

THOUGHTS FROM

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GLORY AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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FREE

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"And the LORD, HE it is That doth go before thee; HE will be with thee, HE will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed."

Deut. 31.8

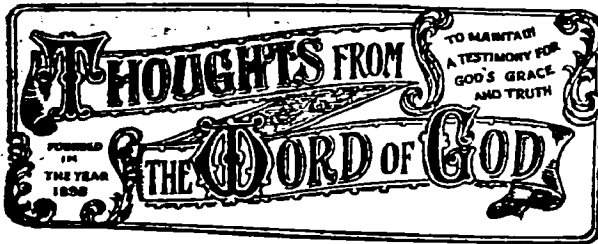
"I am the LORD . . . they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

Isa. 49.23.

God's time is best. Trust thou in Him,
And be thy soul in rest;
For thus thou shalt be blessed;
Thy vessel filled—it shall be—to the brim.

God's time is best. Go not before
Thy God makes known His will;
Thus shall thy heart be still.
Soon from within thou shalt His praises pour

God's time is best. Wait patiently,
For He hath heard thy prayer,
And doth in love prepare
The blessing He hath foreordained for thee.



Words of Encouragement.

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
Ex. 33.14.

These words were spoken to Moses after a most grievous failure on the part of the people of God, with whom he had chosen to suffer affliction, and for whom he had pleaded with God that He would not forsake them. For the LORD God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Ex. 34.6.)

At the outset of a fresh year (though he lives a day at a time), the believer will be conscious of much favour in past days from Him who "hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

The upward journey still lies before, and we need to pray, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Ps. 17.5). For we are "going," ever making spiritual progress (or are we?). Unlike the world, however, in its "running to and fro," and its feverish haste, we are promised "rest" amid it all.

To be "on the move" and yet "at rest" at the same time, is a paradox only understood by the believer who, as Enoch, walks with God, and would be worthy of such Divine testimony, "he pleased God."

May "grace and peace be multiplied" to every reader, "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet. 1.2).

Poem to help Christian Experience.—213.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah . . . passing through the valley of Baca make it a well."

Psalm 84.4.6.

The place of Thy dwelling, the home of my heart,
The holy of holies above,
There would I abide, e'en from earth would depart:
That beauteous dwelling I love.

But 'tis by His work, Who was Sacrifice, Priest,
And Altar, alone I am blest.
From works of my doing by grace have I ceased
And enter a heavenly rest.

How happy, O Father of mercies, Thine own
Who love in Thy house to abide,
Who now have the right to draw near to Thy throne,
Because of the Saviour Who died!

And though through the valley of weeping they go.
By mercy they make it a well;
Thy rain cometh down to the valley below
And maketh the rivulets swell.

If here e'en a foretaste of blessings to be
Can comfort and cause such delight,
O what will it be when the Saviour I see,
His beauty unveiled to my sight?

STARS AND LAMPSTANDS

Rev. 1-20.

The Book of Revelation has many symbols and figures of speech, but they are not to be regarded as poetic sentiments. They stand for solemn realities. Some are explained in the book itself, as are the "candlesticks" (lit. lampstands) which stood for seven churches in Asia, and the seven stars, which were in the right hand of the glorious Lord, and symbolised the "angels" of those churches.

There is little difficulty in appreciating that a "lampstand" is a fitting representation of an assembly of God, for it bore a light, was fed by oil, and was set in a certain city. The Lord Jesus was in the midst of these seven, and, it may be, in His High Priestly ministrations, as Aaron was commanded to "order" the lamps on the candlestick within the tabernacle (Lev. 24.4 Numbers 8.1-3). They needed daily attention, and not only was oil to be provided, but snuffers and snuff-dishes were used, for the trimming of the lamps.

The seven candlesticks were separate, and, like those in the tabernacle, were golden. The branches of the latter proceeded out of the main stem, symbolising union and unity, but the unity of the several churches of Asia was ensured by the presence of the Lord Jesus in their midst.

As the golden lampstand was in the holy place, for the eye of God, so the assemblies are "in the heavenlies." Yet their being also in cities called for a golden testimony of true light. This could only be maintained by a supply of the Spirit (Phil. 1.19 Zech. 4.6) and the ministration of the Lord Jesus, the Great High Priest.

With these thoughts most believers will be in agreement, probably, but who are "the angels of the churches" and why are they symbolised by "stars"?

It is thought that "stars" may suggest these "angels" are heavenly beings, but there are reasons against this opinion, namely, 1. Angels are elect.

holy, sinless creatures, but the persons addressed in the seven letters have, in most cases, failed, and are called upon to repent.

2. They are of those who could be cast into prison and suffer death (Rev. 2.10).

Another view is that, since the word "angel" has the simple meaning of "messenger," they were representatives of the churches, sent therefrom to John in Patmos, to receive the epistles, but the whole setting would appear to forbid this interpretation. First, there is nothing to suggest such visits to John, and there were other churches besides these seven. Secondly, an epistle would not be written to such a messenger, who would be merely a bearer of the message. It may be thought that the words, "to the angel" might be rendered "by the angel," but also the words following would appear to preclude this idea, namely, "of the church," for the sentence would then read, "By the angel of the church . . . write." But the message in each case is so obviously addressed to an individual ("thou" and "thy") that, by this rendering a second person would be implied. The phrasing of the epistles does not, however, seem to admit of this explanation.

What other explanation can be given? The writer would suggest that the "angel" (or messenger, cf. Haggai 1.13) was the leading brother in each assembly, whom the Lord held responsible for the due order of a "house of God." It is quite true that assemblies had "bishops and deacons" in these early days, but there was one particular person at Ephesus, for example, namely, Timothy, to whom Paul committed the general oversight of the assembly in that city. Note 1 Timothy 5.19-22. "Do the work of an evangelist . . . for I am now ready to be offered" (2 Tim. 4.5.6). Titus also had a special responsibility for the work of God in Crete (Titus 1.5). Is not this the key to the problem? The word "evangelist" contains within it the word "angel," and though it may not prove the point now being put forward (without dogmatism), it is not without significance.

To the writer this interpretation seems the simplest, as it does not involve the difficulties to be met with in the other two suggested explanations. He is not aware of any other views on who are "the angels of the churches," but he assumes that those assemblies really existed in Asia Minor in John's time, and that the epistles contain instruction and warning for assemblies and those called of God to leadership therein (Heb. 13.7.17.24) for all time. Saints should not let prejudice prevent them from praying that scriptural assemblies may be supplied with godly

"pastors and teachers," and recognising them and loving them "for their works' sake," when they are, in mercy, given of God.



THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT STRIVE

2 Timothy 2.24

Percy W. Heward

We would not deal now with the believer's privilege of suffering, and of shewing grace amid all. That is a very great privilege, and we need to illustrate more fully the holy patience of our precious Lord. We are to practice self-denial, not self-defence. Right, not "rights," must be prayerfully emphasized. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1.29). Here is a solemn, yet encouraging message. The heavenly calling involves a true separatedness from the world's ideals, and a real committal all one's needs unto the Lord.

But the words before us seem to have a message with respect to conversation. The believer is surrounded by those who wish either to ignore differences or to quarrel. Both sins must be judged in himself.

The primary reference is to Timothy in his responsible position, but the principle applies much further, and do we not long that the Holy Spirit may apply it with power to our own hearts?

A controversial spirit is against our gracious Lord. We must contend earnestly, but there is a need for meekness. We must not provoke, except to love and good works. It is easy to become angry, but we dishonour our Heavenly Father, and is not this grievous?

The preceding verse (2 Tim. 2.23) shews that we are called to avoid anything which leads to "wordy strife." We are responsible for the effect of our actions. If we present truth in a bitter way, we misrepresent truth, and are to be blamed for the bitterness displayed by those attacking truth. We must not reply, "Others should not become impatient," anymore than, in another context, "Others should not stumble."

How we want grace, therefore, to choose topics of conversation that God may be glorified, and that, while there is no compromise, we may be drawn consciously nearer to our beloved Lord in fellowship with others who are His, though they be in errors as to which He has opened our eyes! We have nothing whereof to boast, and cannot be too gentle. Gentleness is not weakness, is not indulgence. How we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to avoid both extremes. Nor will He fail us.

Continued on page 4

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

A LETTER TO A YOUNG BELIEVER ON BAPTISM

My Dear Young Friend,

How glad I am to be told by you that you are trusting in the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour. And still more I rejoice to know that you desire to obey Him by being baptized.

Let me try and explain in a simple way what baptism is.

First, you must know that the word is not really an English word. It is Greek, the language in which the New Testament was first written. The word means to "sink" or to place right underneath the water. So that to have a proper baptism, there must be enough water for the person to be quite covered by it. Of course, if one were left there, he would drown, but there is a coming up as well as a going down.

We read of the Lord Jesus, when He was baptized, coming up out of the water (Matt. 3.16, Mark 1.10). Also, in Acts 8.38.39, we read, "they went down both into the water . . . and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, John baptized in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there (John 3.23).

Then we must ask, what kind of people were baptized. In Matthew 3.6, they were people who confessed their sins. So they were those who repented. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said, "Repent, and be baptized." And this was said to persons who were "pricked in their heart," and who "gladly received his word" (Acts 2.37-41). Read through the book of Acts, and you will find that, where people trusted in Christ as their Saviour, they were baptized the same day. In Samaria (Acts 8.12) Paul (Acts 9.18) Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10.48). Lydia (Acts 16.15), the jailor (Acts 16.33), the Corinthians (Acts 18.8). Here you see the right order, "hearing, believed, and were baptized."

Why did the servants of God baptize all who had faith in the Lord Jesus? Because they were doing what the Lord told them (Matt. 28.18-20, Mark 16.15.16).

What does baptism teach us? First, that we deserve to be punished because of our sins; we deserve to die. Secondly, that Christ died and was buried, and He suffered in our stead. When He was crucified, all His people were crucified with Him. We were not alive then, because that was nineteen hundred and more years ago, but our sins were laid on Christ, for God foresaw all the wrong we would be and do. So, in God's sight, we died with Christ. But dead people have to be buried, so we read, "We are buried with Him

by baptism" (Rom. 6.4). Yet we are not left down in the water, because we are to "walk in newness of life." Therefore we must be raised up out of the water, "like as Christ was raised from the dead."

Thirdly, our whole body is put under the water, because we are to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin (Rom. 6.11) and we come out of the water with our whole body, for we are to reckon ourselves alive to God, and all our members are to be for Him (Rom. 6.13.19).

Baptism in itself does not do us any good. It is but a picture of death and resurrection. It cannot wash away our sins, but if a saved person obeys the Lord by being baptized, he or she will be blest because God loves obedience.

No one ought to come to the Lord's Table without first being baptized, and no one ought to be baptized until he or she knows the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

Yours in Christ,

by grace,

E. KIRK.

Baptized—a simple thing!

A moment, it is done!

Why should this act much glory bring
Unto the Gracious One?

It is His Own decree,

And, therefore, must be great.

Why should His saints rebellious be,

Or, thoughtless, dare to wait?

Baptized, we seek to shew

How Christ our judgment bore,

That we, now hating sin, would know

His wishes, more and more.

Baptized, we would suggest

Our separated place,

And own how richly we are blest,

And all by sovereign grace.

P.W.H.

The Servant of the Lord Must Not Strive

Continued from previous page

The verse before us also implies, "It is not necessary for the servant of God to strive." The believer does not depend on human methods for the emphasizing of that which he holds dear. Argument may seem forcible when it employs extravagant language, and overbearing self-exaltation may carry weight. But we are not reduced to such sinful expedients. Our gracious God liveth. It is His work to turn a soul from darkness to light. We are but instruments. Herein is our honour, and we lose if we seek to honour ourselves. We can well leave the results with One Who is altogether wise, and wondrously gracious. It is necessary to please Him, but not necessary to gain adherents, as if to ourselves. He alone is to be exalted.



THE DEITY OF CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction

It will have been noticed, by readers of the recent booklet, "The Deity of Christ," that the author apparently intended to show how the book of Revelation bears witness to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As no manuscripts bearing on this aspect have been found among the author's papers, it is hoped that the following essay may supply, in some small measure, the omission.

This book of Scripture is described as "An Unveiling of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him," and included in the revelation is testimony to His Deity. This is seen in more than one way, among which are assertion, allusion, appropriation of Divine Names and attributes, and association of ideas.

The Deity of Christ asserted

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come" (1.8). It may be that the word "Lord," which sometimes translates "Jehovah," in quotations from the earlier part of Scripture, denotes the "Lord God of Israel." Let this be granted; even so, three verses on, the great voice speaks, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; I am He That liveth, and became dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (1.11-17, 18). Thus also He speaks in His message to the angel of the church at Smyrna (2.8). He declares Himself to be Son of God (2.18, compare John 5.18) and "The beginning of the creation of God" (3.14, compare Col. 1.15-17).

"His Name is called the Word of God" (19.13). Here is a plain reference back to John 1, "The Word was God."

In chapter 21.6, we again read the words of "Him That sat on the throne," "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending." Verse 7 suggests it is God the Father Who is speaking, but in ch. 22.13, it is surely the Lord Jesus Who saith (see verse 16), "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Moreover, He is not only the offspring of David, but the Root (5.5 and 22.16),

Appropriation of Divine Names and Attributes

This has largely been considered in the foregoing lines. But other names by which the Lord Jesus is called remind, for example, of Psalm 2, wherein "My King" and "My Son" describe the Same Person, in Whom trust is to be placed—surely an attribute of Deity. Thus He is called in the book of Revelation, "The First-begotten of the dead and the Prince of the kings of the earth." (1.5). Chapter 2.26.27 also contains an allusion to the psalm. "He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (17.14) and has His "Name written, King of Kings and Lord of lords" (19.16). Hence, when the seventh angel sounds, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (11.15), it is noteworthy that in the next two verses, He Who is said to have taken His great power and reigned is the Lord God, the Almighty.

Closely associated with such power and authority is the executing of judgment, which the Father has wholly committed to the Son (John 5.22), Who is Himself God. Hence, in this last book of Scripture, we find Him executing judgment; surely an allusion to His Deity. It is not only that He will act in wrath against His enemies, but He judges even now His saints. The epistles to the churches make this evident. He scrutinises the works of the "angels," and He knows the motives which actuate them. He has the sharp sword with two edges (2.12.16 cf. Heb. 4.12), He "hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire" (2.18). "I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts" (2.23 cf. Ps. 7.9 and Jer. 11.20). He has the right and the power to remove a candlestick out of its place. Solemn thought and heart-searching, if there is merely "a name to live"!

"In righteousness He doth judge and make war" (19.11) and the same sword that deals chasteningly with the failures of saints, will smite the nations in anger. "The wrath of Almighty God" (19.15) is "the wrath of the Lamb," and are not the words of ch. 6.10 addressed to Him, since it is He Who opens the seals?

The possessions of the Lord, as revealed in this book also imply Deity. He has the seven Spirits of God (3.1 and 5.6 compare 1.4 and John 16.7). He speaks of "My Name," "My faith," "My faithful martyr," "My word," "the word of My patience," "Buy of Me," "My voice." If these are examined in their contexts (chs. 2 and 3) the conclusion that they indicate Deity seems inescapable. So also does His dispensing of rewards and chastisements.

From chapter 4.8 it seems clear that the Lamb is worshipped, and we may proceed to notice—

The Close Association of God Almighty and the Lamb

This aspect of the truth upon which we are meditating has much impressed the writer. Let the passages be quoted in full. "Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb" (7.10).

"These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (14.4).

"And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof" (21.23).

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22.1).

"And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face: and His name shall be in their foreheads" (22.3.4).

It might be contended that the proximity of the Names, "God" and "the Lamb" does not prove the Deity of the Lamb, but one verse should dispose of this objection, namely the word "temple" in the singular. There are not two temples, but one; also it is "Him" not "Them," "His," not "Theirs" in the fifth quotation above. Indeed, it seems impossible to escape the conclusion that these passages assume an equality. Otherwise, there would be inconsistency with other declarations of God, Who says, "To whom will ye liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be like?" (Isa. 46.5 and other passages).

The Word of God and the Witness of Jesus

Here again, the Deity of Christ may be inferred from the association of ideas in the Book of Revelation. Let the words themselves speak.

"Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ" (1.2).

"For the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus" (1.9).

"The remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the Testimony of Jesus" (12.17).

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (14.12).

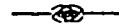
"I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the Testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19.10).

"Beheaded for the Witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." (20.4).

Thus the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus are linked together in a way which suggests an equal authority. Moreover, the sevenfold, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Chs. 3 and 4) corroborates. The letters are indited by the Son of Man, through John, but they are also what the Spirit saith.

It would seem, then, that it is the purpose of God in this closing book, written by express command, to stress, among other things, the Deity of Him Who is called the "Son of Man," and many times by the Name "Jesus." Truly, His humiliation is not overlooked. He is the One once "pierced," the "Lamb as it had been slain," Who "loosed us from our sins in His Own blood," Who redeemed to God by His blood." The great multitude which no man can number "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In the midst of all the glories of heaven, the cost of the redemption of the elect will never be forgotten, but He Who made the atonement is "God over all, blessed for ever."

The Lord refresh our hearts and minds as we read this precious "Revelation of Jesus Christ," and enable us to render Him the worship which is paid by myriads "before the throne" set in heaven.



Inspired Words, Inspected.

No. 38

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans 5.17.18:

It will be noticed that the words "Judgment came" and "free gift came" are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek text.

FOR (gar); conjunction, second word in sentence, its usual position.

IF (ei); conditional conjunction.

BY (no separate word, but the dative case of "offence" is used to denote instrumentality).

ONE MAN'S (tou henos); article and noun, masculine, genitive, from "heis, mia, hen (one). Lit., "of the one" (that is, Adam).

OFFENCE (toi paraptomati); article and noun, dative (of instrument); from "paraptoma" (neuter), compounded from "para" (aside) and "ptoma" (a fall). Literally, "the fall aside"

(that is, where Adam transgressed in Eden).

DEATH (ho thanatos); article and noun, masculine, nominative. "The death." The article may indicate what God said would result from disobeying His law, "Dying thou shalt die."

REIGNED (ebasileusen); verb, aorist, from "basileuo" (I am King, I reign over). Interestingly, Death seems to be called, "the King of terrors" (Job 18.14). Fear of death held old time Saints in bondage.

BY (dia); preposition, here governing the genitive case. Translate, "through."

ONE (tou henos); as above, referring to Adam.

MUCH (polloi); adjective, dative, singular from "polus" (much, many). Lit. "by much."

MORE (mallon); adverb, comparative of "mala" (very), meaning more, or rather. The same phrase occurs in Phil. 1.23.

THEY THAT RECEIVE (hoi lambanontes); article and participle, masculine, nominative plural; from "lambano" (I take or receive). Lit. "The ones receiving." In the text, the words "abundance . . . righteousness" come between the article and participle.

ABUNDANCE (ten perisseian); article and noun, accusative, feminine, from "perisseia" (abundance, overflow, superabundance). The "overflowing" of grace is mentioned in verse 20.

OF GRACE (tes charitos); noun and article, genitive feminine, from "charis" (grace); "the grace," that is, what has been spoken of in previous verses.

AND (kai); conjunction.

OF THE GIFT (tes doreas); article and noun, feminine, genitive, from "dorea" (a gift), derived from "didomi" (I give).

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (tes dikaiosunes); article and noun, feminine, genitive, from "dikaiosune" (righteousness). "The righteousness," that is, what has previously been spoken of. The "gift" consists of "the righteousness."

SHALL REIGN (basileusousin); verb, future, third person, plural, from "basileuo" (see above). Saints are now "a Kingdom, priests unto God" (Rev. 1.6) and shall "live and reign" (Rev. 20.4).

IN (en); preposition governing dative case.

LIFE (zoei); noun, feminine, dative, from zoe (life). These last two words precede "shall reign," so are in emphasis.

BY (dia); see above.

ONE (tou henos); see above. "The One" contrasted with Adam. Thus are brought before us the two federal headships.

JESUS CHRIST (Iesou Christou); proper nouns, genitive, in apposition with "The One."

THEREFORE (ara oun); "ara" an illative,

that is, inferential, particle. "Ouv" is a conjunction, also used illatively, so strengthening the inferential idea. May be rendered, "so then," "wherefore." Paul uses these words frequently. See for example, in this epistle, chs. 7.3.25, 8.12, 9.16.18, 14.12.19.

AS (hos); relative adverb.

BY (di'); preposition dia followed by a genitive. "A" is dropped because the next word begins with a vowel.

THE OFFENCE (paraptamatos); noun, genitive. See above for derivation, no article.

OF ONE (henos); see above.

These last three words can be translated, "through one offence."

JUDGMENT CAME (not in text).

UPON (eis); preposition, "into" governed by accusative.

ALL (pantas); adjective, accusative, plural, from "pas, pasa, pan."

MEN (anthropous); noun, masculine, accusative, plural, from "anthropos."

TO (eis); "into" (see above).

CONDEMNATION (katakrima); noun, neuter, accusative; compounded from "kata" (down or against) and "krima" (judgment) meaning "judgment against" or "condemnation." The word occurs in ch. 8.1.

Although there seem to be words missing, the thought is clear. The result of the one offence has penetrated "unto" the whole human race, and brought the whole "into condemnation."

EVEN SO (houtos kai); lit., "thus also," which expression leads one to expect a certain parallelism.

BY (di'); see above.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS (dikaiomatos); noun, neuter, singular, from "dikaioma" (righteousness). Nouns ending in "ma" signify a "product or state," a "thing done," the passive object. Hence we may regard this word as denoting a production, "a righteousness made."

OF ONE (henos); see above. These last three words may be rendered, "through one righteousness made," that is of the Lord Jesus, who was obedient in life and unto death.

THE FREE GIFT CAME (not in text).

UPON (eis); see above.

ALL MEN (pantas anthropous); see above.

UNTO (eis); see above.

JUSTIFICATION (dikaiosin); noun, feminine, singular, accusative, from "dikaiosis" (a justifying or declaring righteous); nouns in "sis" denote that which is in process. The word is only found elsewhere once, in Rom. 4.25. "Dikaioma"

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THE HEALING OF NAAMAN A Signal Instance of Divine Sovereignty

Introduction

Man by nature has an intense aversion to the sovereignty of God. Even religious man hates this fact, fundamental as it is, and would fain explain it away. The Lord Jesus, in the synagogue at Nazareth, told His hearers that, although there were widows and lepers in Israel, yet God chose a Gentile woman and a Gentile man to receive blessing, passing the Israelites by. They might have known that their nation, in the days of Elijah and Elisha, were in a sadly apostate condition, yet they were "filled with wrath" on hearing the Lord's word, and would have destroyed Him. They realised the import of His message, for, although they belonged to an "Elect" nation, to be reminded of God's choice of some outside that nation was abhorrent to them. It is not less so today, particularly to "religious" man. The world has never been other than it was when Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." "Men of this world" today trouble themselves little, if at all, about the things of God yet, if electing grace is so much as mentioned, so that its significance is in some measure understood, it will call forth opposition and possibly angry dissent. Although the record of Naaman in 2 Kings, chapter 5, is so well known, it will surely encourage our hearts to trace the working of Omnipotence in the life of that favoured man.

The Coming Short of Human Goodliness

There is much about Naaman that is very attractive. He was not only personally valorous, but a most efficient general, and in great favour with his master. His King and his country were particularly dear to him. Not only so, but the way in which his servants addressed him, "My father," would indicate that he was respected, perhaps loved, in his household. Was he not an example of a honourable man of the world, such as we sometimes meet, and such as we would long to see come into heavenly blessing?

Yet he had a most serious defect. Concluding the description of his character are the words, "a leper." Here was something that marred, that clouded the life, and prevented the full enjoyment of his many privileges. And is that not morally so with man? "All sinned and are coming short of the glory of God." "Then Jesus beholding him loved him and said unto him, One thing thou lackest." How solemn are the words of James. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all (Rom. 3.23, Mark 10.21, James 2.10). If any reader can see himself pictured thus, let him know that there

is hope only in the Perfect One, Who knew no sin, and "was made sin" for such helpless sinners as all are by nature.

God's enemy by race and nature

Not only was there imperfection in Naaman personally, but he was in association with those who were the enemies of Israel, still God's people, though sadly astray. The little maid had been captured during a raid on the land of Israel, and even after Naaman had been so blessed, the same Syrians warred against Israel (ch. 6.8.24). Moreover, his people were idolators, worshippers of Rimmon. Thus is symbolised the state of all men by nature and by practice. "Born in sin and shapen in iniquity," they even think it right to do things contrary to God.

An Elect Vessel of Mercy

The words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 4 make this fact very clear, but the narrative will bear close inspection and reveal how precious is the Lord's Counsel.

First, the victory gained on behalf of Syria (2 Kings 5.1) is said to be by the LORD, a most remarkable statement, showing how He does intervene on behalf of seemingly unworthy ones, even those who have no knowledge of Him, nor acknowledge the favour thus shown. Is not this fact abundantly illustrated in the favoured land wherein we dwell?

But is it not also true that the Divine favours are not recognised by the nation, and no thanks are rendered to God for his kindness? Further, is it not also a fact that God deals providentially with His elect ere they come to know Him, and in a way that leads up to an experience of His saving grace?

Another factor in the Divine plan for Naaman is his having become a leper. This was absolutely needful in order to lead him to a knowledge of the True God (2 King, 5.15). Painful though it was, distressing and depressing, it was a necessary link in the out working of God's decree. There was no need to tell him of his state. He knew it and felt it. So with the conscious sinner, ere he is brought to the Saviour.

Continuing, a further link in the chain was the capture of the little maid of Israel. Who can know how deep was the distress of her parents and other relatives? Why thus should she be cut off from her land and people at so tender an age? But God, Who is in control of all events, foreordained this captivity, as the results so clearly show. He "worketh all things after the counsel of His Own will" (Eph. 1.11).

Divinely Chosen Instruments

First, a little maid (see 1 Cor. 1.26-29), but notice her selflessness, compassion, faith. Her

testimony was bright, her service was cheerful seemingly rendered without resentment or repining. On the contrary, the compassion of her young heart for the afflicted master made her long for his healing. Above all, she possessed a simple, living faith. There was no hesitancy, no "may-bes," no mere probabilities. The prophet would recover him of his leprosy. The remarkable thing is that this child had never seen Elisha heal a leper. The Lord's words (Luke 4) make that clear. How then explain such faith except that it was of the inworking of God? Dear fellow-believers, have we such qualities in this more favoured day of grace? Do we yearn over the sin-stricken with unselfish compassion and earnestness? Have we such full confidence in our Saviour, mighty to save? What a Gospel we have to preach! O that we may, as the little maid, by daily life and lip bear a loving faithful witness to Him Who is able to save to the uttermost.

The testimony borne by the little maid was fruitful up to a point. It led to the arrival of Naaman in Samaria. Then it seemed as if all had been in vain. But God is never defeated. He had a further instrument ready to his hand, in the servants of the great general. How gracious were their words, and how effective! But it was all of grace, all of God's working.

The thought arises, however, would you or I, dear fellow-labourer, be willing to see others reap where we had sown; to see souls, who had first been roused to concern through some word spoken by us, led to the Saviour through the instrumentality of another? Yet such must often be the case. Did not the Lord say to His disciples, "One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." (John 4.37.38)?

The Obedience of Faith

In regard to the great matter of salvation, men make sad mistakes. Sometimes, in the overruling of God, these are experienced ere the full light of truth shines into the heart. So it was with Naaman. First, he was sent to the wrong man, the King of Israel. No doubt it seemed more fitting to go to the King rather than to a despised prophet. Then the man himself desired the wrong place—the waters of Damascus. National pride intrudes. Further, he manifested a wrong spirit—"He turned and went away in a rage." How long-suffering is our God! By the gentle persuasion of his servants, all the errors and the pride were swept aside. He obeyed, having faith in the word of the prophet, and proved the truth of the promise of God through the mouth of His servant.

It is interesting to note that the Septuagint, in 2 Kings 5.14 uses the word "baptize." When Naaman dipped himself seven times in Jordan, what are we to understand but that he immersed his whole body? Was he not wholly unclean when he went down into the water and was he not wholly clean when he emerged the seventh time? "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Thus, we have, not only a confirmation that "baptize" means "immerse," but we have also advance teaching, so to say, of the meaning of baptism today. Naaman rose up to a new life, in the natural sense. Believers who are baptized at the present time, rise to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6). Thus they show, by a Divinely commanded symbolic act, what they have experienced spiritually, namely a death unto sin, and the quickening which is of the spirit.

Salvation is Free

Not only was Naaman instantly healed, but the cure was complete. He began a new life, physically. Did he enter into a spiritual experience? It would seem so from his words, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." "Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but the LORD." Thus he expressed gratitude to God for His mercy.

He would, however, show his thankfulness by offering a gift to Elisha. This was steadfastly refused, for the gift of God is "without money and without price." To have accepted a gift would have marred the type. Gehazi sinfully misrepresented his master, and spoiled the testimony. How solemn was the chastisement, and what a warning! The Lord preserve His servants from so dishonouring Him and thus hindering themselves from further service!

Conclusion

As already mentioned, this true piece of history, given by inspiration of God, is one of the best known of Scripture narratives. Yet the tracing out of the sovereign working of an Omnipotent God, such as here so plainly appears, is ever a joy to the diligent student of Scripture. The immutable counsel of God is a part of truth so interwoven with the holy writings, that it is marvellous that any one can read them without perceiving the fact. God's purpose was that Naaman, by nature ignorant of Himself should come to know Him, and, as the narrative shows, that purpose came to fruition. "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." What is the design of saving mercy but that its subjects should enter into a knowledge of God? "This:

is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (John 17.3, and notice the words, "as many as Thou hast given Him" in verse 2). The confidence of Naaman seems parallel to that of the once-blind man, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." The revelation of the Son of God led to worship (John 9.38) and such fruit was also seen in Naaman (2 Kings 5.17). Let there be praises to Him who saith "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46.10).



* * *

"To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."—Romans 14. 14.

This verse sets forth an important principle. The apostle does not assert that sin is not "unclean in itself." He is speaking of material things, and of meats and so forth. Some Gnostics taught that "matter" was essentially evil: the deadly effect of such teaching in excusing sin can be realized. Further, the inspired words, rightly understood, witness against the sin of so-called "Christian Science." "Esteeming anything unclean" does not refer to moral and invisible things: search the whole context, and all will become clear as to the Holy Spirit's meaning. And the verse assumes, too, that "things" do exist. "Christian Science" takes hold of part of truth as the ground-work for a colossal lie. The misused part of truth is, however, important, namely, thoughts have a powerful influence, and effect the character of things, and bring blessing or harm thereby. But sin is a fact, "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3. 4).

Observe that whereas "esteeming unclean" can make a thing unclean, "esteeming right" is not said to make evil good. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5. 20),—meaningless words, alas, to some. It is easy to spoil a right action by a wrong motive, but a "right motive" cannot be pleaded to sanctify sin. The message of Haggai 2. 12, 13 is impressive. In the type, holiness was not contagious, but unholiness was. And we catch diseases, not health. If a thing is "probably" right, but we are not sure, let us stand still till we know more

Continued on page 12

Notes on Memorized Verses

MALACHI 3

1. A prophecy fulfilled, as regards John the Baptist. As regards the Lord Jesus, He *has* come and *will* come. There would seem to be a twofoldness in the prophecy. 2. His second coming plainly foretold (cf. Rev. 6.17). 3. He will purge with a view to the worship He desires. 'Tis even so today: see Heb. 10.2—"worshippers once purged." 4. "Then," in that day, and because of the atoning work of Christ. 5. But sin, that of the apostate nation in the days of Antichrist, will be judged. 6. An unchanging God! How deeply thankful should also present day saints be! 7. God's call questioned by man. How sad! 8. 9. Are believers innocent in this respect? 10. No reviving can be expected if anything due to the Lord is withheld. 11. 12. National prosperity the result of obedience, but the spiritual counterpart is also true. 13. Words against God, yet sadly unrealised. 14. 15. Outward observances. The openly wicked seemed to prosper. Hence complaining words. May saints beware. 16. Times of declension are but an opportunity for saints to gather and edify one another (see Heb. 10.25). 17. "And they shall be Mine in the day that I do make, saith the Lord of hosts, even a peculiar treasure." (R.V.) Saints are His Jewels NOW, but in that Day they shall be seen as such. 18. Discernment can only be by those who return. There is a great lack today of this spiritual power (see 1 Cor. 2. 14. 15. margin).

MALACHI 4

1. Compare 3. 2. 2. The Name of the LORD is ten times mentioned. Earth's darkness will not be overcome until the Sun of Righteousness arises. 3. "The day that I do make" (see ch. 3. 17) That same day will be blest to the elect, but a curse to the ungodly (see Ex. 14. 20). 4. God's Law must stand. 5. "Elijah must first come" (see Matt. 17.11). 6. He will thus "restore."

JEREMIAH 1

This prophet, whose name means, "Jah is high," was like Ezekiel, of the priests. He prophesied in the latter period of King Josiah, and continued until the Babylonian captivity. Judah experienced a reviving in the days of Josiah, but Zephaniah's prophecy reveals that, even during the reign of that godly man, there was much apostasy.

1. 2. "The words of Jeremiah" were "the Word of the Lord." Verbal inspiration. 3. A sorrowful experience. 4. 5. First, the "Word" came declaring him to be a chosen vessel (cf. Paul, Acts 9. 15. 6.) 6. Felt weakness, like Moses. "I cannot" is met by God's, 7. "Thou shalt." 8. "I am with thee" (see Matt. 28. 20) to deliver, yet he was ill-treated. But God never forsook him. 9. "My mouth" (see Isa. 6. 7.) 10. The prophet was thus God's executive, as Joseph (Gen. 41.13). 11. 12. Apparently the reference is to the early flowering of this tree. 13. 14. A seething pot, apparently boiling, and about to overflow. 15. These words the prophet lived to see fulfilled. The prospect was dreadful, yet God preserved him and his testimony. 16. The foretold judgment was merited. God was very patient, and forewarned the guilty nation. 17. "Gird up thy loins," for warfare. A solemn warning. "lest," May you and I take it to heart. 18. "Against" three times. The prophet stood alone in his witness, and would find all were, 19. "against" him. "I am with thee" (see verse 8).

JEREMIAH 2

1. 2. "The Word of the Lord" came, and has been written for our learning. God remembers the "first love" of Israel. 3. "Holiness unto the Lord." God was

"for" Israel. 4. Though the prophet was in Judah, his message is to the whole nation. 5. An unanswerable question. Unreasonable conduct. 6. God was not enquired after, nor His mercies remembered. 7. "My land," Mine heritage," but defiled by sin. 8. "Priests," "Pastors," "Prophets," leaders in iniquity. 9. God's patience, even to children's children. 10. 11. The nations keep to their "gods," but Israel "changed their glory," (see Rom. 1. 23. 25). 12. The very heavens witness the sin of man with astonishment and fear. 13. What man has been doing all through the centuries. He would be independent of God. This century is marked by this sin in increasing intensity. 14. "A servant is Israel? Is he a child of the house?" (Young's Lit. Trans.) Well may it be asked, "Why?" 15. "Young lions," perhaps a name for the nations. 16. Cities of Egypt (see 2 Chron. 36. 3). 17. An answer to the question, Why? 18. "Waters," "Waters." Were not these the "broken cisterns"?

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL."—MARCH, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|----------|-------------|----------|-------|
| | 2 Chron. | 2 Corinth. | Malachi | Heb. |
| 1 | 27 | 1-9 | 3. 1 | 2. 16 |
| 2 | 28. | 1-15 | 2 | 17 |
| 3 | 28 | 16-27 | 3 | 18 |
| | | Galatians | | |
| 4 | 29. | 1-19 | 4 | 3. 1 |
| 5 | 29. | 20-36 | 5 | 2 |
| 6 | 30. | 1-12 | 6 | 3 |
| 7 | 30. | 13-27 | 7 | 4 |
| 8 | 31. | 1-21 | 8 | 5 |
| 9 | 32. | 1-16 | 9 | 6 |
| 10 | 32. | 17-33 | 10 | 7 |
| 11 | 33. | 1-25 | 11 | 8 |
| 12 | 34. | 1-18 | 12 | 9 |
| 13 | 34. | 19-33 | 13 | 10 |
| 14 | 35. | 1-15 | 14 | 11 |
| 15 | 35 | 16-25 | 15 | 12 |
| 16 | 36. | 1-10 | 16 | 14 |
| 17 | 36. | 11-23 | 17 | 14 |
| | | Ezra | | |
| 18 | 1. | 1-11 | 18 | 15 |
| 19 | 2. | 1-70 | 4. 1 | 16 |
| 20 | 3. | 1-13 | 2 | 17 |
| 21 | 4. | 1-24 | 3 | 18 |
| 22 | 5. | 1-17 | 4 | 19 |
| 23 | 6. | 1-22 | 5 | 3. 1 |
| 24 | 7. | 1-15 | 6 | 2 |
| | | Philippians | Jeremiah | |
| 25 | 7. | 16-28 | 1. 1 | 3 |
| 26 | 6. | 1-20 | 2 | 4 |
| 27 | 8. | 21-36 | 3 | 5 |
| 28 | 9. | 1-15 | 4 | 6 |
| 29 | 10. | 1-8 | 5 | 7 |
| 30 | 10. | 9-17 | 6 | 8 |
| 31 | 10. | 18-44 | 7 | 9 |

MARCH, 1956

- 4. Num. 11. 10-17. 24-30. Deut. 1. 9-11. Acts 6. 1-8, 20. 17-21, 28-32. 1 Pet. 5. 1-5.
- 11. Num. 11. 18-23, 31-34. Ps. 78. 17-33. 1 Cor. 10. 10-14. Gal. 5. 16. 17. 24. 25. Rom. 13. 13. 14.
- 18. Num. 12. 1 Cor. 13. 4. 5. Heb. 13. 7. 8. 17. Jas. 4. 11. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 11. 12. 20-24.
- 25. Num. 13. 1-3. 17-33. Deut. 1. 19-28. Ps. 34. 8-16. Jer. 17. 5-10. 1 Cor. 2. 9-12.

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL."—APRIL, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|-----------|------------------|----------|------|
| | Nehemiah | Colossians | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 1. 1-11 | 1. 1-10 | 1. 8 | 3-10 |
| 2 | 2. 1-20 | 1. 11-19 | 9 | 11 |
| 3 | 3. 1-16 | 1. 20-29 | 10 | 12 |
| 4 | 3. 17-32 | 2. 1-12 | 11 | 13 |
| 5 | 4. 1-23 | 2. 13-23 | 12 | 14 |
| 6 | 5. 1-19 | 3. 1-11 | 13 | 15 |
| 7 | 6. 1-19 | 3. 12-25 | 14 | 16 |
| 8 | 7. 1-45 | 4. 1-18 | 15 | 17 |
| 9 | 7. 44-73 | 1 Thess. 1. 1-10 | 16 | 18 |
| 10 | 8. 1-18 | 2. 1-20 | 17 | 19 |
| 11 | 9. 1-12 | 3. 1-13 | 18 | 4-1 |
| 12 | 9. 13-25 | 4. 1-17 | 19 | 2 |
| 13 | 9. 26-38 | 5. 1-11 | 2. 1 | 3 |
| 14 | 10. 1-39 | 5. 12-28 | 2 | 4 |
| | | 2 Thess. | | |
| 15 | 11. 1-19 | 1. 1-12 | 3 | 5 |
| 16 | 11. 20-36 | 2. 1-17 | 4 | 6 |
| 17 | 12. 1-26 | 3. 1-18 | 5 | 7 |
| 18 | 12. 27-39 | 1 Tim. 1. 1-20 | 6 | 8 |
| 19 | 12. 40-47 | 2. 1-15 | 7 | 9 |
| 20 | 13. 1-18 | 3. 1-16 | 8 | 10 |
| 21 | 13. 19-31 | 4. 1-16 | 9 | 11 |
| | Esther | | | |
| 22 | 1. 1-22 | 5. 1-24 | 10 | 12 |
| 23 | 2. 1-23 | 6. 1-21 | 11 | 13 |
| 24 | 3. 1-15 | 2 Tim. 1. 1-18 | 12 | 14 |
| 25 | 4. 1-7 | 2. 1-13 | 13 | 15 |
| 26 | 5. 1-14 | 2. 14-26 | 14 | 16 |
| 27 | 6. 1-14 | 3. 1-9 | 15 | 5-1 |
| 28 | 7. 1-10 | 3. 10-17 | 16 | 2 |
| 29 | 8. 1-17 | 4. 1-12 | 17 | 3 |
| 30 | 9. 1-10-3 | 4. 13-22 | 18 | 4 |

APRIL, 1956.

1. Num. 14. 1-10. Deut. 1. 29-33. Ps. 106. 24. 25.
Heb. 3. 7-19. Phil. 1. 3-6.
8. Num. 14. 11-20. Ps. 106. 21-23. Ezek. 20. 9-22.
Eph. 2. 1-9. Rom. 11. 28-36.
15. Num. 14. 21-25. Ps. 95. 10. 11. Heb. 4. 1-11,
10. 35-39, 13. 20. 21.
22. Num. 14. 26-38. Acts 5. 5-10. Josh. 1. 1-9, 14. 6-15.
John 12. 26.
29. Num. 14. 39-45. Dent. 1. 41-46. Mark 14. 29-31. 72.
2 Cor. 10. 1-6. Rom. 8. 31. 32.

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 68. 18.

Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22, can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKSGIVING."

- Colossians 4. 2.
- For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (8. 10).
 - For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
 - For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.

- For saints on the Continent, and their many difficulties, including persecution and repression.
- For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in war-stricken Korea.
- For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3. 14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Duce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Lutz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling if He will, of additional fellow workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
- The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
- For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
- For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
- For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

Continued from page 7

(see above) is found also in Rom. 1.32, 2.26, 5.16, 8.4.

OF LIFE (zoes): noun, feminine, genitive (see above). Thus "justification" is shown to be linked with "life." "Dikaioma" is the finished work of Christ; "dikaiosis" is the process now going on, as the elect are one by one convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, and are led by the Same Spirit to look to Christ only for salvation. The parallelism of the last clause with that preceding is clear. Yet the phrase "all men" has a limited meaning in the second instance, inasmuch as only those who believe are justified and live. Cf. the "alls" of 1 Cor. 15.22. There is no such thing as "universalism!" taught in Scripture.

Continued from page 10

definitely God's will. Playing with conscience is a deadly game, and the Holy Spirit warns against it. May our hearts receive the gracious warning, and be preserved from Saul's hastiness: "Withdraw thine hand." "They waited not for His counsel" is a saddening description: but blessed is the one who hears the Lord, waiting at the posts of His doors.

P.W.H.

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THOUGHTS FROM

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GRACE AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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"He that saith he abideth in HIM
ought himself also so to walk even as
THAT ONE walked."

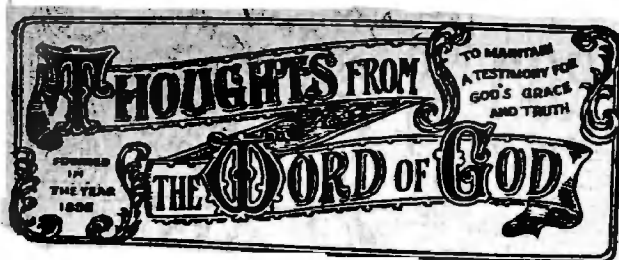
I John 2.6.

"EMMANUEL"

"Emmanuel," God with us! O the grace
That led the Lord to leave the holy place,
Where thousand thousand angels praise His
Name,
To be rejected here to suffer shame:

"Emmanuel," God with us! Doth He then
Delight to be among the sons of men?
Yea, mid the church He ever lives to be,
Leading their praise with holy melody.

"Emmanuel." Ah! Who can then withstand
Him Who is with, and for us? For His hand
Will ne'er let go the weakest of His own;
In love will lead them to the Father's throne.



Words of Encouragement.

"Set yourselves, **Stand ye still and See the Salvation of the Lord with you."** We need, dear fellow-believers, not only to encourage one another with God's other with God's "exceeding great and precious promises," but

2 Chron. 20.17.

by reminding ourselves of the many exhortations and warnings in His holy Word. We desire for all the saints an "abundant entrance" into the Kingdom but the way thither is through much tribulation, and unceasing warfare, in which "there is no discharge." "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor. 10.4). In ourselves there are "imagination" and "high things" that have to be "cast down." And we cannot succeed in "bringing every thought into captivity" in our own strength.

The text invites to "stand still and see the Salvation of the Lord," but those to whom the words were spoken had need first to "set themselves," which meant purpose of heart from which there must be no turning aside or hesitancy. "O God, my heart is fixed," twice said the Psalmist. Have we fixity of heart? "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself," said Paul.

In the narrative (2 Chron.) the King and the people worshipped on hearing this word, and as they went forth to meet their enemies, "they began to sing and to praise." Then "the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel."

It is a precious word, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But we need to ask ourselves, "Am I for God, and do I, with purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord?" Otherwise, there will be no "overcoming," either of inward or external foes. The Lord lay upon our hearts the desire for victory, and impart power therefor, by His Holy Spirit.

Poem to help Christian Experience.—241.

"THE LORD COMETH"

Christ will come in glory;
Love we his appearing,
For that Day is surely, nearing?
With His holy angels
From the height descending,
Cometh He in might transcending.
Let us pray
E'en today,
Come as Thou hast told us;
To Thy promise hold us.

"Surely I come quickly."
But are we preparing
For His joy? Shall we be sharing
In His heav'nly Kingdom,
Or shall we be blamed,
In His presence, yet ashamed?
Let us pray
E'en today,
Grant us holy striving
Leading to reviving.

"My reward is with Me;"
Hear the Master speaking
O ye church of Christ, be seeking
An abundant entrance
In His Kingdom glorious,
Over ev'ry foe victorious.
Let us pray
E'en today,
Come, for Thy returning,
Lord, our hearts are yearning.

"OTHERWISE GRACE IS NO MORE GRACE"

Rom. 11.6

Is mercy a reality? Is it true that God has no reason outside Himself, and His Own love, for our salvation? If the answer be "yes," as it surely must be from all humble believers, we must realise the right of election. "Oh," say some, "that is not fair." Such opposition assumes merit in the ruined sinner. Has not God a perfect right to do that which He will with His own free bounty? If my salvation, in wondrous grace, necessitates that another must have the same "opportunity," the sovereignty of God is denied, and He is no longer acknowledged as absolutely unconstrained. This thought is solemn. Can God be bound by anything except His Own Truth? Can He be limited as men are limited? Our hearts shrink from such a thought. There was no necessity for God's grace to us. It was only in mercy that He provided everything for our present and final acceptance before Himself. Oh how wondrous is His loving kindness!

This verse (Romans 11.6) attacks human

theories which set aside "grace" in another slightly different way. If there be anything in the elect one, before he is quickened, which is well-pleasing to God in the sphere of His righteousness, "dead works" are not so repulsive after all, and repentance from them would be unsatisfactory (Heb. 6.1). Let our pride be laid low at once. Why are we children of God; why are we now believing; did we do anything first; what was it? How hateful the very suggestion should be!

But salvation by grace has a train of precious inferences. Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, His people are in Him for ever. Their obedience is not merely an earthly effort, but an expression of a new life. Thus, praise and holiness are shut in, and boasting is shut out. May it be our joy to acknowledge this, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

P. W. HEWARD.



AN ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF A MARRIAGE

The Lord Jesus, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever," the Only-begotten, who is from everlasting, is truly Man—"God manifest in flesh." His "delights were with the sons of men," and this is seen from the evident pleasure that was His in the company He sought at the godly home of Bethany. "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." His own home at Nazareth, "where He was brought up," was sanctified by His presence, though, indeed, His brethren did not believe in Him. Among His last words are those to John concerning Mary His mother; in loving obedience, "that disciple took her to his own home."

The holy land should have been a home to Him, but "He came to His own (home) and His own (people) received Him not." He was "a Stranger in the earth." Heaven was His home, and in spirit He ever was there. "The Word was with (at home with) God." Thither He ascended when His work here—His redeeming and atoning work—was finished. "He came from God and went to God."

But in all His dealings with those whose flesh He had assumed, His glory shone forth. "We beheld His glory," says John in behalf of all the disciples. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory."

What a privilege for the young bridal pair in that village to have such a happy beginning to their wedded life! "Both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage." He was no unin-

vited, unexpected guest. He was there in the acceptableness of His person, loved, revered, respected. So were His disciples, for those who were His friends were welcomed for His sake. And should not this love be ever shown by saint to saint? "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him."

Dear young friends, you can only be supremely happy, and your home sanctified, by the presence of the Lord Jesus, and by fellowship with those who love and revere Him.

It was a happy thing, too, for them, that the Lord's mother was there. She did not know all that was in His heart, and even suffered a mild rebuke from her Holy Son, yet her confidence in Him was such that she could say to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

By a word from Him, plain water, useful as that is, became "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." The ruler of the feast knew not whence it was; "but the servants which drew the water knew." Would we enter into the secret of the Lord? That is possible if we do whatsoever He saith. Let us fill our vessels "up to the brim," that is obey Him fully, and we, like the servants, shall have the exquisite joy of bearing blessings to those who know not the source of those blessings, but may, by the grace of God, come into the conscious enjoyment of them.

Moreover, who but the Lord Jesus can so bless the simplest things of earth as to cause them to wear an aspect of heavenly winsomeness.

Household duties may seem irksome and unattractive at times, but the realised and enjoyed presence of the Lord Jesus can transform them so that the heart can be glad in the very doing of them, just as the tree cast into the waters of Marah changed the bitter into the sweet.

Married sisters, who have to endure the daily absence of your husbands for several hours whilst they are earning that which is needful for the upkeep of your homes, listen to the voice of one who was herself a wife and brought up children, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Words especially for you are found in Holy Scripture. Yours is an honourable estate, and there is grace sufficient to glorify God therein.

Like Mary, you may have your times of anxiety as to things needful for the body; your cares are not for yourselves, but, also like her, for others. But her Lord, who knew the need before she was aware of it, is your Lord, and will provide.

May God grant that you, now united in wedlock, may find "the best is yet to be." The wine of the Kingdom is being kept in store for you, as for us. May each day, month, and year

Continued on next page

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

"UPSIDE DOWN"

These words come five times in the Bible, and like all parts of Holy Scripture, they have lessons for us. May we all learn them!

What Man Does

"Surely your turning of things **upside down** shall be esteemed as the potter's clay." (Isa. 29.16.) These words were said by God's prophet to the people of Israel, and if we read what goes before, we shall see why he thus spoke. "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me," said the Lord by His servant. Now in putting their mouth and lips before their heart, that is, **talking** instead of being right **within**, they were indeed turning things **upside down**. How sad it is when anyone talks nicely and yet the heart is far from God. And how foolish! The clay cannot tell the potter how to use it. The potter will do as he likes with it. So man cannot say, "God did not make me." God made us all; and God only can make us, as clay, into vessels to please Him. Are you such a vessel? Do you worship God because you are His saved one—saved through the precious Lord Jesus, Who gave Himself for sinners that He might redeem them and make them true worshippers?

What God Did

"I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it **upside down**" (2 Kings 21.10-16). I suppose my young readers help at home in the "washing up," and know that this cannot be done except by putting the dishes in water to cleanse them and then turning them upside down. But why did God say He would treat His city so? Because a very wicked King, Manasseh, "had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other" with blood of innocent persons, "beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." So God said He would empty Jerusalem, and this He did some years later, when the King of Babylon came and burned God's house, and many other houses, and took the people away. God's word shall stand. If He has said He will punish sin He means what He has said. But how will you stand when a greater over-turning takes place on this earth?

What God Will Do

"The way of the wicked He turneth **upside down**" (Ps. 146.9). "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man." It is his own way, and such may **think** he is on the way to heaven.

But he will find, if he has not come in by the "Door"—The Lord Jesus (John 10.9), he will still be in the broad way which leadeth to destruction. It is much better to be turned the right way up **now**. If a person walked with his feet in the air and his eyes downward, he would be looking toward hell. But when a person is "converted," turned, he looks upward—and goes onward till he reaches heaven. Which way are you going?

There is coming a day—the Day of the Lord—when, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it **upside down**, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" (Isa. 24.1). This will be when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again. He will take His saved people to be with Him, but He will punish all who have not trusted in Him to save them. That solemn day is drawing nearer. Some think, who are living today, it may be in their lifetime. We cannot tell, but, O how needful it is to be ready! Are your sins forgiven, because of the work of the Saviour? He alone can make you ready for 'That Day.'

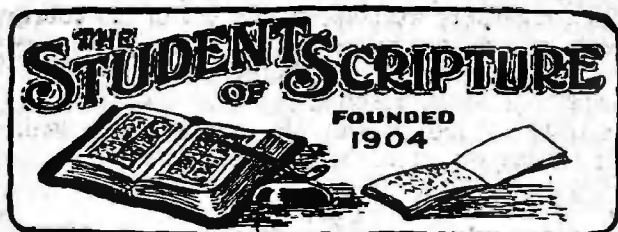
What Men Said About God's Servants

How earnest was God's servant Paul and those who worked with him. He and Silas went into a Jewish house of prayer in Thess-a-lon-i-ca, and preached about the suffering and rising again of the Lord Jesus. "This Jesus, Whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Some believed; but some believed not, "and set all the city on an uproar," "crying out, These that have turned the world **upside down** are come hither also" (Acts 17.1-9). When people **think** they are right, and are told they are on the wrong road, they often do not like it, and treat God's people unkindly. It is not easy to live a Christian life, and we must expect trials if we are among God's saved people. Nor must we be surprised if we are told we are turning things upside down, because we trust in Christ and desire to witness for Him. May you be among His true witnesses!

An Address on the occasion of a Marriage

Continued from previous page

bring progressive enjoyment of the Lord's presence. Nothing is revealed of the subsequent history of the wedded couple at Cana of Galilee,—not even their names are given—but may it not well be true that, being so blessed by His presence at the beginning, they went on together in happy fellowship with Him and each other? There "He manifested forth His glory." May it be so here, and in your future life! Amen!



THE BELIEVERS' ONLY RELATIONSHIP TO THE COURT OF THE LORD'S HOUSE

PERCY W. HEWARD

There are Scriptural reasons for avoiding expressions which imply that saints are **now** bidden to enter into God's courts with praise. Such beautiful language fitted, and will fit, Israel's **earthly** calling. On the Day of Atonement, there was first the bullock for the household, then the goat for the nation. And we would not forget **how near** we are brought to our Heavenly Father in the present time, "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein" (Rev. 11.1). These words must be suggestive to a believing heart, as he quietly meditates upon them. We are "partakers of a heavenly calling" (Heb. 3.1). It is not suggested that Jews and Gentiles are being saved in different ways. In this age, God is not dealing with Israel nationally, but there is one Gospel to men of all races and classes. Nor is it suggested that there is to be a final and eternal distinction. Surely, salvation is "in Christ," and there must be living union with Himself. Hence it is written that the Father will "gather together (literally, "head up") in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1.10); not, be it noticed, the things under the earth—there is no universalism. These thoughts may be used to guard against many misinterpretations. The **dispensational** position of believers is now before us.

How often one is helped by that epistle to Hebrews who of old trusted in Christ. The message of chapter 13.11 is clear in connection with the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16.27.28), but the allusion to Leviticus 4 is deeply impressive also. There we have **four** sin-offerings, but only in **two** cases was the blood taken into the holy place (vv. 6.17). This fact, taken with the words of Leviticus 6.30, may help to show the precious fullness of those in Hebrews 13.10. And what were the sin-offerings thus marked out, for only in those two cases do we read of a burning without the camp (vv. 12.21), such as are referred to in Hebrews 11.12, and to which cases these words alone can apply? They were for a priest, or for

the whole congregation. Have we not here a reference (in type) to saints of the present day, individually and collectively?

The united aspect may also include Israel's elect who are to be blest, for we are in the new covenant in advance, and we would not forget them. The twofold division of the Day of Atonement is also found in Leviticus 4, only there are two examples in each case. Israel pictured by the "ruler"—with an **earthly** position—(v. 22) and the "people of the land" (v. 27 margin) have no parallel with "outside the camp" in that day, for they will be God's camp. The order too is deeply suggestive. The priest and assembly, as also the bullock for the priest (Lev. 16.11) are **first**.

And what is the Holy Spirit bringing in front of us? Surely that Christ has once died in the court (Rev. 11.2 with John 19.33—the place of His legal, albeit unlawful, condemnation) and has been accepted by God as the well-pleasing Sacrifice (welcomed in heaven itself), but has also remained the One rejected "out" from Israel's state (Matt. 21.39—in three gospels there is a similar emphasis), and so is the One dishonoured of earth—even of a religious world—to this day. Sad illustrations of Matthew 23.29 in no wise alter the fact. "The Living Stone is disallowed of men," not merely of Israel (1 Pet. 2.4). Herod and Pilate, as well as the chief men of the favoured nation, set at nought the Lord of Glory, and Christendom is Babylon's legal heir.

Hence we, God's people, have two positions. We are made to "sit together in heavenly places" (Eph. 2.6) and, therefore, having boldness, may draw near (Heb. 10.20.21). The two rooms (holy place and holiest of all) are one, because of the rent veil (Eph. 2.14, omitting italics). Our worship is not in the Court. "Public worship" does not belong to the present dispensation, and mark in this connection, the stress on "houses" with regard to "the breaking of the bread," even in the book of "The Acts." The food (Hebrews 13.10) is to be eaten in an holy place. (See Leviticus 6.26). The court was then such, but now it is cast out (Rev. 11.2). Hence there is no mention of court-worship for believers in Hebrews 13. As to **earth**, we must be outside the camp, which was the residential and social counterpart of the court where the nation worshipped. We have no governmental position, no continuing city, no identification with man's religion. We must be willing to be esteemed the **off** scouring of all things (1 Cor. 4.9-13), as lepers, rejected by those who belong to this age. Are we thus willing?

But have we nothing in the camp? I would suggest the thought that we have only that which presents a contrast with human ideals. Our sacri-

place, being one of praise and prayer, belongs to the golden altar, inside, before the Lord, on which no other sacrifice was permissible (Ex. 30.9). Romanism plainly denies the heavenly calling in opposing this, and adds many sins. Our relationship to the antitypical altar of Christ's earthly life is partaking of the food, not repeating His work (Heb. 13.10—"the breaking of the bread" pictures this, and John 6.53,54 will emphasise*) But was there not one other large vessel, besides the brazen altar in the court? Yes, and it was copper, as this altar, and brightly reflecting the latter (Ex. 38.8). This was the laver. Does it not set forth the position of saints, an united and distinct people on this earth, a receptacle for the water of the Word, and individually being cleansed in that Word? The laver was not for the nation, but for the priests. They acknowledged defilement whilst walking this earth, and so would we. The Lord of glory was not so. For Him there was no laver before the altar; He was altogether perfect. But we falter, and would confess this, but not with bare emotion; the Truth purifies. Our feet need washing oftentimes (John 13.14), and we would not count this a waste of time, before every act of worship. Compare how Israel's priests were instructed to wash whenever they entered the tabernacle.

It is marvellous to be in God's dwelling place. Salvation is very precious. What manner of persons ought we to be! "In heavenly places" we have "no more conscience of sins"; as to our earthly walk, we see that we fail, and therefore would be humbled even before the world by setting this forth, for we lay no claim to fleshly perfection. We want to use the words of God's Truth, as the religious world does not use it, to cleanse. Let it be repeated, the laver was not linked with the nation. How much this aspect of truth simplifies. Separation from worldly politics and arrangements is appropriate for believers. How can we join with those who are not walking with God in their worship and philanthropic societies? The position of believers is "inside" the house. Israel's priests were in harmony with the nation, but the nation was then acknowledged, and the priests were not without the camp. The primary position of saints is thus twofold—quite inside and quite outside, and Exodus 33.7 may give an anticipatory suggestion of the life which pleases God. There is no wish, by referring to the laver, to hinder the teaching which the Holy Spirit so plainly sets before us, but rather the desire is to suggest to the people of God that

* This passage does not refer to the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's Supper refers to this. A precious type must never be exalted against the Antitype (2 Kings 18.4).

while, regarding worship, we are not of the court, the laver-type has a hint which actually emphasises our separation as His family all the more.

May our hearts respond to truth, and our lives illustrate it, and so will His Name be exalted. What other object can redeemed ones cherish?

Inspired Words, Inspected.

No. 39

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5.19-21.

These are the closing words of this important section of the epistle, setting forth the federal headships of Adam and Christ. Notice the repetition of "as . . . so." Parallellism and contrast are a constant feature of this part of Scripture.

FOR (gar); conjunction, second word in sentence, its usual position.

AS (hosper); adverb, from "hos" (as) strengthened by particle "per" (wholly or very). "Wholly as."

BY (dia); preposition; followed by a noun in genitive case, is rendered "through," in the sense of, "by means of."

THE DISOBEDIENCE (tes parakoes); article and noun; feminine, genitive, from "para" (aside or alongside) and "akouo" (I hear); therefore, "a hearing aside," listening to oneself or to the voice of one other than God. "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife" (Gen. 3.17).

OF ONE MAN (tou henos anthropou); article, numeral adjective (heis, mia, hen) and noun, (anthropos) all in genitive case; literally, "of the one man," that is Adam.

MANY (hoi polloi); article and adjective (polus); masculine plural; literally, "the many," sometimes equivalent to the English idiom, "the masses."

WERE MADE (katestathesan); verb, aorist, from "kathistemi," compound of "kata" (down) and "histemi" (I cause to stand); therefore to cause to stand down, to set down, to constitute. The word can be rendered, "were constituted."

SINNERS (hamartoloi); noun, masculine, plural, from "hamartolos" (a sinner) from "hamartano" (I sin, miss the mark). Is there

not a connection (a sequential one) between "hearing aside" and "missing a mark?"

SO (houtos); adverb, "thus."

BY (dia); as above, which see.

THE OBEDIENCE (hupakoes); note the difference in the prefixes of the two words. Here "akoe" has the prefix "hupo" (under) hence "a hearing under," that is, with subjection. Thus was characterized the life of the Lord Jesus, Who came to do the Father's will, hearing His voice always. See Isaiah 50.4.5. He was obedient unto death.

OF ONE (tou henos); see above. "Of the One," that is Christ.

MANY (hoi polloi); see above. But there is a difference, as the "alls" of 1 Cor. 15.22. The whole human race fell in Adam, but all who believe in Christ, by grace, have been quickened, and reckoned righteous.

SHALL BE MADE (katastathesontai); verb future, passive. See above. "The many" are not yet completed, but they shall be brought in—"constituted righteous."

RIGHTEOUS (dikaioi); adjective, masculine, plural, agreeing with "polloi;" from "dikaios" (righteous).

MOREOVER (de); conjunction, meaning "but."

THE LAW (nomos); noun, masculine, without the article. The Law of Moses is indeed before us, though not described as "the Law." Rather the attributes of the law is the thought to be conveyed. Here it is the antithesis of sin, aggravating its heinousness, and causing a realization of its enormity (an abounding or overflowing, as the context shows). For other examples of this word without the article, see verse 13, and Galatians 2.16.19.21, 3.18, Romans 2.23, 3.28.

ENTERED (pareiselthen); verb aorist, from "pareiserchomai," compound of "para" (aside, beside, alongside) "eis" (into) and "erchomai" (I come); hence, "to come into alongside." Only found elsewhere, in Galatians 2.4 (came in privily). So the law came in alongside the "offence," thereby displaying its exceeding sinfulness.

THAT (hina); conjunction, "in order that."

THE (to); definite article, neuter.

OFFENCE (paraptoma); noun, neuter, compound from "para" (aside) and "pipto" (I fall); hence, "a falling aside." Compare "parabasis" (a going aside) verse 14, and "parakoe" (a hearing aside) verse 19. The word "offence" is found in verses 15.17.18.

MIGHT ABOUND (pleonasei); verb, aorist, subjunctive, from "pleonazo" (to be more than enough, immoderate, excessive).

BUT (de); see above

WHERE (hou); adverb.

SIN (he hamartia); noun and article, feminine; meaning "to miss a mark." "The sin" seems to refer back to Adam's sin (see verse 12).

ABOUNDED (epleonasen); verb, aorist, from "pleonazo"—see above.

GRACE (he charis); noun and article, feminine. "The grace" previously spoken of (v. 15, and previous verses).

DID MUCH MORE ABOUND (hupereperiseusen); all one word, a verb; aorist; compound from huper (over) and "perisseuo" (to abound or overflow); hence the word means to "overflow," a superabundance. Cf. "more than conquerors"—"over-overcomers" (ch. 8.37).

THAT (hina); see above.

AS (hosper); see above.

SIN (he hamartia); see above.

HATH REIGNED (ebasileusen); verb, aorist, from "basileuo" (I reign as king); see verse 14. translate, "reigned."

UNTO (en toi); preposition and dative article, literally, "in the."

DEATH (thanatoi); noun, masculine, dative, from "thanatos." The phrase, "in the death" signifies the sphere of sin's rule. Notice, "the death through the sin" (v.12) and "the death reigned" (verses 14 and 17).

EVEN SO (houtos); adverb, see above.

ALSO (kai); conjunction, not translated.

MIGHT REIGN (basileusei); verb, aorist, subjunctive; see above.

GRACE (he charis); see above.

THROUGH (dia); preposition followed by genitive.

RIGHTEOUSNESS (dikaiosunes); noun, feminine, genitive, from "dikaiosune." The reign of grace is by means of righteousness, that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ. See also verse 17; wherein is stated that those who "receive . . . the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One."

UNTO (eis); preposition, literally "into." The goal of reigning grace is life eternal.

ETERNAL (aionion); adjective, accusative, from "aionios."

LIFE (zoe); noun, feminine, accusative, from "zoe" (life).

THROUGH (dia); see above.

JESUS CHRIST (Iesou Christou); proper nouns, genitive.

OUR (hemon); personal pronoun, genitive, plural; "of us."

LORD (tou Kuriou); noun and article, genitive; from "ho Kurios."

BALAAAM**His Prophecies and Parables****Introduction**

The record in the truly historical Book of Numbers, chapters 22 to 25, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." Both parts of Holy Scripture allude thereto, and saints are warned that similar Satanic workings will manifest themselves in this present age. Not only are there these warnings, but there is much practical teaching, as, for example, the danger of knowing the truth without loving the truth. Further, the prophecies of Balaam contain the germ of those fuller prophecies uttered by Isaiah and others concerning Messiah, Israel, and the nations. Hence, there is a perennial value in this history for believers today, and so much the more as the Day approacheth.

The Prophet's Antecedents

His name, Balaam, signifies, "Not of the people" or "Destroyer of the people," with which may be compared the name "Nicolaitanes," meaning "Conquerors of the people" (Rev. 2.6.14.15); "people" denoting Israel in the first instance, and the professing church in the second.

His father, Beor (derived from a word, to burn up) is called Bosor by Peter (2 Pet. 2.15) which word signifies "flesh." Both names are significant, for his son had a consuming desire for lucre, and was but carnal in his religion.

Balaam belonged to the City of Pethor, which name signifies a "revealing," and suggests that therein were the headquarters of the Oriental Magi. Thus, this man is described as a "soothsayer" or diviner (Josh. 13.22). This evil practice forbidden by God (Deut. 18.10.14) was one of the sins which provoked the Lord to anger with Israel, and led to their captivity. (2 Kings 17.17). Balak, the King of Moab, sent messengers to Balaam, "with the rewards of divination in their hand." (Num. 22.7). From these Scriptures, it is plain that the enemies of Israel were not human only, but satanic. Hence the evil power is said to have been overcome by the greater power of God. (Deut. 23.4.5, Josh. 24.9.10, Neh. 13.2, Micah 6.5).

It is also not without significance that Pethor is situate in Aram-Naharaim, a Hebrew word translated "Mesopotamia" in Genesis (24.10). "Balak . . . hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east" (Num. 23.7), said Balaam, while he is described as being "of Mesopotamia" in Deuteronomy 23.4. Bearing in mind the prophetic importance of this district, the land of Shinar, whose chief city is Babylon,

the prophecies of Balaam take on an added interest.

Abraham and Lot both came from this country. The wives of Isaac and Jacob came therefrom, and the covenant Name of God—THE LORD—seems to have been known by its inhabitants. This fact is capable of misuse, in that a supposed sanctity can be ascribed thereto—a factor of importance to Satan in his opposition to God and His people. Balaam had some knowledge of the LORD, and uses the Name. He had some fear of Him also, but it was slavish fear, and was coupled with "error" and love of "reward," "the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2.15, Jude 11), so that his "way" was not the way of God. He tried to serve "God and mammon." His doctrine re-appeared in the church quite early in its history, namely in the church at Pergamos. To the angel of that church, the Lord Jesus wrote, by the hand of John, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2.14). "The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" is mentioned immediately after. This doctrine the Lord hated (v.6) and He commends him who also hated it. "That woman Jezebel" was guilty of the same sin as that of Balaam (Rev. 2.20) and this is spoken of as "The depths of Satan" (v.24). Here we have not merely a case of "history repeating itself," but a revelation of the pattern the Evil One has consistently followed from earliest days until now, and will follow "unto the end of the age."

The Prophet's Character

Here is delineated the "make-up" of a "double-minded man." He believed in the True God, speaking of Him as the LORD. He knew something of His holy and righteous character, also of His irresistible power. He was acquainted with the ways of God, but he did not love them. His fear of the LORD was but slavish. At first he appeared to acquiesce in God's word, "Thou shalt not go with them," the messengers of Balak. But he had a lingering desire that God would change His mind, and thought this to be the case when, on the next occasion of the visit of Balak's men, he was permitted to go. Eagerly he rose up, hoping yet he would be able to gain the gifts and honour offered by the King of Moab; although God had said, "But yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." And were not the earlier Divine words still in his memory, "Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." Like Saul, like Judas, he confes-

sed, "I have sinned," but there was no change of heart; for when he was compelled to utter that which neither pleased Balak nor gratified his own covetous heart, he resorted to an infamous device. If Balak could not obtain victory by force, he could gain an advantage by a false fellowship. Thus Israel was entrapped (Num. 31.16). The sad history is recorded in Numbers 25, and is a warning to believers that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." The words of Second Corinthians 6.14-18 are the Divine Commentary on this painful lapse of the people of God.

Moab and Midian

These two Gentile tribes, both descended from Abraham, are found in a confederacy against Israel, reminding of a yet-to-be wider uniting of nations, not only against Israel, but all persons and things definitely "of God." See Psalm 83, and Revelation 16.14, 17.12-14, 19.17-21. Balak the King of the Moabites consulted with the elders of Midian, but seems to have taken the lead; and although the Midianites vexed Israel with their wives, it was through Balak, who was taught by Balaam. Balak's folly is manifest, in supposing that a curse could turn God from His purpose to bless, but his cunning is also seen in his falling in so readily with Balaam's evil suggestions. One might almost see in these two men a foreshadowing of the Beast and the False Prophet (Rev. 13).

God's Use of an Evil Man

It may seem a difficulty to some that truth should come from the lips of an unregenerate man. But God is Sovereign, and He Who caused the "dumb ass to speak with a man's voice" can quite easily compel an unwilling man to utter what He purposes. God did not disdain to speak to Cain, and to Pharaoh, and even to Satan. Moreover, a certain high priest named Caiaphas, in a council of priests, declared "it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people." "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11.51.52). Herein is a very close parallel with Balaam and his prophecies.

The Seven Parables of Balaam

The word "parable" is used, and not "prophecy." It occurs seven times. Thus, it may be assumed, these inspired messages are seven in number. They are all from God, even as Balaam was bound to confess. Hear his own words "Have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (22.38 see also 23.5). "Must I not

take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" (23.12). "Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do." (23.26). "Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak" (24.13). Admirable sentiments, had they proceeded from a pure heart! Expressing also what the servant of God should be in uttering His truth!

The first three parables are a declaration of God's choice, love, redemption, and unchanging purpose of and for Israel. This Balak, to his discomfiture and anger, recognised. "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times."- He had a curious notion that Balaam possessed a power to bless or curse; "For I wot that he whom thou blessest is blest, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." And, indeed, in the counsels of the nations, whom Satan, to serve his own undeviating purpose, can play off one against another, this was probably true. The Book of Daniel lets in some light upon this sinister aspect of international affairs, for he shows that there were Satan's emissaries in the very courts of the kings, unseen, but none the less potent. And may not the strange happenings in the political affairs of the nations today be due, in part, to the activities of unseen principalities and powers? When God acted for Israel, He contended, not only with man, but with "all the gods of Egypt."

The First Three Parables

These concern chiefly God's dealings in grace with Israel. They formed a witness to her enemies, of God's purpose regarding that elect nation. He will have the world know that it is blessed and cannot be cursed. The words of Ephesians 3.10 (R.V.) occur to the mind; "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." Though Israel and the church are distinguished in Scripture, we have here an illustration of the consistency of Divine principles.

The central truth herein expressed is that, "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (23.19). Hence the words of this God-controlled man, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?" And again, "Behold, I have received

commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (23.8.20). Twice occur the words, "God brought them (him) out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" (23.22, 24.8). The nation is not only redeemed, but reckoned righteous. Only sovereign grace could say, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (23.21), for by nature and practice the nation was full of failure. Yet "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (23.9). How true are these words history, past and present, bears witness.

Moreover, the people shall be many, prosperous, strong and victorious. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" (23.10). "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (24.6). "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion." "He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows" (23.24, 24.8). True was the exclamation, said "of Jacob and of Israel," "What hath God wrought!" (23.23). But Balaam's desire, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like His," was destined never to be fulfilled. Whether, under the power of the Spirit of God, he has a momentary longing for something better cannot be known. Avarice overwhelmed such wishes if they existed, and "Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword" (31.8). Nevertheless, his testimony was true, that Israel was "righteous" in God's sight.

The Four Remaining Parables

In introducing his third parable, Balaam speaks of himself as, "the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling, but having his eyes open." The words, "in a trance" are in italics. There is no reason to suppose that he was in this state. The words may refer to his experience when the Angel of the LORD met him on his way to Balak. Then he did fall, because his eyes were opened, before the presence of the holy One. This description of himself is repeated (24.3, 4.15.16).

It is also recorded that when he "saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments" (24.1). This seems a difficulty, but it may be that Balaam, when wishing to meet with supernatural spirit powers, was intercepted by God (23.4.16). He seems to have thought there could be a blending

of righteousness and unrighteousness, of light and darkness, of Christ and Belial (2 Cor. 6.14.15). Compelled as he was to abandon this idea, "the Spirit of God came upon him." (24.2). Thus controlled by God, he continued his parables, which now are more of the nature of prophecy. To Balak he said, "Come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days" (24.14). "Agag" and "the nations" have already been mentioned, but now there is to be a further unveiling regarding them, "in the latter end of the days" (compare Gen. 49.1). This phrase may be regarded as almost technical in regard to the study of prophecy, and occurs no less than eleven times; the same Hebrew word is rendered "last days" three times.

The Fourth Parable

First, in these four last parables, there is a prophecy of the Coming Messiah, under the figure of a Star. Is the Lord Jesus not called "The Day Star" and "the Bright and Morning Star" (2 Pet. 1.19, Rev. 22.16)? In close association therewith is a Sceptre, looking back to Jacob's prophetic words in Genesis 49.10 and forward to the King Who shall reign in righteousness (Isa. 32.1), Who "shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23.5). Moab (and how this must have angered Balak) is to be smitten in its princes (Num. 24.17 margin). See Jeremiah 48. Edom and Mount Seir are then mentioned almost in the same breath, just as in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. (Isaiah 11.14, Ezekiel 25.8) "Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies." Obadiah enlarges on this in his prophecy, which is almost wholly taken up with Edom (or Esau) and its punishment at the hand of Jacob, who shall "possess their possessions." "And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau" (Obadiah 17-19). Thus there is a parallel with the words of Balaam immediately following: "And Israel shall do valiantly." Doubtless, there was a partial or token fulfilment of Balaam's word in the victories of David (2 Sam. 8) but later prophecies make clear that Israel will in the last days be restored and gain the ascendancy over all nations. Further, in this fourth parable, "One Who shall have dominion" shall come, like the Star and Sceptre, "Out of Jacob." Thus, it would appear that we have a threefold prophecy of Messiah, Who, moreover, "shall destroy."

The Fifth Parable

This relates solely to Amalek called here "the first of the nations." A hint of Israel's supremacy over them is given in the third parable: "His king shall be higher than Agag" (24.7). But why

is Amalek called "the first of the nations"? The marginal explanation is that it was the first to war against Israel (Ex. 17). But it is also true that this nation, as a nation, was the first appointed by God to destruction, that is, after Israel became marked out as God's nation. (see Ex. 17.16). Saul was commanded to exterminate them, but we find David warring against them (2 Sam. 1.1). An Agagite was almost the cause of Israel's destruction at the time of Esther, and Psalm 83 shows them to be confederate with others, in the last days, against Israel. It seems clear therefore,

Continued on next page

"fathers"? 24, 25, 26. How much depended on obedience in regard to the Sabbath, and how simple a command. 27. The city was thus ruined (ch. 52.13). Hence it is inferred the people did not obey. Sad perverseness!

JEREMIAH 18

1. The word which came . . . from the Lord. Now written, therefore, as we read, it is the Word of God. 2. 3. Arise . . . go . . . I went. 4. The power of the potter over the clay. 5. The Word of the Lord interprets the acted parable. 6. The sovereignty of God. 7. 8. God turns from His threatened judgments when there is repentance (cf. Jonah 3). 9. 10. Conditional promises can be forfeited by disobedience. Let saints think of the judgment seat of Christ. 11. A call to repentance. God is long-suffering.

Notes on Memorized Verses

JEREMIAH 2

19. Memory of sins is oft reproving and correcting. Sin is bitter in its results, if "pleasant" in commission.

JEREMIAH 14

1. The Word of the Lord came. Note the constant repetition. 2. The dearth caused mourning and a cry, but was there repentance? 3. No water. Vessels empty. Had they not forsaken the spiritual waters (2.13)? 4. A vivid picture. Who could plough the hard ground? And what of future sowing? 5. 6. No grass, because no rain. All creatures suffered. A groaning (cf. Rom. 8.22). 7. Confession. Sin is against the LORD (Ps. 51.4). 8. A sense of God's "absence." 9. A sense that God's power is not being put forth for them. So with saints. Sin causes loss of a sense of His presence and power. 10. God will not overlook the love of sin. 11. The prophet forbidden to pray for his people. How solemn! 12. Iniquity regarded in the heart prevents acceptable prayer (Ps. 66.18). 13. Lying prophets speak exactly opposite to what God has said in previous verse. 14. God had not sent them. All true messengers are God-appointed. 15. By their punishment, their words will be proved lies. 16. And their willing hearers shall not escape. 17. Yet the prophet mourned over them, with godly grief. 18. The results of Sin pained his heart. 19. Are these the prophet's words (as Daniel in ch. 9)? 20. 21. Confession of sin and pleading the honour of God. 22. An acknowledgment of God's power contrasted with the impotence of Gentile vanities (false gods). The prophet's prayer, or his record of the pleadings of the people, but see ch. 15.1.

JEREMIAH 17

1. Sin that cannot be erased. Graven (contrast, 2 Cor. 3.3). 2. Children also infected. 3. To the spoil. This was fulfilled. 4. Nebuchadnezzar was the appointed "servant" to effect this. 5. 6. The folly of trusting man. Dryness. 7. 8. The happiness of trusting God. Witness to man and fruit to God. 9. The heart of man crooked and incurable. 10. The divine reply to "Who can know it." 11. Waste of time, and eternal loss. 12. The prophet's personal experience here and in verses following. The throne a sanctuary (cf. Heb. 4.16). 13. Written in the earth. Contrast. Heb. 12.23. 14. If God saves and heals, it shall be so, to His praise. 15. Derisive words. 16. The prophet calls to mind he has been chosen of God, unlike the false ones. 17. His prayer was answered (see ch. 40). 18. Jeremiah was but pronouncing what God had decreed. 19. 20. A public place and a public proclamation. 21. 22. A call to hallow the Sabbath, according to the commandment. 23. Do these words apply to the

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL"—MAY, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|-----------|---------------|----------|------|
| | Job | Titus | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 1. 1-22 | 1. 1-16 | 2. 19 | 5. 5 |
| 2 | 2. 1-13 | 2. 1-15 | 14. 1 | 6 |
| 3 | 3. 1-26 | 3. 1-15 | 2 | 7 |
| 4 | 4. 1-21 | Philemon | 3 | 8 |
| 5 | 5. 1-27 | Heb. 1. 1-14 | 4 | 9 |
| 6 | 6. 1-30 | 2. 1-18 | 5 | 10 |
| 7 | 7. 1-21 | 3. 1-19 | 6 | 11 |
| 8 | 8. 1-22 | 4. 1-16 | 7 | 12 |
| 9 | 9. 1-35 | 5. 1-14 | 8 | 13 |
| 10 | 10. 1-22 | 6. 1-9 | 9 | 14 |
| 11 | 11. 1-20 | 6. 10-20 | 10 | 6. 1 |
| 12 | 12. 1-25 | 7. 1-12 | 11 | 2 |
| 13 | 13. 1-28 | 7. 13-28 | 12 | 3 |
| 14 | 14. 1-22 | 8. 1-13 | 13 | 4 |
| 15 | 15. 1-19 | 9. 1-10 | 14 | 5 |
| 16 | 15. 20-35 | 9. 11-17 | 15 | 6 |
| 17 | 16. 1-22 | 9. 18-28 | 16 | 7 |
| 18 | 17. 1-16 | 10. 1-10 | 17 | 8 |
| 19 | 18. 1-21 | 10. 11-22 | 18 | 9 |
| 20 | 19. 1-29 | 10. 23-39 | 19 | 10 |
| 21 | 20. 1-29 | 11. 1-10 | 20 | 11 |
| 22 | 21. 1-21 | 11. 11-19 | 21 | 12 |
| 23 | 21. 22-34 | 11. 20-31 | 22 | 13 |
| 24 | 22. 1-14 | 11. 32-40 | 17. 1 | 14 |
| 25 | 22. 15-30 | 12. 1-10 | 2 | 15 |
| 26 | 23. 1-17 | 12. 11-21 | 3 | 16 |
| 27 | 24. 1-25 | 12. 22-29 | 4 | 17 |
| 28 | 25. 1-6 | 13. 1-14 | 5 | 18 |
| 29 | 26. 1-14 | 13. 15-25 | 6 | 19 |
| 30 | 27. 1-23 | James 1. 1-11 | 7 | 20 |
| 31 | 28. 1-11 | 1. 12-20 | 8 | 7. 1 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

- MAY
- 6. Num. 15. 1-16. Ps. 96. 8. Heb. 13.15.16. Eph. 5.1.2. 1 Pet. 2.5.9.
 - 13. Num. 15. 17-21. John 6.32-35, 48-51. 2 Cor. 8.1-6. 9.6-15. John 12.24.
 - 20. Num. 15. 22-36. Neh. 9.28-31. 2 Cor. 7.6-12. Heb. 10.26-31. 1 John 1.7-2.2.
 - 27. Num. 15. 37-41. 2 Pet. 1.12-15. 3.1.2. Matt. 28.19.20. John 15.14-20. 1 Cor. 11.23-32.

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL"—JUNE, 1956

| Day | READING | | | LEARNING | |
|-----|-----------|-----------------|----------|----------|--|
| | Job | James | Jeremiah | Heb. | |
| 1 | 28. 12-28 | 2. 1-13 | 17. 9 | 7. 2 | |
| 2 | 29. 1-13 | 2. 14-26 | 10 | 3 | |
| 3 | 29. 14-25 | 3. 1-18 | 11 | 4 | |
| 4 | 30. 1-15 | 4. 1-17 | 12 | 5 | |
| 5 | 30. 16-31 | 5. 1-20 | 13 | 6 | |
| 6 | 31. 1-14 | 1 Peter 1. 1-12 | 14 | 7 | |
| 7 | 31. 15-28 | 1. 13-25 | 15 | 8 | |
| 8 | 31. 29-40 | 2. 1-12 | 16 | 9 | |
| 9 | 32. 1-9 | 2. 13-25 | 17 | 10 | |
| 10 | 32. 10-22 | 3. 1-14 | 18 | 11 | |
| 11 | 33. 1-12 | 3. 15-22 | 19 | 12 | |
| 12 | 33. 13-22 | 4. 1-11 | 20 | 13 | |
| 13 | 33. 23-33 | 4. 12-19 | 21 | 14 | |
| 14 | 34. 1-11 | 5. 1-14 | 22 | 15 | |
| 15 | 34. 12-23 | 2 Peter 1. 1-11 | 23 | 16 | |
| 16 | 34. 24-37 | 1. 12-21 | 24 | 17 | |
| 17 | 35. 1-10 | 2. 1-11 | 25 | 18 | |
| 18 | 36. 1-11 | 2. 12-22 | 26 | 19 | |
| 19 | 36. 12-21 | 3. 1-18 | 27 | 20 | |
| 20 | 36. 22-33 | 1 John 1. 1-10 | 18. 1 | 21 | |
| 21 | 37. 1-13 | 2. 1-14 | 2 | 22 | |
| 22 | 37. 14-24 | 2. 15-29 | 3 | 23 | |
| 23 | 38. 1-11 | 3. 1-12 | 4 | 24 | |
| 24 | 38. 12-21 | 3. 13-24 | 5 | 25 | |
| 25 | 38. 22-41 | 4. 1-10 | 6 | 26 | |
| 26 | 39. 1-12 | 4. 11-21 | 7 | 27 | |
| 27 | 39. 13-30 | 5. 1-9 | 8 | 28 | |
| 28 | 40. 1-24 | 5. 10-21 | 9 | 8. 1 | |
| 29 | 41. 1-34 | 2 John | 10 | 2 | |
| 30 | 42. 1-17 | 3 John | 11 | 3 | |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY
JUNE

3. Num. 16. 1-11. 19-24. 28-35. Rom. 12. 1-11. Phil. 2. 5-11. Matt. 11. 29-30.
10. Num. 16. 36-40. Prov. 16. 5. 18. 3 John 9. 10. Heb. 12. 25-29. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 10.
17. Num. 16. 41-50. Ps. 130. 3. 4. Lam. 3. 22. 23. 1 Tim. 1. 14-17. 1 Tim. 2. 5. 6.
24. Num. 17. 1-11. Ps. 65. 4. Is. 42. 1-4. Rom. 8. 28-34. Rev. 1. 4-6.

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 66. 18.

Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22. can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKS-GIVING." Colossians 4. 2.

- For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (6. 10).
- For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
- For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.
- For saints on the Continent, and their many diffi-

- culties, including persecution and repression.
- For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in war-stricken Korea.
- For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3. 14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Luce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Luiz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling if He will, of additional fellow workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
- The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
- For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
- For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
- For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.



Balaam

Continued from previous page

that Balaam's prophecy awaits fulfilment; "But his latter end shall be that he perish for ever."

The Sixth Parable

Here is a difficulty. Who are the Kenites? They are first mentioned in Genesis 1.19. The land of Canaan appears to have been possessed by ten tribes, of which the Kenites were one. They are not again mentioned unless they be the Midianites, of whom came Jethro and his son, whose family "dwelt among the people" of Israel, (Judges 1.16) thus separating from the main stock. The Kenite, then, may be Midian, which as a nation was one of Israel's foes. If this is so, the fitness of the prophecy is manifest, for Midian and Moab were confederate at this very time. Seeing also, that Balaam "looked on the Kenites", its land was probably visible from where he stood. "Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted" (24.22). There is no time-mark, for, according to the margin, the following words are put in the form of a question: "How long shall it be ere Asshur carry thee away captive?" However, Asshur, or Assyria, is thus tacitly recognised to be a coming great power, which later history and prophecy show to be the fact. See Isaiah 10 and 11 for the final phase of Assyria's power and of its destruction.

If the Lord will, to be continued

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THOUGHTS FROM

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GRACE AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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FREE

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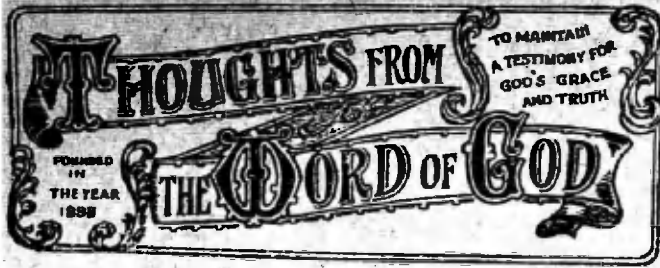
"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. . . . If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief".

Rev. 3. 2. 3.

LOVE UNQUENCHABLE

"He brought me." Ah! myself I did not bring.
The One Immortal and Eternal King,
Invisible save to the eye of faith,
He brought me, for His love is strong as death.
Death none resist, he will not be denied.
All must be gathered in his net flung wide
O'er all the earth. E'en as the grave is love,
Firm grasping all therein, till from above
Soundeth the Son's almighty, glorious voice.
When myriads shall rise, and shall rejoice,
Each summoned by his own peculiar name.
Love hath indeed a most vehement flame,
That nothing quenqueth. Overwhelming floods
Can never drown that love, for it is God's.

E.K.



Words of Encouragement.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

Ps. 42.2.

There is no satisfaction for the Divinely awakened soul out of God. If there are desires after Him, they are inwrought by grace, and can only be met in and by Him. What gratitude of heart should be ours, beloved fellow-saved-ones, if our hearts long for Him, "in a dry and thirsty land", such as is this barren world! Have we not heard the voice of Him who cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink"? And have we not proved, in our experience, the power and truth of His words, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst"?

Yet we still long for manifestations of Himself to our souls. "David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate!" Three mighty men "brake through the host of the Philistines," and brought the water to David. Reverently, however, he poured it out unto the Lord."

But do we ponder enough on what it cost One, Mighty to save, to bring to us the Water of Life? It has come so freely to us, that there is a danger of undervaluing the Gift. Worse enemies than Philistines tend to bar our access to this everflowing spring; apathy, lethargy, "busy-ness" in service, worldliness, self-sufficiency, pride. These must be "broken through", if we are to enjoy true communion with God. May the Lord revive us, in His mercy, only thus will there flow from us "fountains of living water".



Poem to help Christian Experience.—242.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son". Rev. 21.7.

O Lord, I am oppressed,
I feel my failure so;
My sin I have confessed,
And Thy forgiveness know;
But, Lord, I would be fully free,
And know continuous victory.

Unceasing is the fight;
'Tis not in me to gain
The conquest that I might,
But, O, in mercy deign
To put Thy Spirit's pow'r within,
That I may conquer ev'ry sin.

An overcomer now
I, in Thy strength, would be;
To such a Father Thou
Hast promised Thou will be;
All things he shall inherit, yea,
Be owned Thy son in "that great Day".

Should I not fix above
My mind and all my heart,
My Lord give all my love—
The whole, and not a part?
Let Thy pure love, O gracious God,
Within my heart be shed abroad.

The good fight let me fight,
My heav'nward course complete,
And keep the Faith so bright,
That I at my Lord's feet
The Crown of righteousness may lay—
His gift—in His soon-coming Day.



FELLOWSHIP

Percy W. Heward

This oft-used word is rarely understood. It means, "having in common" or "partnership". Wonderful grace is bestowed on us that, even while we are commanded to sanctify the Lord God and hallow His Name, we can add (if we walk in the Light) "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ". But let us not make our having in common with the Lord of glory a common thing, or set one portion of the Word against another. "Let us come boldly" indeed, but also, "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

Not only have we the fellowship of the Father and the Son in heavenly places, and as we keep the commandments of the Lord (John 14.23) but, at the end of a severe passage which had spoken of many believers sinning, and doubting the apostle's authority from God, the words ring out, "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13.14). For Jesus Christ was in the members of the assembly at Corinth, by His Spirit, except they were reprobates (2 Cor. 13.5) and, though grieved, The Spirit was not taken away. Herein is love, that the Lord may be feared, and sin hated, and this to His glory. (Eph. 4.30.)

Then we have a special stress on aspects of fellowship with the Lord—our Lord. Shall we be unmindful of them, or shall our hearts yearn after the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 1.29, 3.10)—not to add to our salvation, not the suffering of death under God's wrath—but the sufferings, "the tribulations of Christ" in our flesh (Col. 1.24)? What a strange object this seems. Rejection! Agony! Intense trials! How Christ was valued when such things as these seemed to be nothing except painful discipline, and painful preservatives from evil. But what is suffering, if so be that the coming Kingdom is a fact? Shall we be those who have fellowship in the glory (1 Pet. 5.1)? Then let us take any position our beloved, unerring, and gracious Lord shall appoint for us. He has compensations.

Then there comes the thought—closely related and likewise important—of fellowship with saints (Acts 2.42); the second command is as the first, and wrapped up in it. If we honour God, we shall "love one another". "Keeping on having all things common",* or in fellowship, was self-denial as a fact, the denial of anything as one's own, or anything beyond stewardship. It does not mean selfish levelling, but the valuing of a brother beyond a thing. The free will offering is called "a fellowship", and should be the very same thing. It is nothing, unless beyond power (2 Cor. 8.3). The next verse uses the very word, and thus holds back the ungodly from giving, and also any believer who lacks willingness and a right motive. Fellowship is a practical thing; the collection was not merely the expression of it, but the very "it" itself. Love is not in tongue. An assembly, and indeed all saints, should be more united than any worldly federation, shareholding or benefit society.

And there is the need for the negative side of obedience. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5.11). We oft need to "come out", and to go forth to our beloved Lord. The wrench may be painful but His Word is clear. Every saved one should fear the slightest attempt to blend Christ and Belial or Babel, the essence of Christendom.

Finally, brethren and sisters, do we realise this fellowship? Our sin is greater if we know God's will, and yet remain in Christendom's aims and plans and systems. May the Lord, in mercy, draw us out, and give grace to come out.

* Not "they had all things common." This would be a equality. All the sentence is connected with "according as anyone was having a need." This repetition of love attacks both socialism and transitoriness.

BEDS AND BEDSTEADS

How thankful we are, when very tired, to lie down on our beds. Do we always thank God for such a kind gift, and for the sleep He gives to us? For, whether young or old, we are dependent on Him for all things. But we are to use all God's gifts wisely. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows". (Ps. 127.2.) Not that it is wrong to rise early, but there are people who wish to be rich, and use the hours when they should be resting for work. Truly, such people eat the bread of sorrows, and find it vain.

The Slothful on his bed

"As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed" (Prov. 26.14). See also what the verses around say about him. A door never turns more than a half-circle, and keeps on its hinges. It is not meant to be otherwise, but men and women, boys and girls, too, are not to be like doors, useful as they are. They are to rise early, and get up at once when they are called. Again, doors have no life; they move only by the hands of those who use them. I hope none of my young readers are like this, having to be pulled out of bed as if they were lifeless. Form a habit of early rising. The morning is the best time of the day for reading the Scriptures and for prayer.

A great King once stayed in bed all day, at a time when he should have gone to fight his enemies. He got up in the evening, and walked on the roof of his house. He was tempted by what he saw, and fell into grievous sin. It is sad to be idle. Laziness is a sin, and leads to other sins. O beware of being slothful! Read what will overtake the man who will not tend his vineyard. Poverty and want come swiftly and cruelly upon him. But what will come upon those who are careless about the way of salvation? (Prov. 6.11, 24.34.)

Frogs in a king's Bed

The king of whom we have just been speaking was one of God's servants, and we are reminded of the words written to believers, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But there was another king, a bad man, who kept the children of Israel in hard bondage, and would not let them go. God therefore sent many evil things upon him. One day it was said to him by God, "If thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs . . . which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed". (Ex. 8.2.3.) The King's heart was hard. He gave

no heed to God's word. The frogs came, and filled the houses, and greatly distressed the people of the land of Egypt. They did not come away until Moses prayed to God. What lesson shall we learn from this? It is that what God says He will do will be done. This punishment on Egypt was only for a short time, but sinners who die with their hearts still hard will be sent away from God, and suffer for ever and ever. They will have no beds whereon to rest, and their companions will be worse than frogs, even fellow sinners, who have disobeyed God even as they.

A Short Bed

"For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it" (Isa. 28.20). So both the bed and the covering fall short. That means no real rest and not enough clothing. Both of these are needed for our earthly comfort, but these words of Scripture are not about earthly things. They remind us that heavenly rest and dress are needed for those who would wish to reach heaven. Many people try to make these themselves. But, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". We may try to do the best we can, hoping to find favour with God, but our "good works" will be too short to rest upon, and too narrow to cover us. Nothing can cover a poor sinner except God's robe of righteousness, wrought by His Dear Son. There can be no rest except for those who lay themselves on God's mercy, which He has for poor sinners who trust in the redeeming blood of His Dear Son. Have you this righteousness and rest?

Taking up the Bed

The Bible speaks of beds of ivory, on which people laid themselves because they loved comfort, and beds of gold and silver upon pavements of marble, because a great King wished to shew the riches of his glorious Kingdom. And once we read of a bedstead of iron, about five yards long and two yards wide. But that was for a giant, Og the King of Bashan (Amos. 6.4, Esther 1.6, Deut. 3.11). None of these were like the beds on which the sick of the palsy and other weak ones were lying when they were brought to the Lord Jesus to be healed. To such as these He said, when He healed them, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." (Matt. 9.6, John 5.9.) The bed was a kind of thick mat, so when the four friends of the palsied man wanted to bring him to Christ, they could each take hold of a corner of the "bed". What a change, when he could carry what had carried him! But such

Continued on page 36



THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

The message of this book has, for the careful reader, depending upon Divine teaching, a perennial interest. It reveals that man in the earlier centuries was, in all moral respects, no different from man today. He is, and was, and will be increasingly, rebellious and lawless, until the coming "Wicked One" heads up every manner of sin in himself, and thereby earns that awful name, "The Man of Sin". The prophecy further reminds that God always has His remnant to witness for Him, though it be small and despised—an elect company, to whom He makes known Himself and something of His counsel and purpose.

Yet the words of the prophet, sombre and solemn though they be, do not present a scene of unrelieved darkness; a final restoration of the nation of Israel is clearly foreshewn; glorious and most comforting are the Lord's concluding words; and the believer who prays for the peace of Jerusalem should be heartened, and praiseful also, in the remembrance that "this God is our God even for ever and ever".

The Prophet's Antecedents

Of no other prophet, save our Lord Jesus, is there given so extended a genealogy. His great-great-grandfather was Hizkiah, which is the same name as Hezekiah. Since this king was great-grandfather to Josiah, during the earlier part of whose reign Zephaniah spoke the Lord's message, it is not improbable that the prophet belonged to a branch of the royal line, and so was a distant relation of the King Josiah.

Others who prophesied during this reign were Huldah (2 Chron. 34.22) and Jeremiah (ch. 1.12), who was of the priests and commenced his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, continuing until his death (2 Chron. 35.25) and on to the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. So that, if indeed Zephaniah was of royal descent, we have one of Judah and one of Levi prophesying during the reign of Josiah. Members of these tribes are more than once seen working together, (for example, Haggai 1.1). As to where the

prophet was born, nothing is revealed. His name means, "Jah has hidden", of prophetic significance (see ch. 2.3), probably unrealised by his father, but indicating the Divine foreknowledge.

The Times of Josiah

This king, who lived but thirty-nine years, was only eight years old when he ascended the throne of Judah, but how much good, in the sight of God he accomplished in that time. It has often been the case that God's chosen servants have lived short lives, in some instances because the abundance of their labours has caused them to be "spent out" well before reaching middle age. It is true that Josiah died on the field of battle, though warned not to engage in combat by Pharaoh. His loss was a great sorrow to Judah, and especially Jeremiah, who lamented for him. His "untimely" death, as men would say, may have been Divine chastisement on the nation, for, despite his godly example and reforming work, Judah as a whole was not in fellowship with God. As in many "revivals", comparatively few were deeply affected.

Here was a godly ruler, desiring the best for his people, and seeking to turn them back to the God of their fathers; and yet the reformation affected the majority but superficially. His own sons (ch. 1.8) were ungodly, as the closing words of the books of Kings and Chronicles record. And what of the people? All classes, princes, judges, prophets, priests (ch. 3.3.4) were utterly corrupt, as were the people. Such a serious state of affairs is paralleled in the present time. We see great nations, either almost leaderless, or with a multitude of would-be leaders, in a state of chaos. On the other hand, there are those in high position, boasting of their godlessness, and endeavouring to bring the peoples down to their level.

Observe the varying degrees of wickedness in Judah. Do not their counterparts exist in the present day, even in the land wherein we live? Taking the verses 5 and 6, Chapter 1, in reverse order, we find—

- (a) The indifferent
- (b) The apostate
- (c) The latitudinarian
- (d) The openly idolatrous.

The Indifferent

There were those who had not sought the Lord nor enquired for Him. This is a prevailing sin today in this land, a "couldn't care less" attitude. This witness is true, but how much is due to the apostasy in high places. Where doubt is thrown

upon the historical truth of Scripture, when the unique character of Christ, "God over all", is denied, when His virgin birth and bodily resurrection are called in question by professed ministers of the gospel, what other fruit can be produced from the sowing of such evil seed? Judah's prophets, with the exception of those named, were "light and treacherous persons". Solemn is the Divine judgment! "Her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the Law". The words come to mind, "Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

The Apostate

"Them that are turned back from the Lord". Here are those that once professed to know Him; perhaps, like the "stony-ground" hearer, had emotionally rejoiced in the "revival", when a passover, the like to which had never been kept since the days of Samuel (2 Chron. 35.18), had been observed. But they had not only grown cold; they had "turned back". Is there not a parallel to this today? Oh, how we need, beloved fellow-believers, to "watch and pray", lest we backslide! Awful are the words, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2.21.22). The context suggests (see v. 20) that the apostate condition continues, with no "place of repentance".

The Latitudinarian

"Them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham". Here are those that considered one religion as good as another. Oaths could be in the Name of God or the name of an idol. What difference could it make if the swearer "believed" in his god? There was a wicked tendency to obliterate the marks that indicated a separation of the worship of the Lord from the adoration of false gods. Did not Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy utter solemn warnings as to this very thing? But the book of the Law had been neglected and remained unknown, until it had been discovered in the house of the Lord during its repairs (2 Chron. 34.14-19). The king humbled himself when it was read to him, but how many followed his example?

This levelling of "faiths", debasing "Christianity" to a mere "religion" was recently illustrated in America by a so-called festival, wherein

various systems, some idolatrous, received equal recognition with "Christianity"—or rather, an emasculated form of it dear to the hearts of modernists. This is the very sin which Zephaniah denounced in his day, when he warned Judah of impending judgments because thereof. A further manifestation of this sin is described in chapter 1.12. "The men that are settled on their lees", "say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil". Thus they blasphemously and vainly sought to represent Almighty God to be as "tolerant" as their own divided hearts. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1.8).

The Openly Idolatrous

Of the three classes concerning which we have already spoken, it may be said, they had idols in the heart; but there were "them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops", a place of proclamation (Matt. 10.27, Luke 12.3). Their sin was shameless and defiant. That so privileged a people should descend so low is sad indeed. But do we not see herein iniquity in its full development? This open sin springs from latitudinarianism, which in turn is the result of apostasy, and the fruit of indifferentism. Though there were these four classes of evil-doers, the dividing line between them was very thin. Let no one imagine that open idolatry is non-existent in so-called Christian countries. God has said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them". And yet, although the Divine command has never been, or ever will be, abrogated, it is broken by devotees both of pagan religions and of a corrupt Christendom. What can be the end but awful retribution from the hand of God, Whom men thus outrageously defy!

The City of Jerusalem

That "Holy City", wherein was the House of the Lord, should have been a centre of light and blessing, but what has the prophet to say about her? "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city" (ch. 3.1). Here is a threefold positive indictment, followed by a fourfold negative accusation. The word "filthy" is actually "rebellious"; "polluted", strange to say, is similar, in Hebrew, to the word "redeem". But as that has to do with "setting free", we are probably meant to think of a false "freedom", that is "licentiousness", with which, of course, we associate pollutedness. The third word, "oppress-

ing", speaks for itself. In these three terms, there is brought before us the logical sequence of sins. A rebel is one who demands freedom for himself, who sets at nought all law, and, in the moral sphere, is a licentious person. Casting off all restraint, indulging in the lusts of his own heart, he may promise liberty to others, whilst himself is a servant of corruption. Such is a demagogue who, as soon as convenient, will deny liberty to all except himself and thus become an oppressor. This will be seen in its fullness when the Antichrist arises. But how sad to see these evil principles at work in the very City of God! 'Tis no marvel that the "Woe" pronounced by the prophet came to pass during the reign of one of Josiah's sons.

If the Lord will, to be continued.



Inspired Words, Inspected.

No. 40

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4.5.

The following analysis is in the order of the of the Greek Text.

THEREFORE (hoste); adverb, meaning, "so that", hence what follows is closely connected with what precedes, namely the Lord's sole prerogative to judge.

NOT (me); negative, conditional and dependent, to be taken with imperative verb, Krinete.

BEFORE (pro); preposition, always followed by genitive case.

THE TIME (Kairou); noun, masculine, genitive (because preceded by "pro") from kairós (fit time or proper season). No article. It signifies an appointed time "which the Father hath put in His Own authority" (Acts. 1.17).

ANYTHING (ti); pronoun, indefinite, neuter; with "me", means "not anything", hence translated "nothing".

JUDGE YE (krinete); verb, present, imperative, from krino (I judge).

UNTIL (heos); adverb, meaning, "as long as, until"; therefore excluding all thought of present "judging". Joined to this word is the particle "an", having the thought of "so ever".

COME (elthei); verb, aorist, subjunctive, from

"erchomai" (I come). May be rendered, "shall have come".

THE LORD (ho Kurios); noun and article masculine, nominative.

WHO (hos); relative pronoun, agreeing with Kurios.

BOTH (kai); conjunction; with the "kai" a little further on, is rendered "both . . . and".

WILL BRING TO LIGHT (photisei); verb, indicative, future, from "photizo" (I light, lighten, bring to light). The thought is to "throw light upon". Solemn thought in regard to a believer's life. See 2 Tim. 1.10 for the meaning of this word.

THE HIDDEN THINGS (ta krupta); article and adjective used as substantive; neuter, from "kruptos,-e,-on" (hidden, concealed, secret); cf. Matt. 10.26.27.

OF DARKNESS (tou skotous); noun and article, neuter, genitive; from "skotos". It would seem that the judgment seat of Christ is alluded to, since those addressed are believers. It is a solemn thought that what we imagine is hidden from others now will be brought to light "in that Day". What follows confirms.

AND (kai); see above.

WILL MAKE MANIFEST (phanerosei); verb, future, from "phaneroo" (I make apparent, manifest, shew openly.) See Mark 4.22.

THE COUNSELS (tas boulas); article and noun, feminine, accusative, plural, from "he boule". It signifies what goes on within of inward thoughts, purposes, and decisions.

OF THE HEARTS (ton kardion); noun, and article, feminine, genitive, plural, from "he kardia" (the heart). The hearts, that is, of believers.

AND (kai); conjunction.

THEN (tote); adverb of time, meaning "at that time".

PRAISE (ho epainos); article and noun, masculine; meaning praise in the sense of commendation or approbation. See, for use of this word, Rom. 13.3. 1. Pet. 2.14.

SHALL HAVE (genesetai); verb, future, from "ginomai" (I become); translate, "shall become".

EVERY MAN (hekastoi); adjective, used as substantive, dative, singular, masculine, from "hekastos,-e,-on;" (each); translate "to each one", for it is intensely personal.

OF (apo); preposition, followed always by genitive, meaning "from".

GOD (tou Theou), article and proper Noun, masculine, genitive, from "Ho Theos".

**BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT
AND YET
BAPTISM IN WATER**

An article by the late Mr. Percy Heward appeared in the November-December issue of 1955, under this heading. The first paragraph has called forth some comments by readers. One seemed to think it was a plea for baptism in the Spirit with the signs accompanying, such as is claimed by some today. This was definitely not the object of the writer. Another thought that birth of the Spirit and baptism in the Spirit take place at the same time. Scripture, however, does not seem to bear this out. Yet another reader, referring to this first paragraph, asks for further remarks by way of explanation. This it seems the duty of the editor to give.

The writer, at the time he penned this article—in the year 1913—emphasised the fact that, whereas birth of the Spirit was invisible, baptism in the Spirit was visible, that is, was invariably accompanied by “signs”. In the book of Acts, our only source of knowledge of such baptism historically, it was undoubtedly after salvation was received and was accompanied by “gifts”. Baptism in water was also practised. The church at this time was marked by a **unity**, wherein there were no “sects”, as the word is understood today, and it is **such** a church that was marked also by the possession of various “gifts”. The persons using them were “inspired”. See 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14. The **unity** was **manifest**, and so were gifts, which were associated with the baptism in the Spirit.

Our author held, at one time, that as the **unity** no longer exists **manifestly**, the fact of the “**one body**” could not be now emphasised. Hence he concluded that it was not correct, in the present state of “weakness” (he abandoned the word “ruin”) of the church, to speak of being baptized in the Spirit. Later, however, he felt, in the light of the words of 1 Corinthians 12.13 that this view could not be honestly maintained. Let his own words be quoted. “I was very conscious (in 1912) of the sad disunity of God’s dear people (and would ever feel this) and, realising that the earthly manifestation of unity was **not** being set forth as a witness, I thought we could not speak of the “one body” and of being baptized into it, in its heavenly (and primary) aspect, at it does (blessed be God) still exist before **Him**. O to learn more of His truth and to have a full-orbed view, to His glory.


“May I now briefly summarize thus:—

(1) The early church was brought into a new

position and dispensation, and there is an appropriate record of being manifestly baptized in the Spirit, in the **fresh** spheres, fulfilling the gracious prophecy of Acts 1.8.

(2) The gift of tongues was fittingly linked, setting aside the primary use of Hebrew, and thus contrasting with the olden days; going to all nations **where they were**, and not bringing in via Jerusalem, nor incorporating with earthly Israel.

“But we do **not** read of this sign twice in **one** place, and the Lord gave the blessings sovereignly (even when in the house of Cornelius the Jewish disciples might have hesitated as to baptism) as a **witness** that Gentiles were brought in. The evidences of God’s work seem to be always granted by means of special signs at the **commencement** of a **new** dispensation.

“May we not truly say that, if we fulfill Acts 2.38, God still grants us the Gift? He does not fail. The word of 1 Corinthians 12.13 surely still applies. There was no **promise** of the continuance of the gift of tongues (which served a special Divine purpose then) nor of other similar manifestations, but the present dispensation is not ended, and the unity “In Christ” is secured by His finished work. We **believe**, and do not require “signs” (1 Cor. 14.22). We walk by faith, and experience God’s gracious gift of the Holy Spirit. But we would enter more fully into our Lord’s prayer in John 17, and pray more fervently for more manifested unity amongst the redeemed, “till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4.13)”.


BALAAAM

Concluded

The Seventh Parable

Solemn are the opening words of this final prophecy: "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" However much the nations assert themselves, setting at naught God's holy commandments, and oppressing His people, God is over all. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" is a comforting word to His saints, but terrifying to His adversaries.

Chittim, Asshur, and Eber, are all names of deep significance. Kittim (Gen. 10.4) and Chittim are the names of Cyprus and the people who inhabited that and adjacent coasts and islands. By way thereof the approach to the Syrian coast was made by ships. Tyre and Sidon used the island as a harbour for their fleets (Isa. 23.1.12). From Jeremiah 2.10, the prophet looks east and west, for Chittim and Kedar are about the same distance relative to the coast of Palestine. Asshur, or Assyria, has already been mentioned (Num. 24.22) as a coming sovereign power. She asserted her supremacy over the northern Kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17.5.6) but was absorbed by the Chaldeans (Isa. 23.13). That Assyria is to rise again seems clear from chapters 10 and 11 of Isaiah. The last great Assyrian King is the Antichrist. He is the "vile person" of Daniel 11.21, against whom the ships of Chittim come (v. 30) apparently about the midst of the last "week" of Daniel 9. Remarkable it is that Balaam, in speaking of "ships of Chittim" that "shall come," "and shall afflict Asshur," anticipates Daniel by so many centuries. As Cyprus is so much in the news just now, this subject should be of deep concern to saints who dwell in Europe. But these ships also "shall afflict Eber." From the word "Eber" is derived "Hebrew." This is the name of the great-grandson of Shem, and Abraham descended from Eber, being the sixth generation from him. Are we, therefore, to infer that Israel's affliction in the latter days is the subject of Balaam's prophecy? It may be so, because although Daniel declares that "ships of Chittim" come against the Antichrist, in the last day, all nations will be gathered together against Jerusalem. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle." "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be One Lord and His Name One" (Zech. 14.1-3.9).

The last words of Balaam are "And he also shall perish for ever." There seems but one explanation of these words. As Assyria has already been mentioned, the final destruction of Anti-

christ is here predicted. But whether our interpretation be correct or no, certain it is that that Wicked One, the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2.8).

**WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH**

Percy W. Heward.

This the Father seeks. Only His children can render it. Man-made, gaudy ritual and public worship appeal not to Him Who looketh on the heart. The rich men may give their wealth, but He commends the poor widow; the oratorios of the earth may pour forth their music, but to Him there is more beauty in the trembling tones of a dying saint, or in the unprofessional singing of a few sinners saved by grace, and gathered to the Lord Himself.

"Worship"—what is it, and why so unpopular? It is recognition of the glory of God, and self is not merely put second, not merely condemned (for this may become self-centering), but left out. The soul adores God for what He is, and thus becomes lost, not in dreamland, or disobedient sentimentalism, but in acknowledgement of His majesty. "I fell at His feet as dead". The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and none could enter. When Isaiah saw the grandeur of the Lord, his self-reliance vanished, and in the result we see the effect of worship in the, "Woe is me", and the, "Here am I".

The Lord has been pleased to give us descriptions of the glories of heaven, and the awfulness of wrath, in "The Revelation of Jesus Christ". What do the angels sing, and what is the cry of the representatives of the redeemed? Honour to the Lord seems the great theme—absorbing employment, aye, and it will be when time shall be no more.

Can we not see, therefore, why it is so unpopular? Man's glory is left out; man's contemplation of self may become mere information-seeking, even when coupled with that which looks like confession. To worship is to give God His right place and to feel His wonderful glory.

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" is the command. Shall we not obey? "The people bowed the head and worshipped, is the Divine statement. Shall we not, redeemed by our Passover, act likewise? Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? The "parts of His ways" transcend thought. Yet faith says, "that I may know Him".

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL—JULY, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|---------|--------------|----------|------|
| | Psalms | | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 1 | Jude | 18 12 | 8. 4 |
| 2 | 2 | Revelation 1 | 13 | 5 |
| 3 | 3 | 2. 1-16 | 14 | 6 |
| 4 | 4 | 2. 17-29 | 15 | 7 |
| 5 | 5 | 3. 1-12 | 16 | 8 |
| 6 | 6 | 3. 13-22 | 17 | 9 |
| 7 | 7 | 4. 1-11 | 18 | 10 |
| 8 | 8 | 5. 1-14 | 19 | 11 |
| 9 | 9 | 6. 1-17 | 20 | 12 |
| 10 | 10 | 7. 1-17 | 21 | 13 |
| 11 | 11 | 8. 1-13 | 22 | 9. 1 |
| 12 | 12 | 9. 1-21 | 23 | 2 |
| 13 | 13 | 10. 1-11 | 20 1 | 3 |
| 14 | 14 | 11. 1-19 | 2 | 4 |
| 15 | 15 | 12. 1-17 | 3 | 5 |
| 16 | 16 | 13. 1-18 | 4 | 6 |
| 17 | 17 | 14. 1-20 | 5 | 7 |
| 18 | 18 | 15. 1-8 | 6 | 8 |
| 19 | 18 | 16. 1-21 | 7 | 9 |
| 20 | 18 | 17. 1-18 | 8 | 10 |
| 21 | 19 | 18. 1-24 | 9 | 11 |
| 22 | 20 | 19. 1-21 | 10 | 12 |
| 23 | 21 | 20. 1-15 | 11 | 12 |
| 24 | 22 | 21. 1-27 | 12 | 14 |
| 25 | 23 | 22. 1-21 | 13 | 15 |
| 26 | 24 | Matthew 1 | 14 | 16 |
| 27 | 25 | 2. 1-23 | 15 | 17 |
| 28 | 26 | 3. 1-17 | 16 | 18 |
| 29 | 27 | 4. 1-25 | 17 | 19 |
| 30 | 28 | 5. 1-16 | 18 | 20 |
| 31 | 29 | 5. 17-30 | 23 1 | 21 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

JULY

- 1. Num. 18. 14. 1 Cor. 6.17. Eph. 2. 10-19, 4. 11-16. Heb. 2. 9-15.
- 8. Num. 18.5.6. Ezra. 6. 16-22. John 17. 1-11. Col. 3. 23.24. Rev. 22. 1-7.
- 15. Num. 18. 7-13. Heb. 13. 8-10. John 6. 49-58. 1 Cor. 9. 7-14, 11. 23-28.
- 22. Num. 18. 21-32. 1 Cor. 10. 1-4. 2 Chr. 31. 4-10. Mal. 3.10. 2 Cor. 8. 1-9.
- 29. Num. 19. 1-10. 2 Cor. 6. 17-7.1. Heb. 9. 13-14. 1 John 1. 7-9.

Notes on Memorized Verses

JEREMIAH 18

12. No hope. Wilful sin (see Gen. 6.5). 13. Among the heathen. (cf. 1 Cor. 5.1). Sin is horrible. 14. See margin and compare ch. 2.13. 15. Turning from God can only lead to stumbling. Contrast ch. 31.9. and see

John 11.9.10. 16. 17. A warning that went unheeded. They turned their back on God, and God dealt thus with them. 18. A prophet is not without honour save—One can smite with the tongue, even a believer. 19. Give heed—an allusion to the previous words. Jeremiah committed his cause to God. 20. The servant of God will not be popular, nor his kindnesses be remembered (see 2 Cor. 12.15) 21. 22. The prophet was not vindictive. His tears forbid the thought. He declared what would result from their rejection of him. 23. Not all these words express Jeremiah's wish, but declare coming judgment.

JEREMIAH 20

1. 2. The prophet suffered much at the hands of those to whom he spoke God's word. 4. 5. 6. Judah, Jerusalem, and the lying priest shall be in servitude to Babylon. 7. "Thou hast persuaded—and I am persuaded." How painful to be a laughing stock! 8. The Word of God a reproach, and Jeremiah a daily derision, but Christ endured much more than he. 9. Thus he felt, but stronger feelings prevailed, as in Elihu's experience (Job 32.18-20). 10. Thus they smote with their words. 11. "With me . . . therefore" (see 2 Tim. 4.16-18). 12. "I do see" (lit). 13. Having "opened his cause" to God, he can sing and praise for deliverance. 14-18. How quickly Jeremiah fell from his rejoicing. God has shewn us that he was, as Elijah, a man of like passions as we are. It is easy to get discouraged; saints are thus warned.

JEREMIAH 23.

1. 2. Pastors that destroy and scatter instead of feeding await solemn judgment. Compare "that evil servant" (Matt. 24.48-51). 3. But the flock shall be fed. God, who drove them out, will gather and bring them back, even Israel. 4. A blessed prospect. 5. The promise of Messiah's second coming. 6. Judah and Israel—not the church—in His days—millennial. But Christ is our Righteousness now. The church is blessed in advance. 7. 8. The Same Lord that liveth (Rev. 1.18). Who redeemed from Egypt will, a second time, recover and restore Israel. 21. All true ministers are "sent." Christ was sent and He sent His servants also (John 20.21). 22. "If." Have we failed, fellow-saved-ones? 23. "A God near am I . . . and not a God afar off" (Lit). 24. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15.3). 25. God sees, and hears. 26. Lies and deceit in the heart, and, 27. told to the neighbour. 28. It is not enough to have the Word. It must be told out faithfully. 29. God's Word is like wheat to feed, like fire to barn, and like a hammer to break rocky hearts. 30. Not only speaking lies, but stealing God's words from their neighbour, acting like Satan (Mark 4.5). 31. Smooth their tongues (margin). Such existed in apostolic days (Rom. 16.18, 2 Pet. 2.3). 32. Lies and lightness. Truth is weighty, but men love it not. They prefer to be amused.

JEREMIAH 24.

1. The time—when the captivity began. Unlike the false prophets, "the Lord shewed me" (cf. ch. 1.11-13). 2. Figs—very good, and figs that could not be eaten for badness. 3. Jeremiah saw, but had to wait God's interpretation. 4. Again the Word of the Lord Came. Here we see Divine Sovereignty. 5. Those carried away captive were so, by God's purpose, for their good. 6. 7. Surely this promise is yet unfulfilled. The return by the decree of Cyrus was only a token fulfilment. 8. Egypt. This was a prophecy (see Ch. 41.17 and chs. 42 and 43). 9. 10. This was ultimately fulfilled in A.D. 70.

JEREMIAH 26

1. The wicked son of a godly King. 2. Thus saith the Lord. Stand . . . speak . . . diminish not a word. It is solemn and painful to tell of judgment (see Acts 20.26-27).

Beds and Bedsteads

Continued from page 28

wondrous things the Lord Jesus still does. Sinners may come to Him, in their weak and helpless state, and find Him able and mighty and willing to save all that come unto God through Him.

This message is written for young people, but the reader may be older. Do not despise these words, therefore, and be not negligent about this great salvation. If, under real conviction of sin, you ask, "What must I do to be saved?" there is but one answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved."

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL"—AUGUST, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|---------|-----------|----------|-------|
| | Psalms | Matthew | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 30 | 5- 31-48 | 23. 2 | 9. 21 |
| 2 | 31 | 6. 1-15 | 3 | 22 |
| 3 | 32 | 6. 16-24 | 4 | 23 |
| 4 | 33 | 6. 25-34 | 5 | 24 |
| 5 | 34 | 7. 1-20 | 6 | 25 |
| 6 | 35 | 7. 21-29 | 7 | 26 |
| 7 | 36 | 8. 1-17 | 8 | 27 |
| 8 | 37 | 8. 18-34 | 21 | 28 |
| 9 | 37 | 9. 1-13 | 22 | 10. 1 |
| 10 | 38 | 9. 14-26 | 23 | 2 |
| 11 | 39 | 9. 27-38 | 24 | 3 |
| 12 | 40 | 10. 1-15 | 25 | 4 |
| 13 | 41 | 10. 16-28 | 26 | 5 |
| 14 | 42 | 10. 29-42 | 27 | 6 |
| 15 | 43 | 11. 1-15 | 28 | 7 |
| 16 | 44 | 11. 16-30 | 29 | 8 |
| 17 | 45 | 12. 1-20 | 30 | 9 |
| 18 | 46 | 12. 21-37 | 31 | 10 |
| 19 | 47 | 12. 38-50 | 32 | 11 |
| 20 | 48 | 13. 1-17 | 24. 1 | 12 |
| 21 | 49 | 13. 18-30 | 2 | 13 |
| 22 | 50 | 13. 31-43 | 3 | 14 |
| 23 | 51 | 13. 44-58 | 4 | 15 |
| 24 | 52 | 14. 1-12 | 5 | 16 |
| 25 | 53 | 14. 13-27 | 6 | 17 |
| 26 | 54 | 14. 28-36 | 7 | 18 |
| 27 | 55 | 15. 1-14 | 8 | 19 |
| 28 | 56 | 15. 15-28 | 9 | 20 |
| 29 | 57 | 15. 29-39 | 10 | 21 |
| 30 | 58 | 16. 1-12 | 26. 1 | 22 |
| 31 | 59 | 16. 13-28 | 2 | 23 |

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 66. 18. Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22, can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKSGIVING."

1. For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (8. 10).
2. For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
3. For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.
4. For saints on the Continent, and their many difficulties, including persecution and repression.
5. For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in Korea, Cyprus and North Africa.
6. For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3.14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Duce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Lutz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling if He will, of additional fellow-workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
7. The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
8. For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
9. For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
10. For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

AUGUST

- 5. Num. 19. 11-13. Hag. 2. 10-14. 1 Cor. 3.9.16.17. Jas. 4. 4-10. 1 John 3. 1-3.
- 12. Num. 19. 14-22. Ps. 51. 6-12. Num. 16.26. 1 Cor. 15.33. Heb. 10. 19-25.
- 19. Num. 20. 2-13. 1 Sam. 15.22. Ps. 106.32.33. Isa. 53. 5-10. Heb. 9. 23-27.
- 26. Num. 20. 23-29. 1 Cor. 10. 10-12. Heb. 7. 23-28, 4.14.15, 13.8.15.

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:— 61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate. E.7. Phone: Grangewood 4198. No telephoning on Lord's Day.

THOUGHTS FROM

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GRACE AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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JULY, AUGUST, 1956

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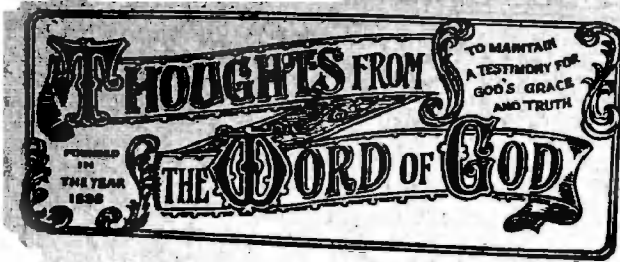
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| Zephaniah | 41 |
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"My soul waiteth for the Lord more
than they that watch for the morning".
Psalm 130.6.

When Christ shall come, and world-wide
To be earth's King, blessing bring,
The sleeping saints shall rise,
And with them, to the skies,
The living ones, to bliss,
In bodies like to His.
For He shall come, and earth-wide blessing
The Christ, the King. bring—
That Sun shall rise with healing in His wings,
The King of Kings.
All things shall praise His Name,
His glory shall acclaim;
The valleys shall rejoice,
The mountains give their voice
In blessing; all the little hills shall sing
For Christ is King.

E.K.



Words of Encouragement.

**"Let Me hear thy voice, To cast all our care
for sweet is thy voice."** on One Who careth for
Song. 2.14. us, to roll our burden
on to One Who is able

to sustain us, to be anxious for nothing, but in
everything to made known our requests to Him
who giveth liberally, is, dear fellow-believers,
blessedness indeed. 'Tis the privilege of every
child of God, however young in the faith, how-
ever mature in spiritual experience. But are we
making full use thereof, and, as a result, having
the heart "kept" by the peace of God

Doubtless, we regard prayer as a means of ob-
taining blessing and of seeking Divine guidance,
but do we realise that our God takes pleasure
in our approach to Him? "The prayer of the
upright is His delight." How gracious are the
words, "Sweet is thy voice," and how we should
seek to be pleasing to Him in calling upon His
Name! Should we withhold that which He de-
sires, "Let Me hear thy voice." Nay, let our
hearts respond, "My voice shalt Thou hear in the
morning, O Lord." "Evening, and morning, and
at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall
hear my voice." Ps. 5.3, 55.17).

Poem to help Christian Experience.—243.

"We will not have this Man to reign over us"

"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness
and a Man shall be as an hiding place".

"A Man of sorrows" was the Lord;
How oft He walked alone,
Unwelcomed Guest, and e'en abhorred
By Israel, "His own".

"To His own home" Messiah came;
"His own" received Him not;
The Lord of glory put to shame,
And gained themselves a blot.

"We will not have this Man to rule
O'er us", the nation cried;
But have they learned in sorrow's school
The staining of their pride?

The blot that tarnisheth their name
Nothing will e'er erase,
Till with contrition and with shame
They on Messiah gaze.

For ev'ry eye shall see the Lord,
And all the tribes shall mourn.
The Spirit then shall be outpoured;
A nation shall be born.

"This is the Lord", shall Israel say,
When shall the heavens cleave;
Messiah coming in that Day—
"Our God" they will receive.

Praise God, the people He foreknew
He hath not cast away;
They shall be saved—His word is true!
Lord, hasten that glad Day!

"Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say,
Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the
Lord".

CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL Thoughts on Romans 8.17

Percy W. Heward

The wondrous grace of God cannot be over-
valued. Those who, in themselves, are utterly
worthless are made His children, and are counted
as one with the Son of His love, indwelt by the
Holy Spirit, and made meet for the inheritance
of the Most Holy Place in the light (Col. 1.12).
Nothing can alter God's eternal purpose, for it is
not of human will or scheming or planning.
Grace has abounded, and praise is becoming.
Oh for more thankfulness, manifest, unwavering
thankfulness to our gracious heavenly Father.

But our Father has not seen fit to take us away
at once from this scene of sin and death. We are
under probation, not for eternal life, but with
regard to position in the Kingdom. This is one
key to an understanding of the strange problems
permitted to His children. If we view Canaan
as a type of the Millennial Kingdom, the words
of Deuteronomy 8.2 afford a striking parallel to
our present experience. How frequently a young
man who has high position is caused to go
through a routine, that his capacities and abilities
may be practised and manifested. Not only in
this connection, but in the way of reward, many
future glories are linked with this solemn time of
waiting, and serving, and preparing.

This thought is emphasized in the words of
Romans 8.17., and shews us that which is con-
ditional. It should be rendered and punctuated
thus:—"But if children, also heirs, heirs on the
one hand of God; but heirs together with Christ
if indeed we are suffering together, that we may
also have been glorified together". If we are

THOUGHTS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

children, if we have been quickened by the Holy Spirit, there is no question as to our position as heirs. This is unconditional. Every redeemed one is acknowledged by the Father as His child. Oh that we may realize more the things which God has prepared, that is, realize by the instruction of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2.9.10). Wonderful is the fulness of His mercy! And we deserved nothing—nothing at all.

The contrast between being an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, is not brought out in the authorized version. "And" would imply the blessings are almost one; "but" is the word Divinely used. Furthermore, the structure of the sentences rather needs the punctuation as given above. Thereby each of the two "ifs" of the passage has its appropriate accompaniment. But if a position as "joint-heirs with Christ" is conditional on our suffering together, what is to be said of those who bear the Name of the Lord and who avoid this suffering. First, "The Lord knoweth them that are His". We do not know; that is positively. Secondly, many who profess His Name are unsaved, and none such can be fully recognised as believers. Yet Scripture suggests that there are unfaithful ones who will be saved, like Lot, yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3.15). Oh that this may not be our sad experience!

The closest parallel is afforded by the words of Isaiah 53.12. This is, I think, one of the passages to which the Holy Spirit alludes in Romans 8.17. There we read of two dividings, one by the Father with "the many" (the same word as in, "He bare the sin of many"). Here we behold the "heirs of God". The other is a dividing of spoil by Christ, and only among "the strong". Here then we find "joint heirs with Christ".

The words of 2 Timothy 2.12 add their testimony to this privilege. Let us earnestly seek that it may be ours. How wondrous are the added blessings upon spiritual faithfulness. Nor is the grace of God insufficient (1 Cor. 15.10, 2 Cor. 9.8; James 4.6). May we wait on Him continually, and He will be exalted in our joyous reward.

EPAPHRAS

Colossians 1.7.8, 4.12.13, Philemon 23.

Very little space is devoted in the epistles to this servant of God, but what is said about him is very revealing. All we are told is from the pen of Paul, speaking by inspiration, and yet expressing his heart-feelings. The church at Colosse had not been founded through Paul's ministry. The

faces of those in fellowship in that assembly he had never seen, except that Epaphras had come thence to visit Paul in the prison at Rome. This fact seems to shew that Paul's apostleship was recognised by the Colossian saints; and, seeing there were some in the meeting who were not keeping to the simplicity which is in Christ, the visit of Epaphras probably had some relation to the problems caused by these "philosophisers". Their modern counterparts are not absent from the "churches" of today.

But the object of this paper is to gather from the record a little regarding the character of Epaphras, whose name—a shortened form of Epaphroditus—suggests that his parents were not believers. He was evidently a convert from idolatry, like those of 1 Thessalonians 1.9. But he grew in grace and spiritual stature, so that he became as Paul tells the Colossians, "for you a faithful minister of Christ". Such was the estimate the apostle had formed concerning him.

Moreover, he gave a clear account of the condition of the assembly. He "also shewed unto us your love in the Spirit". No mere talebearer was he, but he spoke first of the good things of the church, as their faith in Christ Jesus and of the love to all the saints (1.4) and their fruit bearing (1.6). Further, the apostle could say, on receiving the record by Epaphras, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (2.5). His report was such that on hearing it, Paul gave thanks to God and ceased not to pray for them. True, in the course of his epistle, he took occasion to warn them of false teachers; but, like his Lord, he spoke first of what he found pleasing to God (see Rev. 2 and 3). How great is the value of a truthful and gracious account of the state of an assembly or an individual! And what harm may be caused by the reverse!

Not only was Epaphras a faithful minister (diakonos); he was Paul's "fellow-bondman" (1.7), and in Chapter 4.12. is described as "a bondman of Christ Jesus" a lovely title, and one of which the apostle himself boasted. His love for the saints, from whom he was temporarily absent, never grew cold. "I bear him record", says Paul, "that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis". The word "zeal" signifies "pain", and conveys to us what "labour and travail" was his, in deep concern for the flock at Colosse and around. He wanted them to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God". But were they

Continued on page 42

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

Twelve Stones

The number twelve is often met with in the Bible. Jacob had twelve sons, in Israel were twelve tribes. The Lord Jesus had twelve disciples, and we read of a crown of twelve stars. This is interesting, and full of meaning, but our little talk now is, as God shall enable, to be on Stones of this number.

Stones out from a river bed

Before the children of Israel could go into the promised land, they had to pass through the River Jordan. At this time the river was in flood and overflowed all its banks, but God made a way through. The priests, carrying God's ark, stepped into the water, and at once the waters rolled back, and the people were able to "clean pass over". Not a drop of water touched them. But twelve men were told to take each one a stone from the bed of the river, where the priests stood while the people were crossing, and these were piled up in the place where they lodged, to remind the people of what God had done for them. For the waters would have drowned them if He had not made a way through. I wonder how many of our young readers can say that they have been brought out from God's judgment into salvation by the death of the Lord Jesus. All the waves of God's anger passed over Him, that His people might be saved.

Stones left in a river bed

"And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests, which bare the ark of the Covenant stood; and they are there unto this day". (Joshua 4.9). The river went back into its place, and covered those stones, and that also was a sign. It reminded of God's judgment from which there is no way out. But why twelve in both cases? It is to teach us that not all Israel were God's children in heart. Some out of all the tribes were truly His own, but many out of all the tribes were not. There are only two classes before God. To which do you belong?

An Altar of Twelve Stones

When Elijah lived and spoke for God, the nation of Israel was divided into two parts, one made up of two tribes, and one of ten tribes. The ten tribes had a very bad King, who led the people to worship idols, and brought trouble upon them. But one day Elijah called the people together, so that they might see clearly who was the True God. The idol worshippers prayed to their "god", and had no answer. Elijah built

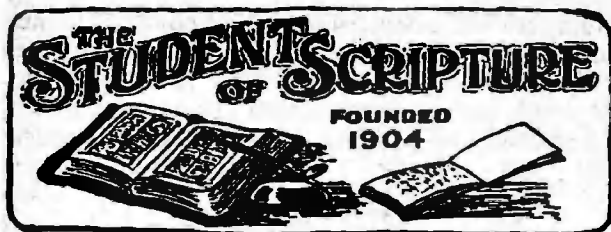
an altar of twelve stones, "according to the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob" (1 Kings 18.31.32). He knew that, although now divided into two parts, they were really one; also he knew a day would come when they would be joined together, and serve God as one nation. Then God sent fire from heaven and the bullock on the altar was burned. So the people cried, "The LORD, He is the God". Poor Israel is still spread abroad in many lands, and have many enemies against their own land. They do not serve idols now, but neither do they love the Lord Jesus; so are not serving God truly. How glad we should be that a day is coming when they shall see Him, and weep, and confess their sins. Then God will restore them, and all the twelve tribes will dwell as one saved people in their own land.

Twelve Precious Stones

The High Priest of Israel wore "garments for glory and beauty", and one of these was a breastplate. It was square, and made like a pocket, and fastened to the robes by golden chains and laces of blue. It had also four rows of lovely jewels, each having engraved upon it a name of one of the tribes. This was to teach the people how each tribe was known to God and precious to Him. And, as Aaron bore these names upon his heart (Ex. 28.29), he went to God for the people. And does not this remind us that believers are God's jewels (Mal. 3.17) and their Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, bears their names on His heart. He loved them and died for them, to redeem them by His precious blood. Do you not long to be one of His saved people?

Foundation Stones

In the last book of the Bible, we read of a heavenly city, of gold and precious stones, and pearls. It has twelve gates, each bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Also, it has twelve foundations, bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They were all precious stones like those in the high priest's breastplate. And this is the home that is prepared for all them that love God. (1 Cor. 2.9). Who would not wish to be there, seeing that it is the dwelling place of "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" (Rev. 21)? Will you be there?



THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHANIAH

Concluded

We see the same downward progression in the "nots" of verse 2. "She obeyed **not** the voice", surely the voice of God, as mentioned so often in the Pentateuch, and therefore meaning the Law, wherein the Holy Spirit speaketh. "She received **not** correction (instruction, margin)", for the only source of teaching was ignored. Dear fellow-saints, is there anything comparable to this in our lives? Do not the words, "Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts", speak to us, since they are words which "the Holy Ghost saith"? Are we disciples? Do we wish to receive instruction? Then let us "buy the truth", that is, pay the price of love's obedience. Sad indeed is the ignorance of believers of the precepts and promises and warnings of Holy Scripture; yes, and even refusal of plain commands as 1 Corinthians 11.5.13, 14.34.35 and 1 Timothy 2.9-13. Much more can be said along these lines, but "a word to the wise" is sufficient. "She trusted **not** in the Lord", inevitable result of the two previous "nots". For "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by a word of God" (Rom. 10.17). See also 2 Timothy 3.16. "She drew **not** near to her God". How could she when faith was not in operation? What a mournful sequence of sin in the heart and in the character! "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall".

The state of Jerusalem naturally reflected itself in the condition of Judah as a whole. Hence the words. "O nation not desirous" (ch.2.1 margin). There was no spiritual longing, only a deadly apathy, leading on to open sin.

An Elect Remnant

But were there none that loved the Lord and sought Him? Yes, indeed, and they are thus described; "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (ch.2.3). The words of Isaiah come to mind, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast;

for behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (26.20.21). Also the prayer of Psalm 57.1. "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast". Such will be the Lord's encouragement to His remnant, and such their response, in the yet future tribulation, as they have proved His faithfulness in past trials. They, and they only, learn the secret of the Lord and can look beyond present trials—"as it were for a little moment"—to that promised rest when "these calamities are overpast". Is it not to them the Lord speaks through the prophet (Zeph. 3.8)? God will rise up (cf. Ps. 50.3) but meanwhile "wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord". That is truly the appointed attitude for saints today. God reserves judgment to Himself. 'Tis His prerogative, though indeed the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come". (1 Cor. 4.5). Thus was the remnant in Zephaniah's day, in their patience to possess their souls (Luke 21.19) just as saints are encouraged by the Lord in regard to future days of testing.

In all ages, the true children of God have been but a remnant, compared with the world's millions, and even with the many who profess the Name of Christ. To such come the heartening words of the Great Shepherd, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12.32). Hence, they "wait", they "seek righteousness, seek meekness", and take no part in earth's politics and diplomacies, unions and federations.

The Nations

Jeremiah was ordained "a prophet unto the nations", and although this phrase is not used specifically of them, the same is true of other prophets, notably Isaiah. Thus the Gentiles are not excluded from God's purview and purpose. Indeed, Isaiah in particular, in the midst of declarations of wrath against them, oft speaks of their future blessing, as his words are quoted in Romans 15. So Zephaniah speaks of the Philistines, including the Cherethites, and the cities of Gaza*, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron. Moab and Ammon, Ethiopians and Assyrians, with the great city, Nineveh, all are mentioned as about to be punished in the righteous judgment of God. And why? Because of their evil behaviour toward

* Much in the news today. "The Gaza strip" is a danger point.

the children of Israel. "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached My people, and magnified themselves against their border". "This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts" (2.8.10)*. In two other places (2.9) God speaks of Israel as "My people", and this despite the fact that He has spoken so severely against their forsaking Him for the gods of the nations. Truly He has not cast away His people, yet even they will not escape His chastisement.

God's Judgments

These, as chapter 1 discloses, will be very heavy upon the nation of His choice. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3.2). So, through Zephaniah come the solemn words, "I will utterly consume", "I will consume . . . I will consume", (1.2.3). Again, "I will stretch out Mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will punish . . . I will punish". These dreadful words had a pre-fulfilment at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, but seeing that the great day of the Lord" is mentioned in the context (ch.1.14-18) there is to be a final chastisement of Israel, prior to her restoration. Indeed, judgment must begin with that once-favoured nation, even as, in the vision of Ezekiel, we hear the words, "Begin at My sanctuary" (Ezek. 9.6) and as Peter, in his day, wrote of the time "when judgment must begin at the house of God". (1. Pet. 4.17). This is God's way, for privilege brings responsibility, and to know the Lord's will and not to do it will bring loss for saints at the judgment seat of Christ.

Judgments upon the Nations

How solemn are the words of Chapter 2, wherein God speaks of a "forsaking", "driving out", "desolation" and "rooting up", of a visitation as on Sodom and Gomorrah. "The Lord will be terrible unto them, for He will famish all the gods of the earth". Thus, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth, He will deal not only with men, but with principalities and powers, those behind the idols of men. Compare Exodus 12.12. Nineveh has already suffered eclipse (2.13-15) but Assyria, once ruled by Nebuchadnezzar, will be revived in the latter days, for Antichrist is called "The Assyrian" (Isaiah 10) and will be a rod in God's hand to chastise Israel. Zephaniah spoke, not only of the immediate

future, for the instruction and admonition of his contemporaries, but he looks beyond to a remote future, wherein he sees, not only judgment upon his people and the nations, but the time of peace and blessing immediately to succeed the present age.

Final Deliverance

"My determination", saith the Lord, is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy" (3.8). It would seem that this is the great gathering of Zechariah 14.1-3. for it is followed by the restoration of the chosen nation. Notice also the words, "The Lord . . . hath cast out thine enemy", surely the Antichrist. Repentance of their transgressions will be evidence of the work of sovereign grace (Ezek. 36.24-32. Zeph. 3.11) as will also be the change of heart and character that grace will produce (3.13). The concluding verses of the prophecy would seem to permit no doubt as to the Divine purpose in regard to **Israel and Jerusalem**. Precious as may be the application of the words of verse 17 to children of God in this present age, the **interpretation** must be of the nation which God hath not cast away. "The King of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more". "Behold, at that time, I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame". (3.19). Such words cannot well apply to a heavenly people, as is the church; for heaven—The Father's house—is their predestined place, not fame upon the earth. "At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord". Again, these words can only apply to a freed and restored people on the earth. Let us take the words in their simple meaning, and praise our gracious God for this happy conclusion to so solemn a prophecy, remembering, "This God is our God".

EPAPHRAS

Continued from page 39

not "complete in Him Who is the Head of all principality and power" (2.10)? Yes, but he longed for them to be growing, so as to become "perfect". In this he shews himself in full harmony with the apostle, who preached, "warning

* Such, at this very day, is the hatred toward Israel.

every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may **present** (make to stand alongside) every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour (wearisome toil) striving (agonizing) according to His inworking Who in-worketh in me in power'. (1.28.29). How close was the fellowship between Paul and Epaphras! For the latter also was "always labouring fervently (agonizing)" with a view to the same object (4.12).

Such was Paul, and such was Epaphras. In view of the judgment seat of Christ, for those whom they fed as His flock they desired progress, so that the saints might not remain "babes", but attain to "full growth" (perfection). Herein also they would serve their Lord, Who hath "reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to **present** (make to stand alongside) you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight" (1.21.22).

Thus, then in a few sentences, is portrayed the character of a selfless servant of Christ, and not only selfless, but willing, in his purpose to visit Paul, to incur the risk of himself being imprisoned. Like Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of Paul's chain (2. Tim. 1.16). We have spoken of his "temporary" absence, but did he ever return to his beloved fellow-saints at Colosse? Probably not, for we read the words, "There salute you Epaphras my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus" (Philemon 23), a further honour he shared with Paul.

The Lord be pleased to raise up more such faithful, truthful, fervently-praying and self-sacrificing servants of Christ as Epaphras, in our day and generation, for His Own glory.



INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

No. 41

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power."
Col. 2.8-10.

The words below are in the same order as the original.

BEWARE (blepete); verb, imperative, present, from "blepo" (I see, I look). Here it has the thought of "looking out, keeping your eyes open, see to it that". Hence, "beware".

NOT (me); negative; denying a possibility.

ANYONE (tis); indefinite pronoun.

YOU (humas); personal pronoun, accusative, plural.

SHALL BE (estai); verb, future, from "eimi" (I am).

THE (ho); article, masculine.

ONE SPOILING (sulago-gon); verb, present participle, from "sulagogeō" (I lead away as prey, carry off as booty); compounded from "sulon" (spoil, prey, plunder) and "ago" (I lead, lead away). The whole sentence may be rendered "Take heed (or beware) that not anyone (or no one) shall be leading you away as booty". The Gnostics (knowing ones) only wished to captivate the saints by their attractive words of human wisdom. As the word is in the singular, it may be that one particular person was a source of trouble and danger in the assembly (cf. Eccl. 9.18).

THROUGH (dia); preposition.

PHILOSOPHY (tes philosophias); article and noun, genitive; from phileo (I love) and "sophia" (wisdom) but philosophy, much loved by certain minds, is usually human wisdom, often complex and always defective, ignoring Scripture, though sometimes seeking to understand and explain Scripture by human reasoning. But see 1 Cor. 2.14).

AND (kai); conjunction.

VAIN (kenes); adjective, genitive, from "kenos, -e, -on" (empty).

DECEIT (apates); noun, feminine, genitive; from "apate" (deceit, deception, cheating, fraud).

AFTER (kata); preposition meaning "down" or "along"; with accusative, render "according to".

THE TRADITION (ten paradosis); article and noun, feminine, accusative; from "paradosis" (a delivering over); compounded from "para" (aside, beside, alongside) and "dosis" (giving) from "didomi" (I give). The word signifies something orally delivered. It is used also in a good sense (1 Cor. 11.2, "ordinances"—the verb is also used here); also 2 Thess. 2.15, 3.6).

OF MEN (ton anthropon); article and noun, masculine, genitive, plural.

AFTER (see above).

THE RUDIMENTS (ta stoicheia); article and noun, neuter, accusative plural; from "stoicheion" (elements or rudiments), as a child may learn to form letters from parts of such, for the word means literally "a little step, a pin, a peg, standing upright". The philosophers, and they exist today) thought they had advanced knowledge, but were really elementary. The word occurs in Gal. 4.3.9, Col. 2.20, Heb. 5.12, 2. Pet. 3.10.12.

OF THE WORLD (tou kosmou); noun, masculine, genitive; from "kosmos" (world).

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

AND (kai); see above.

NOT (ou); negative denying a fact (see "me" above).

AFTER (see above).

CHRIST (Christon); proper noun, accusative, from "Christos".

FOR (hoti); conjunction meaning "because"; sometimes "that".

IN (en); preposition always followed by dative.

HIM (autoi); personal pronoun; from "autos".

DWELLETH (katoikei); verb, present, indicative, from "kata" (down) and "oikeo" (to dwell as in a house); meaning therefore "to dwell permanently and fixedly".

ALL (pan); adjective, neuter, qualifying "fulness". Nominative case.

THE FULNESS (to pleroma); article and noun, neuter, nominative. A favourite word with Gnostics, who used it to describe the assemblage of emanations (angels) proceeding from the Deity, and even spoke of Christ as such an emanation. The text refutes this evil teaching, and uses the word in a true and holy sense.

OF THE GODHEAD (tes theotetos); noun, feminine, genitive, from "Theotes" (Deity, Godhead); only used here.

BODILY (somatikos); adverb, the adjective "somatikos" means "bodily" (see Luke 3.22, 1 Tim. 4.8). Hence, the adverb, as used here, would be "bodily-ly"; perhaps indicating the reality of the union of Godhead and Manhood in the Person of the Lord Jesus; also the thought of substantially and truly. He is "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3.16).

AND (kai).

YE ARE (este); verb, present tense, from "eimi" (I am).

IN (see above).

HIM (see above).

COMPLETE (pepleromenoi); verb, perfect passive participle, from "pleroo" (I fill); hence meaning "ones having been filled". A true fulness. Wycliffe rendered it thus or similarly. The word "pleroma" (see above) is derived from this verb.

WHO, (hos); relative pronoun.

IS (estin); verb, present indicative, from "eimi".

THE HEAD (he kephale); article and noun, feminine, nominative. Occurs also in verse 19 and ch. 1.18.

OF ALL (pases); adjective, feminine, genitive, from "pas, pasa, pan".

PRINCIPALITY (arches); noun, feminine, genitive, from "arche" lit., "beginning"; but sometimes meaning the first place; hence the thought of "rule" or "dominion".

AND (kai).

POWER (exousias); noun, feminine, genitive,

from "exousia" (authority). These two words are often coupled together (see Eph. 1.21, 3.10, 6.12, Col. 2.15). In 1 Peter 3.22, the words, angels and authorities and powers (dunamis) occur.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

No. 164.

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him That was to come". Romans 5.14.

It is requested that this verse of Scripture be explained. Therefore let it be considered in its context. The argument contained in the verses 12 to 21 is based upon the parallels and contrasts in the two federal headships, that of Adam over the whole human race, and that of Christ over His Own people, elect, and redeemed, and called by grace.

Adam is said to be a figure of Him That was to come, Who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, described as "the Last Adam . . . a life-giving Spirit". "For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". (1. Cor. 15.21.22.45). In what way is Adam a figure (or likeness) of Christ. In the first place, he was formed before Eve, who had no existence apart from him. The church, ere that foundation of the world, was "chosen in Christ" (Eph. 1.4).

Secondly, he "was not deceived". "The woman, being deceived, became in transgression" (1. Timothy 2.13.14). Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. Apparently, love for Eve led him to choose to share her sin and its consequences. In a contrasted way, the Lord Jesus Christ bore the sins of His Church and their penalty, though in Him was no sin. In saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God", He fully realised what it would mean to Him, but love to the Father, and love for His chosen led Him to the cross.

What was it that characterised Adam's transgression? It was wilfulness, and in full consciousness that he was disobeying. Is not sin always of this nature? Does not even conscience convict a person of wrong, even before he commits an act of sin? "All sinned": it is common to man, because he has a sinful nature. Babes are "conceived in sin" and "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. 51) yet they do not sin as Adam until they reach an age of moral consciousness. Hence the words, "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" would seem to apply to babes.

Yet many babes died, and still do so, thus illustrating the universal reign of death.

But why the words, "from Adam to Moses"? Because God gave a simple law to Adam which he transgressed, and for breaking which he paid the penalty foretold, "Dying, thou shalt die". God also gave a law through Moses, with like penalties for transgression. It is not to be supposed that law was in abeyance during this period—Adam to Moses. Verse 13 states, "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law". Is it therefore to be inferred that there ever was a time in the world's history when law was not. Surely the answer must be, "No", and this is confirmed further by the words of verse 12. "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". Sin is imputed to the whole human race. It follows therefore that law has existed from Adam onwards. The Law given by Moses was much more complex, and of that it was said, "It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3.19). It is important to remember that circumcision, sacrifices, monogamy, the keeping of Sabbath, punishment for murder, were not initiated by the Law which came through Moses. The actual effect of Law, when the Holy Spirit is applying it to an unsaved (though elect) sinner, is to awaken consciousness of sin, and to lead to the seeking to God for mercy and forgiveness through the atoning blood of Christ. We may well be thankful for law, for it shews us what sin is—lawlessness (1 John 3.4) and what man is—a law-breaker; also in regard to the elect, it leads (Gal. 3.24) to Christ, the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10.4).

That babes (and perhaps mentally deficient persons) are meant by those described as not having "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" is not a novel thought. It seems to the writer a valid explanation. "From Adam to Moses" all were under the reign of death and this "all" (see verse 12) includes even those especially named.

It is thought by some that the emphasis here is on the fact that the Law through Moses had not been promulgated, and that persons living prior thereto are not in the same degree guilty. It is quite true that God held Israel more accountable because of His sovereignly gracious choice of, and dealings, with them (Amos 3.2). In the passage before us, however, it is not a question of degrees of guilt, but the fact of guilt, meriting death.

Those who lived after the Flood were not without law (see Genesis 9). Adam was not without

law, neither were those who lived before the Flood. As already mentioned, many things were binding on men before Sinai. The Law through Moses, so to speak, confirmed, regularized, and expounded them. Moreover, as one reads through the book of Job, one of the oldest, it is clear that some manner of law governed the lives of men, because of various actions described therein as sin, such as murder, adultery, theft, idolatry and so forth.

Teaching concerning degrees of accountability may be found in other parts of Scripture, but here the solemn fact of universal guilt and the inescapable penalty are before us.

If, dear reader, you and I have known, by grace, a transfer to this new position of being "In Christ", and are members of that body of which He is the Head, how our lives ought to manifest this blessed change!

BAPTISM

Introduction

Have there not been written books without number on this subject? Yes, writings, both of great length and shorter, have been put forth during the centuries. Has not the question been settled? Yes, as far as Holy Scripture is concerned, but the appeals have often been to sources outside Scripture, namely, to historical records, to "church authorities", to human reasoning, and to analogy with Old Testament types. This last may seem to be spiritual, and so it would be if the types were to be considered in their entirety, and every factor taken into account.

How many are relying upon their "baptism" in infancy in the various bodies of Christendom, both Protestant and otherwise! The practice is oft regarded with superstitious awe, and as having some saving efficacy, as though any act performed by the creature could rightly be added to the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ when He "poured out His soul unto death" at Golgotha.

In the following essay, the appeal will be solely to Holy Scripture. And why not? Only of the Book of God is it said, "All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (2. Tim. 3.16). Hence, there will be no references to works of men; not that the writings of godly men are undervalued, but because believers—especially those younger in the

* It is hoped to reprint as a booklet.

faith—need to learn to “prove all things” by Scripture. That alone stands as the court of appeal. If it be said—and it is quite true—what you are now sending forth is a work of man, the only reply can be, “Yes, but examine all its statements by searching the Scriptures whether these things be so.” (Acts 17.11).

In the hope that readers will so act, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in John 7.17, this little book asks for a kindly reception. To God alone be glory.

The Word Used

Baptize, Baptist, Baptism, are not English words. Hence, although they have been anglicised, we must examine a Greek dictionary to find their real meaning. Liddell and Scott's Lexicon gives as the meaning of “Baptizo”—to dip repeatedly, to dip under, to bathe; “Baptistes” (a description of John the Baptist)—one that dips, a dyer. Another lexicon adds the verb, “to sink”. “Bapto”, whence “Baptizo” is derived, is rendered “to dip, to dye, to dip under, to sink”. Now, whatever meanings have been attached to the word since the New Testament Scriptures were written, it does not appear that it can be used other than in the sense, “To immerse”. “Sprinkling” or “pouring” cannot rightly translate the word as thus used in the original language of the New Testament; indeed there are distinct words for both such actions, but they are not used for the act of water baptism.

The Idea of Immersion

confirmed by the Inspired Record

John, we are told, baptized IN water (Matt. 3.11, John 1.26.31.33. Mark uses the instrumental dative case,* translated “with water”. “John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there” (John 3.23). At the baptism of the Lord Jesus, as recorded by Mark, it is said that, “straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened” (Mark 1.10). Matthew's words are, “And Jesus, when He was baptised, went up straightway away from the water” (Matt. 3.16). The baptism of the Ethiopian is thus recorded in Acts 8:38.39. “And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him, and when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip”.

It would seem, then quite clear that these baptisms were performed by a complete dipping under the water of the whole body. There would be no need to go down into the water for a mere sprinkling or pouring. Nor for such acts as these

latter would there be need of “much water”. This cumulative evidence goes to prove that a true baptism can only be carried out by a complete immersion.

The Baptism of John

By this phrase is meant the baptism performed by John the Baptist. It is used by the Lord Jesus Himself (Mark 11.30). “The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” That it was from heaven is confirmed by John's own words, “He (that is, God) That sent me to baptize” (John 1.33). Who were the subjects of this baptism? Those who were confessing their sins, who had heard the words, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand”. Moreover, it was “unto” (or with a view to) the remission of sins (Mark 1.4.5). Not that this act could of itself procure forgiveness, but where there is a work of the Holy Spirit, producing repentance and confession, obedience to the Lord's command will result in an assurance of forgiveness. Did all who were baptised in Jordan prove themselves to be true disciples? That is impossible to tell. Simon Magus was baptized but he shewed afterwards that his heart was not right in the sight of God (Acts 8).

Very many obeyed the word of God through John, as the “people” and the “publicans”. These, hearing the words of the Lord Jesus, “justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him” (Luke 7.29.30). They were, as the Gospels testify so often, self-righteous, needing no repentance, and therefore not confessing their sins.

John's baptism was not an empty form. He ever pointed away from himself to the Son of God. It was with a view to the Lord Jesus he baptized, never in his own name (compare 1. Cor. 1.13-15). This is confirmed by Paul in Acts 19.4.5. “John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him Which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus, and, having heard (lit.) they (that is, those who heard John preaching) were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus”. It cannot be proved beyond question that this last sentence (verse 5) applied to the twelve men at Ephesus. The two verses should be read together as a continuous narrative. These men evidently knew the Lord Jesus as Saviour, but, being imperfectly taught, they needed further instruction as to the real meaning of their baptism, before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From the context it would

* sometimes translated “in”.

THOUGHTS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

appear that these men had become disciples (Acts 19.1) through the ministry of Apollos (Acts 18.24-28). This servant of God needed to know the way of God more perfectly, prior to which his teaching lacked certain parts of truth which Aquila and Priscilla were able, by the grace of God, to impart to him.

The baptism of John did not differ essentially from that practised by the Lord's disciples (John 3.22, 4.1.2) or from that commanded by the Lord ere He ascended into heaven. The language used by Peter on the Day of Pentecost remarkably resembles that of John the Baptist (Acts 2.38). All baptism, rightly carried out, is "into the Name", not of men, but of God (Matt. 28.19, Acts 8.16).

The Lord Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan, at His own request. "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3.15). He is seen in the midst of people confessing their sins: He had none to confess, He had no need of repentance, for He knew no sin. But did not this act on His part have in view His coming baptism under wrath, when the sins of His elect people would be laid upon Him? He Who restored that which He took not away had laid to His charge "the iniquity of us all". The sins of His chosen were imputed to Him, that He might bear the judgment due thereto. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12.50). Such a baptism meant for Him that "all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over Me" (Ps. 42.7). Thus also cried Jonah, of whose experiences the Lord Jesus spoke as a type of His own. (Jonah 2.3). Well may the saved one rejoice in such a Saviour!

If the Lord will, to be continued

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 68. 18. Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22, can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKSGIVING." Colossians 4. 2.

1. For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (8. 10).
2. For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
3. For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.
4. For saints on the Continent, and their many difficulties, including persecution and repression.

5. For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in Korea, Cyprus and North Africa.
6. For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3.14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Duce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Lutz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling *if He will*, of additional fellow-workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
7. The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
8. For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
9. For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
10. For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL"—SEPTEMBER, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | Psalms | Matthew | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 60 | 17. 1-13 | 26. 3 | 10. 24 |
| 2 | 61 | 17. 14-27 | 4 | 25 |
| 3 | 62 | 18. 1-20 | 5 | 26 |
| 4 | 63 | 18. 21-35 | 6 | 27 |
| 5 | 64 | 19. 1-12 | 7 | 28 |
| 6 | 65 | 19. 13-30 | 8 | 29 |
| 7 | 66 | 20. 1-16 | 9 | 30 |
| 8 | 67 | 20. 17-34 | 10 | 31 |
| 9 | 68. 1-19 | 21. 1-14 | 11 | 32 |
| 10 | 68. 20-35 | 21. 15-27 | 12 | 33 |
| 11 | 69. 1-18 | 21. 28-46 | 13 | 34 |
| 12 | 69. 19-36 | 22. 1-14 | 14 | 35 |
| 13 | 70 | 22. 15-33 | 15 | 36 |
| 14 | 71 | 22. 34-46 | 16 | 37 |
| 15 | 72 | 23. 1-22 | 17 | 38 |
| 16 | 73 | 23. 23-39 | 18 | 39 |
| 17 | 74 | 24. 1-14 | 19 | II. 1 |
| 18 | 75 | 24. 15-31 | 20 | 2 |
| 19 | 76 | 24. 32-51 | 21 | 3 |
| 20 | 77 | 25. 1-13 | 22 | 4 |
| 21 | 78. 1-25 | 25. 14-30 | 23 | 5 |
| 22 | 78. 26-49 | 25. 31-46 | 24 | 6 |
| 23 | 78. 50-72 | 26. 1-19 | 29. 8 | 7 |
| 24 | 79 | 26. 20-35 | 9 | 8 |
| 25 | 80 | 26. 36-56 | 10 | 9 |
| 26 | 81 | 26. 57-75 | 11 | 10 |
| 27 | 82 | 27. 1-18 | 12 | 11 |
| 28 | 83 | 27. 19-32 | 13 | 12 |
| 30 | 85 | 27. 50-66 | 30. 1 | 14 |
| 29 | 84 | 27. 33-49 | 14 | 13 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

SEPTEMBER, 1956

- 2. Num. 21. 4-9. John 3. 14-18, 6. 37-48. Rom. 8. 1-4. 2. Cor. 5. 21.
- 9. Num. 21. 16-18. Isa. 12. 1-6. John 4. 6-14, 7. 37-39. Rev. 7. 13-17.
- 16. Num. 21. 21-25, 33-35. Ps. 136. 17-22. 2 Cor. 2.14. Eph. 6. 10-18. 2 Tim. 4. 7. 8.
- 23. Num. 22. 2-12, 22-35, 38. Deut. 23. 3-6. Isa. 61. 8. 9. 2 Pet. 2. 15. 16. Eph. 1. 3-14.
- 30. Num. 23. 4-10. Deut. 33. 26-29. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 14-7. 1. Titus 2. 11-14.

"IF THE LORD WILL"—OCTOBER, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|------------|--------------|----------|--------|
| | Psalms | Matthew | Jeremiah | Heb. |
| 1 | 86 | 28. 1-20 | 30. 2 | 11. 15 |
| 2 | 87 | Mark 1. 1-15 | 3 | 16 |
| 3 | 88 | 1. 16-31 | 4 | 17 |
| 4 | 89. 1-14 | 1. 32-45 | 5 | 18 |
| 5 | 89. 15-32 | 2. 1-17 | 6 | 19 |
| 6 | 89. 33-52 | 2. 18-28 | 7 | 20 |
| 7 | 90 | 3. 1-19 | 8 | 21 |
| 8 | 91 | 3. 20-35 | 9 | 22 |
| 9 | 92 | 4. 1-20 | 10 | 23 |
| 10 | 93 | 4. 21-41 | 11 | 24 |
| 11 | 94 | 5. 1-20 | 12 | 25 |
| 12 | 95 | 5. 21-34 | 13 | 26 |
| 13 | 96 | 5. 35-43 | 14 | 27 |
| 14 | 97 | 6. 1-13 | 15 | 28 |
| 15 | 98 | 6. 14-29 | 16 | 29 |
| 16 | 99 | 6. 30-44 | 17 | 30 |
| 17 | 100 | 6. 45-56 | 18 | 31 |
| 18 | 101 | 7. 1-13 | 19 | 32 |
| 19 | 102 | 7. 14-23 | 20 | 33 |
| 20 | 103 | 7. 24-37 | 21 | 34 |
| 21 | 104. 1-15 | 8. 1-13 | 22 | 35 |
| 22 | 104. 16-35 | 8. 14-26 | 23 | 36 |
| 23 | 105. 1-22 | 8. 27-38 | 24 | 37 |
| 24 | 105. 23-45 | 9. 1-13 | 31. 1 | 38 |
| 25 | 106. 1-18 | 9. 14-32 | 2 | 39 |
| 26 | 106. 19-31 | 9. 33-50 | 3 | 40 |
| 27 | 106. 32-48 | 10. 1-22 | 4 | 12. 1 |
| 28 | 107. 1-15 | 10. 23-34 | 5 | 2 |
| 29 | 107. 16-31 | 10. 35-52 | 6 | 3 |
| 30 | 107. 32-43 | 11. 1-14 | 7 | 4 |
| 31 | 108 | 11. 15-33 | 8 | 5 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

OCTOBER, 1956

- 7. Num. 23. 16-20. Ps. 33. 4-12. Rom. 11. 25-29. Heb. 6. 13-20. 2 Cor. 1. 18-22.
- 14. Num. 23. 21-24. 2 Sam. 6. 12-15. Ps. 47. 1-7. Zeph. 3. 14-17. 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.
- 21. Num. 24. 1-6. Ps. 1. 1-3. Song. 4. 12-16, 5. 1. John 15. 1-8. Rev. 22. 1-5
- 28. Num. 24. 7-9. Ps. 21. 1-10. Ps. 89. 24-29. Zech. 14. 8. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 17. 6. 13-16.

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:—
61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.7.
Phone: Grangewood 4196. No telephoning on Lord's Day.

Notes on Memorized Verses

JEREMIAH 26

3. An evil way, evil doings—nature and practice—meriting "evil"—judgment from God. 4. God's law to be heard and a walk commanded in accordance. 5. Threefold stress on "hearken". The prophets were God's servants (Heb. 1.1, 1 Pet. 1-10-12). 6. Like Shiloh (Ps. 78.60). The house and the city (see ch. 52). 7. Priests, Prophets, People, heard, but. 8. Rejected God's message. 9. "Against" (see ch. 1.19). 10. The Princes sit in judgment. 11. Man's intense hatred of truth. "Worthy to die", but Christ, worthy to live, died. 12. Jeremiah's claim that the Lord sent him (see v. 15). 13. The Lord's "repentance". A word used in His condescension. He is long-suffering (see 2 Pet. 3.9). 14. 15. His willingness to die would not clear them (see Matt. 27.4.25). 16. A change of mind, but was it permanent? 17.18.19. A wise appeal to Scripture history—a needed lesson today (2 Tim. 3.16). 20-23. A further appeal to history, but how great a contrast. 24. Divine Deliverance.

JEREMIAH 29

8. God's prophet opposed by false prophets in the midst. 9. A lie (see 2 Thess. 2.10-12). 10. This was fulfilled (Daniel 9.2, Ezra 1.1-2). 11. God's thoughts how precious! But who knows them except He reveal them. 12. Call, pray, an answer. 13. "All your heart". Is it thus we seek the Lord? 14. Fulfilled in measure (see above) but a fuller fulfilment when the Lord returns.

JEREMIAH 30

1.2. The word came to the prophet, but it must be written, and so has come to us. 3. A token fulfilment (see above) but this looks beyond, to the day of Messiah's return. 4. Israel and Judah—not the church. 5. Israel in their land, but fearful—no peace. 6. How deep the anguish! Do we feel for the affliction of Joseph? (Amos 6.6). 7. "That day"—the closing day of this age—a climax of trouble for "Jacob" (see Zech. 14.1.2. apparently the same day). But he shall be saved. 8. "That day, an oft-repeated phrase in Scripture. "His yoke", that of Antichrist. 9. David shall be raised; the Son of David will rule. 10. Words of grace, not appreciated at the time when spoken, but applicable to the suffering remnant in Antichrist's days. 11. Correction, but not destruction. 12. Why the chastisement is needed. 13. No advocate, no physician. 14. An enemy, a cruel one. Nebuchadnezzar then, Antichrist in the future. 15. Yet God's hand in all—"I have done". 16. As the adversaries acted, so will God act toward them. Today, Israel has many enemies, but still does not seek the Lord. 17. "I will", for only God can. 18. The city and the palace, soon to be destroyed, will yet be restored. 19.20. Thanksgiving and multiplying (see Zech. 2.4, 8.4-8). 21. "Their Governor . . . engaged his heart". Is not this the Messiah? 22. How often these words occur (see ch. 31,33, 24.7). 23. God is now silent, but only for a season. 24. "The intents of His heart". A comforting phrase, for it includes blessing for His people.

JEREMIAH 31

1. "At the same time", and see ch. 30.22. 2. The sword deserved, but grace granted. 3. A declaration concerning Israel, but we, too, have been drawn by love (John 6.44). 4. "Thou shalt" preceded by God's "I will". 5.6. Samaria, Mount Ephraim, Zion. Must these not be taken literally? 7. Jacob—not the church. A call to prayer for Israel (Rom. 11.26). 8. A great company shall return. Why? Because God says. "I will bring them".

THOUGHTS FROM.

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GRACE AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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FREE

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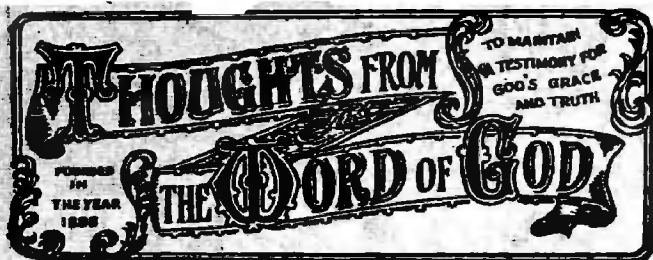
"The LORD redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

Psalm 34. 22.

"MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED IS BUT ONE" Song 6.9

"O My dove": How gracious, tender,
Comforting, the word He speaketh—
Christ Himself—to His betrothed,
Whose companionship He seeketh.
"Mine", His Own redeemed, His chosen,
Purchase of His blood, He claimeth
Them for ever, ne'er to lose them,
Whom His virgin bride He nameth.
O'er His church the Saviour yearneth;
Soon for her, her Lord returneth.

E.K.



Words of Encouragement.

“Elect of God, holy and beloved.” Frequently has the Holy Spirit caused a cluster of gracious words to appear on

the pages of Holy Scripture for the refreshing of the saints, as for example, “God Who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us”. Sometimes, as here, to give the reason for His wondrous dealings with them; sometimes, as in the words at the head hereof, for an incentive to godly living.

“Elect ones of God” are the saints called, because “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world”; “holy”, because “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”; “beloved”, since God loved because He loved (see Deut. 7.7.8). “From the beginning He chose”, and everlasting is His love. He will love.

Such words are very humbling, for we feel so unworthy, having been “enemies” and “ungodly”. But “where sin overflowed, grace did over-overflow”. Hence what manner of persons ought we to be, in our outward deportment! For we are told to “put on” (clothe ourselves with) the virtues here mentioned, which are of such a nature as to be entirely contrasted with worldly aims. A merciful, humble, meek, gentle, and forgiving spirit is to characterize the people of God. “Love” is to be put on, the peace of Christ is to rule in the heart, and His Word to indwell. In short, Christ Himself is our Example, and who, of the saved, would not desire to imitate Him? May the Holy Spirit by His inworking, make us both willing and able to “put on the new man, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the Image of Him that created him” (Col. 3. 10.17).

Poem to help Christian Experience.—244.

“Graced in the Beloved.”

Eph. 1.6.

In all the perfectness of Christ,
The Son of God once sacrificed,
An Off’ring of sweet savour,
By sovereign mercy now I stand,
Held in God’s everlasting hand.
Ah! Why to me this favour.

In sovereign, everlasting love
His Son descended from above,
To draw me from the waters—
The waters that my soul had drowned
In wrath Divine—but I am found
Among His sons and daughters.

As cherubim within the grasp
Of hands Omnipotent, the clasp
Of God is e’er around me;
In Him I have eternal rest,
I am within the holiest,
For love Divine hath found me
Sin once through all my being surged,
But now in mercy I am purged
By Christ’s propitiation.

The Son of God His soul made bare
To judgment on the cross, for there
He took my condemnation.

Now to His holy Name be praise
In all my walk and work and ways,
His doctrine all adorning;
Be it from day to day my care,
By grace He giveth, to prepare
To meet Him on that morning.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Genesis ch. 1, and ch. 2 vs. 1-3

God created; God created; God created.
God made; God made; God made.

God called; God called; God called.

God saw; God saw; God saw; God saw.

God saw; God saw; God saw.

God said; God said; God said; God said; God said;
God said; God said; God said; God said; God said.

God divided. God set.

God blessed; God blessed.

God ended His work.

God rested from all His work which He created
and made.

In such a manner as above the creation and making of the heavens and the earth is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

Quite contrasted, is it not, with books sponsoring evolution, which seldom mention God, and which try to account for things as they are without Him, as their childish genealogical “trees” endeavour to show.

With many evolution is an obsession hypnotising the mind so that they see effect without a cause, creation without a Creator. They have not yet apprehended the truth of the Psalmist who thousands of years ago said, “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear, and He that formed the eye, shall He not see?”

Actually evolution is only a cover word for ignorance. It is credulity, often mixed with wishful thinking.

R.L.W.

BAPTISM (continued)

Types of Baptism

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were **under** the cloud, and all passed **through** the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10, 1.2). It may be said, "How does this help to prove immersion?" Surely the language, "under" and "through", as well as the use of the word which we have seen means to immerse, cannot be made to mean anything otherwise. Moreover, were not the waters a wall each side of them and the cloud above them? If this is not a typical immersion, language ceases to have meaning.

Moses was the mediator, thus foreshadowing Christ. He had, by the hand of God, led a redeemed people (by the blood of the lamb) out of Egypt, and was still leading them to a new life of freedom and worship. The type is clear, is it not?

Alluding to the ark made by Noah, Peter, writing by Divine inspiration, says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (request) of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1. Pet. 3.21). There can be no question here as to whether **immersion** is symbolised, since the waters were above, beneath and all around the ark. "The end of all flesh is come before Me", said God. And that is exactly what baptism sets forth. In Noah's case, he passed through that which was death to all others, and he stepped out on a dried earth to begin a new life and a new witness.

It is interesting also to remember that Naaman "baptized" himself seven times in Jordan. He too, began a new life, so to speak, for "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child and he was clean". "The fuller result was that he could say, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel", and again, "Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD" (2 Kings 5.14-17). What a beautiful type of a baptized believer!

The Baptism in the Spirit is the work of the risen Lord Jesus, and took place first on the day of Pentecost. What is the language of Scripture? "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2.2). True, it is said the Holy Spirit, as tongues of fire, sat upon each of them. But is it straining the language to assert that those sitting in the "filled" house were immersed? When the Spirit came upon the old time saints, He is said to have "clothed" them. Is it straining the imagination to say that a like experience was that of

those who first experienced Baptism in the Spirit, as recorded in the book of Acts 2? These thoughts are commended to the prayerful consideration of readers.

The Lord's Command

Our Lord baptized disciples, but the baptizers were His apostles. He did not perform the act Himself (John 3.2.26, 4.1.2). And we are told He revisited the scene where He Himself had been baptized. (John 10.39-42). But prior to His ascension, His command was very plain to His apostles, and cannot possibly be misunderstood by one who takes Him simply at His word. In Matthew 28 He said, "Go ye therefore and make disciples (see margin) of all the nations, baptizing them (disciples, not nations) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (28.19). The word "them" is masculine, and cannot refer to "nations", which word is neuter.

In Mark's Gospel, the command of the Lord, though couched in slightly different language, is not contradictory, but complementary. "And He said unto them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16.15.16).

There is no ambiguity in these words. It is incumbent on all believers to be obedient, and though baptism in and of itself does not save, every act of loving obedience surely tends toward assurance of and enjoyment of, a saint's acceptance in the Beloved. On the other hand, indifference may hinder joy and peace.

How did the Apostles obey?

They took their Lord's words in a literal sense. On the day of Pentecost, to hearers who were pricked in their hearts, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized". "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2.38.41).

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women . . . they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8.12.16).

Thus Jews first, and then Samaritans became baptized disciples, but a Gentile comes next in the record—an Ethiopian, to whom Philip, from Isaiah 53, "preached Jesus". He was baptized at his own request. (Acts 8.36-39).

Paul is then before us. His remarkable conversion, attended by a sightless three days, was followed by baptism (Acts 9).

In the house of Cornelius, a Gentile army officer, the preaching of Peter was blessed by God, so that "the Holy Ghost fell on all **them that heard the Word**". There is no suggestion

(continued on page 56.)

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

When Peter went to sleep

Twice did Peter sleep—and others with him—when he should have been awake, and twice he slept because sleep was given by God. We may learn something for ourselves from the records in the “Gospels” and “The Acts”.

Let us turn first to Luke 9.28-36. The Lord Jesus went up into a mountain—a high mountain (Matt. 17 and Mark 8)—to pray, and took three of His disciples along with Him. Whether the climb tired them, we do not know, but the three men, Peter, James and John “were heavy with sleep”. But the Lord Jesus prayed, and, as He did so, “the fashion of His countenance altered, and His raiment was white and glistening”. Moses and Elijah came and talked with Him about His coming death in Jerusalem.

When Peter and the others “were awake, they saw His glory and the two men that stood with Him”. I wonder how they came to wake up; Peter would never have been able to write those words in his second epistle (ch. 1.16-18) if he had kept asleep, for he would not have seen the glory of his Lord. Now the Lord Jesus has the Name, “The Lord of glory”, but how few see any “beauty in Him that they should desire Him”? Why? Because they are fast asleep. They may be very wide awake for their own affairs, but they are dead to the loveliness of Christ. Is this the case with you, my dear young friend? If so, it is very sad. As I write these words, I pray they may be used to awaken some to see in the Lord Jesus the Saviour Whom they need.

We come now to a quite different scene (Mark 14.32-42). Here we see the beginning of the Lord's great sorrow. He said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death”. He wished his friends—the same three—to watch with Him, but “He found them sleeping for sorrow” (Luke 22) “He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour?” How great was His agony we cannot know, but how sad to know that His closest friends failed to keep awake whilst He was praying with “strong crying and tears” to His Father! We may feel how wrong it was of Peter, after his promise to be true to his Master, to fail so sadly, but how few think at all of what the Lord Jesus went through for the sake of sinful men and women, and boys and girls.

Yes, as their eyes are held so that they see not His glory, so their “deadness” keep them from an interest in His sufferings. But what about you, dear reader? “Is it nothing to you” that the Lord Jesus “once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust”? O that your heart may be touched and your eyes opened, so that you may be “brought to God”.

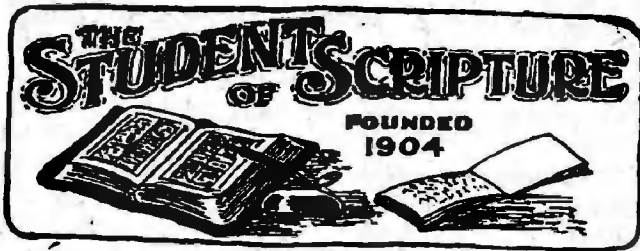
Now turn to Acts 10.9-16, where we read of Peter falling into a trance—a kind of sleep, for he had a dream. He saw a great sheet coming down from heaven, having in it all kinds of creatures, among them being “creeping things”. A voice said, “Rise Peter; kill and eat”. “But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean”. But the voice said, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common”. Peter was taught a lesson from this. It was that Gentiles, who were regarded by Jews as “common or unclean”, had also a place in God's purpose to save. So he went to the house of Cornelius, and told him and “his kinsmen and near friends” about the Lord Jesus who was slain and hanged on a tree, but was raised up by God, and “that through His Name **whosoever** believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (ch. 10.39-43). And all who heard were blessed with God's salvation and were baptized.

Most of those who read these words are not Jews, but God is taking out of all nations a people for His Name. The Gospel which Peter preached may often have been heard by you, dear friend, but have you had **your** sins forgiven?

Once more we think of Peter—this time in a prison. He was to die the next day, “but prayer was made without ceasing of the church for him”. And that prayer was answered, for God gave him sleep, and so he was restful. But God gave more than this, for He sent an angel, a light shined in the prison, his chains fell off, the doors were all opened, and Peter was free.

Dear young friend, you have heard of the suffering and the glory of Christ, how the gospel has come to Jews and Gentiles, and how God cares for and rescues His people.

What does it mean to **you**?



“IT HATH BEEN FINISHED”

Words could not be plainer. In this brief sentence is a wealth of teaching. The tense used conveys the sense of a past action with a present effect. All that is needful for the salvation of “a great multitude which no man could number” had been accomplished when the dying Saviour, with His last breath uttered that cry of triumph. Truth and justice had been satisfied, expiation effected, and a righteousness wrought. The work of His beloved Son was accepted fully and unreservedly by the Father. “It hath been finished.”

And yet the philosophising mind of man often will not let these words stand in their simplicity and finality. There seems to be an idea on the part of some that the victory was not complete until the resurrection. But does not this set aside the plain declaration of the Lord? Resurrection was the work of God the Father.

Resurrection must of necessity follow, because it was:—

- (a) The Divine pledge of the value and acceptance of the work of the Son. God raised Him from the dead, as many Scriptures make clear. “And declared (determined) to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1.4).
- (b) A fulfilment of Scripture, which declared, “Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments; which if a Man do, He shall live in them” (Lev. 18.5). Quoted in Romans 10.5, the words read literally, “The Man, having done, shall live in them”. The flawless obedience of the Son of God, having become under law (Gal. 4.4) entitled Him to life. For the sake of the sheep, He elected to die. “No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power (authority) to lay it down, and I have power (authority) to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (John 10.18). Christ is the only “Man” Who has rendered complete obedience under law. Hence His title to life necessitated His resurrection.

(c) It was needful for the sake of the elect, to whom this righteousness is imputed, by faith. For, since their sins were expiated on the cross, and His merit is reckoned to them, they must share the life which is His. “Because I live, ye shall live also”. (John 14.19).

Thus the words of Rom. 4.25 are clear; “Who was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again because of our justification. Here the word is not “dikaïoma” (a righteousness made) but “dikaïosis”, rather referring to what takes place when one who exercises a Divinely-wrought faith, trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

There is yet another idea held in some minds that, when the Lord Jesus descended into sheol, there was a great conflict with evil powers. The absence of Scriptures should make one hesitate to put forth such views. That a conflict did take place, the words of Psalm 22 make clear. But that was when our Lord was upon the cross. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2.14.15). When our Lord descended, after His death, it was as a Victor. “It hath been finished.” “Through the death”, He destroyed (nullified) “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”, and delivered “them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2.14.15).

The Lord then effected a “deliverance”. But if, as some say, he left them in sheol, how could that be so described? But the word used helps us. Liddell and Scott renders the word, “to set free, release, to remove, depart from, go away”. There is also the thought of transference from one place to another. Hence, this “deliverance” was from sheol to Paradise, and that is upward not downward. In 2 Corinthians 12.2-4, which records a single experience, the “catching up” was “up to” (heos) the third heaven, but “into” (eis) Paradise. Hence, it would seem that Paradise bears the same relation to the third heaven as the Holy place to the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and Temple.

This appears to be confirmed by Revelation 6.9. The altar is the altar of incense—the golden altar (ch. 8.3), for no other altar is mentioned in Revelation. In fact, it is definitely excluded (Rev. 11.2); for the court being left out, naturally all within is left out also.

Paradise then is the waiting place of those that have fallen asleep, and are awaiting the resurrection. It is the portico of the “Third Heaven”,

and the presence there of the souls of the departed saints is part of the fruit of that blessed work accomplished by Him Who cried, "It hath been finished".

There is yet another denial of the simple meaning of the Lord's triumphant words "It hath been finished", and that by a large part of Christendom, with its "altars" and "sacrifice of the mass". The Lord Jesus offered up Himself, and that once for all (Heb. 7.27). No other but He could make that Sacrifice. Hence, for a "priest" to claim to do this constantly, day by day, is to set aside the authority of Scripture and to nullify, if that were possible, the declaration of the Lord on the Cross. Since it is stated of the Lord Jesus, that He "needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice" (Heb. 7.27); "nor yet that He should offer Himself often" (Heb. 9.25), it is presumptuous on the part of any man to claim to do this.

Further, we read, "For then **must He often have suffered** since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9.26). There is no expiatory sacrifice apart from suffering, but for Christ the suffering has been endured and the glory entered (Luke 24.26).

Far be the thought that our beloved Lord is continually offering His sacrifice, involving pain, and that through the agency of sinful men. His sacrifice has a continual—yea, an eternal value and efficacy, because it is HIS, of HIMSELF. Let us rejoice in, and comfort our hearts with, His solemn, yet victorious words, "It hath been finished".



"AND CHILDREN"

Ezra 10.1

Percy W. Heward

It is well to realise God's stress upon children, not indeed to their exaltation, but in His display of love for all classes (Matt. 18.1-14), and in His clear teaching that children may be brought to love and please Him. We can never overlook to His glory the solemn words in Deuteronomy 6, concerning the training of children. The conversation with young folks should be much more largely as to the Scriptures. We are often afraid of over-burdening them, at least so we put the excuse. May it not rather be we are afraid of over-burdening ourselves?

Beloved friends, we all have need to confess our failures in these particulars, that our Heavenly Father may be honoured in our leaving off of that which is grieving His Holy Spirit.

The imitative and formative time of life is very often used by Satan more than by saints. "Atmosphere" affects beyond an occasional testimony otherwise, and if we regard the Bible as hardly the Book for everyday education and talk, is it surprising that the children, whom we influence, look upon its perusal rather as a necessary task than as a wondrous privilege?

The words of our text are very striking. There we have a gathering of those who trembled at the Commandments of God (cf. chs. 9.4, 10.3) and among them were children. The matter was one regarding which we should probably have left children out. But God's way is perfect. What lessons can be learnt? Many, doubtless, if, by grace, we have ears to hear the voice of our God. Among them, the following may be lovingly and earnestly mentioned.

First, children are much affected by our attitude. We more often hinder God's work by small things than by great things. Little foxes spoil the vines.

Secondly, parents should interest their children in what are commonly viewed as "grown up people's meetings"—prayer gatherings included. They should encourage interest in everything connected with a work of God. Not that the children can act; they are quite silent, in the record of Ezra 10, so far as we know, apart from the weeping, but their presence is emphasized by the Holy Spirit. An up-to-date tendency is to view interest in the Scriptures on the part of younger ones as a mere love of novelty. Thus enthusiasm is damped, rather than encouraged. This sin is grievous.

Thirdly, when God is at work, there will usually be family revivings. Opinions in the present day obliterate the value of the family, and even many believers forget their tremendous responsibilities.

Lastly, we should expect deep sorrow for sin, even on the part of boys and girls, when the same Holy Spirit, Who brings about all godly repentance, is inworking.

O that these thoughts may live in our memories, and affect our actions "unto the Lord".

Inspired Words, Inspected.

No. 42

"But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His Own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 9.11.12.

BUT (de); conjunction, second word in sentence, its usual position.

CHRIST (Christos); noun, proper, masculine. The Greek word for Messiah, meaning "Anointed", from "Chrio" (I anoint).

BEING COME (paragenomenos); participle, aorist, masculine, agreeing with "Christos". Compound of "para" (aside, beside) and "ginomai" (I become); "paraginomai" (I become near or present); has also the thought of Coming or appearing publicly (Matt. 3.1). The Lord "became alongside" the people of His (earthly) day for the purpose of salvation.

AN HIGH PRIEST (archiereus); noun, masculine, nominative; compounded of "arche" (beginning or first) and "hiereus" (a priest); hence "first or chief priest."

OF THE (ton); article, genitive, plural

TO COME (genomenon); participle, aorist, genitive, plural, from "ginomai" (I become); hence, "having become", not "to come".

GOOD THINGS (agathon); adjective used as noun, genitive, plural, from "agathos, -e, -on". (good) that is, intrinsically, whether seen to be so or no. ("Kalos", good as seen outwardly, may oft be rendered "beautiful", that is, good in appearance.) The whole phrase may be rendered, "the good things having become".

BY (dia); preposition, meaning "through" or "across": with accusative, means, "because of"; here, with genitive, "through" or "by means of".

A (tes); article, genitive, feminine; pointing out "tabernacle"; hence "the . . . tabernacle"; compare John 1.14; "dwelt" means "tabernacled". God's dwelling place among Israel in the wilderness was a type of Christ.

GREATER (meizonos); adjective, comparative of megas (great); genitive of "meizon" (greater).

AND (kai); conjunction.

MORE PERFECT (teleiōteras); adjective, comparative of "teleios" (perfect, having reached an end or goal, since "telos" means "end"); from teleios, -a, -ov, comparative, teleiōteros, -a, -ov. The tabernacle was made to a certain "end", God's dwelling, but Christ is the true (real) tabernacle. (Heb. 8.2). "God manifest in flesh."

"God was in Christ." The end God purposed was accomplished or perfected in His Son.

TABERNACLE (skenes); noun, feminine, genitive, from "skene" (a tent).

NOT (ou); negative, denying a fact.

MADE WITH HANDS (cheiropoiētou); adjective, genitive, from cheiropoiētos (hand-made); compound of "cheir" (hand) and a derivative from "poiēo" (I make); the word occurs in Acts 7.48, 17.24, Eph. 2.11, and Heb. 9.24.

THAT (tout); pronoun, demonstrative, from houtos, haute touto (this). Neuter form, the "o" being dropped because the next word begins with a vowel.

IS (estin); verb, present tense, from "eimi" (I am).

TO SAY (not in text).

NOT (ou); see above.

OF THIS (tautes); pronoun, demonstrative; see above; genitive, singular feminine.

BUILDING (ktiseos); noun, feminine, genitive, singular; from ktisis (creation); the "sis" ending suggests a process. "Ktisma" (1 Tim. 4.4) means something created. The greater and more perfect Tabernacle was not the product of "creation", but of God's appointing. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10.5).

NEITHER (oude); conjunction, denying absolutely and objectively.

BY (di); preposition, "dia", "a" being omitted, because the next word begins with a vowel. See above for meaning.

THE BLOOD (haimatos); noun, neuter, genitive, from "haima" (blood). No article here.

OF GOATS (tragon); noun, masculine, genitive plural, from "tragos" (a he-goat).

AND (kai).

CALVES (moschon); noun, masculine, genitive, plural, from "moschos" (calf or young bullock).

BUT (de); see above.

BY (dia); see above.

HIS OWN (tou idiou); article and adjective, neuter, genitive, singular, from "idios, -a, -ov" (own, one's own, peculiar to one's self). Animals gave of their own, not willingly or wittingly. How much more precious the blood and the offering thereof by the very Son of God! And how real was the manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

BLOOD (haimatos); see above.

HE ENTERED (eiselthen); verb, aorist, from "eiserchomai" (I come into).

ONCE (ephapax); adverb, meaning "once for all; compound of "epi" (upon) and "hapax" (once); lit, "upon once". Used also in chs. 7.27 and 10.10.

INTO (eis); preposition, governing accusative. Notice double use of this word, since it is a prefix in the word, "entered".

THE HOLY PLACE (ta hagia); adjective used as noun, neuter plural, with article, from hagos, -a, -ov. literally, "the holy things", or "the holies". It is found in ch. 8.2 (gen. pl.), 9.1 (acc. sing), 9.8 (gen. pl. where it signifies, "the holiest of all", as does the acc. sing. in vv. 24 and 25. See also ch. 10.19 (gen. pl.) and 13.11 (acc. pl.). From all these occurrences, it is plain that the innermost sanctuary, beyond the veil, is indicated. We may thus understand the use of this phrase in Col. 1.12.

HAVING OBTAINED (heuramenos); participle, aorist, middle voice, from "heurisko" (I find): in middle voice, "I find for myself"; hence, to obtain. This sense of the word is seen in Matt. 10.39, in Luke 9.12 (get), John 21.6, Rom. 4.1, Heb. 12.17. Redemption could not be "found" in or amongst men. It is only in Christ. Note Job 33.24.

ETERNAL (aionian); adjective, accusative, to agree with "redemption"; from aionios' -ia, -iov (eternal, everlasting).

REDEMPTION (lutrosin); noun, feminine, accusative, from "lutrosis" (a setting free because of ransom price paid); derived from "lutroo" (I let go free for a ransom).

FOR US (not in text); but the whole epistle makes it clear that the Lord Jesus is the Substitute for His people.

—●—

Continued from page 51.

that babes were present or were baptized. Concerning these hearing ones, Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord" (Acts 10.48).

Continuing in the inspired narrative, Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened", was baptized and her household (Acts 16.14.15). Are we to infer from this that infants were included? We do not know that Lydia was married, and the household in all probability, consisted of servants. The practice of baptizing infants cannot be proved from this passage.

The Philippian jailor's conversion is described as "believing in God". He "was baptized, he and all his". Why? because, he and **all his house believed in God**. Whatever their ages, "all his" were capable of exercising faith. They were therefore not infants.

When Paul preached in Corinth, "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized"

(Acts 18.8). Among these was the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1.16) of whom it is recorded that they "addicted themselves to the ministry of saints" (1. Cor. 16.15). Such could not have been infants, or other than those who were sufficiently mature both in age and spiritual attainment.

Notice the words used concerning the subjects of baptism. They are hearing, faith, repentance, pricking of heart, gladly receiving the word, great joy, gladness, rejoicing, an opened heart. If any one can produce herefrom an argument for infant baptism, then words have no meaning.

It is not perfectly clear that only those who **believed** were baptized in those early days, quite apart from the question of age. Moreover, the mode was **immersion**, never sprinkling or pouring.

The Argument from Circumcision

This is commonly used by advocates of "household" and "infant" baptism; but is it valid? It is supposed that the converted Jew, having been used to the circumcision of every male member of the household at the early age of eight days old, would **naturally** expect his infant children to be baptized as well as he. But would he? Let it be remembered that only males were subject to this Mosaic rite. What of his female children? Surely here is a stumbling block.

But there **is** an analogy. The Jewish baby boy was circumcised **because of his birth** into Israel. All others were excluded. Baptism, if the analogy is logically followed up, should be restricted to **spiritual infants, who have been born again**, and therefore must be of an age when **faith** is possible. One feels that the argument is not only defective, but reveals a determination to hold on to infant baptism at all costs.

The Teaching of Baptism

It is in the epistles that the meaning of baptism is opened out. It is called a "burial", the word employed being that used for the internment of a dead body. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death". "Buried with Him in baptism" (Rom. 6.4, Col. 2.12). The words, "with Him", that is, with Christ, signify that the believer died with Christ when He endured the penalty due to his sins on the cross. This is confirmed by the words of 2 Corinthians 5.14, "If One died for all, then all died", that is, judicially so in the sight of God. "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3.3). The saved one then, by faith, accepts this fact, and shews it forth symbolically by being baptized—buried in the deep waters. Hence, the Apostle goes on to say, "Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. . . ."

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6.8-11).

There is, therefore, not only an immersion, but an emerging from the waters of baptism. To remain thereunder would lead to physical death, which the sinner, though now saved by grace, actually deserved, but, because of the resurrection of Christ, the saved one also lives. The whole context of Romans 6 teaches that the "going down into", and the "coming up out of" the waters is a picture of the spiritual death and resurrection of saved ones, identified with their Saviour.

But baptism is a call to godliness of life and true obedience. The whole body with all its members has become dead to the old sinful life, and is now for God only; the saved one "should walk in newness of life". "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6.13 see verse 19).

Concluding Thoughts

Seeing then how deeply significant is the act of believers' baptism, who among God's saved people ought to refuse obedience to Him Who hath commanded this? For every one who has gladly received the word of the truth of the gospel and has been immersed into the Name of our Lord Jesus has declared by that symbolic act—"I deserve to die. My sins merited eternal separation from God. But I rest on the atoning death and substitutionary work of My Saviour, the Lord Jesus, so that I may say. "I have been crucified with Christ". These waters are the grave in which I have been buried. I would die to my former ways, and the members which I used in sinning against God, I would now yield to God, as I now rise from this grave to "walk in newness of life". So then I may also say, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me".

Doubtless many have experienced the truth of all this, without having been immersed. But how much happier such would be if the Lord's word had been implicitly obeyed!

Dear fellow-saved-one, if you have not been baptized, it is not too late, provided there is no positive physical infirmity to hinder. May the Lord incline each reader to hear Him, Who said, "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments". "See, here is water! What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

JAMES ON "PRAYER"

Perhaps it would be better to say, "The Teaching of God through His servant James concerning Prayer".

All the Epistles refer often to Prayer, as also do the Gospels. In the latter, the Lord gives much instruction thereon, both in teaching and by example, a helpful study in itself. "James" is sometimes called "the practical epistle", but surely those of Paul can be so described, for his expositions of doctrine are always accompanied by exhortations to right behaviour as a necessary complement. These two are ever to be united in the experience of saints.

James' words are very stern in their warning against mere externalism. A "dead" faith, double-mindedness, friendship with the world, the sinful use of the tongue, partiality and covetousness are exposed in all their hatefulness. And yet he addresses his readers four times as "brethren", eight times as "my brethren", and thrice as "my beloved brethren". For love and plain speaking are not incompatible.

But what has he to say on Prayer? Much, in his very short letter. First, we learn something of the

GOD TO WHOM PRAYER IS MADE

that He is characterized by **giving**. "The Giving God" is almost a title in ch. 1.5. "He giveth . . . giveth" (4.6) also declares the bountiful beneficence of our gracious God. He delights to give, and takes pleasure in those who come confidently to Him. He gives **wisdom** to those conscious of their lack, and **grace** to the humble (1.5, 4.6). His manner of giving is "liberally" or "in simplicity", for with Him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning". Men may give with an ulterior motive; not so the God of grace; far be such a thought. "Good" is He in His **giving** and the **gift** "from above" is "perfect" when it reaches the suppliant (1.17). Not only so, but He bestows His bounty without "upbraiding", though the petitioner be unworthy in himself, as every saint both feels and owns. Such, then, is that Gracious One Who says, "Ask what I shall give thee".

HOW TO APPROACH GOD

James does not speak of atonement, but regeneration by the sovereign will of God is before us in ch. 1.18. His language, however, implies that those to whom he writes are saved persons. From other parts of Scripture we learn that entrance into the Holiest is "by the blood of Jesus". Since the epistle has spoken of the character of God as a Giver, it also speaks about the character required of those who pray.

There is, first of all, a sense of need; "if any of you lack". Then a direct approach, not to friend or acquaintance, but to God* "Let him ask of God". It is so simple. But, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering", that is, doubting or hesitating. Striking is the figure of a wind-tossed wave, driven to the shore, only to recede, and to lose its identity in the great sea. A doubter is double-minded (literally, "two-souled") and needs to pray, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name". We think of the words, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty" Hosea 10.2). "Unstable in all his ways" is such an one, and again there come to mind the words, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (Gen. 49.4). And how solemn is the Divine declaration, "For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (1.5-8). Not only will there be no answer of God, but Satan may seize the opportunity to give something from himself. Truly, prayer is a precious privilege, but there are dangers if the required conditions are not fulfilled.

Further, a suppliant cannot be proud. Indeed, where the Holy Spirit has produced in the heart a deep sense of need, how can there be pride? Hence, it is said, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (4.6). In humility then, and submission to God (4.7) let our requests be made known unto Him.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (5.16). Only a **righteous** one can pray effectually; that is, one accounted righteous because of the merit of Christ, and who lives "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age" (Titus 2.12). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66.18). The word "effectual" is literally, "being in-worked", suggesting the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus we have the secret of prevailing prayer—the Spirit's energising and the saint's godly living.

The believing life will include much prayer, and, though the conditions laid down in this epistle may not be easy of attainment, we may take comfort from the words, "He giveth more grace" (4.5), remembering also the gracious invitation, "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (4.8).

WARNINGS AS TO PRAYER

This study in the epistle of James would not be complete without pondering the solemn words of chapter 4.1-3). Doubtless, this servant of God

heard or knew something that disquieted him, in regard to the behaviour of those, or of some of them to whom he was writing. Whether the wars and fighting were physical or moral we may not be able to decide. There is a smiting with the tongue (Jer. 18.18) and there are words that wound (Prov. 18.8). In any case, prayer was hindered or ruined. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Carnal strugglings may accompany a desire to "have" and "obtain", but peace and brotherly love are surely pre-requisites for true prayer—prayer that will be heard.

Further, there may indeed be an "asking", but "amiss" or "evilly", that is, with a heart planning to "spend" in "pleasures" what is desired. Can it be possible that these words are written to believers? Yes, and those following (verse 4) are even more solemnly heart-searching. But the Lord Jesus—and how many of His words are echoed in this epistle—spoke just as plainly: Read Luke 21.34-36. Dear fellow-saved-ones, how can there be a life of prayer if to us the world is attractive in any measure? Perhaps these words describe a condition, in measure, of assemblies or individual believers today. There certainly seems to be a "world-bordering", and even some love of the world, whilst a Christian profession is outwardly maintained; beneath, however, there may be a rebellious heart, a factious spirit, an unsuspected resentment of the "too rigid" godliness of some. All this is destructive of real prayer, and calls for repentance. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (4.8-10).

SPECIAL OCCASIONS OF PRAYER

Three are mentioned, two general, the other specific. "Is any among you afflicted (suffering evil)? Let him pray". Not, "Let him seek relief, or justice, or his rights", but take the matter to God, and leave it in His hands. "Is any sick (strengthless) among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (5.14.15). As in chapter 1, **faith** is emphasized (Heb. 11.6). How we wish, dear fellow-believers, the unity of the church were manifest today as it was then, so that this command could be **exactly** carried out by elders with the qualifications required for such (see 1 Tim. 3.1-7 and Titus 1.5-9). Nevertheless, God does even today, though the saints are divided, restore sick ones to health in answer to prayer. Let it never be forgotten, however, that

*James rarely speaks of "The Father". "God" and "Lord" are the Names used by him.

sickness—even a prolonged state of weakness—may be God's definite appointment for some, for His Own glory, and the display of His strength made perfect in weakness.

A specific instance of prayer is that of Elijah, a man, as ourselves, subject to like passions. Three years and six months elapsed between the two petitions mentioned. He prayed for the withholding of rain—that is, a form of judgment upon an apostatizing people. Such a prayer is not fitting for a believer today, for he leaves all judgment to God, however fearful the apostasy. He is bidden to pray for all kinds of men (I Tim. 2.1-4), confident that God will answer in His Own way.

Doubtless, it was more pleasing to Elijah's heart to pray for the blessing of rain. He was in the line of God's will; therefore both prayers—"he prayed in prayer" (lit.)—were answered. So may believers pray for the coming of the Lord, for "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" (Ps. 72.6). See also James 5.7.8. But let us "ask in faith".

Suggested Daily Readings

" IF THE LORD WILL "—NOVEMBER, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|----------|--------------|----------|---------|
| | Psalms | Mark | Jeremiah | Hebrews |
| 1 | 109 | 12. 1-12 | 31. 9 | 12. 6 |
| 2 | 110 | 13-27 | 10 | 7 |
| 3 | 111 | 28-44 | 11 | 8 |
| 4 | 112 | 13. 1-13 | 12 | 9 |
| 5 | 113 | 14-23 | 13 | 10 |
| 6 | 114 | 24-37 | 14 | 11 |
| 7 | 115 | 14. 1-16 | 15 | 12 |
| 8 | 116 | 17-31 | 16 | 13 |
| 9 | 117 | 32-42 | 17 | 14 |
| 10 | 118 | 43-52 | 18 | 15 |
| 11 | 119. 1-8 | 53-72 | 19 | 16 |
| 12 | 9-16 | 15. 1-15 | 20 | 17 |
| 13 | 17-24 | 16-28 | 21 | 18 |
| 14 | 25-32 | 29-47 | 22 | 19 |
| 15 | 33-40 | 16. 1-20 | 23 | 20 |
| 16 | 41-48 | Luke 1. 1-20 | 24 | 21 |
| 17 | 49-56 | 1. 21-38 | 25 | 22 |
| 18 | 57-64 | 39-56 | 26 | 23 |
| 19 | 65-72 | 57-66 | 27 | 24 |
| 20 | 73-80 | 67-80 | 28 | 25 |
| 21 | 81-88 | 2. 1-19 | 29 | 26 |
| 22 | 89-96 | 20-35 | 30 | 27 |
| 23 | 97-104 | 36-52 | 31 | 28 |
| 24 | 105-112 | 3. 1-14 | 32 | 29 |
| 25 | 113-120 | 15-22 | 33 | 13. 1 |
| 26 | 121-128 | 23-38 | 34 | 2 |
| 27 | 129-136 | 4. 1-14 | 35 | 3 |
| 28 | 137-144 | 15-32 | 36 | 4 |
| 29 | 145-152 | 33-44 | 37 | 5 |
| 30 | 153-160 | 5. 1-16 | 38 | 6 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

- November, 1956
- 4. Num. 24. 12-17. Ps. 45. 3-7. Rev. 2. 24-29, 22.16. 2 Pet. 1. 16-19.
 - 11. Num. 25. 3-5, 9. Ps. 106. 28-31. 1 Cor. 10. 11-22. Eph. 5. 1-11. 2 Cor. 6. 14-7.1.
 - 18. Num. 25. 10.18. Num. 31. 1-8. Mal. 2. 4-7. 2 Tim. 2. 1-4. 2 Cor. 10. 2-6.
 - 25. Num. 26. 1-4, 52-56. Acts 26. 15-18. Rom. 8. 16-21. Eph. 1. 3-18. 1 Pet. 1. 3-9.

Notes on Memorized Verses

JEREMIAH 31

9. Israel and Ephraim—not the church—but do not saints today realise the sovereign grace of God Who says, "I will cause", resulting in, "They shall come". 10. Not only gather, but keep. 11. Redeemed and ransomed. So are we (1 Pet. 1.18.19). 12. Grace leads to gratitude, and abundant blessing. 13. Again, God's "I will" and the response, "They shall". 14. Priests and people. Nothing satisfies the soul but God's goodness. 15. A fresh note, in a minor key; a prophecy fulfilled (Matt. 2.16-18). 16. 17. The slaughtered children will have a better resurrection, "in thine end", that is when Christ comes again. 18. 19. Confession and a sense of shame, and repentance, when God "turns" or converts. 20. What tender words are here. God reveals His heart-feelings. 21. "Set thine heart"—a call to purpose. "Toward the highway." For us the strait gate and the narrow way. 22. A new thing—a prophecy of the virgin birth. 23. Blessing in the land of Judah, when their captivity is ended. 24. "Judah itself" means the land—not heaven. 25. The tenderness of God toward the weary and the sorrowful. 26. Perhaps the prophet experienced the blessings of the previous verse, the sweet sleep being also God's gift to him. 27. "I will sow." 28. "I will watch . . . build . . . plant." 29. A proverb current in Israel (Ezek. 18.2). 30. But God will judge every man according to his own works. 31. The new covenant for Israel in days to come, but we are included therein now (Heb. 8). 32. The broken covenant is "ready to vanish away". 33. God will ensure the continuity of the new covenant. Christ is the Mediator, through His blood (see Heb. 9). 34. Knowledge and forgiveness. Ours now in Christ, but theirs when "the days come". 35. The Creator and Upholder. 36. The seed of Israel cannot cease from being a nation. God has said so. 37. "All that they have done" will not hinder God's purpose. 38-40. The places mentioned forbid a spiritualizing; there was a token—fulfilment in Nehemiah's day. The full fulfilment will be in the day of Christ.

JEREMIAH 32

1. A time-mark (see 2 Kings 25). The siege had lasted one year, and continued one year more. 2. 3. Shutting Jeremiah up could not nullify the Word of the Lord. (2 Tim. 2.9). 4. 5. These words came true. 6. "The Word of the Lord came", an oft-recurring sentence, as though to emphasise that GOD spoke through the prophet. 7. A strange message, in view of the siege then in progress. 8. yet the coming of his cousin confirmed the word. 9. Bought and paid for. 10. 11. The deeds written, sealed, according to law. 12. An open transaction, which, under the circumstances, may have seemed folly to the witnesses. 13. 14. Baruch was Jeremiah's secretary (see ch. 36). The deeds preserved, in certain hope of a restoration. This was faith. 15. This came true in Ezra's day, and will have complete fulfilment when Christ reigns. 16. After acting in faith, he prayed (note verse 25) seeking to know God's mind. 17. The LORD is Creator. What can He not do? 18. The Name of God.

Thus we pray (cf. Eph. 3.20.21). 19. Great, mighty, and righteous. 20. 21. "An Israelite indeed" never forgets the redemption and deliverance from Egypt. Nor should we fail to remember (2 Peter 1.9.12.15) See 1 Cor. 11.24.25. 22. God's faithfulness, but 23. man's utter failure—"have done nothing". 24. "Behold" and "Thou seest," yet 25. "Thou hast said." Jeremiah believed God, yet would seek further light. 26. Then came the "Word". 27. God underlines what Jeremiah has said about Him, in his prayer. 28. But He will perform His purpose, and, 29. because of Israel's awful idolatry, their city shall be destroyed. It was (see 2 Kings 25.9).

Suggested Daily Readings

"IF THE LORD WILL"—DECEMBER, 1956

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | Psalm | Luke | Jeremiah | Hebrews |
| 1 | 119. 161-168 | 5. 17-26 | 31. 39 | 13. 7 |
| 2 | 169-176 | 27-39 | 40 | 8 |
| 3 | 120 | 6. 1-19 | 32. 1 | 9 |
| 4 | 121 | 20-34 | 2 | 10 |
| 5 | 122 | 35-49 | 3 | 11 |
| 6 | 123 | 7. 1-17 | 4 | 12 |
| 7 | 124 | 18-35 | 5 | 13 |
| 8 | 125 | 36-50 | 6 | 14 |
| 9 | 126 | 8. 1-15 | 7 | 15 |
| 10 | 127 | 16-25 | 8 | 16 |
| 11 | 128 | 26-40 | 9 | 17 |
| 12 | 129 | 41-56 | 10 | 18 |
| 13 | 130 | 9. 1-17 | 11 | 19 |
| 14 | 131 | 18-27 | 12 | 20 |
| 15 | 132 | 28-45 | 13 | 21 |
| 16 | 133 | 46-62 | 14 | 22 |
| 17 | 134 | 10. 1-16 | 15 | 23 |
| 18 | 135 | 17-29 | 16 | 24 |
| 19 | 136 | 30-42 | 17 | 25 |
| 20 | 137 | 11. 1-20 | 18 | James 1.1 |
| 21 | 138 | 21-36 | 19 | 2 |
| 22 | 139 | 37-54 | 20 | 3 |
| 23 | 140 | 12. 1-21 | 21 | 4 |
| 24 | 141 | 22-40 | 22 | 5 |
| 25 | 142 | 41-59 | 23 | 6 |
| 26 | 143 | 13. 1-17 | 24 | 7 |
| 27 | 144 | 18-35 | 25 | 8 |
| 28 | 145 | 14. 1-11 | 26 | 9 |
| 29 | 146 | 12-24 | 27 | 10 |
| 30 | 147 | 25-35 | 28 | 11 |
| 31 | 148 | 15. 1-10 | 29 | 12 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

December, 1956

2. Num. 26. 63-65. 1 Cor. 10. 5.6. Heb. 3. 7-19.
Jude 5. 20.21. Heb. 12. 1-3.
9. Num. 27. 1-11. Num. 36. 1-5. Josh. 17. 3-6.
Acts 20. 32. Gal. 3. 26-29.
16. Num. 27. 12-17. Ps. 78. 70-72. John 10. 9-18.
Heb. 13. 20.21. 1 Pet. 5. 1-4.

23. Num. 27. 18-23. 2 Kings 2. 9-15.
John 14. 12-16, 20.19-22. Rom. 8. 9-15-
30. Num. 28. 1-8. 1 Pet. 2. 5-9. Heb. 13. 15.16.
Eph. 5. 2. Rev. 5. 6-13-



REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 66. 18.

Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22, can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKSGIVING." Colossians 4. 2.

- For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (6. 10).
- For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
- For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.
- For saints on the Continent, and their many difficulties, including persecution and repression.
- For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in Korea, Cyprus and North Africa.
- For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3.14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Duce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Lutz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling if He will, of additional fellow-workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
- The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
- For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
- For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
- For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.

If the Lord will, to be continued

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:—
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THOUGHTS FROM

TO
MAINTAIN
A TESTIMONY
FOR GOD'S
GRACE AND
TRUTH

FOUNDED
BY
PERCY W.
HEWARD

THE WORD OF GOD

AND

THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

EDITED BY E. KIRK

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FREE

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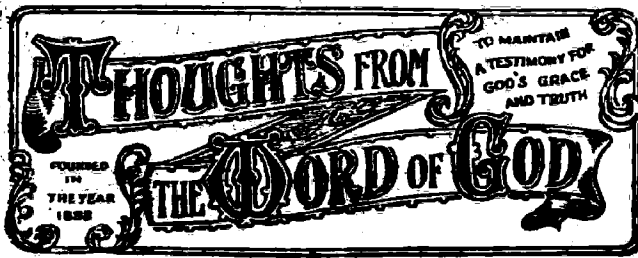
"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1.8.

"HIS FRUIT WAS SWEET TO MY TASTE"

'Tis but a taste,
Yet precious even so.
I to the Lord would haste
In warmest love, although
My love is little like a fervent flame
For His is like the after fire, for aye the same.

A taste of grace—
Of grace that shall be brought,
When from the holy place
Revealed is He who wrought,
My whole salvation, Whom my soul doth love;
My Saviour, Who is coming quickly from above.

E.K.



Poem to help Christian Experience—245.

“Jesus Christ . . . Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.” Acts 3.20.21.

The heavens must our Lord receive,
And veil Him from our mortal eyes:
But still our waiting hearts believe
That God—our God—will rend the skies,
And send His Son again to earth,
To bring her peace, to heal her dearth;
Yea, it will be a second birth
In that glad day when the Lord comes.

Though Israel now is set aside,
Yet God—our God—is gath’ring in
For His Dear Son a chosen bride,
For whom a Sacrifice for sin
The Lord became. But Israel
Shall look on Him, Emmanuel;
The nation be redeemed as well
In that glad day when the Lord comes.

’Tis always darkest ere the morn,
The growing darkness may be felt;
The Truth of God the nations scorn,
Yet hearts, from ill forebodings, melt.
But saints, redeemed by sovereign grace
Look for a true abiding place,
But, O to see Him face to face
In that glad day when the Lord comes.

Soon shall be heard the mighty voice
Of God’s archangel, and the sound—
The rousing trumpet sound. Rejoice,
Ye saints in all the earth around.
God will His age-long silence break,
The “dead in Christ” shall all awake,
And we, then “changed”, our way shall make
With them, to the air, when the Lord comes.

Words of Encouragement.

“Your life is hid
with Christ
in God.”
Col. 3.3.

“Your life.” Yes, ’tis
a present possession, for
“God Who is rich in
mercy for His great love
wherewith He loved us,

even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2.4.5.). To the former things “ye died”, and a “new man” hath been created (Col. 3.10). Not only is this life

surely ours, but it is certainly secured. “It hath been hid with Christ”, and He is in glory at the Father’s right hand; and, as if to give a double assurance, that life is in God. No created being can touch our treasure, which is not only in heaven; we are possessors of eternal life now. But it is “hid”. Man does not recognise it, nor does he understand the saint’s peace and joy any more than Samson’s enemies could discern where-in his great strength lay.

Some day—and it may not be far distant—God’s hidden ones shall be manifested. Christ is their life, and He Who was taken up out of their sight, and “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things”, shall appear “in that Day”. “Then shall ye also appear with Him, in glory.” Not only is the place of glory prepared, but a very condition of glory, for “we shall be like him”. (Phil. 3.20-21, I John 3.2) What a prospect for the believer—“when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that Day”! Think, too, what it will mean to the groaning creation, for then “the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God”. (Rom. 8.21)

“Look up” therefore, “and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.”

THE MIRACLES OF PRAYER

Percy W. Heward

Who can over estimate the privilege of prayer to God? And it is deeply precious to know what prayer has done, or rather what God has done through, and in answer to, believing prayer.

When a land is closed to the post, and we seem cut off from believers there, how blessed to know that prayer is not only quicker than a letter, but quicker than a cable, and, moreover, our Father knows just how to apply the blessing. We may not be able to send a gift, or a word, but He can translate our prayer into the very language of encouragement for which a weary heart sighs, and He can pay a prayer-draft in the very “currency” that meets the immediate need and emergency of a burdened child of God.

And is it not delightful to remember we are not only praying for many, but being prayed for by many? And how helpful not to spend too much time proportionately in prayer for ourselves (though that is needful), but to enjoy the blending to which our Father leads, so that we pray for a brother, and he prays for us, instead of each being occupied selfishly with himself. Even

in physical things we ever need others. If I were to do all for myself, and you for yourself, how difficult and costly all our arrangements for food and clothing would become! In spiritual fellowship we gain much by remembering others, though our object is beyond this,—for prayer is the fruit of love, and prayer ever seeks the glory of God.

The heaven of heavens cannot contain God, but prayer can reach His bowed down ear. All nations before Him are less than nothing, but the prayer of the upright, however insignificant they are, is His delight. No man can stay God's hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? But prayer can cause His hand to be with us, and can confidently plead, "Do as Thou hast said." Prayer is not potent in itself, but the prayer of faith is prevailing, for it is a laying hold of One Who is Omnipotent. How often we look to our worthless planning, and seem to regard trust in God as a last resource, but actually it, or rather He to Whom we pray, is the First Resource, without Whom all our planning is vain. Prayer makes light of difficulties, and knows nothing of impossibilities, for with God all things are possible. Prayer is not based on human reasoning but on Divine promises. Prayer does not see Anakim and cities walled up to heaven, but beholds Him Who is in heaven, and to Whom Anakim are less than grasshoppers. Prayer knows nothing of circumstances changing God, but it knows much of God changing circumstances. Prayer is not our will altering natural laws, but it is our will within God's will bringing into activity spiritual principles. Prayer is not a tool given to a child to use at his misguided pleasure, to injure himself and others, but a precious instrument which is only usable, when there is the contact and current, or (shall we not rather say?) the gracious inworking of the Holy Spirit to direct our whole being. Then there is the true power of prayer, against which nought of man or of Satan can stand, so that we marvel not when we read the sentences together, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

But do we not, dear friends, often think of our feelings of safety, and our future in a way that makes self the centre? Rather should we rejoice because "He shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53.11). The ultimate object of God must be the glory of God, and though He has mercifully linked that with our blessedness, are we not in danger of being concentrated on that blessedness as a thing isolated from Himself? And this easy selfishness is really unkind to ourselves, for our climax of delight will be, as the verse before us shews, to behold and realize His glory.

We little know the "beauty of the Lord our God" (Ps. 90.17). The wondrous descriptions of the throne and city of God cause the mind to faint, as it were, and, like the queen of Sheba, we should have no breath in us, if we but believed and grasped the Divine unveiling. Can we be surprised that Israel's priests could not enter the Tabernacle or Temple when the Lord displayed something of His majesty? Can we think it strange that Saul of Tarsus was struck down by a Light that paled the noon-day sun? We read the words, "The Lord is my Light", and again, "The Lord God is a Sun", and yet again, "Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness?" But yet we forget, in everyday life, and in our meetings, the greatness of our Lord, and become careless, if not familiar.

But is it not well to turn aside from the sentimentalism of today to meditate on His glory in the light unapproachable? (I Tim. 6.16). And as we call to mind the strengthlessness of both Daniel and John, in two different dispensations, when they looked on something of the glory of the Lord, we shall understand, as never before, the veiling of the seraphim when they cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 6).

Dear friends, are we longing to see Christ's glory? Are the words, "And they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22.4) merely a verse to us, or a reality and a call to prayer that we may thus be privileged, by grace? Do we love our Lord so that we want to see Him? Or are we engrossed in our wishes and our work—which we may call "Christian Work"—in such a way that His person and the "Blessed Hope" have become of secondary importance to us?

To think aright of the essential and eternal glory of the Lord Jesus will not only be a check to lightness, but a powerful encouragement to the appointed and Scriptural making known of the Gospel of the grace of God, that others may share the privileges, of which even the present anticipations, and the view as through a glass darkly, are so joyous.

Percy W. Heward.

"THAT THEY MAY BEHOLD MY GLORY"

John 17.24

The desire of the Lord Jesus for His people is thus set forth. It is true that He had graciously obtained for them all manner of gifts, even in this world, amid its sin and ruin. It is true that He wants them to have the everlasting enjoyment of happiness in the consciousness of everlasting sal-

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMN

"I AM THE DOOR"

John 10

Every house has a door; most have many doors. Those who live in the house, even the young ones, may go from room to room, but have to pass through doors. Only friends and relations are asked to come into the house, and they must have the front door opened to them. They could not come in as they could not unlock the door. The head of the house has the key and he can open and shut it from the inside or the outside. The house is for the family—father and mother and children.

But not only houses have a door. Stables and cowsheds and barns have doors. The Lord Jesus once spoke of a sheepfold having a door. What is a sheepfold? It is a shut-in place, with only one way in and out, where the sheep are kept for safety. But the fold of which the Lord spoke was for a **flock of men**, that is, the children of Israel. The True Shepherd was the Lord Jesus Christ, but there were some men who pretended to be shepherds, yet did not look after the sheep at all. Others there were whom the Lord called "thieves and robbers" They made out they were shepherds, even that they were God's Messiah—Christ—but they climbed up "some other way" to get into the sheepfold.

At the time the Lord Jesus—The True Messiah—came, John the Baptist was a kind of "porter"—one who kept the door. John said "I knew Him not", but God gave him a sign, and that was, the Holy Spirit would come down and stay upon Him. So he said, "I saw, and bare record that This is the Son of God" (John 1.33.34).

In this way, John opened the door of the Sheepfold to the Lord, Who then began to work and teach amongst "the lost sheep of the House of Israel". Yet not all those who were called "sheep" were really "sheep"; but there were some among them whom the Lord called His "little flock". And these He called by name—"His Own sheep". There were the disciples and many women who heard His voice, and were "led out", that is to say, the fold of Israel and the so-called shepherds could no longer be a help to them, for now they belonged to the Good Shepherd. Listen to His Own words. "To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His Own sheep by name and leadeth them out."

Let us stay a moment and ask ourselves, "Has the Lord Jesus called me? Have I heard His voice? Am I one of His sheep?" The writer can say the Lord called him by His grace more than ty years ago, and can also say, "The Lord is

my Shepherd; I shall not want". How can anyone know whether he or she is in the flock of Christ? Listen again to His words; "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me".

But how does one become a follower of the Lord, for, remember, "He goeth before them"? No one can be in that flock unless he or she is one for whom the Shepherd died. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep". We know from other parts of the Bible why. It was that He might take all their sins upon himself and be punished in their place. Can you wonder that He also said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again". But do you, dear friend, love Him because of His great love in dying for sinners?

Now the Lord also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep . . . I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in, and shall go out, and shall find pasture". One might say, how can the Lord Jesus be both the Shepherd and the Door? It is said that in the East, the fold has only one opening, and the shepherd stands at this opening to let the sheep go in and out one by one. Also at night he lies down in this opening, so he knows whether a sheep tries to get out or a wild animal tries to get in. So you see a shepherd in that case is really a "door" as well.

The Lord Jesus is the ONLY DOOR. You cannot become a member of His flock except by coming to Him. "By Me, if any man (really, "anyone", man, woman, boy or girl) enter in, he shall be saved." Remember, too, He also said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me". And then how precious are the words He has added, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, Which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand".

Are you in the hand of God?





**“AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME THAT
YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE”**

John 5.40

Believers who worshipfully acknowledge the Sovereignty of God, and confess that they “are what they are” by His free grace alone, are sometimes met by those who quote these words as though they taught the free and unfettered will of the **natural** man. Indeed, there is an extreme form of teaching amongst certain heretical sects implying, or directly stating, that there is nothing in Holy Scripture which cannot be perceived by the natural understanding of men. Such ideas are quite contrary to the words of 1 Corinthians 2, especially verse 14, and particularly those of our Lord in Matthew 11.25-27.

The Lord Jesus has said, “No man **can** come to Me except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him” (John 6.44) and again in verse 65, “No man **can** come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father”. If, therefore, there are texts which **seem** to teach otherwise, we must own our dependence upon the Heavenly Teacher, that He may lead us into all truth. Thus, and thus only, shall we be kept from unwise “reasonings” and rash assertions.

Are the words at the head hereof contradictory to our Lord’s other words already quoted? No reverent believer would dare to say so. They are **complementary**, not contrary. The one word of the Lord stresses the sovereign will of the Father, graciously overcoming the natural reluctance and sad unwillingness of men. The other emphasises the lack of will towards, or rather the will set against, the testimony of the Lord, and the honour of His Person. “Ye do not will to come.”

We have not here an arbitrary decree of the Lord, but a solemn statement of fact in the simplest words. In illustration, God said to newly-created man concerning the “tree of knowledge of good and evil”, “in the day thou eatest thereof, **thou shalt surely die**”. In so commanding, the Creator was within His Own Infinite rights. His words to Adam could not be plainer, and, we may add, His bountiful provision robbed them of all excuses for acting as they did. Yet they had free will. God did not make human machines, but living, intelligent, sentient beings.

When Eve was faced with the temptation, her ears, made to listen to the voice of God, the singing of birds, the musical rustle of leaves in the wind, and the rhythm of running streams, turned aside to the seductive suggestions of the enemy of God; her eyes, which should have been satisfied with the beauties of creation—for God saw that all was very good—turned from these to the **one** forbidden object; her hands, given to enable her to be a help meet for her husband, were used in such manner as to cause her and his downfall. They disobeyed; they died; physically within “the thousand-year day”, morally on that literal day.

The statement concerning man, that he is “dead in trespasses and sins”, is, as all scriptures bearing a like testimony, not an arbitrary decree of God, but a solemn statement of fact, unchallengeable and unalterable. Moreover, experience and observation bear out the fact. What God said **would** follow the turning aside from His word **did** follow, and the whole human race fell in Adam and inherited his moral and spiritual deadness.

So this “death” is accompanied by, and evidenced by, inertness and inability and ignorance, from which only the mighty power of the Spirit of God can deliver. And, blessed be His Name, many who read these pages can testify that His word, “Live!”, has been “effectual”, and now they are able to “yield themselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead”.

Returning to our text and its context, the first word of verse 39, though it is capable of an **imperative** rendering, has rather an **indicative** sense—“Ye search the Scriptures”—which is exactly what the Jews, and particularly the scribes, delighted to do. It was, however, the letter of the word that interested them most. They approached it mentally and intellectually rather than spiritually. They knew many prophesied facts concerning Christ. For example, they could tell Herod where He was to be born. They read of His kingdom and glory, but utterly failed to perceive from the Scriptures His life of suffering and his atoning death. Their apprehensions were those of a carnal mind; and they have their counterpart today. In their actual ignorance, they “supposed” in them—in the words as words—to have eternal life. What a solemn warning! One may have a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, have committed large portions of Scripture to memory—and would that all the Lord’s people did so—and yet miss the mark. The Jews failed to see Christ, the foretold Messiah, in the Lord Jesus, although the Scriptures delineated Him so

(continued on page 67)

Inspired Words, Inspected.

No. 43

“Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.”

Phil. 4.17.18.

The apostle has been commending the saints for their care for him, but as these verses shew, their gifts were primarily to God.

NOT (ouch); negative “ou”, but having “ch” affixed because the next word is aspirated.

BECAUSE (hoti); conjunction, sometimes rendered “that”, sometimes “because”.

I DESIRE (epizeto); verb, present tense, meaning “to seek after, inquire after”; compounded from epi (upon) and zeteo (I seek); the preposition prefixed intensifies the force of the word. Hence it is translated “desire”. Paul’s yearning over the saints was strong.

A GIFT (to doma); article and noun, neuter; derived from didomi (I give); the “ma” ending signifies something done, made, or produced. “The gift”. It may signify the particular “fellowship” mentioned (v. 16), or, perhaps, that to which, as God’s servant, he was entitled. (1 Cor. 9.13.14, 2 Cor. 11.9)

BUT (alla); strong adversative conjunction; almost meaning, “on the contrary”.

I DESIRE (see above).

FRUIT (ton karpon); article and noun, masculine; accusative; “the fruit”.

WHICH MAY ABOUND (ton pleonazonta); participle; the verb, pleonazo, is derived from pleion, the comparative of the adjective polus (much) therefore meaning “more”; hence the thought of “increase”. Literally, the phrase is, “the fruit the abounding”.

TO (eis); proposition, “into”, governing accusative case; it may be rendered “unto” or “with a view to”.

YOUR (humon); personal pronoun, genitive plural, meaning “of you”.

ACCOUNT (logon); noun, accusative; from “logos” (a word); Paul uses it in Acts 20.24 (I make account of nothing—rendered “none of these things move me”). Also the word is rendered “account” in 1 Pet. 4.5. The thought of an account or reckoning is seen in the use of the word in Phil. 4.15 “an account of giving and receiving” (lit). The idea seems to be conveyed that God keeps an account of His people’s liberality (see Heb. 6.10 and Matt. 6.19-21).

BUT (de); conjunction; second word in sentence.

I HAVE (apecho); verb, present tense; meaning, “I have received”, a formula of receipt for payment.

ALL (panta); adjective used as noun; neuter, plural, from “pas, pasa, pan”; meaning “all things”.

AND (kai); conjunction.

ABOUND (perisseuo); verb, present tense, meaning, “I overflow”.

I AM FULL (pepleromai); verb, perfect, indicative, passive from “pleroo” (I fill); translate, “I have been filled”.

HAVING RECEIVED (dexamenos); participle, aorist, nominative, singular, from “dechomai” (I welcome).

OF (para); preposition; may govern accusative, genitive, or dative case; meaning “beside or alongside”. With genitive as here, signifies “from the side of”, or “from”.

EPAPHRODITUS (Epaphroditou); proper noun, genitive.

THE THINGS (ta); article, neuter plural.

WHICH WERE SENT (not in text).

FROM (par); proposition “para” (see above); “a” is dropped out because the next word begins with a vowel.

YOU (humon); see above.

AN ODOUR (osmen); noun, feminine, accusative, from “osme” (a smell, odour).

OF A SWEET SMELL (euodias); noun, feminine, genitive, from “euodia”; compounded from “eu” (well, or good) and “ozo” (to smell); hence, “a good (or sweet) smell”. The only other place where these two words occur together is Eph. 5.2. But in LXX, they are found in Lev. 1.9.

A SACRIFICE (thusian); noun, feminine, accusative, from “thusia” (a sacrifice—of a slain animal); but used of spiritual sacrifices (Rom. 12.1, 1 Pet. 2.5, Heb. 13.15-16) as those which cost something (1 Chron. 21.24) and which ascend to God.

ACCEPTABLE (dekten); adjective; from “dektos, e, -on”; derived from “dechomai” (see above). The gifts of the saints were welcomed by God, not only by Paul.

WELL-PLEASING (euareston); adjective, accusative, from “euarestos”, compounded from “eu” (well or good) and “aresko” (I please).

TO GOD (toi Theoi); noun, with article, dative, from “ho Theos”.

"THEY DID NOT KNOW"

Who? Those who lived at the same time as Noah, and who perished in the flood. Why did they not know? Because, like so many today, they were "willingly ignorant". But some will say, why talk about a flood that nobody credits nowadays as having occurred. Nobody? How sweeping the assertion! But it is not true. There are still very many who believe the Biblical record. And have not recent excavations in the Middle East revealed a thick bed of clay that could only have been deposited by a flood of great magnitude? Not only does the book of Genesis record the fact, but other parts of the Bible allude thereto. Most important of all, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the flood as an historical occurrence. Have you a "natural" faith in Him? That is to say, do you regard Him as One Who ever spoke truth? If so, you must accept His testimony regarding this stupendous event.

But, supposing you do not accept the personal witness of Christ, or that of Genesis or the writers of Scripture thereafter, or the unveiling by excavations, are you not obscurantist, or "willingly ignorant"? It will be a sad awakening if, after all, you are found wrong.

Why, we again ask, did Noah's contemporaries, not know? Was it not because the idea of a deluge was fantastic to them? There was some knowledge of God in the earth, but He was not loved nor obeyed. Had men formed an opinion that God was indulgent and would never take vengeance of their sins; that He was too kind to execute so severe a judgment? What is certain, is that "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until—" it was too late. Such things were not wrong in themselves. It was simply that present employment and enjoyment dulled the conscience and deadened the apprehension. Such a state of mind led to the practice of the vilest wickedness, until "the earth was filled with violence".

Oh, dear reader, do not neglect the warnings of a yet greater calamity foretold in Scripture. This record of the flood is given as a warning. What God said would come did come. The whole world neglected and rejected His word and suffered under His awful judgment.

The testimony of Noah by word and work was clear, and should have been convincing. He was "a preacher of righteousness" (2. Pet. 2.5). The Spirit of Christ was in Him, preaching to men whose spirits were, at death, put into a prison. Moreover, Noah, by the very preparation of the

ark, "condemned the world". But a Greater than Noah came into the world, Who said, "He that believeth on Him (Christ) is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3.18.19). In these words, sadly true in the days of Christ's earthly life, may be described the state of things in Noah's day. We are not told what men said about Noah. All we know is that only Noah and his family—eight persons—were saved in the flood. The whole world scorned his preaching, continued in their own ways, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away". There was no excuse for their ignorance. They loved darkness rather than light.

And, how, dear friend, is it with you? Are you going to face the fact of the coming judgment, sure and swift, and, foreseeing the evil, to hide yourself? "Whither shall I hide myself?", you ask. Are you in earnest "to flee from the wrath to come"? The writer is not an alarmist. To him the things he has written are terribly real. But he can say, on the authority of Scripture, there is a way of escape, and one way only. 'Tis in Jesus Christ, "Who once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God". "Flee from the wrath to come".

**"AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME"**

(continued from page 65)

clearly. "They are they which testify of Me." There is such a thing as seeing and not perceiving, as hearing and not grasping the import of what is said. The Lord's hearers exemplified this "grossness of heart" (Matt. 13.14.15), as their attitude abundantly shewed, and justified the Lord's quotation from Isaiah 6.

How great is the mercy that opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, and blessedly disposes the will to come to Christ! If there are many in Christendom who resemble Israel, of not a few, on the other hand, it can be said, "But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear". Is every reader hereof among such? Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13.16.17.51.52).

Notes on Memorized Verses

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

JEREMIAH 32

"IF THE LORD WILL"—JANUARY, 1957

30. "Have only . . . have only". Evil and no good.
 31. From the day that they built it". The seeds of sin even in the earlier days. 32. Not confined to one class.
 33. Wilful rejection. An insult to God. 34. The house of God defiled (cf. Matt. 21.12.13). 35. So they were not of God's mind. 36. The judgment did arrive, but, 37. In wrath God remembers mercy. 38. He hath not cast off for ever. 39. The secret—a united heart Divinely given. 40. A threefold "I will" ensures "they shall".
 41. God's great condescension. Not only "I will", but He speaks "in truth" (margin). "My whole heart . . . My whole soul". Could words be more gracious or tranquillizing? 42. "As . . . So". 43. 44. The prophet's transaction not in vain (see earlier part of chapter).

JEREMIAH 33

1. In prison, but the *Word* came. 2. The LORD thrice named, a hint of tri-unity. 3. In prison, but *prayer* not bound. 4. 5. What Jeremiah saw, but God would shew "*hidden things*" (v. 3. margin). 6. The city and the people will be "cured". The "revelation" will not be to *one* prophet, but to a *whole* nation. Peace, but not at the expense of truth. 7. "As at the first".
 8. Cleansing and pardon for *all* iniquities. 9. The nations shall hear. God desired such testimony (Deut. 4.6.7) but Israel failed. 10. Desolation shall give place to, 11. Vocal joy, gladness, and praise—"as at the first" (v. 7). 12. 13. Flocks of sheep shall again feed in the once desolate places. 14. "I will *perform*" what "I have *promised*". This is God's word; not to the church, but to *Israel* and *Judah*. 15. The Branch (see Isa. 11.1. Zech. 3.8) is Messiah. 16. Jerusalem will be called by His Name (see ch. 23.6). 17. 18. See Ezekiel's last few chapters. 19. Again, "the *Word* of the Lord came". How often this sentence occurs. 20. The Covenant (see Gen. 8.22). 21. So God confirms His promise. 22. This recalls the promise to Abraham (Gen. 15.5) 23. See verse 19. Thus God underlines His purpose. 24. "The two families". A phrase not applicable to the Church. 25. What God says, not what man says, shall stand. 26. "I will". Divine Sovereign purpose. Let saints remember, this faithful God is their God also.

JEREMIAH 35

1. The word . . . from the LORD. 2. "Go . . . speak . . . bring". 3. The prophet obeyed. "The whole house". 4. So Jeremiah was not alone. "A man of God" was there. 5. 6. Wine, offered but refused, not because it was wrong to drink, but because of loyalty to a promise of obedience. 7. Tents, not houses, to dwell in. 8. A full obedience. 9. 10. An interesting type of "strangers and pilgrims". 11. The enemy hinders the full obedience hitherto shewn, but God's stress is on the abstinence from wine. 12. "Then came". It is still "the *Word* of the LORD". 13. "Go" (see verse 2) "Tell". 14. Rechabites obeyed their father, but "ye hearkened not unto Me". 15. These words repeated, also in verse 16. "This people", not "My people". 17. They neither heard nor answered. 18. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts". A special word to Rechabites. 19. Faithfulness rewarded. "A man to stand before Me". God delights in obedience.

| Day | READING | | LEARNING | |
|-----|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| | Psalms | Luke | Jeremiah | James |
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| 2 | 150 | 16 1-13 | 31 | 14 |
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| 5 | 3 1-20 | 20-37 | 34 | 17 |
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| 7 | 4 1-27 | 15-27 | 36 | 19 |
| 8 | 5 1-23 | 28-43 | 37 | 20 |
| 9 | 6 1-19 | 19 1-10 | 38 | 21 |
| 10 | 20-35 | 11-28 | 39 | 22 |
| 11 | 7 1-27 | 29-48 | 40 | 23 |
| 12 | 8 1-19 | 20 1-19 | 41 | 24 |
| 13 | 20-36 | 20-47 | 42 | 25 |
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| 21 | 14 1-16 | 13-25 | 6 | 6 |
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| 23 | 15 1-17 | 39-56 | 8 | 8 |
| 24 | 18-33 | 24 1-12 | 9 | 9 |
| 25 | 16 1-16 | 13-35 | 10 | 10 |
| 26 | 17-33 | 36-53 | 11 | 11 |
| | | John | | |
| 27 | 17 1-14 | 1 1-18 | 12 | 12 |
| 28 | 15-28 | 19-34 | 13 | 13 |
| 29 | 18 1-24 | 35-51 | 14 | 14 |
| 30 | 19 1-12 | 2 1-12 | 15 | 15 |
| 31 | 13-29 | 13-25 | 16 | 16 |

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

January

- 6. Num. 28. 9.10. Isa. 58. 13.4. Heb. 4. 1 to 11. Acts 20. 7. 1 Cor. 11. 26.
- 13. Num. 28. 11 to 15. Deut. 33. 14. Matt. 26. 29. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Rev. 21. 5.6.
- 20. Num. 28. 16 to 25. 2 Chron. 35. 1. 10 to 19. Luke 22. 7 to 22. John 14. 21. 1 Cor. 5. 6 to 8.
- 27. Num. 28. 26 to 31. Lev. 23. 9 to 14. 2 Chron. 31. 2 to 5. 1 Cor. 15. 20 to 23. Rev. 1. 5.6.17.18.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—FEBRUARY, 1957

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| 2 | 20 16-30 | 3 17-24 | 18 | 18 |
| 3 | 21 1-15 | 3 25-36 | 19 | 19 |
| 4 | 21 16-31 | 4 1-14 | 20 | 20 |
| 5 | 22 1-16 | 4 15-26 | 21 | 21 |
| 6 | 22 17-29 | 4 27-42 | 22 | 22 |
| 7 | 23 1-18 | 4 43-54 | 23 | 23 |
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| 9 | 24 1-18 | 5 17-30 | 25 | 25 |
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| 27 | 3 1-22 | 10 16-30 | 17 | 17 |
| 28 | 4 1-16 | 10 31-42 | 18, 19 | 18 |

- For saints on the Continent and their many difficulties, including persecution and repression.
- For troubled China, and the trials of God's servants in that land, and for saints in Korea, Cyprus and North Africa.
- For the Lord's work entrusted to us, in this and other lands, and by Scriptures sent, and literature, that all may be fresh and vigorous, and responsive to Him, that we may never settle down or slacken (Gen. 49. 24, Phil. 3.14)—with special remembrance of Stanley Duce (Canada and U.S.A. temporarily), F. A. Franco (Argentina and around Uruguay, Brazil, etc.), E. Lutz (Switzerland), D. Werner (Germany). Continue to pray for the Lord's enabling if He will, of additional fellow-workers for S. America, and the translation of Scripture.
- The growth of literacy, opening doors both to evangelical and ideological literature, in many lands.
- For aged believers, that Isaiah 46. 4 and Psalm 92. 14 may be realised.
- For God's blessing in families ("Thou and thy house"), and that many "little ones" may believe in Christ (Matt. 18. 6).
- For lonely missionaries, cut off from intercourse with fellow saints.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

February

- Num. 29. 1 to 6. 35 to 38. Ps. 45. 6 to 8. Song. 1. 3-4. John 12. 3 to 8. Eph. 5. 2.
- Num. 30. 2. Ex. 24. 3-7. Ps. 15. 4. Matt. 26. 36 to 42, 56. Heb. 10. 1 to 10.
- Num. 30. 6, 7. 2 Cor. 1. 17 to 20. Col. 3. 17 to 19. 2 Cor. 8. 1 to 5. Heb. 2. 9 to 12.
- Num. 31. 1 to 8. 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11. Rom. 6. 8 to 14. 2 Cor. 10. 3 to 6. Rev. 2. 14 to 17.

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE

Let us mark the limitations of Psalm 66. 18.

Only those "IN CHRIST," and drawing near according to Hebrews 10. 22, can "CONTINUE in prayer, and watch in the same WITH THANKSGIVING."

Colossians 4. 2.

- For those in authority (Rom. 13. 1, 1 Tim. 2. 1-4). The times are solemn: our "politics" remain heavenly ("citizenship," Phil. 3. 20), but our responsibilities to pray are real, even as in the days of Ezra (6. 10).
- For Israel—scattered, peeled, confused—that God may see in us the intensity He has appointed (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and that Psalm 122. 6 and Jeremiah 51. 50 may be a reality to us.
- For Hebrew-Christians and their peculiar wants and difficulties, particularly in other lands.

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