1 Cor. 11. 7, "The man is the image and glory of God, the woman is the glory of the man." This is true of all who are saved by God's grace. Moreover, our mortal body is spoken of as, "Our earthly house of this tabernacle" and our Resurrection body as "A building of God, a house not made with hands, ETERNAL in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1-4). How comforting then is all this provision and so wonderful!

When death takes place the mortal remains have no glory. The glory goes and a five-fold described condition takes its place, the first of which is found in v. 37 and is very precious. "That which thou sowest . . . bare grain" (seed or kernel). The same word is used of our blessed Lord Jesus in John 12-24. "a Corn of Wheat," with emphasis on sowing, not burying. The remaining four conditions are described in verses 42-44:—

"It is sown in corruption."

"It is sown in dishonour."

"It is sown in weakness."

"It is sown a natural body."

Here is a list which saddens us, but it is followed by a four-fold description list which gladdens us, as:—

"It is raised in incorruption"

"It is raised in glory"

"It is raised in power"

"It is raised a spiritual body"

and bears the Image of the Lord from heaven as in verses 47-49:—

"There are celestial (heavenly) bodies"

These were sometimes seen by saints of old, as—The three men of Gen. 18. 2; one was the Lord, two were angels; Captain of the host of the Lord" (Joshua 5. 13); Man of God (An Angel) (Judges 13. 3, 6); "A Man above upon it" (Ezek. 1-26); "Part of a Man's Hand" (Dan. 5. 5). Then there are those who were beheaded in their earthly bodies, but who live and reign with Christ a thousand years in their celestial (heavenly) Resurrection bodies. They sit on thrones, they live and reign with Christ. How precious! None of these

have bodies of Adam's race, they are celestial (heavenly) and glorious. The passing of our beloved brother is to those of us who have known him for over forty years not just the passing of one person, but the end of a very helpful, and spiritual family. His passing is like the closing of a book after having been read. We remember the courage of his parents and himself in leaving the ruts of tradition, so usual in denominations, and going to the Scriptures with the determination to put into practice the commands and precepts of the Lord as found therein. And today we rejoice that they as a family are, together with ourselves, embraced in God's heavenly family. And we here today are a token of the fruit of their labours. Therefore we, instead of being a company of mourners, should all feel like a company of gardeners, preparing to plant this seed (his body) with a sure expectation of his and our own blessed resurrection, or wondrous change as, 1 Cor. 15. 51-53, at the return of our Glorious Lord, and our being reunitedly gathered unto Him.

ADDRESS BY MR. E. KIRK.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 6-8).

If there is one character in Holy Scripture that captivated the heart and imagination of the brother whose body we are now about to "sow" in the earth, it is God's servant, Paul, and it is because of our brother's likeness to his Lord, and his imitating that "bondslave of Jesus Christ" that such a text has been chosen for this solemn occasion.

Truly that description of himself in which Paul delighted, for he uses it again and again, was one up to which he lived. "Become ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ," he could say with truth and with all humility. To have spoken otherwise would have been mock modesty, of which he was incapable.

Like his Lord, he was sent by the direct commission of God into the world to accomplish a work fore-ordained for him to do. He was not with the other apostles, when the risen Lord appeared and gave them the great commission—"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Christ was seen of Paul "last of all, as of one born out of due time," to use his own words. Yet He who breathed upon *them* and

said to *them*, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" was Paul's Lord, as well as theirs, and how blessed and fruitful was that relationship between the Master and the bondsman the "Acts" and the Epistles make abundantly manifest.

From the day that his eyes were opened to behold beauty in Jesus that he should desire Him, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." If, as some said of him in a later day, "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible," yet his words were ever with conviction and intense passion. His love for souls burned with an unquenchable fire, because his soul was aflame with love to his Lord.

Think how he and Barnabas went into the synagogue at Iconium, "and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." What a joy, answering in measure to that joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, was his when hearts were opened and turned to the Lord.

Nor did he leave the saints at that point. He was not satisfied merely with their conversion. He kept ever before them, by Example, Encouragement, and Exhortation, the need to grow in grace, to become "imitators of God as dear children, to walk in love." "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of God."

For these twin causes—and should they ever be separated?—the winning of souls to the Saviour and the building up of the saints on their most holy faith, he hazarded his life for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, he continued his care for them even when they failed to reciprocate his love; and how real was that love may be gathered from the words, "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." And again, "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children."

'Twas only such a great soul as Paul could say, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent (out) for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." And what of that time when he was compelled to say, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me. I pray God it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me"? Ah! how blessed for him to enter into the feelings of the Lord Jesus, when "all forsook Him and fled."

Such was Paul, who, "having obtained help from God, continued witnessing . . . That Christ should suffer and that

He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." And may we not say, in his measure, such was our brother, Percy Heward?

And now, anticipating martyrdom, he exhorts Timothy, his genuine child in faith, to follow his way of service in the words of our text. "I am already being poured out." *There* was the sacrificial aspect of the devotion of his soul.

"And the appointed season of my *departure* is at hand." It seemed to have come upon him suddenly, as the word suggests, yet was he unprepared? Nay, he had told his Philippian friends he had a desire to *depart* ('tis a similar word) and to be "with Christ, which is far better." At that time, however, he judged it more needful to abide on in the flesh for their sakes. Was the servant tired that he was moved to express such a longing? Yet the needs of the saints over-rode his desires for rest in Paradise. Now, at last, he is looking forward to his release, as the cable is loosed to allow the ship to glide out of the harbour to the wide ocean; or, to change the figure, which the word may also permit, the camp was about to be broken up prior to a journey. How expressive of Paul's desires to be away on his upward path to the presence of Christ, willing to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Now, as his vessel is still tethered to the land, and as he surveys the camp, the tent ready to be taken down, he looks back on the past, and takes also a forward look into the future.

He looks back. "I have fought . . . I have finished . . . I have kept . . ." Each word is in the perfect tense, expressing a present result of past actions. That means, his work will remain, he has no mournful regrets, and he can leave all in the hands of God, confident that His work will go on, though the workman be buried.

"I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

'Twas a beautiful fight, 'twas a difficult course, and the faith to him was a treasure; the earthen vessel that held it was about to be broken, but the precious content, already shared by Timothy, his genuine child in faith, could not be lost. That young man now had to "Keep the deposit," and the things he had heard from Paul among many witnesses he was to commit to faithful men who should be able to teach others also.

And as the cable is about to be sundered, and the tabernacle about to be taken down, he looks on to "That Day," not only because of what it will mean to him, but what it will mean to all the saints, past, present, and future.

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

But what has this to do with the burial of a brother beloved, such as he whose memory we now honour, not for his own sake. He would be the last to wish that. “Not I, but Christ,” characterised his whole life.

It is because we have seen in our late brother, Percy Heward, a likeness to Paul, such as is rare in present day saints.

Blessed with believing parents (whom many of us remember with affection and reverence) who gave themselves to the Lord and His service, addicting themselves to the ministry of the saints, our brother turned to the Lord, trusting Him as his personal Saviour, very early in life. I think it is true to say he hardly remembered the time when he did not love the Lord. His parents dedicated him to the Lord and never repented of their resolve. Like Samuel, he was lent to the Lord all the days of his life. Straight from school (he was educated at St. Olave's, Southwark) he entered into Christian service. His parents had meetings in their own drawing room, but as time went on, it was needful to branch out.

Possessed of great natural gifts, our brother, when quite a young man, founded the magazine “Thoughts from the Word of God,” originally hand written and produced by means of a duplicator. He started and carried on for some time, always with the loving and faithful encouragement of his parents, a Bible Training College, to which many look back with thankfulness. After a time, feeling that a College and a Principal did not fulfil Scripture precedents and principles, he was led to invite those who had joined in the work to take an assembly (or church) position. Some continued with him, and some did not, but whatever choice they made, they did not cease to regard our brother with respect.

Thenceforward the work proceeded on lines conceived by him to be in accord with God's revealed will for this present age. His own contribution has been unstinted. He spared not himself. “He scorned delights and lived laborious days.” He literally spent himself out for Christ, having presented his body to God, “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” and never drawing back.

Many at this gathering can testify how their whole course of life has been changed, under God, through his influence; how many across the seas can bear record in a similar strain, is known only to God. The last month of his life was spent in service amongst his German friends in the American Zone. To these brethren, we in this land, offer our loving sympathy. May the fellowships formed through his visits continue!

With sad hearts, yet not sorrowing as those without hope, beloved brother, we part from thee, “until the day break and the shadows flee away.” We scarcely realise we shall not see thy face or hear thy voice again on earth. Thou art with thy Lord. Thou hast had thy desire, to go to Him in the midst of thy labours, and thou shalt surely hear Him say to thee, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

ADDRESS BY MR. W. ELLIS.

I expect I can safely say that the majority, if not all, of God's dear people, would be prepared to confess that some passages of Scripture are somewhat difficult to understand. This will not surprise us when we discover that even one writing by inspiration acknowledges this. 2 Peter 3. 16.

If I asked for one of those difficult passages, I expect I would be directed to the book of Revelation, or some other book dealing largely with prophetic matters, but Peter did not single out the book of the Revelation, he pointed his readers to the Epistles of Paul, I want, as the Lord enables me, to take you there this evening. Romans 8. 28 is one of the many well known, oft quoted, verses of Scripture, one that is not viewed as being among those difficult to understand; it is cited rather as a comfort and a consolation, in a time of need, and doubtless many *have* been encouraged thereby, in times of trial and testing. It will be helpful for us to ask, Who is the speaker here? Is he one who has had everything in his favour? Has he been borne along on the wings of ease and encouragement? We all realise how easy it is to emphasise such parts of Scripture *upon others*, who are passing through deep waters, and we expect them to be helped thereby, we expect *the fruit* of faith, as a result, but what of ourselves in our time of need? This time of need? Could it be said to us at times, as it was said to that mighty man of God, when he was enduring a severe test. “Thy *words* have upholden him that was falling, and *thou hast* strengthened the feeble knees, but *now* it is come upon *thee*, and *thou* faintest, it toucheth *thee*, and *thou* art troubled.” Job 4. 4-5

How stimulating was the question, yea the challenge addressed long ago to Gaal, who had opened his mouth in the absence of conflict. “Where is *NOW* thy mouth wherewith thou said'st?” Do these words come home to our hearts reminding us of personal failure to derive the benefit from our own words that we have expected others to benefit by in their

time of need? The speaker in Romans 8. 28, as we all know from what is recorded of his experiences, was one who was called upon to endure, yea, to suffer much for Christ's sake. He knew what it was to be beaten with rods, to have many stripes upon his bare back, to have his feet made fast in the stocks, and many other trials he was called upon to endure, trials too numerous to mention, but amid them all, he could testify, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." These well known words may not be paralleled with some of the words of Scripture that seem so difficult of elucidation, but they are among some of the most difficult of explanation as to their outworking. We acknowledge readily we cannot see *how* this or that sorrow, this or that affliction, this or that bitter disappointment, can be among the all things that are working together for good, but we know *it is so*. We cannot at this moment see *HOW* our present inexpressible loss can work out for our good. We shall miss our dear brother so much, and we all rightly feel that there is no one who can take his place and do his work, and yet, we know that our God worketh all things together for good to them that love Him. Yes, dear fellow believers, it is to them that love Him. If He has favoured us by constituting us lovers of God, we who were once lovers of self, then we can rest assured, however distressing the circumstances may be that our God permits in our pathway to the promised land, nevertheless He is performing the thing that is appointed for us, and thereby working all things together for our good. "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name."

"Which kind of things are (having indeed a word of wisdom in WILL worship, and lowliness of MIND and not sparing of the BODY, not in any honour), toward the filling of the flesh."

Colossians 2. 23 has a difficulty through our English punctuation. Acknowledge *one sentence* ("Which things are toward the satisfaction of the flesh"), and recognize the parenthesis, and all seems clear. "The doctrines and commandments of men," ("doctrines" in plural always evil), may lead to worship, lowliness, and asceticism; but, in all three, the will, mind and body are out of harmony with the Lord. Here is a key to the energy of devotees, even in heathenism. The *flesh* can delight in religiousness, in worship, and in mortification physically, with pride. What a contrast is the true mortification of sin from the standpoint of resurrection ground in Christ (Col. 3. 1-5).
P.W.H.

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The Student of Scripture.

Founded by Percy W. Heward, Edited by E. Kirk.

"I know that Thou canst do everything" Job. 42. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a delight to know "God is able" (2 Cor. 9. 8). "Can God?" is not in the vocabulary of a believer (Ps. 78. 19). But His power is not that of a capricious tyrant, nor of one far away, only controlling the universe. His power is for ME (Jude 24). His love and power are united for a poor, weak, heart-broken sinner, and for a trembling saint. It is wonderful. "OUR God . . . is able" Dan. 3. 17). Said Darius, "Is THY God, Whom thou servest CONTINUALLY, able?" Daniel said, "MY God, HATH SENT:" He is not only GENERALLY able, but PARTICULARLY HE HAS INTERVENED already. Yes, we know God as a very Present Help (Ps. 46. 1). The Lord Jesus said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." There is personal love, and with the faith, joy and realization of this are these pages sent forth to His praise and glory. Our longing is that anxious sinners and tried saints may know Him in a deep, real sense of His grace, power and wisdom, all united that there may be the fullest confidence in Him, and a holy witness for Him, EVERY DAY.

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"A cause of blame."

Colossians 3. 13.

The rendering of the margin ("complaint") is helpful. "Quarrel" is not exact, and spiritually harmful. Saints should never quarrel. Observe that if we have a cause of blame, if there is something to be forgiven, (not an imagination), if our brother does owe us a hundred pence, there must be no ill feeling, no grudge, no ruminating and rankling, only love, gentleness, forbearance and peace.

FAITH.

THE Lord never blamed any for too much faith: but He did tenderly, yet firmly, reprove those of little faith, and not only once or twice. The centurion's "so great faith" (Matt. 8. 10) was the theme of special commendation. The Lord Jesus "marvelled" at this, and likewise at the unbelief of some in Israel (Mark 6. 6)—an unusual word. He caused many to marvel, yet *He* is not said to have marvelled at aught else. But the Syrophœnician woman's faith called forth the *same* approval, "Great is thy faith." And she, too, was a Gentile. Grace shines out. And what about *your* faith and *mine*? Does it stand "in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2. 5)? Are we "*strong* in faith, giving glory to *God*" (Rom. 4. 20). Do we "believe, and therefore *speak*" (2 Cor. 4. 13)? Have we "the faith of *God*" (Mark 11. 22)? Do we "know Whom" we "have believed" (2 Tim. 1. 12)? Is our faith *living* as a grain of mustard seed (Luke 17. 6), and thus is it growing exceedingly (2 Thess. 1. 3), so that we illustrate "the prayer of *faith*" (Jas. 5. 15), and obtain "a good report" (or testimony from God) through faith" (Heb. 11. 39)? Are we ever "running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith" (Heb. 12. 1, 2), so that circumstances do not terrify, but our hearts calmly and happily say, "*I believe God* that it shall be, even as it was told me" (Acts 27. 25)?

"Understanding what the will of the Lord is"

Ephesians 5. 17.

To have no wish but His,
 Ah! That is peace:
 All else—how vain it is—
 And cares increase.

Abiding in His will,
 How sweet to trust
 And say, "I praise Thee still
 For all Thou dost."

Mistakes are never found
 Within God's plan:
 But how mistakes abound
 In all from *man*!

Self is the root of fear,
 But faith is calm:
 The Lord is ever near,
 And nought can harm.

A right action may be spoilt by a wrong motive, but a wrong action is not sanctified by a right motive: how we long to please God in all,

**"The Lord is my Shepherd,
 I shall not want"**

Psalm 23. 1.

The words (four only in the Hebrew) are so simple, and learnt from childhood. But how much they mean! Observe *One Person* to meet the need, and one whose need is met. "The Lord" is the first word of the psalm, and all depends on Him. But I must have personal relation to Him, and personal dealings with Him. I would not only seek His shepherding but would realize Himself, not only the blessing, but the Blesser. Then there is the inference of simple faith, without any "if" or uncertainty, and referring to both present and future, and timeless as to end. No end to His grace! The brevity, with apparent completeness, is the completeness itself. I shall not want—What? Ah, no need to add, or fill in. Here is the blessedly blank cheque of perfect and unchanging grace.

**"For Thou Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and
 plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee."**

Psalm 86. 5.

THROUGHOUT Scripture there is a deep realization of God's greatness, and of His holiness. But there is also a constant recognition of His infinite mercy. The revelation of Exodus 34. 6, 7 is constantly before us, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." Moses pleaded this (Num. 14. 18) and God accepted his word (20). Jonah misused this unveiling of love when wandering (Jon. 4. 2). But his prayer was quite different, and the psalms continually bring us a consciousness of God's "plenteous redemption," because He is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2. 4). How grateful *our* hearts, too, should be. There is no stint or scarcity in God's grace to those who are humbled before Him. Those that seek Him early and earnestly shall find Him, and, as in Luke 15, there is a wondrous and full welcome. And "the Lord is *nigh* unto all them that call upon Him in truth" (Ps. 145. 18). We cannot measure His grace, except by His mercy, for we find an ocean without bounds, a fountain that never runs dry. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting," and His readiness to forgive seventy times seven must be impressed on our grateful hearts. How ashamed we should be of sin after the love we have received, and are receiving! Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 6 shows a sense of God's character of love, even when Israel sinned and were brought into captivity as in Judges, and afterwards. "When Thou hearest, forgive." And Nehemiah's prayer (ch. 9) beautifully recounts the fulness of mercy. We would never abuse such loving-kindness of the Lord (Isa. 63. 7), but seek grace to respond obediently, and also to pray expectantly for others, and never to forget Israel (Rom. 10. 1, Ps. 122. 6).

Unconscious Cruelty.

OUR hearts need much grace that we may perceive how and wherein we hinder others, for our heart's desire is to be a help to God's glory, is it not? By intended *kindliness* we may indulge worldlikeness, and, with a desire to win, we may broaden the Lord's path, and, as in the third century, compromise with a temporary apparent blessing, then a great and final loss.

In like manner, you and I may be cruel by abruptness, with a thoughtlessness for others, through intense preoccupation with *one part* of the Lord's will and work, instead of growing up "into Christ in all things." There may be a disregard for the feelings of others, by a *right* word at the *wrong* time, or a public reproof when there should have been a private admonition (Matt. 18. 15). "Considering thyself" is always a message to be *remembered* within. The love of Christ constrains His saints to be loving. Zeal for the truth may be present, but it may lack balance, also *love* for those in error. We need to have compassion on some, "making a difference" (Jude 23), and, in other cases, there is a need to act with the holy severity of 1 Corinthians 5, or Galatians 2. 5, or 2 John 10. But in 1 Corinthians also observe the *object*—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (verse 5). We remember Jehu—"Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord" . . . "but Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart" (2 Kings 10. 16, 31). Yes, let us repeat it, we need to grow up "into Christ in all things." The angels of the churches in Ephesus and Thyatira exhibit two contrary tendencies, from both of which we need the Lord's preservation in holy proportion, and firmness, and tenderness, in the Spirit.

The history of God's dear children, even of those who have been rightly burdened as to what they have felt to be departure from the truth, has sometimes shown some grievous mistakes, from which we would desire to stand free. For example, we plead for grace to be kept from the sin that "persecutes" relentlessly those ignorantly in error, and thus drives them into the evil more and more, instead of wooing them back. And, secondly, let us pray that we may *not* be in some error ourselves, and make our own ("conscientious") misinterpretation of any part of precious truth a standard, and, as a result, oppress those who cannot accept this. It may be a "little thing" apparently, but we may, with a *right* fear of compromise, and of one-sidedness, have a swing of the pendulum and speak too often of one thing, and bring almost every subject round to it. Thus we may cause a cloud, and bring a dull sense of suspicion and a heavy atmosphere among fellow saints, with a tendency (unconsciously) to coerce, so that some dear tender souls are almost afraid to meet us, or to

speak. O let it not be so. Let us wait on God for grace, and holy balance, and self-judgment, and spiritual discernment, in the Holy Spirit.

A LITTLE THING.

WE are all inclined to overlook the importance of little things, and yet a cup of cold water, given in the name of the Lord Jesus, may be so precious (Matt. 10. 42) and, on the other side, little foxes may spoil the vines, and a little leaven leaven the whole lump (Song. 2. 15, Matt. 13. 33). A word in season may refresh the weary, and one idle word may cause, or fan, a flame of evil.

There are many directions in which this principle applies. If authorities ask for voluntary self-denial, how rarely is the reduction anything like to that which is asked. So manifest is this that many might be inclined to propose a larger percentage of reduction in the hope of a larger fraction. The goal asked is *not expected*. But how much is wasted, not wilfully in defiance, not with utter indifference to those who have need, but with the thought in the back of the mind, "A little makes such a small difference." "My action will not affect," and "I save more than others." But little things are more resultful than we think, and also the *accumulation* of little things will make that which is great. It is so in our daily life. How many crumbs of food contribute to our present health. And in spiritual matters, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" Little acts of devotion, and of victory over sin lead to a holy character, to God's glory.

So it is with a stray word, as we have seen. It may bring a cloud, and confusion into a spiritual meeting, or alienate or estrange a brother in the Lord, or burden a loving saint for hours. One unkind word, one hasty word, one sarcastic word, one thoughtless word, one unguarded word—how much evil may be wrought thereby! And the utterer may have "meant" to do right, and yet may have been suddenly ensnared in a moment: so subtle are Satan's wiles and temptations: how we need to be kept humble and dependent, and at the feet of the Lord.

We set a ball rolling, and cannot stop it, we light a fire and cannot put it out, a tiny crack in a dyke may eventually cause the flooding of a county. May our hearts be concerned to glorify God in the little things of daily life, which seem so small. We do not realize how precious they are to Him, and how much they affect and influence one another. Our unconscious power, for good or evil, is far far greater than we know, hence the need for "abiding" in Christ, and for "walking" in the Spirit, that we may never lack the grace-supplying contact.

NON-PRODUCTIVE WORK.

IN a war, much time and strength are spent in definite destruction: there is the reverse of production. But apart from this, in times of nominal peace, how much labour is consumed on arrangements and organization, because men cannot trust men? The innate selfishness of the human heart is the cause of untold waste. Fears occupy the time, and give non-productive occupation to many. Sin is the great troubler of the human race, and sin is normally self-centred.

As we contemplate this, we are reminded of the fall, and of the need for a holy contrast in Christian living. Yet is it always so? If all saints were saintly, and time were always spent to the glory of God, and no moments wasted on profitless talk, if believers never spoke unkindly of others, if there were no misrepresentations, if their word was at once distinguished from that of the unsaved as unquestionably reliable, if they did not need any outward overlooking, because their work would be as thorough without this, if diligence and love characterized their whole home and business life:—what a testimony for the Lord would there be. And why should not this be so?

SCRIPTURAL DEFINITENESS.

“YOU hath He quickened who were dead.” “Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:” “in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.” Such clear cut distinctions are important. Human inclination is to imagine a third class—“in between.” And the enemy’s attempt is to make believers resemble unbelievers. Darkness cannot shine, but light *can be covered up by dirt*, so as to appear little better than darkness. And this is sadly illustrated today. The children of God do not make manifest their heavenly calling. There is a feeling of shame as to that which should be their honour: “the reproach of Christ” seems a burden instead of riches. We are unwilling to be rejected. Is the contempt of the world too painful to bear? And would we rather grieve the Holy Spirit than the men of this age? Surely the need is a holy separation, on the lines indicated by 2 Corinthians 6. 14-18. Why should we seek to become as much like the men of this age as possible? Have we not been chosen out of the world, and is not this a privilege beyond all else? Why should we hesitate, if the disciple is treated as his Lord? Is the language He used there a grief to us? Do we almost wish that He had not said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”? Why do we dishonour His precious and holy Name? O that we may be ashamed of sin, and show a true definiteness in love to our loving Lord.

“STALE.”

WE may prefer stale bread to new, but with stale flour, etc., it is quite different. And so is it—O that our hearts may feel this—in our Christian life. I found the word coming to me with God’s message for my own deep need. Is there a staleness in *my* prayer-life, and in *my* service for Him? The great peril may be here for me, even more than grave error in doctrine. You and I are not immune from *that* danger, but staleness of real “truth” is less easily detected. One may say precious words in supplication and in conversation, and all the while lack *communion* with God. There is no living freshness. One can tell of Christ to lost souls without a burning earnestness. The exquisite unveiling of His love in dying for sinners may be too well-known to be *realized*, as I felt Liechtenstein’s beautiful scenery was unnoticed among its inhabitants. We have become *used* to the gospel of the glory of Christ. We need a reviving every day (Isa. 57. 15), and to be anointed with fresh oil (Ps. 92. 10). A life that is fountain-like is never stale (John 4. 14). Such water is never stagnant. The green pool may be attractive to one who has a microscope, but I will not quench my thirst there. Let the water be living! And let our christian life be constantly *flowing forth*, fresh and bright, to God’s glory.

DAILY WORK.

THIS is very important. God is glorified by holy regularity and the fulfilment of His will in all our little background duties. The Lord Jesus chose a position in Nazareth that gives a definite encouragement to spiritual service in our ordinary daily work. Any thought of laziness, any emphasis on an imagined godliness that cannot do the “common round” and “trivial task” unto the Lord, is sinful. But let us not be willing for an opposite extreme. Some children of God seem so busy that they neglect prayer and make no time for meetings. They become worn out, and use the quickly passing days as if earning money were the aim of life. And yet “today” never returns. We cannot have its privileges of pleasing God over again. Daily occupation is rightly to pay expenses, and to honour God, but it is not to *absorb* all our powers, so that we have little time for prayer, and for His words, and no opportunity to lead souls to Christ.

A man may be religious, and yet be quite apart from God’s salvation: he may profess the “Christian religion,” and show intense devotedness, and yet not have been born again. So many fail to realize the new creation, the heavenly birth, the Divine miracle of passing out of death into life, and becoming a member of Christ.

MOTION, MOTOR, AND MOTIVE.

THE child of God dare not be immobile: he has life and light, and where these are present (as God's parable in nature illustrates), there is motion. "We *walk* by faith:" O that we may *run* with patience the race set before us, and *press* toward the mark. It is a wondrous privilege to be enabled to run the way of God's commandments with enlarged heart (Ps. 119. 33). How different the condition of Israel when He "taught Ephraim to go," but as "they called them, so they went from them" (Hos. 11. 2, 3). There was no *spiritual* life. May our *motion* be ever upward, and onward, and go forward to His glory Who has redeemed us.

The operated motor within machinery produces activity. Our physical heart is a wonderful motor, and spiritually it is the same. We have life within, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Yes, marvel of marvels, "the Son of God Himself loved me, and died for me," says the praiseful believer, "and now the Spirit of God Himself dwells in me." Stupendous fact. God did not send an angel to redeem us. It would not have been possible to His glory. Nor does He send an angel to indwell us. Here then is the *motor-might* within:—the Holy Spirit acting on and through our new life, born of the Spirit (John 3. 6).

And the *motive*? We are not compelled by an external force, nor terrorized by a whip or a threat. The aim is not mass-production, nor man's applause, nor earth's success, nor our own satisfaction or human reward, but the pleasing privilege of pleasing God Himself:—*Men* may have their target, to animate their effort, but saints have the living joy of glorifying God our Father (1 Cor. 10. 31).

FAITH.

Faith is a "substance," not a dream,
 A "proof," and not a guess,
 Dealing with facts, not as things *seem*,
 Faith says, "I **shall** possess."
 God does not give a trembling doubt,
 But grants a restful heart,
 Suspense and worry driving out,
 His peace He will impart.
 Hope is an anchor of the soul,
 Its cable cannot break:—
 Now we have part, and soon the whole;
 God's promise none can shake.

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