

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

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FREE

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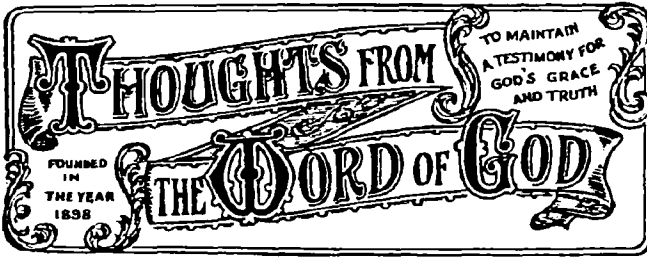
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"O come, let us worship and bow down :
let us kneel before the LORD our
Maker."
Psalm 95.6.

Eternal God ! O Infinite,
Uncomprehended One,
Dwelling within the holy height,
Enrobed in uncreated light,
Paling the burning sun.

We worship Thee, O Changeless One,
The Father, Who art Lord
Of heaven and earth, through Thine Own Son.
For all He is and He hath done,
Be ever Thou adored !

E.K.



Words of Encouragement

“There is a river” How great the contrast Ps. 46.4. between the “river, the streams whereof shall make glad,” “the waters of Shiloah, which go softly” (Is. 8.6) and the waters that “roar” and “be troubled.” These latter resemble the wicked, who “are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest,” “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame” (Jude 13). Could there be a more apt simile for prevailing conditions in the world today? In some lands, believers are to be found where “the heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved;” so that an increase of violence and lawlessness may well cause fear to possess the heart.

But “God is our Refuge and strength, a Help in distresses to be greatly found” (Ps. 46.1. Lit.). “See that ye be not troubled” is the encouraging word of the Lord Jesus. “In your patience possess ye your souls,” is His needed exhortation in these troublous times. “There is a river” and we look for “The City of God.” In due season His chosen shall reach His house, and be abundantly satisfied there. “Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures” (Ps. 36.8).

So, despite all that seems against us, shall we not humbly, and by grace, say, “Therefore will not we fear.”

Poem to help Christian Experience.—246.

“God sent forth His Son”

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

O Thou Who art the Living Word Eternal,
Thou Who didst flesh become,
Thou Who art full of grace and truth supernal,
Of glories all the sum,
Apart from Thee not one thing hath creation,
O Thou Eternal Son!
All have their being through Thy mediation;
’Twas spoken; it was done.

Thou camest, but Thine own would not receive Thee,
Though into Israel born;
Great were Thy works, yet would they not believe Thee,
But full of hate and scorn
Were Israel, though over them Thou yearnedst
With love that was intense.
Yet from Thy sufferings, Son of God, Thou learnedst
A blest obedience.

Before Thee I am bowed, My Lord and Saviour,
In humble gratitude;
I marvel at Thy gracious, calm behaviour
Mid scoffings rough and rude;
Yea, Thou didst leave Thy holy habitation
To live in poverty;
Becamest Thou the Author of Salvation
By dying on a tree.

Like to Thy brethren, Saviour, Thou becamest
In drawing human breath,
And, dying, Thou the adversary shamedst
That had the power of death;
And for the saints in bondage through their fearing
Death, didst alone effect
Deliverance: and now Thy blest Appearing
Both they and we expect.

Until that day, Lord Jesus, let us follow
The path Thyself hast trod,
The world refusing, and its promise hollow,
In faithfulness to God.
Loyal to Thee, and loving Thine Appearing,
We would ourselves prepare,
And with “That Blessed Hope” each other cheering,
We shall Thine Image bear.

* * *

ERRORS IN GOSPEL PREACHING

Percy W. Heward

To point out errors for the sake of pointing them out is ungracious, but brotherly love suggests washing one another’s feet. We are all, in measure, influenced by the mistakes around us, and need to be on our guard in the power of the Holy Spirit, so I would venture to do what I desire others to do for me, namely, to help by pointing out whatever lacks the warrant of God’s precious Words of truth*. It is better to be corrected now than to lose reward “in that Day.” “He that hateth reproof is brutish,” but, “Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.” (Prov. 12.1, 9.8). May we seek to glorify God in this matter, and receive with meekness the grafted Word” (James 1.21).

The writer would not claim to detect all errors: nor can this brief word of exhortation deal with all which have been, in mercy, perceived. There are so many sad accompaniments of preaching. Some are musical, some are social, but anything that makes the gospel of grace secondary, or which has no warrant from Scripture, is dangerous, and worse than dangerous. The apostles did not go forth to amuse men. Those who want a man-attractive message instead of God’s humbling gospel are not to be pleased. We are God’s ambassadors, why should we take a lower standing? Let each one who feels called or, rather, who is called by God to declare His message in the open air, or on a platform, be ashamed of human contrivances, and, searching his heart and

motives, **keep to the glorious gospel of the grace of God**, not even with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (1 Cor. 1.17).

May I limit myself just now to the misrepresentation of the gospel, often unconscious, which **exalts** the sinner, and sets aside the **sovereignty** of grace? I do not mean that we are to deny a due proportion as to truth. God has shewn to "the heirs of promise" the immutability of His counsel. Electing love is very precious to His grace-humbled people; it is food for His saints. This part of truth is not so much for the unsaved, except as sounded forth to any like the argumentative Jews (John 6), who **assumed** they were elect. Referring to these, the Lord Jesus said, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me," and again, "No man can come unto Me except it were given unto Him of My Father" (John 6.45.65). Likewise the self-righteous sinner is met with a definite testimony against him—"I came not to call the righteous." But the **general message** appointed by the Lord is on the lines of, "Come, for all things are now ready" (Luke 14.17). Let me earnestly seek to make clear the wondrous simplicity and **freeness** of the gospel message. Not a few think they honour Christ by a **cheap** gospel. But it is the reverse. The **free** gospel, and that alone, can glorify Him. God's grace is to the unworthy, the lost, the condemned, and to such we would preach it, rejoicing that herein is the **power** of God unto salvation (Rom. 1.16). But, alas, it is so easy to make the efficacy of the gospel contingent on some work of the sinner. The work may be viewed as a "small" one, but anything which detracts from the **absolute freeness** of God's gospel is a denial of His amazing love, and, moreover, it flatters the sinner. In this connection we need prayerful earnestness, that we may not be misled by human logic, and that we may discern things that differ. God's election must be acknowledged.

Further, if we say truth in a way which we know will mislead, are we not acting dishonestly? The apostles rightly used the expression, "Men, brethren," when addressing those of Israel, but if among Gentiles, professing Christianity, we repeat such an expression today, most will assume the universal fatherhood of God. We need to wait on God that we may not cause others to stumble by our unwise language, though sorrowfully aware that the sinful heart will even try to change and ferment the new wine of the gospel

in any case. But if we obey our Lord, we can leave results with Him; if we are careless, the solemn responsibility is our own.

The sinner must be laid low before the gospel becomes music to him. Its invitations are pointedly to the thirsty and the heavy laden. We address sinners, but we should explain what a sinner is, that those in whom God is working may own to that name. The law is good if a man use it lawfully. When the poor Israelite on the road to Jericho—the city of the curse—had been stripped of all, he was ready for the oil and wine; when the jailor was in anguish, the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" were peculiarly appropriate. Hence we desire to shew that the gospel is for those whom the law condemns, those who can do nothing; and as they feel this, humbled to know that their very feeling is through free grace, they are welcome to the blessings that free grace bestows.

If we bring, however, before the unconcerned sinner belief in the Lord Jesus, he assumes a modified law*, and trusts to a mental faith. I would hesitate to use the word "offer." It implies the sinner's natural ability to produce a godly acceptance of what is offered. But we know that by nature, he will only refuse; so we are to set forth that which God describes as a **gift** rather than an offer; and, as we preach this glorious message, we long and pray that God the Holy Spirit may **cause** some, as part of the gift itself, to accept that which is beyond expression.

Who can estimate the love of God? O that we may **realize** this, and also His just wrath, when we are privileged to tell of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again let me plead against anything which encourages the sinner proudly and carelessly to think he can take as and when he likes, in his own power. Let the awful condition of those without Christ be shewn, and God Himself will use this to lead the lost to His Beloved Son. Let **Him** thus be lifted up, exalted, and honoured (John 12.32), and men of all classes will yet be drawn to Him.

* The present editor also would express the same wish.

* "Doing belief" instead of "doing everything."

* * * *

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

THE ROCK

This word makes us think of that which is high and strong. We may have seen great waves of the sea dashing themselves against a rock standing by itself, but only to be driven back into the great ocean. They seem to break in fury upon its sides, but there the rock stands. It cannot be moved.

Now that is just a picture of what God is. He is High and Strong. Men may be against Him in their words and actions; they cannot harm Him, but can only hurt themselves. They are like "raging waves of the sea." Once, the waves beat into the boat in which the Lord Jesus was lying, but He arose, and the waves and the wind were still.

Moses and David both spoke of God being a Rock. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect." "The LORD is my Rock." "Who is a Rock save our God?" "The LORD liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted." (Deut. 32.4; Ps. 18.2, 31.46). We shall see presently that the Lord Jesus is called by the same Name, thus reminding us He is God.

When Israel sinned by falling down before an idol, Moses was very sorry, and prayed to God, asking Him to forgive the sin. And, as he was to go on leading the people, he asked God, "Shew me Thy glory." God said, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a Rock; and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the Rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by" (Ex. 33). So Moses was both ON and IN the Rock. And that is a lovely picture of salvation, for a saved boy or girl is one who has faith "on to" and "into" Christ, because we read, "That Rock was Christ." And some can sing, "On Christ, the Solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand;" and, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."

But we also read in Scripture of what came "out of the Rock," namely, water. In this there are lessons for us. Let us see what we can learn.

WATER OUT OF THE ROCK

One day the children of Israel encamped in a place, where "there was no water for the people to drink." They grumbled against Moses and were almost ready to stone him. Yet God, in His great mercy, gave them water, though they

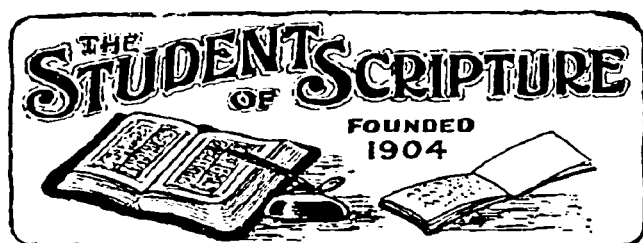
did not deserve it. O how kind He is! You and I would have nothing from God if we only had what we deserve. Faith is a gift, repentance is a gift, a new life is a gift, and, indeed, all earthly blessings are a gift.

But how did God give His people water? The LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the Rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the Rock, and there shall come water out of It, that the people may drink." As soon as Moses struck the Rock, "the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed," for it was God Who "brought streams also out of the Rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers" (Psalms 78.16.20). "And they thirsted not when He led them through the deserts: He caused the waters to flow out of the Rock for them: He clave the Rock also, and the waters gushed out" (Isaiah 48.21). Long after, then, this gift of God was remembered as the work of the kind and gracious God. And even today we read in 1 Corinthians 10.4, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

Since, therefore, it speaks of Christ, we can see that when Moses struck the Rock, it was to teach us that Christ was to be smitten **once**, if blessing was to come to any boy or girl, or man or woman. That which was used to give the blow was the rod which Moses once used to smite the river of Egypt, and that was in punishment. So we are to see in this act that the Lord Jesus Christ **once** bore the punishment which sinners ought to have. That was when He died on the cross.

Afterwards, when the people needed water again, Moses was told to take the rod, to remind them how it was **once** used, but this time, he was to **speak** to the Rock. I am sorry to say Moses did not obey God. Yet God, in His kindness, again gave the water, for it "came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also" (Numbers 20.7-13).

Is there anyone who reads this page, who is thirsting for God; is there one who feels so sinful and helpless, that he or she has a need which only God can meet? Then think of Christ, the Rock once for all smitten, Who "died unto sin **once**," Who "was **once** offered to bear the sins of many" (Rom. 6.10; Heb. 9.28). Then remember the Rock was to be **spoken to**, and the blessing came. May many who read these words be led to Christ and speak to him from their hearts, and receive His great salvation.



THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET AMOS

Foreword

It is imagined by some of God's people that those who emphasise the sure and literal fulfilment of those prophecies as yet unfulfilled, are unmindful of the fact that the prophets also had a message for their own day and generation. Far from such a view being true, the careful student not only recognises that those servants of God spoke a personal and national message to then reigning kings and their peoples, but that their words have a relevancy to present day conditions. It has been said that men—even those in high places—fail to learn the lessons of history. But God is in control of all events. He has never abdicated His rights, and never will. History, particularly Biblical history, illustrates this, and the following essay, it is hoped, will help the people of God, to enter more fully into the message and meaning of these ancient, yet living Books, given by inspiration of God. Since they are part of "All Scripture," thus "Godbreathed," they are written for "our learning" and "our admonition." (2 Tim. 3.16, Rom. 15.4, 1 Cor. 10.11.)

Introduction

Holy Scripture paints man in his true colours. It does not flatter, nor does it treat him as a mere animal, unreasoning and irresponsible. He was created in God's image, after His likeness. That has been marred by sin, and though man has, representatively, in the Divine choice of Israel as a nation, been blessed beyond all others, the history of that people demonstrates the incorrigible evil of the human heart, and its rebellion against Divine authority. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4.7.8). Thus spake Moses, but what saith the chronicler in 2 Kings 17. Among other things, we read, "And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies that He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and

became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them" (2 Kings 17.15.16). These words are spoken of the northern kingdom, but Judah apostatized, too, and "transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen . . . and the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers . . . but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words . . . until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36.14-16). The rise, decline, and downfall of that greatly favoured people are faithfully recorded as a witness and a warning to nations and to individuals. But the church and her several members need also to take heed to these lessons of past history. Such a "messenger" was Amos in his day, and his "message" is relevant to the present day.

The Prophet

Thus he speaks of himself and his call to service, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel (7.14.15): Like Isaiah, he could say, "I saw the Lord" (9.1). He "who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa" had "words" from God, "concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel" (1.1). Nothing is recorded of his family, but, being of Tekoa, he belonged to the southern kingdom, though his witness was to Israel. Not that his testimony was welcomed. "Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. And Amaziah said, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (7.10-13).

Jeroboam the second had reigned 27 years before Uzziah became King of Judah, and as he lived only 14 years after that, it is possible that the foretold judgment on the house of Jeroboam (Amos 7.9) took place during the lifetime of Amos. (see 2 Kings 15.12 and 2 Kings 17.6). The captivity of Israel occurred during the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings 17) some 38 years after the death of Uzziah.

Disclaiming prophetic "succession," Amos was yet a true prophet, for he was (a) called of God and by Him sent forth; (b) he had a "Thus saith the LORD" for an authoritative message, and (c) his was the usual experience of the messengers of God, rejection and mocking (Matt. 13.57; John 4.44). The prophets all spoke by the Holy Spirit (Micah 3.8; Jer. 20.9; 1 Pet. 1.10-12; 2 Pet. 1.20.21), that is, by revelation, for with a view to this they were chosen. "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy? (Amos 3.7.8). Amos, like Paul, regarded himself as one of the least. Like the apostle also, he recognized that there were other servants of God to whom He made known His purposes. To Paul was revealed the mystery of the one body, but not to him only. "It is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3.5). It must surely be interesting to the heart of a believer to observe such maintenance of Divine principles, and their similarity in all dispensations; also to notice the likeness of character in the chosen servants of the Lord, their humility and faithfulness, and their desire for the honour and glory of the Divine Eternal Being.

The Scope of the Prophet's Witness

Although his words were "concerning Israel," he was also, like Jeremiah, "a prophet of the nations." Indeed, were not the prophets all entrusted with messages to the Gentiles? Israel alone was known by God, of all the families of the earth, yet God was, and still is, not unmindful of the ways of the nations. England has been greatly honoured by God in past centuries, and has been respected and feared by the rest of the world. But there is a steady and perceptible decline. Should she, therefore, not take to heart the lessons of history, particularly that of Holy Scripture? That Book is not now the possession of one nation only. It has been known for centuries by many of the peoples of the earth. Hence its message is an universal one, and it will be observed by readers of the book of Amos how striking are the parallels in contemporary history.

The Wickedness of the Nations

Repeating the phrase. "For three transgressions . . . and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof," God declares His hatred of their sins and His righteous judgment of them, in regard to Syria, Gaza, (as representing the Philistines), Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, before He speaks similarly concerning Judah and Israel. Chs. 1 and 2). In each case, He Who is of purer

eyes than to behold evil, yet knows of the evil, specifies the sin, and declares the appropriate judgment. He is righteous, and cannot tolerate the wickedness of man, though oft does He hold back, in wisdom and mercy, the execution of His condemnatory decree. See 2 Kings 14.24 and 27 for an example of His forbearance as regards Israel, and compare Genesis 15.16 and 18.20.21.

The Wickedness of Israel

To this "family" which was brought out of Egypt God said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (2.10, 3.1.2). Israel's sin was particularly evil, because it was against "light" and skewed the basest ingratitude for singular privileges. "I know," said God, "Your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins," and these were many and various.

Violence and Robbery

"For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces" (3.10). They trod upon the poor, taking from them burdens of wheat, and refused them justice "in the gate," the place of judgment (5.11.12). This injustice to the poor and needy was accompanied by corrupt business dealings and "sharp practice" (8.4-7). And all this because of a

Love of Ease and Luxury

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion . . . that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon couches ("abound with superfluities,"—margin), and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall . . . that drink wine in bowls." Here is a section of the people who have enriched themselves at the expense of the poor in the community. Not content with enjoying the most delicate food and wines, they pandered to their sensuous pleasures, in musical performances. "That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David" (6.1-6). Food, amusement and idleness! How like the present generation! Truly, man has not changed. 'Twas no marvel that, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." (5.10). Even the women—"the kine of Bashan"—cast off all feminine pity and modesty, "which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink" (4.1). Sad are the words (5.13). "Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time." It would seem that wiser ones, though grieving over the evil, forebore to speak, since it would expose them to hatred. Truly there was a need of the prophet's stern words. Then there was—

A False Religiousness

We read of their "altars," and "the house of their god" (2.8). 'Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgressions; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years. And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven . . . for so ye love" (4.4.5 margin). These two places, of such hallowed memories, were now the scenes of idolatry; yes, with all their wickedness in everyday life, the people were "religious." Yet they professed not to profane the sabbath or neglect the "new moons." The hypocrisy of Phariseeism was working in those days; Israel's business men were impatient for the "days" to be gone, so that they might resume their trading and cheating (8.5.6). Human religion can never be anything but external, be it professedly "Christian" or openly idolatrous. It has no power to produce godliness of life. Indeed, it is often accompanied by moral laxity (see 2.6-8) and, as we have seen, by a total disregard of righteous dealings with fellow-mortals. Can we be surprised at God's displeasure with Israel? "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts" (5.21.22). All iniquity is evil, but religious iniquity is offensive and loathesome. God hates it. Even to the "leader" of an assembly, the Lord Jesus expressed His abhorrence of his lukewarmness, in the words, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3).

If the Lord will, to be continued.

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED—

No. 44

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."

Colossians 1.28 to 2.1.

In these words we have some insight into the deep experience and feelings of the apostle in regard to his affectionate concern for the saints. "Are they ministers of Christ?" he asks concerning some, and replies, "I am more . . . besides those things that are **without**, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

(2 Cor. 11.28.)

WHOM (hon.); relative pronoun; accusative, because object of the verb following. From hos, he, ho (who, whom). Refers back to "Christ in you."

WE (hemeis); personal pronoun, masculine, plural.

PREACH (kataggellomen); verb, indicative, present, from kataggello (I bring word down upon); compound of kata (down) and aggello (I announce, bring a message). The noun aggelos means a messenger, an angel. As the pronoun "we" is included in the verb-form, the addition of the "we" going before makes emphasis.

WARNING (nouthetountes); present participle, masculine, plural (applying to Paul and Timothy, ch. 1.1) from noutheteo (I warn); compound of nous (mind) and tithemi (I set or place); literally, the word means to "set the mind" or to "put in mind."

EVERY (panta); adjective, masculine, singular qualifying "man," from pas (all).

MAN (anthropon); noun, masculine, singular, accusative, from anthropos.

AND (kai); conjunction.

TEACHING (didaskontes); participle, plural, present tense, masculine (applying to Paul and Timothy as above); from didasko (I teach).

EVERY MAN (see above).

IN (en); preposition, meaning "in," governing accusative case.

ALL (pasei); adjective, singular, dative, feminine, qualifying "wisdom," from pas.

WISDOM (sophiai); noun, feminine, dative, singular, from sophia (wisdom).

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

WE MAY PRESENT (parastesomen); verb, aorist, subjunctive, first person, plural, from paristemi (I make to stand alongside); compound of para (beside) and histemi (I make to stand). The thought is not only of standing, but being in God's presence, "in that day." The word also occurs in ch. 1.22.

EVERY MAN (see above).

PERFECT (teleion); adjective, masculine, accusative, qualifying "man," from teleios. This is derived from telos (end). Compare telephone, telescope, what is heard and seen at "end" places. Hence teleion signifies "what has reached its end," or "has been brought to a goal." It has sometimes the thought of "full-grown." See the same word in Ephesians 4.13.

IN (see above).

CHRIST JESUS (Christoi); Proper Noun, dative, from Christos. The Name Jesus does not occur in some manuscripts.

(continued on page 10)

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.”
(Ps. 39.7).

This is the centre verse of a Psalm wherein sounds a sorrowful note, a minor key, although the faith of David is not eclipsed by his experiences, such experiences, too, as the saints of God in all times have known. Hence it is that they turn to the Psalms to find the same kind of comfort that the psalmist found in the consolations of God.

Here David begins by resolving to control his tongue, just as Job, who, when stripped of everything in a single day, could say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not nor attributed folly to God.” The psalmist would be careful how he spoke, because the wicked was before him; and also because he had sorrow (v. 2) and felt the chastening hand of God. “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it” (v. 9).

He had, moreover, a sense of sin, such as believers often feel when mourning the loss of a loved one. Memory is then very active. “Deliver me from all my transgressions,” he prayed, and surely God heard his plea. In a previous psalm he spoke of the happiness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, but now he remembers his sins, and is troubled. Happy are the saints of this present day, who can rejoice in a Saviour, of Whom it is said, “Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own body on the tree, by Whose stripes we are healed.”

Then again, this man of God pondered in his heart the condition of the human race generally. “Surely,” he says, “Surely,” every man at his best state is altogether vanity.” “Surely, every man walketh in a vain shew, they are disquieted in vain.” “Surely every man is vanity” (vv. 5, 6.11).

But what of himself? “Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am,” or as the margin says, “What time I have here.” He is but one in the multitude of men, and yet he realizes that God has an interest in him. To his own enquiry, he makes a wise reply: “Behold, Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee.” How insignificant his existence, how short his life, in the light of God’s eternity and infinity!

But he prays, and his prayer is accompanied by crying and tears, even as it is said of the very

Son of God, Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him Who was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared (Heb. 5.7). And David adds a plea for God to hear him, in the words, “for I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” Such language as this well befits the saints of the present day, who are themselves but strangers and pilgrims (Heb. 11.13; 1 Pet. 2.11), but it is with God, though man recognises them not. “The world knoweth us not because they knew Him not.”

David, realizing the brevity of life, knowing something of its vanity, feeling the power of sin, and experiencing the chastening hand of One Whose ways he does not fully understand, amid his tears and sorrows, can yet cry, “And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.” There is no hope, or consolation, or rest outside of God. He Who uttered these words of faith had not the same fullness of light as we have in this day, for there has appeared “Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel” (2 Tim. 1.10).

“And now, Lord, what wait I for?” Said Job, “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14.14).

The beloved sister whom we remember with affection, for her godliness of life and consistent and faithful testimony, would surely have said “Amen” to that word. Did she not wait with patience, either for the Lord to return from heaven or that it might please Him for her to gently “fall asleep?” We cannot sorrow for her, for she is in Paradise, but our hearts go forth in sympathy to those whom she has left for a short while. The Lord Jesus wept over His friend Lazarus. When John the Baptist died, his disciples buried him, and then “went and told Jesus.” Shall we not, relatives and friends, do likewise? Can we do better than pour out our sorrows into His listening ear? “For we have not an High Priest Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4.15). It is affecting to read that, “when Jesus heard” of the death of John, He departed into a desert place apart. Surely, we have here a touching example of His sympathy. But His sorrow was not expended all upon John, for He “went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick” (Matt. 14.12-14). So let our private sorrows not be lessened, but rather

may they expand into a deeper and wider compassion for the griefs of others. So shall we follow the Master.

The last verse of our Psalm may well be a prayer for each of us. "O spare me, that I may brighten up, before I go hence, and be no more," that is, "no more" in this scene. And how can this be? Another psalm (34.5) will give the answer, "They looked unto Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed." "For God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4.6).

The above is the substance of an address at the sowing of the body of a sister in Christ, Miss K. Hack, at the City of London Cemetery, Ilford, Essex, on September 25th, 1956.

"MINE INIQUITY . . . IT IS GREAT"

There are not many people conscious of the enormity of sin. Pleasanter names are given to the evil practices of men. Stealing, for example, is sometimes described as "winning" something. True, the "winnings" in a gamble may well be thought of as equivalent to stealing, for a person who gains a sum of money in this way has done nothing to "earn" it. He has given no service in return for his newly-found riches. A person also, whether in office or workshop, who wastes a considerable amount of his employer's time, or arrives late at his place of duty, or takes longer for his meals than he should, is stealing. It is an ugly word, and perhaps it stings, and you, my reader, may resent such plain speaking.

But if Christ has said "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," how much more shall they give account of the idle hours, the time stolen from what should have been spent in profitable work!

But stealing is only one form of sin. That, and all other iniquities, are the bad fruit of a bad tree, and that, dear unsaved friend, applies to you. A corrupt tree **cannot** bring forth good fruit, and unless you are changed by the mighty power of God, your life will yield **nothing** acceptable to Him. To take an example, the children of Israel were chosen by God to bear a testimony to Him in the earth, but this is what He said to them, speaking of them as His vineyard, "He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth **stinking** grapes." Yes, sin is offensive to God. It **stinks**, a word not too strong, for those who have some realization of its loathsomeness.

But you are respectable, and feel this does not apply to you. "I know I am not as good as I ought to be, but I do my best," you say. See you drunkard or immoral man or woman! There is a drunken or vicious **sinner**. But yourself—you are a sober **sinner**. Your sins are much "smaller," and you are complacent about it; but not thus did the man, David, who wrote the above words, feel lightly about his sin. "It is great," because it is against a **great** God. Hence, sins can never be little. "Religious" man, in his presumption, dares to classify sins into "mortal" and "venial." But **all** sins are mortal—they tend to death. The "smallest" sin is a seed that may produce a fearful harvest. The sin of Adam and Eve would be regarded as small by some today, but to what a state has the world become as a result. "The wages of sin is death," and these words allow of no distinctions of small and great iniquities.

"For Thy Name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." This writer had no illusions as to the greatness of his sin, and that only a great God **could** pardon him. The very enormity of his transgressions and their guilt threw him upon the mercy of a forgiving God, "for it is great." But how can God **rightly** forgive, seeing He has pronounced judgment against sin? Because when God pardons, He does more than cancel the debt; He regards the forgiven one as "justified," that is to say, He reckons such an one as righteous in His sight. But how? And here the first of the "Fors" comes into prominence. "For Thy Name's sake, pardon mine iniquity."

In old time, the LORD to Moses proclaimed the **Name** of the LORD, "The LORD. The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving (bearing or lifting up) iniquity and transgression and sin." One might ask how could God **bear** sin. But this question has been answered in the Bible. Of Christ the words are written, "Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own body on the tree." Hence, by the words, 'For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity,' the writer pleads the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom belongs also the Name of the Eternal LORD. By His righteous life on the earth, and His sacrifice in death, He has met the need of those who cry, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

However deeply you have sinned, however great the burden of your guilt, you may come in all your need to God for salvation.

"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth (beareth) iniquity?"

(Continued from page 7)

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

WHEREUNTO (eis ho) ; preposition, meaning "into," and relative pronoun, accusative. The two words may be rendered, "with a view to which thing."

ALSO (kai) ; conjunction.

I LABOUR (kopio) ; verb, present tense, meaning, "to beat out, become weary, faint." When rendered "labour," the thought is that which is exacting, toilsome, and wearing.

STRIVING (agonizomenos) ; present participle, from agonizomai (I am a combatant, I fight, I strive earnestly). The noun agonia (a contest) is translated "agony" in Luke 22.44.

ACCORDING TO (kata) ; preposition meaning "down," but when followed by the accusative case, has sometimes the thought of conformity to, and is translated "after" or "according to."

THE WORKING (ten energeian) ; noun and article, accusative feminine, from energeia, a compound of en (in) and a word derived from ergon (work). It may be rendered "in-working" or "energizing," which is almost the Greek word anglicized.

OF HIM (autou) ; personal pronoun, genitive, referring to God the Holy Spirit.

WHICH WORKETH (ten energoumenen) ; article and present participle (used as an adjective) ; feminine, accusative, because it qualifies "the working" (see above). From energeo (I inwork, I am effective, I energize). Literally, the phrase is "the inworking," or "which inworketh."

IN (see above).

ME (emoi) ; personal pronoun, from ego (I) ; dative, singular.

MIGHTILY (en dunamei) ; preposition en (in) and dative case of noun dunamis (power) ; "dynamic" is derived from this word. The translation may be therefore "in power." The last clause may thus be literally rendered, "the inworking of Him, which inworketh in me in power."

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

I WOULD (thelo) ; verb, present tense, meaning "I will."

THAT YE (humas) ; personal pronoun, accusative, plural. There is no "that." The word is simply "you."

KNEW (eidenai) ; verb, infinitive, perfect from oida (I know) ; literally "to have known." The whole clause can be rendered, "For I will you to have known."

WHAT GREAT (helikon) ; correlative pronoun ; "how great." This word only occurs elsewhere, in N.T., in James 3.5. Masculine, accusative.

CONFLICT (agona) ; noun, masculine, accusative, from agon (a contest, a combat). See on "striving" above, and compare 1 Tim. 6.12 (first clause) and 2 Tim. 4.7 (first clause) ; in both these passages the verb and the noun occur. Note especially agona, rendered "fight."

I HAVE (echo) ; verb, present tense.

FOR (huper) ; preposition, meaning "over," but often having the sense, as here, "on behalf of."

YOU (hupon) ; personal pronoun, genitive, plural.

AND (kai).

FOR THEM (ton) ; article, genitive, plural, literally, "the ones."

AT (en) ; preposition, "in."

LAODICEA (Laodikeiai) ; proper noun, dative case. See ch. 4.13.15.16 and Rev. 1.11, 3.14.

AND (kai).

FOR AS MANY AS (hosoi) ; relative pronoun, from hosos (as much as).

NOT (ouch) ; negative, "OU," but "ch" added because next word begins with aspirated vowel.

HAVE SEEN (heorakan) ; verb, third person, plural, perfect tense, from horao (I see).

THE FACE (to prosopon) ; noun and article, neuter, accusative. It has the same form in the nominative. Compound of pros (toward) and ops (eye). Hence, the part towards the eyes; so "face" or "Countenance." Sometimes, it is rendered "presence."

MY (mou) ; personal pronoun, genitive ; "of me."

IN (en).

THE FLESH (sarki) ; noun, feminine, dative ; no "the." From sarx (flesh).

QUESTION AND ANSWER

No. 165

'I have had it said to me that Christians are not to address God as 'our Heavenly Father,' because they are now in 'the heavenly places.' The phrase does not occur in the epistles. Can you help me on this point ?'

Thus a correspondent writes, and grace is sought to reply.

In the first place, it is not a necessary logical sequence that to address God as Heavenly Father is not required **because** saints are in heavenly places. They are sons of God (Gal. 4.6), and that is the reason they say "Abba, Father." They are "in heavenly places." Is not this a reason why they **should** prefix the word "heavenly" when they address Him as "Father," rather than otherwise?

Secondly, although we read in the epistle to the Ephesians that saints are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, it is because of:—

- (a) God's Sovereign election in Christ (Eph. 1.3.4).
- (b) Their having been made alive together with Christ and raised up together and made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (2.5.6).

But, precious as is this truth, we are not to speak glibly of our exalted position in Christ. There is a witness to be borne by the Church even to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Here the Church is seen as a unity, **one body** wherein Gentiles and Jews are fellow-heirs. (Eph. 3.10.)

Moreover, we are warned in chapter 6, that there are principalities and powers in the heavenly (high) places with which saints have to wrestle—evil forces in the shape of demonic powers (wicked spirits) ever seeking to dislodge the saints from their heavenly position. Hence the believer is exhorted to **stand** (vv. 11,13,14). And, as prayer is before us in the context, it may be assumed that these "wicked spirits" are doing their utmost to bar the saints' access to God, and to make their efforts to pray as difficult as they can. Hence, "overcoming" has as much to do with prayer as with witness and service.

Do those who thus emphasise our "heavenly" position realize the seriousness of the claim? Do they equally emphasise the Divine predestinating grace that purposed this blessing, and the need of proving its possession by the experiences as set out in the foregoing words?

The "heavenly calling demands, too, that saints should be "seeking" and "minding" the "things" above. Surely, the remembrance that they have a Father "in the heavens" should be a great encouragement to the believer as he enters with boldness into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10.19). And although he is "in spirit there already," he is yet bidden to "draw near" (Heb. 10.22).

The aspect of the heavenly position has been considered somewhat at length, but there is still the further question as to the phrase, "Heavenly Father" not being found in the epistles. Is this a reason for not addressing Him thus? Surely not, for it is used more than once by the Lord Jesus when speaking to His **disciples**. In the address on the mount, the expression, "Your Father Which is in heaven," occurs five times, and the phrase, "Your Heavenly Father" four times. Hence, we may certainly commence our prayers in the way He taught His servants.

The writer is aware that some "sects" teach the "Gospels" do not contain "church" truth, but only the epistles; and some exclude certain of these. A sufficient answer to these strange opinions is found in the words of Matthew 28.19. 20. This command of the Lord Jesus holds good "until the end of the age." All those servants of God who have gone forth to take the gospel to pagan and Moslem peoples regard this as "the great commission." Hence, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you," includes what the Lord Jesus taught them in His lifetime on Earth, which things the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance" (John 14.26).

Let us then, take delight in speaking in praise and prayer to "our heavenly Father," and, in our prayers, remember those who are so misguided in their understanding of Scripture, and whose teachings tend to divide, rather than unite, the saints in this present day

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES

JEREMIAH 36

1. Jehoiakim, King by the King of Egypt's pleasure; an evil son of a godly King (2 Chr. 36.4.5). 2. This is the word that "came" to the prophet. The writing a comprehensive witness against Jew and Gentile. 3. "It may be," God uses human language, though He foreknew what *would* be. 4. 5. Like Paul, Jeremiah was shut up, yet the word of God was not bound. 6. Go, Read, in the Lord's house, and to those out of the cities. 7. "It may be." How the prophet desired the people's repentance. 8. Baruch's obedience, yet his task painful and difficult. 9. 10. A fast proclaimed (see v. 6). 11. 12. 13. Michaiah "heard," "went down," "declared." 14. A seemingly encouraging response. 15. 16. The reading causes fear (cf. Acts 24.25). 17. 18. "How." We are reminded of the "how" of John 9.10. 15.19.26. 19. "Hide." They feared the effect of the words on the king. 20. They laid up the roll, but told the words, probably fearing for its safety. 21. But the king and princes must see and hear. 22. 23. The king heard part, was unwilling to hear all, and thought to annihilate by burning, as Romanists have treated the Bible again and again. 24. 25. Only three out of all that heard pleaded for the book to be spared. 26. The messengers rejected as well as the message. So has it ever been. Not only the Book, but lovers of the Book have perished in the fires of persecution. In this case,

THOUGHTS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

"the Lord hid them." He ever cares for His own. 27. "Then." Man's rejection has a sequel, swift and sure. 28. The roll was burned, but not the words. They are remembered by God, and again recorded. 29. Here is the substance of the message. 30. See 2 Kings 24.8.12. The son of Jehoiakim only reigned three months and was then taken captive. Note also Jer. 22.18.19. 31. God's "I will," but they hearkened not." 32. "All the words" and added "Many like words."

EZEKIEL 1

Jeremiah prophesied until the Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel was "among the captives."

1. God can give visions even in conditions of captivity. "The word of God is not bound." 2. 3. The exactness of the record. The time and the place. The word of the Lord and the hand of the Lord (2 Pet. 1.21). 4. I looked, because "the heavens were opened, and I saw (v. 1). Whirlwind, cloud, fire. 5. Four living creatures. The four "beasts" of Rev. 4 are (literally) "living ones." 6. "Four," a world-wide number. 7. A calf's foot, that is cloven (Deut 14.4-6). 8. Hands of a man, "likeness of a man" (v. 5), "face of a man" (v. 10). 9. Joined wings, suggesting unity in service. 10. Compare Rev. 4.7. Though the creatures are represented, "man" is predominant. 11. Joined (see above). Covered (see Isa. 6.2). 12. Straight forward.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—MARCH, 1957

Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Ecclesiastes	John	Jeremiah	James
1	5 1-20	11 1-16	36 1	4 1
2	6 1-12	17-35	2	2
3	7 1-14	36-57	3	3
4	15-29	12 1-19	4	4
5	8 1-17	20-36	5	5
6	9 1-18	37-50	6	6
7	10 1-20	13 1-17	7	7
8	11 1-10	18-38	8	8
9	12 1-14	14 1-31	9	9
	Song of Songs			
10	1 1-17	15 1-14	10	10
11	2 1-17	15-27	11	11
12	3 1-11	16 1-11	12	12
13	4 1-16	12-19	13	13
14	5 1-16	20-33	14	14
15	6 1-13	17 1-12	15	15
16	7 1-13	13-26	16	16
17	8 1-14	18 1-14	17	17
18	Isaiah 1.1-17	15-27	18	5 1
19	1 18-31	28-40	19	2
20	2 1-22	19 1-18	20	3
21	3 1-12	19-30	21	4
22	13-26	31-42	22	5
23	4 1-6	20 1-16	23	6
24	5 1-10	17-31	24	7
25	11-17	21 1-14	25	8
26	18-30	15-25	26	9
27	6 1-13	Acts 1.1-26	27,28	10
28	7 1-16	2 1-21	29	11
29	17-25	22-36	30	12
30	8 1-22	37-47	31	13
31	9 1-21	3 1-26	32	14

turned not, controlled by spirit. A suggestive lesson. 13. Fire, torches, and lightning. Truly an awesome sight. 14. Alacrity in the service of God. 15. The wheels suggest chariots (cf. 2 Sam. 28.11, Ps. 18.10, and 1 Chr. 28.18). 16. "One likeness;" suggestion of unity. 17. They went, they went, they went. Ceaseless activity (Rev. 4.8). 18. "Full of eyes." (Rev. 4.6.8). 19. Perfect harmony and unison of the living ones and their wheels. So should the saints' body obey the behests of the new spirit 20. 21. Spirit of life (see margin). 22. An expanse—stretched forth over their heads. 23. Glorious creatures as they were, their position was "under the firmament." 24. When they went—when they stood. 25. When they went, there was a noise as the voice of the Almighty. When they stood, there was a voice from the firmament. The appearance of a Man above and upon the throne maybe that of the Son of God. 27. Upwards and downwards radiating from the loins (note Isa. 11.5). 28. The bow (see Rev. 4. 3.). "A man," yet the glory of the LORD. A voice was heard (vv. 24.25). Now is a voice of One That speaks.

EZEKIEL 2

1. The words of the voice, "Stand—I will speak unto thee" (cf. Num. 7.89). 2. The prophet had fallen on his face (ch. 1.28). That is reverence and godly fear. By the Spirit he stands and is able to hear the words of God. A worshipful attitude prepares for instruction

SUGGESTED DAILY READING

"IF THE LORD WILL"—APRIL, 1957

Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Isaiah	Acts	Ezekiel	James
1	10 1-19	4 1-17	1 1	5 15
2	20-34	18-37	2	16
3	11 1-16	5 1-16	3	17
4	12 1-6	17-28	4	18
5	13 1-22	29-42	5	19
6	14 1-20	6 1-15	6	20
7	21-32	7 1-16	7	1 Peter 1
8	15 1-9	17-29	8	2
9	16 1-14	30-43	9	3
10	17 1-14	44-60	10	4
11	18 1-7	8 1-13	11	5
12	19 1-12	14-25	12	6
13	13-25	26-40	13	7
14	20 1-6	9 1-16	14	8
15	21 1-17	17-31	15	9
16	22 1-25	32-43	16	10
17	23 1-18	10 1-16	17	11
18	24 1-23	17-33	18	12
19	25 1-12	34-48	19	13
20	26 1-21	11 1-18	20	14
21	27 1-13	19-30	21	15
22	28 1-13	12 1-11	22	16
23	14-29	12-25	23	17
24	29 1-24	13 1-13	24	18
25	30 1-18	14-37	25	19
26	19-33	38-52	26	20
27	31 1-9	14 1-10	27	21
28	32 1-20	11-28	28	22
29	33 1-24	15 1-21	2 1	23
30	34 1-17	22-41	2	24.25

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers : —61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.7

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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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"All nations before HIM are as nothing; and they are counted to HIM less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken GOD?"

Isa. 40. 17. 18.

"THY LOVINGKINDNESS"

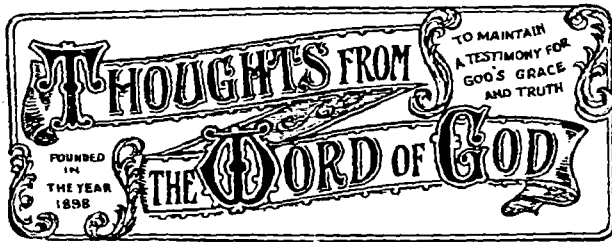
Psalm 36. 7. 10 (margin)

Gracious God, Thy loving kindness,
Shewn abundantly,
Is to all Thy saved ones precious—
E'en to me.

Father, of Thy loving kindness
E'er my heart shall sing.
Refuge he that feareth, findeth
Neath Thy wing.

Ever may Thy loving kindness
Be drawn out at length.
Therein for the saints that know Thee
Is their strength.

E.K.



Words of Encouragement

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.”

John 14.29.

The Lord Jesus uttered these words not many hours before His betrayal and His crucifixion. Far from being solely occupied with thoughts of the impending awful ordeal of the cross, He was tenderly mindful of those whom He was about to leave, for they were, in a short space of time, no more to see Him in the flesh. He was about to “depart out of this world unto the Father.” Hence He encouraged them to **faith**. “Ye believe in God;” they **did** believe, as devout men of Israel, in God whom they had not seen, nor could see. Now that He was, in a few weeks’ time, to be “received out of their sight,” He encouraged them to exercise **faith** in Him. “Believe also in Me.” Sorrow had filled their hearts, because He had said these things unto them, so much so, that, when He said “I go My way to Him that sent Me,” He added, “And none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?” But sorrow and sense were to give place to faith and to an expectation that He would not be absent for ever. “I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Beloved fellow-saved-ones, we, too, are to “walk by **faith**, not by sight.” But we have every encouragement to believe. The things He told before to His disciples in the upper room (John 13.19, 14.29) did come to pass. Hence, we are sure that all else spoken by Him will surely be fulfilled. “Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet **believing**, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

POEM TO HELP CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

No. 247

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Rom. 8.18.

To be misunderstood
Is grieving to the heart
Of one who loves but only good,
From sin who would depart;
Yet this the saint will find
Often to be his lot:
The world his weaknesses will mind,
His kindnesses forgot.

Saved one, be of good cheer;
The Perfect One hath trod
This painful path before you here,
Yet patiently with God;
Though men could not convince
Of Sin That Holy One,
They slandered, and His servants since
Such trials may not shun.

Example true was He
For thee: then, O how blest
To know His gracious company
In ev’ry painful test.
Trials of ev’ry sort
Await each well-loved saint.
This time of suffering is but short;
Trust fully; do not faint.

Afflictions are but light
In view of what shall be
Of glory in the holy height
Of heaven, awaiting thee.
Look up, lift up thy head;
Redemption draweth near:
“I quickly come,” the Saviour said;
Then soon will He appear.

* * *

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God That justifieth.”

“That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

The first verse sets forth the declaration of the **Father**: the second unveils the position of believers “in **Christ Jesus**,” and if the two passages are realized in the power of the **Holy Spirit**, the blessings and joy thereof will be great indeed!

Salvation is not a fresh probation. A gospel that made a man merely “savable” would be a weak gospel. If there were the “doing of our part,” as many vainly teach, the gospel would be “weak through the flesh”—as strengthless as the righteously condemning law (Rom. 8.3)—but it is the power of God (Rom. 1.16). A savable man is an unsaved man, a lost man! But let sovereign grace be manifested in its quickening power, let it be acknowledged that Christ gave “His life a ransom for many,” and that, “He bare the sin of many,” and the suggestion that such will not be brought to glory is derogatory to His glory!

The principle of a sacrifice is this—“A Righteous One, deserving of all honour, and **not** deserving to die, vicariously takes the wrath due to others, and thereby brings to them a deliverance. His competency must be seen in that He has **no guilt**, but, on the contrary, has wrought out a full obedience, for sins against the command, ‘Thou shalt **love**’ cannot be blotted out unless a **fulness** of love is imputed to the sinner.” This Scriptural teaching cuts at the root of indefiniteness as to redemption, and also shows the importance of the **whole** work of Christ, made available for His people **by His death**. Incarnation without atonement would leave us in helplessness and doom.

A perfect life of obedience without atonement would be without efficacy*. But atonement presupposes and crowns both, and those who are

Continued on Page 18

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

SHIPS

Many times is the Sea spoken of in the Bible. "God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He, Seas." "The sea is His and He made it." (Gen. 1.10, Ps. 95.10). The sea is a great divider. It separates land from land and people from people. But ships can sail on the seas and thus unite peoples. The Lord Jesus often sailed across the Sea of Galilee, though He could, and once did, walk on the water. God's servant, Paul, travelled to many lands by means of ships, to take the gospel message. So today, God's servants are able to take the Gospel to lands across the seas, where there are men and women, boys and girls, who must hear of God's salvation through the Lord Jesus, Who died for sinners. How useful, then, are the ships that carry the Lord's messengers.

We may expect, then, to read about ships in the Bible, and so we do. And not only about the larger, but also of boats, and all that has to do with sailing, such as masts and sails, rudders, helms, and oars; also of ship masters, ship men, and sailors. The children of Israel did not have a navy or warships. They were given a land wherein to dwell, for they were not to go from land to land. Their ships and boats were used for fishing.

We are told, however, that King Solomon had ships that went to Tarshish, and that once every three years came ships from that same place, bringing rich and rare things. But this king was very great, and his reign reminds us of the wonderful rule of Christ, yet to be on this earth, when the children of Israel, who have had no real home for many centuries, will be again set in their own land, and will have the Lord Jesus to reign over them as their king. He will also rule the whole earth, and ships of Tarshish shall again bring gold and silver, and not only such riches, but will bring back to Jerusalem her "sons from far" (see 2 Chron. 9.21, and Isa. 60.9).

Ships that were broken

Solomon's ship made their voyages safely, but we read of another King of Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat by name, who tried to do the same, but failed. He made ships "to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken" (1 Kings 22.48). We are told why. It was because he had made friends with a wicked king; so a prophet was sent to him from God, to say, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works (2 Chron.

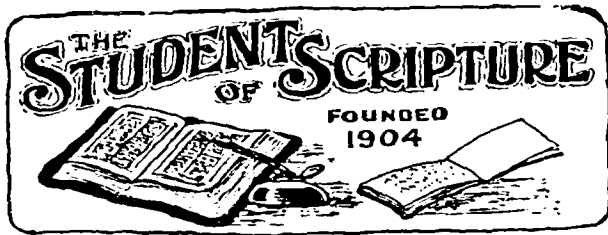
20.37). God is grieved when His people make friends with the ungodly.

There was a ship that carried Paul and two hundred and seventy-five others. They were to go to Italy, for Paul must visit Rome. But a great wind arose, and the ship was "exceedingly tossed with a tempest," and was "driven up and down in Adria." They had to throw everything out of the ship, to make it lighter, and at last "they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. . . . They which could swim . . . cast themselves first into the sea and got to land. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." Now this is just what Paul said would be, because God had told him that not one would lose his life. He said: "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." But Paul could tell of a more wonderful salvation than that from a ship-wreck. Those people on that boat trusted to it, but it was only the mercy of God that saved them. There are many who trust to their "good works" and their "religion" to bring them safely to heaven. How good it is when all such hopes are broken, and hearts are broken, too, so that there is nothing left for a poor sinner to do but to cast himself on the mercy of God. And this will not be in vain, for "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Ps. 34.18.). Dear reader, your only hope of being saved is to trust in the precious blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

"The Ship was like to be broken"

We have read of ships that made their voyages safely, and of others that could not, because they were broken; but we are also told of a ship, also going to Tarshish, that was "like to be broken" in a great storm. Jonah was in that ship for he was trying to run away from God. So God sent the storm, and the heathen sailors feared for their lives. The ship was saved and their lives were spared when Jonah was thrown into the sea. He was willing for this, for the sake of those men, and to their wonder, the storm ceased at once; then the men "feared the LORD, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD." Of course, you already know that Jonah was a sign. The Lord Jesus tells us so, for He was willing to go into death for the sake of those in a far greater danger than drowning. He died to save sinners from everlasting shame and punishment. And this He did by bearing their sins on the tree. I wonder, dear reader, if you know Him as your Saviour.

If the Lord will—to be continued



THE MESSAGE OF AMOS

Concluded

A False View of the Day of the Lord

This was seemingly a fruit of the false religiousness in which Israel rested so complacently. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you?" (5.18). Even today there are some who wrongly wish for that Day to come. Why? Because they desire to be free from the trials of this life. This is altogether unworthy. It is escapism, and has nothing in common with a heart-longing and a looking for the Saviour. God told the people, through Amos, that, "The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (5.19,20).

Amos spoke of "That Day" (9.11) in the sense of the **ultimate future**, but here he appears to warn of a day which would overtake the nation in the **near future**, a day of captivity for Israel by Assyria, and a day of captivity for Judah by Nebuchadnezzar.

And yet, with these warnings, there was no repentance, but a putting "far away the evil day," by means of self-indulgence that dulled the apprehension and deadened the conscience (6.3.,9.10). But the days came (4.2). God's words are not spoken in vain.

Chastisement

God was very patient with His people and bore long with them. With a view to their blessing, He chastened them. He permitted them to want bread and water. He sent blasting and pests on their orchards and gardens, and pestilence and the sword upon their bodies. Some He overthrew, as He did Sodom and Gomorrah, and they were as a "firebrand plucked out of the burning." Five times sadly He speaks the word, "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD." (4.6-11). But He did not give them up without further pleading. The readiness of God to withhold His judgments, or to mitigate them, is seen in His answer to the prophet's pleading in chapter 7, yet even there (verses 8 and 9) there came a

period to the longsuffering of God. See also chapter 8.1-3.

Calls to Repentance

Having spoken of His past disciplinary dealings, the Lord warns them of what He will do. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4.12). And He solemnly reminds them of Who is their God, as though to shew them the folly as well as the wickedness of continuing in rebellion against Him. "For, lo, He That formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, the God of hosts, is His Name." (4.13). A key-word in Chapter 5 is "seek." "Seek not to Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought" (5.5). These towns were the religious headquarters, but destined to pass away; therefore offered no hope or consolation or strength to those who adhered to them (5.6). "For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye ME, and ye shall live . . . Seek the LORD and ye shall live . . . Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live" (5.4,6,14). And who is the God Whom they are exhorted by the prophet to seek? Him "That maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: That calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is His Name." (5.8). Who can withstand Him? And yet, what will He not do on behalf of those who trust Him Who is Almighty, Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think?

Gracious and urgent as was the Divine call, it went unheeded, for the last words of this chapter are, "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, Whose Name is The God of Hosts" (5.27). Thus, although they neglected, or rejected, the Divine message through the God-appointed messenger, Israel came to know that a prophet had been among them.

The Coming Restoration

Happily, the prophet's message does not end here. The Spirit of God in him takes him in vision beyond the captivities by the hands of the kings of Assyria and Babylon, and the present state of Israel, in their alienation from the LORD God of Israel. He sees for the nation a wondrous future, yet not to be reached except through fur-

ther severe chastening. Note the solemn words of chapter 9.1-4. Also the Divine pronouncement, "Behold, the eyes of the LORD God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD" (9.8).

There is to be a time of "sifting," "All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword" (9.9.10). Compare Zechariah 13.8. But there is "an end and an expectation" for Israel, determined by God, "In that Day" (9.11). The words of verse 11 were quoted by James in Acts 15.16, whose use of this prophecy is taken by some godly expositors to indicate a final fulfilment in the establishing of the church. But this view fails to account for the last three verses of the book. The language therein used, though, spiritual lessons may be drawn therefrom, surely has a literal significance. A previous verse (8) speaks of 'the house of Jacob,' a term never used of the Church. Hence what is found in the succeeding context must be interpreted as of that house. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed . . . and I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel" Can this word "captivity" be rightly used of the Church, even though it be called 'The Israel of God?' The saved ones of this present day can say, by grace, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4.26). "Jerusalem which now is . . . is in bondage with her children" (Gal. 4.25). Jacob shall be brought into a glorious liberty—freedom from sin and guilt, freedom from oppressors, even the great enemy, Antichrist. Moreover, the promise includes the rebuilding of cities, the planting of vineyards and gardens. Let those who love Israel and pray for the peace of Jerusalem rejoice in the final word of the prophet Amos, "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."

Concluding Thoughts

We see then that the prophet Amos had a message for his own times, as well as for those to come. The same is true of other prophets, who also, as he, have a perennial message, one suited even to present-day conditions. God has not changed, in His Person, or principles, or purpose. Man, too, is essentially the same, as he ever was since the fall, sinful, wilful, irreverent and unstable. Hence the universal suitability of the Book of God. May His people increase in their knowledge of, and in love for His living words.

continued from page 15

Who shall Lay anything . . . ?

"In Christ Jesus" have, on resurrection ground, an acceptance with the Father, which is only to be measured by the perfect acceptability and acceptance of Christ Himself.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8.33). Observe that election is made a sufficient reason for their **eternal security**. This is an evidence that election is a fact. Those who speak against election know not its real meaning. Election injures no one, but secures the eternal blessedness of "a great multitude which no man could number." Who dare blot out one word of Scripture in order to flatter the mind of the flesh? But just now let us meditate on the precious thought that God has so gloriously justified His own (in connection with the declaration that His Son is righteous) that if they were unjustified, He would be denied His very glory!

Shall righteousness be called unrighteous? shall the finished work of Christ be undone? Shall God condemn the justified? Shall He, upon the throne of judgment, set aside His own decision? Impossible! Believers are accepted in all the perfectness of their Lord, and no charge that will stand can be preferred against Him. The safety of a believer is no less than the security of Christ! The Surety of a better covenant has answered for His people, and any thought now of their unjustification is an attack upon the pillars of God's throne, or upon the merits of the Lord. Can such "doubting" of eternal life be called humility? Is it a godly dread of presumption? Nay, it is the fullest presumption. The **only** doubt must be, "Am I saved?" "Have I the evidences of one born from above?" If the lowly answer of the heart before God can be 'Yes,' if the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, then the continual power for a life of devoted love is linked with the joyous knowledge. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10 27.29). Those who are "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5.21), "Who ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7.25), cannot be declared unrighteous. Herein is the **fixed** joy of a **fixed** people, "made to sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

PERCY W. HEWARD.

* That is, as regards the sinner's need. Moreover such a life would condemn all (John 3.19).—Ed.

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

No. 45

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.”

2. Tim. 21, 4-16.

OF THESE THINGS (tauta); demonstrative pronoun, Neuter, plural, accusative, used as a noun. The “of” would belong to the verb—“remind them of.”

PUT THEM IN REMEMBRANCE (hupomimneske); “them” not in text. Verb, present, imperative. The word mimnesko means “to remind of.” The “hupo” (under) prefixed, almost equals the English “sub,” and would suggest a submissiveness to the exhortation.

CHARGING (diamarturomenos); verb, present, participle, from diamarturomai, compound of dia (through) and martureo (to bear witness, to testify). Hence, “to testify through and through” (i.e., to bear full and complete witness). Hence with the following phrase, “before the Lord,” it is a most solemn exhortation. For the same sequence of words, see 1 Tim. 5.21, and 2 Tim. 4.1. The word is used by the rich man in Hades (Luke, 16.28) and by Peter (Acts, 2.40) in both cases translated “testify.”

THEM (not in text).

BEFORE (enopion); preposition; compound of en (in) and ops (eye, or face): hence “in the sight” or “before the face”; governed by genitive case.

GOD (tou Theou); noun, and article, genitive, masculine.

THAT THEY STRIVE (logomachein); verb, present, infinitive, from verb compounded of logos (word) and machomai (to fight, war). The word, logomacheo, is seen in an anglicized form, logomachy, and means to “fight or strive about words”—a wordy battle.

NOT (me); negative, denying possibility.

ABOUT WORDS (included in above verb).

TO (ep’); preposition, meaning “upon,” here governing accusative case, and suggesting “on to.” Implying what such strife will land one in, namely, “nothing profitable.”

NO (ouden); negative adjective, accusative, neuter, from oudeis, oudemia, ouden (not one thing).

PROFIT (chresimon); adjective, accusative, neuter (-os,-e,-on) from chraomai (to make use of); hence, useful or profitable.

BUT (not in text).

TO (epi); see above; ep’ has the “i” omitted there, because the next word begins with a vowel. Note **there** the significance of its use with accusative case. **Here** it is followed by the dative, and suggests, “rest on,” or “arrival at.”

THE SUBVERTING (katastrophei); noun, feminine, dative; compound of kata (down) and strophe (a turning, from strepho, to turn). Hence, “a turning down,” an overthrow, or catastrophe.

OF THE HEARERS (ton akouonton); present participle, genitive, plural with article; from akouo (I hear); hence, “the hearing ones.”

STUDY (spoudason); verb, imperative, aorist; from spoudazo (I make haste, I speed); hence, to be diligent, in earnest.

TO SHEW (parastesai); verb, infinitive, aorist, from paristemi; compound from para (beside) and histemi (I make to stand). Hence, “to make to stand alongside, to present, or place at the disposal of.”

THYSELF (seauton); reflexive pronoun, accusative.

APPROVED (dokimon); adjective, masculine; accusative, because qualifying seauton; from dokimos, -e, on (proved, tried, approved after trial).

UNTO GOD (toi Theoi); noun and article, dative, suggesting “to” or “by” God.

A WORKMAN (ergaten); noun, masculine, accusative, because in apposition with “thyself approved”; from ergates (a worker); derived from ergazomai (I work).

THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED (anepaischunton); adjective, accusative, because qualifying ergaten; compound of “a” (equal to English prefix “un” or “non”) and epaischunomai (I am ashamed of). This verb is also compounded of epi (upon) giving intensity of meaning, and aischuno (to shame, put to shame, be ashamed). Hence the meaning of the word in the text is “without cause of shame.” The translation is good, but it could be expressed in a word, “irreproachable.”

RIGHTLY DIVIDING (orthotomounta); participle, present, accusative, qualifying "workman"; from orthotomeo, compounded of orthos (straight, right) and temno (to cut). Hence "cutting straight." The word is only used here in N.T., but occurs twice in O.T., namely, in Proverbs 3.6, and 11.5, where it translates (in the Septuagint) the Hebrew word "yashar" (meaning straight, right, even). In these two verses, it is used of directing one's road or path. It is used elsewhere (other than Scripture) among other meanings, of ploughing (a straight furrow) and of cutting a roadway. Various are the views of its meaning in our text. The simplest view is that of keeping a straight path when handling the Word of Truth, as contrasted with those who "erred" (that is, missed the mark or swerved from) see verse 18.

THE WORD (ton logon); article and noun, masculine, accusative case, from logos (a word).

OF TRUTH (tes aletheias); article and noun, feminine, genitive, from aletheia (truth); meaning "of the truth." Note this word also in verse 18, and the contrasted attitude thereto. The phrase, "word of truth" occurs in 2 Cor. 6.7, and James 1.18. In Eph. 1.13, it is "the word of the truth, the gospel"—and in Col. 1.5 is the phrase, "the word of the truth of the gospel." Hence, it may be that, in writing to Timothy, the Gospel is primarily the thought intended to be conveyed.

BUT (de) conjunction; second word in sentence.

SHUN (periistaso); verb, present, imperative, middle, from periistemi, compounded of peri (around) and histemi (I make to stand). Note a compound with this word above. Hence, meaning, "to make to stand around." In middle voice, it suggests, "I make myself to stand around," that is, avoiding contact, and therefore shunning.

PROFANE (tas bebelous); article and adjective, accusative plural, governing the following words; derived from belos (a threshold), hence implying an open way in, common to all, that is, with no reserve or respect; therefore, rendered, "profane," contrasted with that which is sacred. The word occurs in 1 Tim. 1.9, 4.7, 6.20, and Heb. 12.16, only, elsewhere.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

No. 166

Did Jephthah actually sacrifice his daughter?
(Judges 11.30-40).

To some questions there can be a simple answer, a plain "yes" or "no;" but those concerning a difficulty in Scripture require a much more careful and considered reply. The word "sacrifice," though its actual meaning is based upon the act of slaying, has also, in the Scriptures, a spiritual significance. A life given up wholly to God can be regarded as such.

Jephthah had vowed that, if God gave him victory, he would offer to the LORD, as a burnt offering, that which first came forth from his house, when he returned from the battle with Ammon. His vow has been called "rash," and doubtless it was uttered without due thought, for it was his only daughter who first met him.

If it be asked, Did he offer her as a burnt-offering to the LORD, the answer must be a categorical "No," for the following reasons.

- (a) A burnt-offering must be perfect to be acceptable to God. No person, however virtuous is without sin, and so could not be such a sacrifice.
- (b) It is plain from Scripture that human sacrifices were forbidden by God. (Lev. 18.21; Ezek. 23.37 and other places).
- (c) In Numbers 30 are given Divine regulations regarding vows. In certain circumstances (vv. 5.8) vows could be made "of none effect." If God permitted to men the annulment of a vow, it may be assumed that He could reserve such a right to Himself, and therefore could disallow Jephthah's vow. Leviticus 27 also deals with laws concerning vows, which could be met by the payment of money.
- (d) Abraham was commanded by God to offer his only son as a burnt-offering, which he proceeded to do, even to the uplifting of his knife, but God prevented, and provided a substitute. In Hebrews 11, however, he is said to have "offered up Isaac." "offered up his only-begotten son." Thus, his readiness to obey is described in terms of the act of obedience. Similarly, it may have been so with Jephthah, for his "faith" is also mentioned in Hebrews 11.

Although his daughter was not slain, it would appear she was devoted to a life of

virginity and separation to God. The word "lament" in Judges 11.40 is shewn in the margin as "talk with."

There is a lovely trait in her character manifest in the answer to her father's distressful act and words. "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth." She realized what it meant to him and to her, yet graciously submitted. Would that young people had a like reverence for God and a like respect for parents.

THE TONGUE

A Message for Today

James 3

The whole of this book deals prominently with sins of the tongue. Whether insulting poor brethren, boasting of empty faith, professing to teach, making dissension, saying what one will do a year ahead, or taking an oath to secure legal redress. We do not fully realize the works of iniquity possible through our physical members. It is easy to overlook the danger of natural gifts. May those who read these lines have grace to use such gifts aright.

If the first verse were more taken to heart, we should not have the prophesied heaping to themselves of teachers by Christendom; and the parallel "open ministry" in the flesh would be feared also. Greater judgment awaits a teacher: if he will proclaim error, he must be called absolutely the least in the kingdom (Matt. 5. 19); if he shuns to declare all the counsel of God he does not deliver his soul, and is not clear from the blood of men (see Ezek. 3. 20. 21., Acts 20. 26. 27). Difficulties increase around such. It is far easier to be in the background.

The second verse goes on to shew that stumbling in word is the most natural and common thing, and that, if the lips have a watch set before them, the whole body will be serving the Lord (cf. Matt. 6. 22). How often God's people have failed to let

their speech be **always** with grace, and the result has been a **growing** fretfulness or pride, or selfishness, with miserable failures of the tongue in emergencies. Verse 5 declares how much fire, how much wood it kindles; we cannot tell the **results** of a hasty word, or a flattering word, or a word of gossip. Let us beware, for God speaks of a harvest to forgotten sin. **No one** can tame this manifestation of a fallen nature. The only hope is God's controlling **via** regeneration and the simple obedience of His redeemed.

We do not grasp the solemn truth that we have in our charge a "wild beast," and "a tree with berries of deadly poison." That which should be our glory (Psalm 30. 12) is oft our disgrace. Like "the mammon of unrighteousness," the tongue is called "the world of unrighteousness" (verse 6) because **nearly always** misused. How rare is "a word fitly spoken," a "soft answer" given, or speech that "ministereth grace to the hearers." Do we wonder that God alike suggests fewness of words in approaching Him and in conversation with others (Eccl. 5. 1. 2., Matt. 5. 37., Jas. 1. 19). The talkative believer is in peril (note "if we say" in John's epistle), but a **bridled** tongue is the fullest manifestation of true godliness. It has been well said that **perfection** needs no bridle*. How humbling are the words of verse 9, which shew that the whole passage is dealing with **believers** and their treatment of believers—those born from above! There are two fountains in such (verse 11) and each is seeking to utilize the opening of the mouth. If we fail to love, we hate; if we fail to bless, we curse; and yet how sadly possible it is spontaneously to speak evil one of another (Ch. 4. 11). If only the words of the Lord (Matt. 5. 22) were always in our hearts! "Happy is the man that feareth **always**" (Prov. 28. 14), but how we fail!

And verse 14 shews the underlying cause—PRIDE. Envy and strife among saints! Are these things **possible**? Yes, jealousy is a present-day fact; hence sectarianism, hence division and "every foul practice" (verse 16). Once let the wish of supremacy, and the tongue of evil speaking, have free course, and there will be one mass of iniquity.

Brethren and sisters, let **us** contrariwise manifest "meekness of wisdom" (verse 13), let **us** sow the fruit of righteousness (verse 18). Our Lord Jesus, "when He was reviled, reviled not again."

Percy. W. Heward.

* Apparently the author had in mind the theories of sinless perfection this side of the grave.—(Ed.).

“THE YOUNG CHILD AND HIS MOTHER”**Matthew 2**

This phrase occurs four times in the chapter (verses 13, 14, 20 and 21). The “young Child” is spoken of an equal number of times (verses 8, 9, 13, 20) whilst verse 13 relates that the wise men “saw the young child with Mary His mother.” They worshipped Him, **but paid no adoration to Mary.** This is very significant. The Central Figure is “The Young Child” and wherever He is mentioned in relationship to His mother, **she is always second.** This is remarkable, because in human kinship, parents are always mentioned first, as “father and son,” “mother and child,” never the reverse. But here the language and order of words is by inspiration, and readers are thus taught by the Holy Spirit what are God’s thoughts, what He intends should be understood.

Here is a solemn rebuke to “worshippers” of Mary, a Divine pre-refutation of idolatrous legends.

Interesting indeed is the record of Matthew concerning Him Who is consistently described as the “Young Child.” First, there is the behaviour of the wise men. They came seeking Him, guided by His star, their purpose being to worship Him. When the star “stood over where the young Child was,” “they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” They saw the star, but when they saw Him, “they fell down and worshipped Him.”

Herod professed to have the same desire, but the intents of his evil heart were shewn in his slaughter of the infants. His purpose was to slay, but as in after years, attempts to destroy the Lord Jesus always failed, because His hour had not yet come, so the malignant plan of the evil one was thwarted in the early infancy of the Lord. The children who died were, in a sense, martyrs, though not consciously.

Another important point to observe is that, after the first announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel, there is no recorded message to her from heaven. Joseph was the legal guardian, being “reckoned” as his father, so that he and Mary are called “parents” (Luke 2.41). Yet when Mary said, “Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing,” the “child Jesus” gently rebuked with the words, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Joseph, therefore, having this status, received all heavenly communications concerning “the young Child and His mother.” Three times (verses 12, 19 and 22) to Joseph was given instruction by “an angel of the Lord” or “by God.”

Mary’s part was but to obey her husband, which she did, but there is not the slightest ground for inference that Mary, **in any instance,** took the initiative.

All this is very significant, and is a complete answer to those who have deified Mary and placed her in a position for which there is not only no authority in Scripture, but is positively contradictory thereto. May those who have been ensnared by this teaching be delivered therefrom.

The fulfilment of the Scriptures of the prophets is of great moment in this record. The birth in Bethlehem (vv. 5.6); the call out of Egypt (v. 15); the murder of the babes (v. 18) and His being despised and rejected—“called a Nazarene” (v. 23).

All that has been foretold concerning the sufferings of Christ has been fulfilled. All that has been prophesied concerning His coming again and His earthly reign will be fulfilled. Past fulfillings are a pledge of those future. But we ever need to be reminded that the Son of God became “a young Child,” and that in order that He might increase in wisdom and stature, and “become under law” to redeem a great multitude which no man can number.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2.14.15).

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES—

EZEKIEL 2

3. God sends His servants often on difficult service. 4. Not only rebellious and transgressors, but impudent and stiff-hearted, and these the Children of Israel. 5. "Thus saith the Lord, "whatever the reception of the message. Cf. Mark. 16 16. 6. Briers, thorns, scorpions, yet the prophet not to be afraid. 7. They are "rebellion" (see margin). 8. But God's Servant must not be like them. He must feed on God's truth. 9. A hand sent (see Jer. 1. 9.); a book therein, containing. 10. mourning because of chastening.

EZEKIEL 3

1. Eat, find, eat. (cf. Jer. 15. 16.). What God gave (Ch. 2. 8.) is to be sought for, accepted from His hand, and eaten. 2. I opened . . . He caused. 3. Then did I eat, and though a book of judgment, sweet because it was from God. 4. 5. The house of Israel, the house of Israel. 6. Even strangers would have listened, but, 7. Israel will not hearken unto Me; how much less to thee (cf. Luke 16. 31.). 8. 9. God will strengthen His own for the hardest service. 10. First hear and receive in the heart, then 11. Go, speak, tell, whatever the attitude of the hearers. 12. The Spirit took me up. (Note 2. Pet. 1. 21.). "The Glory of the Lord." uttered in a voice of great rushing (cf. Res. 1. 15.). 13. The Cherubim. 14. The Spirit . . . my spirit. The hand that gives (Ch. 2. 9.) is the hand also that controls. 15. Seven days among the captives ere he could speak; 16, and that not until the Word of the Lord came. 17. A watchman, hear . . . My mouth . . . warning from Me. 18. Sovereignty will not condone negligence. 19. A faithful message faithfully given is the duty of the servant, even though the hearer reject. 20. Past "righteousness" may be cancelled by sin, but imputed righteousness will never be cancelled. 21. A double blessing . . . he shall live . . . thou has delivered thy soul.

EZEKIEL 8

1. Time-marks. There is nothing casual about God's dealings. Note again "the hand of the LORD. The presence of others did not hinder the vision. 2. Have we here an appearance of the Son of God? 3. The Hand, and the Spirit. 4. The glory there, at the gate; see Ch. 9. 3., 10. 4. 18. 19., 11. 22. 23., but see also the last words of this book. 5. Image of jealousy, because provoking God (v. 3), even at the gate of the altar. The temple had not yet been destroyed. 6. Greater

abominations, so that the Lord went "far off." Note Rev. 3. 20. 7, 8, 9. These were visions of God, concerning Jerusalem and the temple. 10. Abominations of the Gentiles (Rom. 1. 23.) chosen by leading men of Israel. 11, 12. Incense, denoting religiousness, but "in the dark." Foolish thoughts about God. 13, 14. Greater abominations. Tammuz was probably another name for Nimrod, becoming an object of worship. The rites connected with this were very evil. 16. Sun worship was also accompanied by licentious practices. Backs to God, an insult to Divine majesty. 17. No wonder the land was filled with violence. Such is the fruit of apostasy (see Gen. 6. 11.). 18. Unheeded prayer. (Note Ps. 66. 18.).

EZEKIEL 9

1. Charge over the city—Jerusalem. Were they angels? 2. Seen as men with slaughter weapons. The linen-clothed man with the inkhorn speaks of mercy amid wrath. 3. Compare note on Ch. 8. 4. 4. A mark, to distinguish the godly, and preserve from judgment. Note Rev. 7. 3. 5, 6. Judgment, unsparring, begins at the sanctuary. See 1 Pet. 4. 17. 18. 7. They went forth, and slew. Sin—in this case religious sin—must be punished. 8. The anguish of the prophet. Divine judgments can never but cause pain to the godly, though they recognised God's justice; See Ps. 119. 126. 127. 9. Iniquity exceeding great. An awful "fulness." God knew their secret speeches. See Ch. 8. 12. 10. The "I will" of Divine justice in condemning. 11. "I have done as Thou hast commanded

me." He did not act in judgment, but in grace. God is good, whether shewing wrath or mercy.

EZEKIEL 10

1. The throne (see Ch. 1. 26.). God rules, though man rebels. 2. The man who ministered grace (Ch. 9. 4. 11.) now dispenses judgments. Compare Rev. 8. 3-5. 3. The man went in. He obeyed God.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

MAY, 1957
 5. Num. 34. 1-12. Eph. 1. 9-18. Col. 1. 9-12 1 Pet. 1. 3-6. Col. 3 1-4.
 12. Num. 34. 16-29. Heb. 13. 7. 17. 24. 1 Tim. 3. 1-7. 2 Tim. 2. 1. 2. Eph. 4. 10-16.
 19. Num. 35. 1-8. Heb. 11. 8-10. 13-16. Rev. 21. 9-12, 22-27. 22. 3. Heb. 12. 22-24.
 26. Num. 35. 9-15. Jos. 20. 1-9. Luk. 23. 33. 34. Acts 3. 14-18. Heb. 6. 17-20.

JUNE 1957
 2. Num. 35. 22-28. John 10. 9-15. 8. 31-36. 2 Cor. 1. 9. 10. Heb. 2. 14. 15.
 9. Num. 36. 1-12. John 3. 5-8. 1 John 3. 1-3. Gal. 3. 26-29. 1 Pet. 1. 3-9.
 16. Ex. 17. 1-7. Ps. 62. 1. 2. 5-8. Matt. 16. 16-18. 1 Cor. 10. 1-4. John 4. 10-14.
 23. Ex. 28. 2-5, 29. 5-7. Ps. 45. 6-8. Heb. 5. 1-10. 7. 15-28.
 30. Lev. 23. 9-14. Ps. 16. 8-11. Act. 26. 22. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 20-23. Col. 1. 12-18.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
 "IF THE LORD WILL"—MAY, 1957

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
 "IF THE LORD WILL"—JUNE, 1957

READING				LEARNING		READING				LEARNING	
Day	Isaiah	Acts	Ezekiel	1 Peter	Day	Isaiah	Romans	Ezekiel	1 Peter		
1	35. 1-10	16. 1-15	2 3	2 1	1	57. 1-21	1. 1-15	8 3	3 7		
2	36. 1-22	16-40	4	2	2	58. 1-14	16-32	4	8		
3	37. 1-20	17. 1-9	5	3	3	59. 1-21	2. 1-11	5	9		
4	21-38	10-21	6	4	4	60. 1-22	12-29	6	10		
5	38. 1-22	22-34	7	5	5	61. 1-11	3. 1-18	7	11		
6	39. 1-8	18. 1-17	8	6	6	62. 1-12	19-31	8	12		
7	40. 1-17	18-28	9	7	7	63. 1-19	4. 14-31	9	13		
8	18-31	19. 1-12	10	8	8	64. 1-12	13-25	10	14		
9	41. 1-16	13-22	3 1	9	9	65. 1-16	5. 1-21	11	15		
10	17-29	23-41	2	10	10	17-25	6. 1-23	12	16		
11	42. 1-25	20. 1-12	3	11	11	66. 1-13	7. 1-12	13	17		
12	43. 1-13	13-24	4	12	12	14-24	13-25	14	18		
13	14-28	25-38	5	13	13	Jerem. 1 1-19	8. 1-13	15	19		
14	44. 1-11	21. 1-14	6	14	14	2 1-13	14-27	16	20		
15	12-28	15-26	7	15	15	14-25	28-39	17	21		
16	45. 1-13	27-40	8	16	16	26-37	9. 1-16	18	22		
17	14-25	22. 1-16	9	17	17	3. 1-10	17-33	9 1	4 1		
18	46. 1-13	17-30	10	18	18	11-25	10. 1-21	2	2		
19	47. 1-15	23. 1-16	11	19	19	4. 1-10	11. 1-12	3	3		
20	48. 1-11	17-35	12	20	20	11-18	14-24	4	4		
21	12-22	24. 1-27	13	21	21	19-31	25-36	5	5		
22	49. 1-12	25. 1-12	14	22	22	5. 1-13	12. 1-21	6	6		
23	13-26	13-27	15	23	23	14-31	13. 1-14	7	7		
24	50. 1-11	26. 1-18	16	24	24	6. 1-15	14. 1-12	8	8		
25	51. 1-11	19-32	17	25	25	16-30	13-23	9	9		
26	12-23	27. 1-13	18	3 1	26	7. 1-16	15. 1-12	10	10		
27	52. 1-15	14-29	19	2	27	17-34	13-21	11	11		
28	53. 1-12	30-44	20	3	28	8. 1-11	22-33	10 1	12		
29	54. 1-17	28. 1-10	21	4	29	12-22	16. 1-13	2	13		
30	55. 1-13	11-20	8 1	5	30	9. 1-26	14-27	3	14		
31	56. 1-12	21-31	2	6							

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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 ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the LORD draweth nigh."

James 5.8

"MY GARDEN—MY BELOVED— HIS GARDEN"

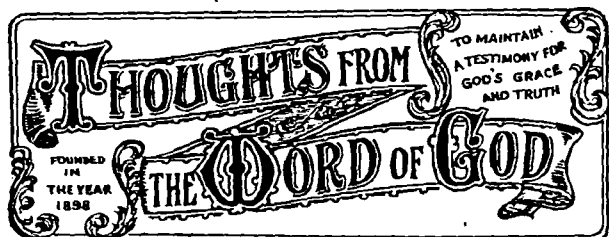
Song 4.16

Awake, O north wind, Come, thou south,
And on my garden blow,
That from the precious plants therein
Sweet fragrances may flow.

The north wind, with its biting cold,
Or south, that "softly blew:"
Just as, O Lord, it seemeth best
To Thee, and when 'tis due.

"My garden," yet 'tis truly Thine.
For ev'ry plant that grows
Is of Thy causing, and the care
Thy Spirit e'er bestows.

E.K.



Words of Encouragement

“He seeth Jesus . . . Here we have a de- and saith, Behold!” lightful sequence, illustrating, in measure, the experience of every child of God. Though “now we see not yet all things put under Him,” yet “we see Jesus,” that One Who, “by the grace of God tasted death for every man.” “John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world.” The Lord comes to His elect first, ere they come to Him. He seeks them, before they seek Him. And how necessary to see, before we can say, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” These words are those of the Lord Jesus, but they contain a principle. In the Scripture we behold God’s Perfect Servant. Therein we may, by faith, “look upon Jesus as He walked.” He is our Righteousness and the propitiation for our sins. Soon we shall see Him “as He is.” Here we may encourage one another, and testify to the world, “Behold the Lamb of God.” In heaven, all voices will join in saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

POEM TO HELP CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

No. 248

“Thou art my hope in the day of evil”
(Jer. 17.17)

Many a day of evil
May overtake a saint.
Yet need he ne’er be fearful,
Nor let his spirit faint.
Since God hath giv’n a promise—
A word He cannot break—
“I will not ever leave thee,
And ne’er, no, ne’er forsake.”

When, on the holy mountain,
His “learners” were allowed
To see the Master’s glory,
Yet, entering the cloud,
The voice they heard from heaven
Did not allay their fear.
Still, when the glory vanished,
Their loving Lord was near.

Though glimpses of His glory
The eye at times may see
By faith, the heart rejoicing,
It cannot always be
Thus, for below the mountain
Are sin and unbelief,
Where servants must be serving
Amid creation’s grief.

What though the darkness deepen,
Saints are not left to grope.
For, “in the day of evil,”
Said one, “Thou art my Hope.”
Beyond the clouds that gather,
A Saviour we expect,
Bringing a great Salvation,
The Hope of God’s elect.

OUR LORD’S ANTICIPATION OF GLORY

Of the Lord Jesus, it is said that He, “for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The very verbs with their prefixed prepositions are deeply significant and full of instruction. The joy was lying “in front of” Him. The cross He remained “under,” and the shame he looked “down upon.” All His life He was the “Patient, Spotless One.” He even endured (remained under) the contradiction of sinners against Himself. When He was reviled, He reviled not again.

But we are not told that the cross in any way obscured His view of future glory. It was, indeed, an intervening event, an absolutely necessary event, decreed by the Father, in Whose will His Beloved Son delighted. The prophets spake of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory” (1 Pet. 1.11, Luke 24.26). Even when His soul was made an offering for sin, it was foretold, “He shall see seed, He shall prolong days. . . . He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied (Isa. 53).

Again and again in the gospel records, this expectation of the Lord finds expression in His use of the words “glory” and “glorify.” When as yet His sacrificial death remained to be accomplished, He could say, “The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified,” and immediately speak of Himself as the “Corn of Wheat” falling into the ground and dying. “I have,” He said, “a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished” (Luke 12.50). Hence, at the last Passover Feast, when Judas “was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If

God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway (immediately) glorify Him." (John 13.31.32.). Remarkable words, when the shadow of the Cross was darkening over Him! Once before He had spoken of being "straitened." Now, in the upper room and probably only a few minutes before—"He was troubled in spirit," perhaps because of the presence of Judas. To that miserable man, He had said, "That thou doest, do **quickly**," for the Lord, "Knowing that His hour was come," knew also that through the agency of Judas and "wicked hands," His "baptism" was soon to be "accomplished."

A TWOFOLD THOUGHT

Percy W. Heward

In Genesis, chapter 6.12, we read, "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." The Holy Spirit leaves us to ponder two thoughts—(a) **God's** appointed way was corrupted; (b) **man's** way, character, and attitude are seen as utterly evil; not only was evil done in some actions, but the whole tenor of life was against God. Thus that seeming indefiniteness increases the emphasis, and shews us how sins are related, and how man's whole demeanour is evil when God's authority is set aside. The precious contrast is most refreshing.

Nor is this Scripture alone in its twofold force. Concerning the man who pleases God, we read in Psalm 37.23, "He delighteth in **his** way." Does this signify that such an one rejoices in God's way, or that God Himself is actually pleased to delight in the godly characteristic and way of His faithful people? Our hearts are thankful for the twofold aspect. The delight is surely mutual. Who can fathom all this means?

May not 1 John 3.3. illustrate? "Every man that hath this hope **in Him** purifieth himself even as He is pure." The primary thought, which rightly impresses many at once, is—"This hope in (or "on") Him," that is, the Lord of glory. It is blessed to know that our hope is **fixed**. It is not a bare and baseless dream. Ah, beloved friends, if we are among the called of Jesus Christ, our hope will not break down. It maketh not ashamed; it shall be fulfilled. Let us trust our gracious God. But is the other interpretation to be entirely forgotten? Shall we not **bear aloft** this hope "upon" ourselves, as a topmost decoration (Prov. 1.9) of grace? We remember

the words, "and for an helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess 5.8). Is not the helmet "upon" those who wear it? Does not the saint in going forth to spiritual warfare need this? And when he puts this on, and makes manifest how he is looking for the Lord, does he not feel there must be a corresponding purity? Truth is sanctifying when rightly realized: it is not barely mental.

There are many examples of this twofold aspect in connection with the word "spirit." It is "in" God's Holy Spirit we pray and worship, but it is also in spirit, an attitude contrasted with mere formality, and, indeed, with every form of merely "natural" worship. "The first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8.23) would suggest His gracious work, but it also impresses the thought of that which is born of the Spirit, the first-fruits consisting of the Spirit, a pledge of our future glory—body, soul, and spirit. (1 Thess 5.23). "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5.25) are words which emphasize the same precious twofoldness, to stimulate our hearts and lives, unto God's glory. Thus we would seek grace to be in a condition to enjoy, feel, and apply the twofoldness, and, indeed, the "manifoldness" of the precious and definite words of the Living God. 'Tis not that we would read something into Scripture, but would read out from it what He in His fullness of love and wisdom has placed there.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

"But rather rejoice, because your names are (have been) **written in heaven**."

"The general assembly and church of the first born, which are **written in heaven**."

"And in **Thy book** all my members were **written**, what days they should be fashioned (margin) when as yet there was none of them."

"Fellow-labourers, whose names are in the **Book of Life**."

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the Beast) whose names are not written in the **Book of Life** of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world."

"And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the **Book of Life**, from the foundation of the world, when they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the **Book of Life**; and the dead were judged. . . ."

"And whosoever was not found written in the **Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire."

—continued on page 35

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

SHIPS

*(concluded)***They that go down to the Sea in Ships**

When you eat fish for your breakfast or dinner, do you ever think of those strong and brave fishermen who catch them. Sometimes, when the weather is more stormy than usual, the fishmonger will say that fish is scarce, because the sailors have not been able to take their boats out to sea. Yes, we ought to thank God for all our food, and for those who provide it by their hard labour, and for your dear mother, who prepares it for you to eat. But I fear many boys and girls never think of thanking Him Who gives us all that is needed to keep us alive and well.

Have you read through Acts 27, where we read of Paul's shipwreck? You should also read Psalm 107, especially verses 23-30. Then you should remember that life is like a voyage on the sea. There may be many dangers. And Satan is a real person who tries to make shipwreck of people, and very often succeeds. He has great power, but God is Almighty, and He is able to save in the time of temptation. If you, my dear friend, are one of God's saved children, you will be tempted to think and say and do wrong. But you must call on God at all times, just as we read in Psalm 107. "Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses." Whatever trial overtakes us, we can, and must, bring it to God in prayer." For in that He (Christ) Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." He "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 2.18, 4.15.16.).

"This great and wide Sea . . . There go the Ships"

Man may make his ships, and make them to "go," but God made the sea, and can send storms to break the ships. And man depends upon the God-given winds to make them "go," or they would remain still on the calm ocean. At least, it was so until men used steam and motors. Even then it is only because God has allowed man to find out His laws concerning the powers of steam and oil and electricity. How humble man should be, and how thankful to God, for all "His wonderful works to the children of men."

I expect you have often been told that life is like a sea-voyage. A ship, laden with goods,

starts from a port, and carries its cargo to distant lands. There must be a captain to have sole charge. All on board, passengers as well as crew, must do as he tells them, especially in times of danger. He knows where the ship is going, but even he needs a guide, and that is, a chart and a compass. He would not sail without these, or he might wreck his ship. He is a trained man. He has been first an ordinary sailor or under-officer, before he can be a captain. Now the Lord Jesus is the Captain of our vessel. He has "learned obedience from the things which He suffered," and knows all about our journey (if we are true believers) from earth to heaven. We can trust Him and must obey Him. He will know just how to help us in our stormy days of trial. Moreover, He has provided a chart and compass, in His gift of the Bible. Do you read it, and study, and learn it? May you love the Holy Scriptures! Now, if you are a vessel on life's wide sea, may I ask if you are "going" and where are you going.

"THERE GO THE SHIPS"

"There go the ships," and indeed they are "going." Across the wide ocean they speed on their way. Some large ones, some little, some light and some laden. They go on their journey by night and by day.

"There go the ships." By what means are they "going." By forces without or by power within? Invisible vapour, or winds in their favour; But both are of God, and are therefore akin.

"There go the ships." But how can each be "going" Unless with a Captain in fullest control. Who knoweth her lading, and what are her limits. The path she must go, to arrive at the goal.

"There go the ships." Can they rightly be "going" Unless by the compass and trusting the chart?— Deep waters they need, not the shoals and the shallows— These must be on board ere for sea they depart.

"There go the ships." Ah! but where are they "going"; To India, China, the Indies, Peru? For all have a port toward which they are making. But what does this signify, reader, to you?

"There go the ships." And like them you are going. As on a wide sea often stormy and rough. Your frame may be strong, and your mind may be stable. Self-confidence have you, but are these enough? Ah! Not enough are the powers of nature; All insufficient your wisdom and strength; Trusting in these you will never be able To get to the heavenly harbour at length.

Faith in the Captain of mighty salvation Is needed; O that He may soon come aboard Your vessel, and tak in His hands its controlling; May He ever be your Commander and Lord.

"There go the ships." Not alone are they "going." But are you among them now heavenward bound? How blessed to be in the convoy Christ leadeth! They shall in the harbour of glory be found.



THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

INTRODUCTION

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1.21). How needful it is to remember this when reading the prophetic Scriptures, for "The Lord God hath spoken" through them! And since they are part of that "All Scripture" which is "God-breathed," they are for our instruction and admonition. These elect servants of God truly spoke of "the Day of the Lord" as that which is yet future, a Day for which His people are still waiting, but they also spoke in similar terms of a day not far distant from their own, a time when Israel would be carried away captive by the Assyrians, and another day when Judah would be overcome by the Chaldean.

It would seem (the writer dare not dogmatize) that the phrase, "In that day" (Micah 2.4) refers to impending judgment, whilst the same phrase in chapter 5.10 appears to denote that associated with the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor need we be surprised at this twofold use of such an expression, for our Lord's words regarding the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 closely resemble those wherewith He describes the events to do with His coming again to this earth.

Furthermore, the character of the times wherein the prophets lived bears a remarkable likeness to our own day, and it is partly the object of this essay to draw attention to this feature, as manifest in the record of Micah's message.

The Prophet himself

Nothing is known of his parentage. He was a Morasthite, apparently belonging to Moresheth-Gath (ch. 1.14), a town in Judah. His name signifies, "Who is like Jah?" with which may be compared "Michael," meaning, "Who is like God?" Probably, the prophet, who makes play upon various names in chapter 1, has his name in mind when he says (ch. 7.18), "Who is a God like unto Thee, That pardoneth iniquity, and passeth

by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy."

The Period of his Prophecy

This was during the reigns of "Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1.1). He was therefore contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea, both of whom lived and prophesied also in the days of Uzziah. In chapter 4 verses 1-3 are found words similar to those uttered by Isaiah (Isa. 2. 1-4). Amos, in addition, spoke the word of God in Uzziah's reign. In all probability some of them were living when Assyria overthrew the northern kingdom, but not when the Babylonian captivity took place. Thus they had confirmation of the truth of God's word given to them, just as John the apostle of Christ, lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem, and so had assurance of the faithful word of his Lord.

As is recorded of all the prophets, "the Word of the Lord came" to Micah, who could truly say, "Is the Spirit of the Lord straightened? . . . Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Again, "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (2.7, 3.8). Yet not only did he faithfully declare God's displeasure at their sin and the punishment it would bring, but he felt very deeply in regard to both. "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls." Not for his own sins did he thus mourn, but like the Greatest of all prophets, he "beheld the transgressors and was grieved." The Lord Jesus beheld the city and wept over it. "Blessed are they that mourn" with such "godly sorrow."

His heart-anguish again comes out in the words, "Woe is me." Did he not feel a loneliness, as mere "gleanings?" "My soul desired the first-ripe fruit." (7.1) but "there is no cluster to eat." There may be a reference to the words of chapter 6.15, but it would rather appear the desires of the prophet were for spiritual fellowship, for the next words are, "The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men." Lack of brotherly conversation is painful to a godly one.

Once more, this true servant of God identifies himself with his people in the words of chapter 7.7-10. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His

righteousness." Doubtless Micah thus declared his personal hope, but, undoubtedly, the language is such as will fall from the lips of an afflicted Israel in days to come.

The Sphere and Scope of his prophecy

He pronounces God's witness from "His holy temple," and calls upon the "peoples and the earth" to hear (1.2), declaring that "The Lord cometh forth out of His place" to shew His great power, adding that "all this" is "for the transgressions of Jacob," "and for the sins of Israel." Such "transgressions" were found in Lachish, a city of Judah (1.13). Hence, God's controversy was with both Samaria and Jerusalem, intimating that in these two capital cities, the evil was concentrated. Hosea gave a word of warning (ch. 4.15), "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend," but Micah finds she has offended, for all the places mentioned in the latter half of his first chapter are in Judah, "for it is come unto Judah" (v.9). In Lachish was "the beginning of the sin" (v.13).

The Transgressions of Israel

These are many, and the recording of them makes sad reading, for Israel was a "family" (2.3), and brotherly love should have been seen among them. Instead we find "My people" acting like "an enemy" (2.8). "They devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds," and "when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand." They "take away" fields and houses defrauding the owners, "a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." Even "the women of My people" and "their children" escape not their rapacious hands. So greedy were they, that "ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war" (ch. 2.) Violence seemed to bring ill-gotten rewards to those—the rich men (6.12)—who practised it, using lies and deceit. Besides this violence and robbery, there was—

Fraudulent Dealing in Business

"Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" (6.10.11). We are apt to think of such evils as belonging peculiarly to the advanced state of civilisation surrounding us in the present day, but this ugly picture portrayed hundreds of years ago, is of a people chosen by God, and, by His grace, remarkably blessed (see ch. 6.3-5.). Tremendous was their fall, and suitable the punishment Divinely meted out.

If the Lord will, to be continued.

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

"Whosoever cometh to Me and heareth My sayings and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great:" Luke 6. 47-49.

WHOSOEVER (pas); adjective, masculine, singular, meaning "all." Translate, "every one."

COMETH (ho erchomenos); article and present participle, masculine, singular; from erchomai (I come); translate, these three words, "every one coming."

TO (pros); preposition, meaning "toward," here governing accusative case.

ME (me); personal pronoun, accusative; notice it is exactly the same as in English, perhaps a reminder of a common origin of languages.

AND (kai); conjunction.

HEARETH (akouon); present participle, masculine, singular, from akouo (I hear). Present participles suggest character and continuance and the one article (ho) to both words, draws attention to the required twofold condition of one who would rightly approach the Lord.

MY (mou); personal pronoun, genitive, singular, meaning, "of Me."

SAYINGS (ton logon); article and noun, genitive, plural, masculine, from "ho logos" (the word). Literally, these last three words are, "the words of Me." (What I am speaking.) Note lego in v. 46.

KAI (see above).

DOETH (poion); present participle, masculine, singular, from poieo (I do, make); a "poet" (derived herefrom) is a "maker" of verse. "We are His workmanship—poiema" (Eph. 2.10) the word "poem." Interestingly, bearing fruit (Luke 8.8) is making fruit. "Become ye doers of the word" (Jas. 1.22). Note, from above, the significance of the present participle.

THEM (autous); personal pronoun, masculine, plural, accusative, to agree with logous.

I WILL SHEW (hupodeixo); verb, future, from hupodeiknumi (I point out, shew); deiknumi by itself has this meaning, but prefixed by hupo (under, sub-) there is a suggestion of a pointing-out not openly, but in a sense privately.

YOU (humin); personal pronoun, plural, dative, meaning, "to you."

TO WHOM (tini); indefinite or interrogative pronoun, dative.

HE IS (estin); verb, present, singular, from eimi (I am).

LIKE (homoiou); adjective, masculine, nominative, singular.

LIKE (see above).

HE IS (see above).

TO A MAN (anthropoi); noun, masculine, dative, singular, from anthropos (a man).

WHICH BUILT (oikodomounti); participle, present tense, dative, masculine, all to agree with "to a man." Oikos means a house as something to live in; domos, a house as something built up. Oikodomeo contains both thoughts (I build up as a house).

AN HOUSE (oikian); noun, feminine, accusative, from oikia (a house, a dwelling).

AND (not in text).

WHO (hos); relative pronoun, masculine, nominative.

DIGGED (eskapsen); verb, aorist, from skapto, (I dig); it occurs elsewhere in N.T., only in ch. 13.8 and 16.3.

AND (kai); in text but not in A.V.

DEEP (ebathunen); verb, aorist, from bathuno, (I deepen, I make deep). The two verbs, "dug" and "deepened" shew time, energy, and purpose behind the effort. Spiritual blessing is costly. Cf the Lord's words, "Strive to enter," "labour for the meat that endureth." Here is not graceless endeavour, rather an earnestness proving the in-working of the Holy Spirit. Oh for a deep work in the saints' hearts!

AND (kai).

LAIID (etheken); verb, aorist, from tithemi (I place, I set, I lay).

THE FOUNDATION (themelion); noun, neuter, but no article; meaning something placed or set; derived from tithemi. The word occurs in ch. 14.29, and in 1 Cor. 3.10.11.

ON (epi); preposition; may govern three cases, but here is followed by accusative, and means "on to."

A ROCK (ten petran); noun, feminine, accusative, with article, meaning, "The Rock," that is Christ. It is used by the Lord in Matt. 16.18, and of Him in 1 Cor. 10.4.

AND (de); conjunction, meaning "but"; second word in sentence.

WHEN THE (these words are used to translate the phrase—"a flood having become," which words are in the genitive case; such a construction in Greek is called, "Genitive Absolute.")

FLOOD (plemmures); noun, feminine, genitive, from plemmura (tide, flood-tide); compound of plen (more than, over, beyond) and muro (to flow). The word occurs here and in Job. 40.23 (Sept.).

AROSE (genomenes); aorist participle, feminine, genitive, meaning, "having become"; from ginomai (I become).

THE STREAM (ho potamos); article and noun, masculine, nominative; meaning, "the river." Note the word occurs in "Mesopotamia" and "hippopotamus" (lit. river-horse). The figure is that of a river at very high tide, and with great force overflowing its banks—a "bursting" (see next word).

BEAT VEHEMENTLY (proserexen); verb, aorist, from prosregnumi, a compound of pros (toward) and regnumi (to rend, tear, burst); hence, the verb means, "to break or burst towards or upon." If occurs in the next verse, and in Psalm 2.9.

UPON (no separate word, but implied in "pros" of previous word).

THAT (ekeinei); demonstrative pronoun, dative case, feminine, to agree with house, from ekeinos,-e,-o. (that).

HOUSE (Tei oikiai); article and noun, dative feminine, from oikia (house); the arrangement of words in the usual order—"the house that one." Sometimes the pronoun precedes, but the article always stands with the noun.

AND (kai).

NOT (ouk); negative particle; usual form is "OU," but "K" is added because the next word begins with a vowel.

COULD (ischusen); verb, aorist, from ischuo (to have strength, ability, power). Translate, "had not strength."

TO SHAKE (saleusai); verb, infinitive, aorist; from saleuo (to move to and fro, to rock or shake); see ch. 7.24. Heb. 12.27.

IT (auten); pronoun, feminine (to agree with house); accusative; from houtos, haute, touto.

FOR (dia); preposition, meaning "through," but here translated "for" (that is, because of).

IT WAS FOUNDED (to oikdomesthai); article and infinitive verb, aorist, from oikodomeo (see above for meaning). Literally, "the to-have-been-built."

UPON A ROCK (kalos); adverb, meaning "well" or "beautifully." This is the reading according to manuscripts preferred by scholars, rather than the phrase "upon a rock."

IT (auten); (see above); though this word should be translated before, "was founded," its position at the end of the sentence is emphatic, calling attention to the character of the building.

BUT (de).

HE THAT HEARETH (ko akousas); article and aorist participle—"having heard."

AND (kai).

DOETH (poiasas); aorist participle—"having done." Note that the present tense, implying character and continuance, is not used.

NOT (me); negative denying possibility.

IS LIKE A MAN THAT (see above).

WITHOUT (Choris); adverb and preposition, meaning "apart from, without."

A FOUNDATION (themeliou); noun, see above, but here in genitive case, because following the preposition.

BUILT (oikodomesanti); aorist participle. See above, verse 48, but note again **there** the continuous tense is used, suggesting a progressive action, definite and purposeful. **Here**, there appears to be a contrast. No foundation has been laid. The work has probably been more rapid, but—

AN HOUSE (see above).

UPON (see above).

THE EARTH (ten gen); article and noun feminine, accusative, from he ge (the earth or land). Compare geography, geology. "The earth," for the purpose of the parable, is literally contrasted with "the rock," but there is a moral significance. Dwellers on the earth in "Revelation" are those "who have their house down upon the earth" (Rev. 11.10 for example).

AGAINST WHICH (hei); relative pronoun, feminine because referring back to "house," a feminine noun; dative case, meaning "to which."

THE STREAM (ho potamos); see above.

DID BEAT VEHEMENTLY (proserexen); see above.

AND (kai).

IMMEDIATELY (euthus); as adjective means straight. As here, it is an adverb, meaning "straightway" (forthwith, immediately).

IT FELL (sunepesen); verb, aorist, from sunpipto; a compound of sun (together) and pipto (to fall); therefore meaning "to fall together," an apt description of a house collapsing. The word only occurs elsewhere in Ezek. 30.4 Sept.

AND (kai).

THE RUIN (to regma); noun, with article, neuter; from regnumi (to rend, tear, break, burst); see above. Meaning therefore a breach or ruin.

OF THAT (ekeines); demonstrative pronoun (see above); here genitive case.

HOUSE (tes oikias); article and noun (see above); here genitive case.

WAS (egeneto); verb, aorist, from ginomai (to become); render "became."

GREAT (mega); adjective, neuter, to agree with "ruin."

**“The Slothful man roasteth not that
which he took in hunting”**

Proverbs 12.27

Slothfulness is a word hardly befitting one engaged in hunting. That strenuous physical exertion requires alertness and alacrity. But it can follow the attainment of the hunter's success in the chase. The parabolic figure, therefore, strikingly illustrates the one-sidedness of human endeavours, as well as their coming short.

The exhilaration and excitement of the chase thrills the “cunning hunter,” such as Esau, but when he has accomplished his purpose, there may come a reaction. This may be seen in an unwillingness for the homely and humdrum drudgery of the kitchen or the cooking pot, which must be preceded by flaying and dividing the carcass of the slain animal. Esau was probably quite as efficient a cook as he was a hunter, for his father enjoyed the meals of venison prepared by his son. But even he, strong man though he was, came back from a “hunt,” exhausted and famishing. It was then he made a sad choice; for one morsel of meat he sold his birthright.

But what are the lessons for you and me, beloved fellow-saints? First, as already mentioned, there is incompleteness stamped on all the work and ways of man, even of the saved. “All sinned, and are coming short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ” (Rom. 3.23.24). How hopeless should we be but for the **finished** work of the Lord Jesus! **Now** it can be said to the believer, “And ye are complete in Him,” and, “As He is, so are we, in this world” (Col. 2.10. 1 John 4.17).

Since we believed, however, can it be said that all we have taken in hand, of the Lord's work, has been really finished? Are we not conscious that, though we have experienced Divine blessing, yet all our service has been marked by incompleteness? And must we not confess “the iniquity of our holy things”? How often, when we have experienced the Lord's gracious using of us in a piece of work for Him, we have, like Elijah, become depressed, or even exhausted (though few, it is to be feared, serve the Lord **thus** strenuously). The danger then is, that the fullness of blessing may be missed. Satan will be busy, the flesh will make excuses for itself, and a spiritual torpor may overcome one. 'Tis then we need to pray to be kept from slothfulness.

There is something exhilarating in an “Evangelistic campaign.” It is a kind of “hunt.” Too often, numbers are sought. Methods are adopted which seem to leave no room for the Holy Spirit to work. In His sovereignty, God can, and does, over-rule all the failures of men, and precious souls are saved. But what is done to help those brought to Christ? In apostolic days, those who “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,” were gathered into assemblies, and through Divinely appointed ministry of the Word, were taught and led on in the things of God. But is that excellent example followed today? Figuratively speaking, that which is “taken” is not “roasted.” This means preparation for food and the saints are the “food” of one another. Was not Peter, in the vision, commanded to slay and eat that which God had cleansed? Was he not to find pleasure in those saved by grace? All gospel effort should have this end in view—the assembling into local “unities,” that the saved ones may be manifestly members one of another. May our gracious God so work in the hearts of His own that they, **following Christ**, may “catch men,” and then, to change the figure (note both “figures” are found in John 21) feed the lambs as well as the sheep of the flock.

How enjoyable to one seeking to walk with the Lord, is an hour or two spent in the study of God's Word, with concordance and notebook and pencil! That is a “hunt” that well repays the time spent thereon. Every child of God can recollect “discoveries” made in such “searchings,” and though others have found “treasures” in Scripture before him, he can truly say, ‘I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil.’ (Ps. 119.162). Let the young believer, at the outset of his new life, use his Bible thus, but let him, and older ones, too, remember the exhortation, ‘Be ye **doers** of the Word, and not hearers only.’ (James 1.22). Otherwise, there may be the counterpart of the slothful man in our text. What we “hunt” must become our “food.”

One further thought occurs to the writer, as one well over the “three score years and ten.” Though age may bring its physical and mental weaknesses, let not the past spiritual activity give place to sloth. There are still spheres of service for the older saints. “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright.” “And we desire that everyone of you do shew the same **diligence** to the full assurance of hope **unto the end**; that ye be **not slothful**, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

(Ps. 92.14 Heb. 6.11.12)

The Book of Life—continued

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

"And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book." (Luke 10.20, Heb. 12.23, Ps. 139.16, Phil 43, Rev. 13.8, 17.8, 20.12, 15.27, Dan. 12.1.)

The Book of Life, then, is that which has been written in heaven, a contrast to those names which are "written in the earth" (Jer. 17.13). The members of the Body, of which Christ is the Head, were written in His book, before they had any existence; which Divine statement is Divinely corroborated by the declaration that names were enrolled therein "from the foundation of the world." This phrase is taken by some to refer to the Lamb, but this cannot be correct; because, although He "was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1.20), He was slain "once in the ending of the ages" (Heb. 9.26), when He was once offered to bear the sins of many." 'Twas the eternal purpose of the Triune God, He should effect the redemption of His elect, but it was "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son . . . to redeem . . ." (Gal. 4.4.5). The words of Revelation 13.8 should rather read, "Whose names are not written, from the foundation of the world, in the Book of Life of the Lamb having been slain."

Two misinterpretations of these Scriptures have been noticed by the writer. One is, that the moment a person receives Christ as his Saviour, his name is recorded in the Book of Life. The foregoing remarks are intended to shew how wrong is this idea, though it is sometimes used in evangelistic appeals.

Another view is thus expressed: God foreknew those who would believe on Christ as Saviour and Lord, and because thereof He inscribed their names in His Book. Such ignores the fact that faith is of grace—sovereign grace, that faith is "not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2.8), that it is "of the operation (in working) of God" (Col. 2.10). If faith were something the natural man can produce, only then could the view thus expressed have any weight. In that case, however, it would make a man's salvation, in the last resort, depend upon something he can do. This cuts at the root of God's sovereign election, and is a denial of human depravity.

Curiously, the advocates of such a theological conception do not realize that, even were their theory true, it would irrevocably decide the destiny of each member of the whole human race; on the one hand, of those foreseen to have faith—to eternal happiness; on the other hand, all the rest of mankind—to eternal doom. What then becomes of the objections to God's unconditional election on the ground of its supposed unfairness?

No man has ever looked into the pages of the Book of Life, but God's servant Paul declared of certain persons that they were "fellow-labourers, whose names are in the Book of Life." How could he know this, except, either by Divine revelation, or by a confidence begotten of his observance of the life and character of those believers? How happy is the saint, humbly resting upon Christ as his Substitute and Righteousness, who has that heaven-born hope that his name is written in heaven! And what a contrast with those who "wonder after" and "worship" the Beast! Such are described

as dwellers on the earth," that is "having their houses down upon the earth." Such are fearfully deceived, deluded, and believing "The Lie" (2 Thess. 2.11). Beloved fellow-saints, are we sufficiently sensible of, and grateful for, the grace that has sought us and saved us, and will "preserve" us "unto His heavenly Kingdom" (2 Tim. 4.18)? And are our lives those of practical godliness, such as proclaim that "our names are written in heaven?"

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES

EZEKIEL 10

4. The glory of the Lord (see 1 Kings 8. 10. 11). There the temple is "filled"; here the glory stands over the threshold; the last view of the glory (apart from the later chapters) is in ch. 11. 23. 5. The cherubim God's instruments. 6. Commanded, he went in, and stood. He heard, obeyed, and waited. 7. Fire in his hands. Was it painful? Still obedient, he went out. A lesson for Saints. 8. A man's hand (cf. ch. 1. 8.). 9. 10. Wheels, because God's chariot. Beryl stone, reflecting the glory. 10. One likeness. 11. Whither the Head looked, they followed, they turned not. How suggestive to God's servants on the earth. 12. A fullness of sight. 13. See margin Galgal means a rolling thing, suggesting smoothness. 14. 15. Ezekiel and John were both favoured with a vision of "living creatures," but no wheels are mentioned in Revelation. Why? 16. 17. Harmony in movement, for the spirit of life (see margin) energized. 18. A beginning of the departure. The glory will not return until Israel as a nation turns to the Lord. 19. The glory was above. 20. I saw . . . I Knew. 21. (See verses 8 and 14). 22. Chebar, a canal in Mesopotamia. Everyone straight forward. This impressed the prophet. Does it mean anything to us?

EZEKIEL 33

1. The mark of a prophet—the Word . . . came. 2. War may be sent by God, though a man may be set by man as a watchman. 3. He is to warn. 4. Unheeded warning leaves no excuse. 5. But there can be deliverance. 6. The watchman's solemn responsibility. (cf. Acts 20. 20. 26). 7. God appoints His servants. His mouth instructs. Warning is from Him. Man has no hand in this. He is simply to obey. 8. The decree of God does not excuse the servant's failure. 9. The heedless one will have to give account. 10. If . . . how? Was the question an honest one? 11. A call to repentance. 12. Past righteousnesses cannot atone for present sin (note Rom. 8. 12. 13). 13. "If he trust to his own righteousness." (But see Phil 3. 9 and compare Rom. 10. 1. 4). 14-16. The question here is not eternal life, but outward acts of obedience ensuring a continuance of earthly life, under the Law. Yet there is a lesson for saints (see 1 Cor. 5. 5. and 11. 30.). 17. Man will always find fault with God's ways (see Rom. 9. 19. 20). 18. 19. God's reply to man's presumption. 20. Ye say (cf. similar language in Malachi). I will judge. 21. Evil tidings (see last chapters of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles). 22. God opened his mouth.

23. The word of the LORD came. 24. "The land is given us," an idle boast. 25. 26. Shall ye possess the land? Had not God warned centuries before by Moses? (See Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). 27-29. Desolation and desolation (see margin) the fruit of sin and lawlessness. 30. The language sounds pious, Come and hear. 31. But they hear, yet do not; their words are fair, but their hearts wrong. 32. It is possible to hear truth with mental pleasure, as one will listen to a "good sermon" and yet derive no profit. 33. "It will come... they shall know."

EZEKIEL 34

This is a most solemn chapter, because the evil shepherds of Israel have their successors in Christendom today. The parallels will be recognized by God-taught believers.

1. "Again, the Word of the Lord came." This sentence marks the fresh instruction to the prophet, and is re-iterated often. Surely, we have an emphasis on verbal inspiration. 2. Prophecy against... Woe. They feed, not the flock, but themselves. 3. Ye kill. Souls can be "slain," but God will require it of the faithless "pastors." 4. What is required of shepherds (note Hebrews 12. 12. 13 and 1 Thess. 5. 14). 5. Scattered (see John 10. 12. 13 and Acts 20. 29. 30). 6. My Sheep.

They belonged to God, but man scattered. 7. Ye shepherds, hear (see also v. 9). 8. "My shepherds" (professedly) yet "no shepherd." 9. 10. Their punishment—no longer to have charge of a flock. God will lay aside a faithless servant (note Matt. 24. 48-51).

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

JULY, 1957

- 7. Ezra. 1. 1-4. Jer. 29. 10-14. Isa. 44. 23-28. John 4. 19-24. Phil. 3.3.
- 14. Ezra. 1. 5-11. Ps. 126. Pro. 24. 3.4. Matt. 16. 13-18. Eph. 2. 17-22.
- 21. Ezra. 2. 1. 2. 62. 63. Lev. 7. 19-21. Rev. 3. 4. 5. John 6. 51-57. Heb. 4. 13-15.
- 28. Ezra. 2. 64-70. Ex. 36. 3-7. 1 Chron. 29. 1-5. Acts 20. 35. 2 Cor. 9. 6-15.

AUGUST, 1957

- 4. Ezra. 3. 1-5. 1 Kings 18. 30-39. Rom. 3. 21-25. Heb. 9. 11-14. Matt. 26. 26-30.
- 11. Ezra 3. 6. 10-13. Matt. 16. 15-18. 1 Cor. 3. 10. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 6. 7. Col. 3. 16. 17.
- 18. Ezra. 4. 1-3. 1 Tim. 6. 3-5. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 8. 9. Jude 17-21. Eph. 4. 9-16.
- 25. Ezra. 5. 1. 2. Ezra. 6. 14. 15. Hag. 1. 7-15. Zech. 4. 6-10. Heb. 3. 1-6.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
"IF THE LORD WILL"—JULY, 1957

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
"IF THE LORD WILL"—AUGUST, 1957

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS "IF THE LORD WILL"—JULY, 1957				SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS "IF THE LORD WILL"—AUGUST, 1957					
Day	READING		LEARNING		Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Jeremiah	1 Corinthians	Ezekiel	1 Peter		Jeremiah	2 Corinthians	Ezekiel	2 Peter
1	10. 1-25	1. 1-17	10. 4	4. 15	1	32. 1-15	1. 1-12	33. 13	1. 13
2	11. 1-23	18-31	5	16	2	16-25	13-24	14	14
3	12. 1-17	2. 1-16	7	18	3	26-44	2. 1-17	15	15
4	13. 1-14	3. 1-23	6	17					
5	15-27	4. 1-21	8	19	4	33. 1-14	3. 1-18	16	16
6	14. 1-22	5. 1-13	9	5. 1	5	15-26	4. 1-18	17	17
					6	34. 1-11	5. 1-21	18	18
7	15 1-21	6 1-20	10	2	7	12-22	6. 1-18	19	19
8	16 1-21	7. 1-14	11	3	8	35. 1-19	7. 1-16	20	20
9	17 1-13	15-26	12	4	9	36. 1-19	8. 1-12	21	21
10	14-27	27-40	13	5	10	20-32	13-24	22	2. 1
11	18. 1-23	8. 1-13	14	6					
12	19 1-15	9. 1-14	15	7	11	37. 1-21	9. 1-15	23	2
13	20. 1-18	15-27	16	8	12	38. 1-13	10. 1-18	24	3
					13	14-28	11 1-15	25	4
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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

Vol. 57 Nos. 7 & 8

JULY—AUGUST, 1957

FREE

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"But we have this Treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of GOD, and not of us."
2 Cor. 4: 7.

"THY LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE"

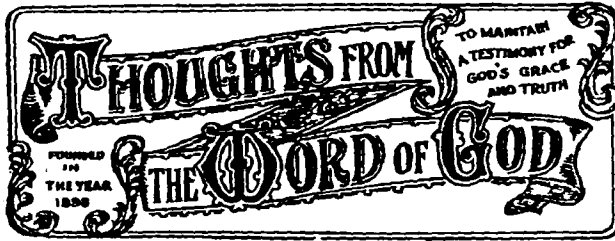
Song 1: 2.

Wine may make glad the heart of man,
But 'tis a joy that ceaseth.
Far better is the love of Christ;
The joy He gives increaseth.

"Give wine" to those of "heavy heart"
Or those "about to perish."
But what is that to His dear love,
Who doth His chosen cherish.

"We will remember more than wine
Thy love," O Christ, supernal,
The love that came to us in time,
Unearned, unchanged, eternal.

E.K.



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"My Father is the Husbandman He purgeth ." The Lord Jesus, the True Vine, was fully fruitful. The saint can say, by grace "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." The branches in Him, grafted "contrary to nature," ought to bear fruit like to that which He bore. He never needed pruning, though "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Yet, as a tender plant before Him, ever was He the object of His Father's care. And shall the branches be less the loving care of the heavenly Husbandman, for "ye are God's husbandry"?

Lovingly and confidently—for He alone knew the Father—Christ committed the disciples to His care. "Much fruit" glorifies the Father, who will spare no pains to that end. A gardener cannot prune a plant by standing a long way off. His instrument is short, as well as sharp. He has a regard for his tree, his eye is keen, and he has learned by experience just how to use his knife. And he must be *very close* to do his work well.

So, beloved, is our Father, whose love is immeasurable, and His wisdom infinite. In all His "purging" operations, He is *very near*, and all His dealings are *in love*. What encouragement to the tried saint! God purposeth fruit, so be of good cheer.

Poem to Help Christian Experience—No. 249.

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

Worthy art Thou, O God in heav'n
Of ev'ry creature's praise.
Righteous art Thou in all Thy works,
Holy in all Thy ways.

The angels highest homage give
To Thee in realms above;
Much more Thy ransomed should adore
Thee for redeeming love.

The chosen angels knew no fall,
They kept their first estate;
But man a fallen creature is,
His misery how great!

Yet o'er Thy creatures hast Thou grieved,
Though sin hath raised a bar
That separateth him from Thee,
And he hath wandered far.

And none could bring him back to Thee
Save Thy beloved Son.
His life and death alone avails—
The work that He hath done.

Man needs a robe of righteousness;
Before Thee he is bare;
His sins must be removed, or he
Must righteous judgment share.

All merit is in Thy dear Son,
And found in Him alone.
Those saved by Him shall faultless stand
Before Thy holy throne.

Enrobed are they in righteousness,
Spotless in Thy pure sight,
Made meet for that Most Holy Place,
The heritage in light.

No glory take they to themselves.
But Thee, the One "I am,"
They worship, and eternally
Shall praise the once-slain Lamb.

Redeemed by His most precious blood,
With fervent heart they yearn
To love Him more, and serve Him well,
Until He shall return.

~ ~ ~

~ ~ ~

TO OUR READERS

The Editor regrets the late issue, on some occasions, of this magazine.

This has been due to printing difficulties, but a change has now been made, and it is expected that future numbers will be delivered to date, as the Lord enables.

The many expressions of appreciation received from time to time, from various parts of the world have been very encouraging to the Editor, who values prayer that each issue may be glorifying to God, and helpful to saints in the path of separation.

"The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." It is with this object ever in view that the magazine is sent forth, so that both writers and readers may prepare themselves, in a "looking for That Blessed Hope."

"HE WENT DOWN . . . AND WAS SUBJECT UNTO THEM"

Luke 2: 51

PERCY W. HEWARD

These are days of self-assertion. Socialism has its echo, and a loud echo, even in the home. Satan, at the outset, sought to alter the right relationship of Eve to Adam. The language is strikingly changed from "a help meet for him" to "her husband with her" (Gen. 2: 18; 3: 6). And the same tendency is found when children behave themselves proudly. It seems evident that God permits this, in reproof (Isa. 3:4, 5). But many are not exercised regarding the state of affairs. A large number of parents seem willing to shirk responsibilities. This is not strange in the world, but believers need to be encouraged to faithfulness. Their duties are not easy, but are a great privilege. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Prov. 1:8). The authoritative, yet gracious, tone of the book of Proverbs is helpful. Children of God must not be afraid that *their children* will be offended. *Fear* is a great peril. God's Fatherly love to us is a guide in dealing with others. There is no assertiveness in a parent's quiet dignity, which is quite the opposite of: "I will be obeyed," or "If you do that, I will —," with all manner of added threats, not intended, and never fulfilled. Untruthfulness in the exercise of authority is a fundamental failure—and a sin.

The Lord Jesus, Who took upon Himself the form of a servant, is the Example for His blood-bought people in their homes. "Subjection," which suggests "arrangement under"—the submission-word of other Scriptures relating to the home—is the word used of Him. He saw no disgrace in this. Love loves to be truthful in the appointed sphere, even though the sphere is voluntarily chosen. "He was *subject* unto them." Surely, *believing children* must feel the force of these words, and believing parents must see what they are to expect. "Expect" is a great, but precious word, for expectation is a true help. The context of these words enforces the lesson. Had He not just proved His wondrous knowledge? Aye, and the words had sounded forth: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Yet He did not hurry forward, for the greater part of His brief earthly life was in the background. Was this a mistake? Nay, there are no mistakes with Him. He needed no delay as we need, yet we read: "Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3: 23); amazing words! And Mark 6: 3 seems to fill up the gaps between Luke 2: 51, 52 and 3: 23. Could not others have made "merely earthly things" *seemingly* just as well? Yet He spent more years

* Thus the natural mind would reason, is what the author apparently intends to convey.—ED.

thereon than in preaching. How instructive to a young believer who would give up a situation, without a clear warrant from God, and devote his time "wholly to the Lord's work"—oftentimes only to be held back from going forward by the rules of a society. The Lord can enable His people, in such a dilemma, to risk pennilessness and to step forth, but it is better not to run into unappointed chains. How precious is the witness of godliness in a workshop, and *unpaid* witness for the Lord in the evening—and even then not only on a platform. Spirituality is possible in myriads of little things, and the precious blood of Christ has purchased the *whole* life.

But to return. "He was subject unto them." If they had understood all, we should find the passage simple. But they understood not, albeit Mary "kept all these sayings in her heart" (vv. 50, 51). He was *subject*. The principle is important, and we must not use one part of God's revealed will against another. A believing child does not cease, because of his faith, to own his parents. Salvation makes a debtor free, but not to omit material payment. The imperfection of a government does not give believers license for insubordination. The Lord Jesus would not have done evil, if unwisely commanded; neither can a believer obey if told to worship an idol. But there must be no resentment, nor rising up, nor lack of *submission*. The government remains the government which he honours, as such, even the day after it issues a wrong statute, and the moment after it condemns him for his conscientious disobedience. There can be no godly resistance.

And *He*—the Lord—appoints the home into which we are born. Yet the human heart often chafes against seeming hindrance. But the Lord Jesus knew nothing of rejection of home authority.† "He was subject unto them"; and the plural implies the importance of *guardianship*, for Joseph occupied this position. How often a believer has fretted because circumstances of responsibility have kept him, or her, back from a seemingly larger sphere. The Holy Spirit, by this inspired record, answers such fretfulness.

Another thought is linked. In how many homes there is an *unrest*. Children need to be told *repeatedly* what they are not to do, and so forth. The Lord Jesus was a Contrast. Is it not probable that, if parents, from the earliest infancy of their children, emphasized this verse, there would be certain encouragements? The restful agreement which God reveals as characteristic in a godly home is much needed.

† This article was written 30 years ago; the "home" authority has greatly deteriorated since then in this and other lands (e.g., the U.S.A.).

continued on page 45

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

Reeds and Rushes

The Bible speaks much about plants and animals, as well as about man, but it is for man the precious Book has been written. Its message is the way of salvation for sinners, young and old, and the Saviour is to be seen in all its pages. Not always by name, but in picture and parable we find Him to be shewn forth. Among other things, He is likened to "a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53). He Himself said: "I am the True Vine."

Now plants are used in the Scriptures also to teach us something about ourselves. The plants that grow by the water's edge, and in the stream itself, go by the names of "reeds," "flags," "rushes," "paper-reeds," "bulrushes." Shall we try and learn some lessons from these water-plants? Many of you like to turn to the places in your own Bibles, so as to see what each verse says about our subject. First,

Where the Rushes Grow.

"Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?" (Job 8: 11). Mire is a kind of mud, always moist until a dry spell comes. If the dryness lasts, the reeds and rushes wither. In Isaiah, chapter 19, we read: "and the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up . . . the reeds and flags shall wither; the paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks . . . shall wither, be driven away, and be no more." So we see what is needed for growth, and this chapter reminds us that God may punish a nation by drying up its rivers and brooks. If we read on in Job 8, we find the words: "Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb." But this is also a picture of one who forgets God, one who seems to be a religious man, but is not real. Whilst there is plenty of mire and water, the rush looks fresh and green, because all is in its favour. *It depends on something that may not last.* Upon what is the reader depending? Do you think only of this life, and forget God? If we read on, we find it written: "the hypocrite's hope shall perish, whose hope shall be cut off." We must not put our trust in anything down here, or deceive ourselves into thinking all is well, because so much *seems* to be in our favour. The grace (or favour) of God is from heaven. Life is God's gift, and those who have this life will not wither, even though God may take away many earthly blessings.

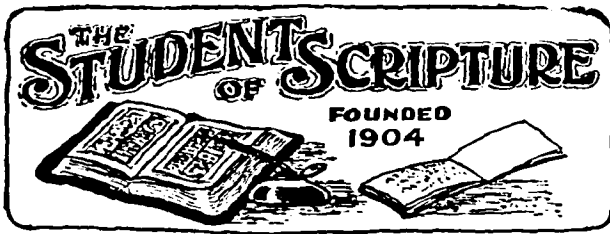
Shaken Reeds

Reeds and rushes are not like trees with their thick trunks and deep roots, for they are easily shaken by wind or water. "For the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land"

(Jer. 14: 15). Why? Because a wicked king had made Israel to sin, by worshipping idols. And as a reed has no strength against the surging waters, so people cannot stand when God sends punishment. "Every plant," said the Lord Jesus, "which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15: 13). What is my reader like, a tree planted by God, or a reed easily shaken and soon withered? But the Lord Jesus spoke of one whom He greatly loved—John the Baptist—these lovely words: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" (Matt. 11: 7), and all He said about John tells us that he was far from being shaken, but was firm in his life, and true in his words. We may rather say many were shaken in their minds by his stern, yet gracious, preaching.

An Ark of Bulrushes

A wicked King of Egypt made it a law that all Hebrew boys, as soon as they were born, were to be thrown into the river, and be drowned. But Moses was saved, for when he was a baby-boy, three months old, his mother made an ark—a kind of cradle—of bulrushes, and filled up all the holes "with slime (a kind of tar) and pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags (rushes) by the river's brink" (Ex. 2: 3). So Moses was put into the river, as the King's law said, yet the ark kept him from being drowned. Perhaps this is to remind us of how sinners are saved. God's law, unlike man's law, is "holy and just and good," and must be obeyed. But because of man's disobedience, all would perish under that holy law. So God sent His dear Son, Who became a man and kept all the Law, on behalf of those who could not because of their sinful hearts. But He also *died* on behalf of poor sinners, bearing their sins in His own body on the tree. There—on the cross—He took the punishment they deserved. So then, those who by faith, which God gives, believe *into* Christ are safe, as Moses was safe in the ark. That ark was a very weak thing, made only of rushes. So people think of the death of Christ as a very weak thing, but "Christ crucified" is the power of God (see 1 Corinthians 1: 23-25). I suppose we all are reminded of a greater ark, made by Noah, being in the water, which could not enter, because that ark also was "*pitched* without and within with *pitch*." My dear friend, your only safety is to run to Christ, for there is a greater judgment than the flood coming upon all the world. Are you safe "In Christ"? When you think of Moses drawn out of the water (Ex. 2: 10 margin), think also of one who said: "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of great waters" (Ps. 18: 16, margin). It is "from above," and by God's "taking" and "drawing," that a sinner can be saved. It is all of God and His sovereign grace.



THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

(continued)

The Sins of the Heads and Princes

Among these are included the "prophets," probably so self-styled and self-appointed. "And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; is it not for you to know judgment?" (3: 1, 9). But they had become those "who hate the good, and love the evil." The people were but as "food" for them. Their rapacity knew no bounds. They lived on the people, enriching themselves at their expense. "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money" (3: 11). "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands (note 2: 1) earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh, for a reward" (7: 2, 3). As for the "prophets," they, too, lived on the people, for "he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him" (3: 5). This was the sin of Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam. 2: 12-17). They cried "Peace," yet they "bite with their teeth." Wolves in sheep's clothing were they. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make My people err." Are not such evils practised even today in "religious" circles? Where are they to be found of whom it can be said: "that for His Name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John 7). Again, where are those who can say, with Paul: "I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not your's, but you . . . and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you" (2 Cor. 2: 14, 15)?

Strife in the Family Life

With such an evil example, set by the heads, the princes, the judges, the priests and prophets, can it be cause for surprise that the canker ate deeply into family relationship? How terrible are the words: "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house" (7: 5, 6). These words were quoted

by the Lord Jesus Christ, for He also knew what it was to be hated, reviled, and misunderstood. There seemed also to be a woman who opposed the prophet. "Mine enemy . . . said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?" (7: 10).

Added to all this, we read: "The statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels" (6: 16). If these words apply to Judah, as apparently they do, how solemn is the fact that, although one of her kings was an evil man, during the period of Micah's prophecy, the other two were those that "did right in the sight of the Lord." Their personal godliness did not hinder the progress of evil, except for a short time.

False Religious Claims

Of Samaria is it recorded that it had many "graven images" and "idols," that "she gathered of the hire of an harlot." Such is God's judgment of idolatry. It is spiritual uncleanness, religious adultery, for it is conferring honour and love upon another than Himself, for He has said: "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image." And: "Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us" (3: 11). Such language is remarkable; it sounds hypocritical, and such it is. But are not all false religious systems similarly evil, even those that are professedly Christian? But Israel should never have brought themselves so low, for they had been warned of this very thing and of its sure judgment (Deut. 29: 18-20).

The Punishment fits the Crime

These words are often on the lips of men, but how little the truth of them is appreciated. Yet they are exemplified in the book before us. Men "devise iniquity," but God says: "Against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks" (2: 1, 3). Did they remove the neighbour's landmark, and take away his field and house? God would compel them, "In that day," to "lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: He hath changed the portion of my people: how hath He removed it from me! turning away (instead of restoring, margin) He hath divided our fields. Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord" (2: 4, 5).

Were there "prophets" among them, evil men whose teaching was false, and their characters covetous and overbearing? Did the people resent a true message, as is implied in the words: "Prophecy ye not"? God's answer is: "they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame." True preaching is intended to cause shame for sin. It is a fearful judgment where God permits a

judicial withholding of truth. And is there not a parallel to those solemn words through Hosea, a contemporary of Micah: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 4:17)? Moreover, God would permit His people who reject the message of His servants, to have prophets after their own hearts. "If a man walking in the spirit" (surely an evil spirit) "and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people" (2: 11). With these words may be compared those of Deuteronomy 29:17-20. But "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4: 3, 4). *That time has come*, not only thus confirming the prophecy through Paul, but illustrating the fact of man's essentially evil nature *in all times*, and that God will smite the wilful rejectors of truth with judicial blindness, even those who falsely claim the name of "Christian." See also 1 Timothy 4: 1-3 and 2 Timothy 3: 1-5, which likewise reveal that the evils amongst Israel in Micah's day will be repeated in the present age.

Were there among the people those who gave "scant measure," using "wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights" (6: 10, 11)? Listen to God's reply: "because of thy sins." "Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied . . . thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine" (6: 13-15).

All this may be summed up in words contained in the later part of Scripture: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7).

(If the Lord will, to be concluded)

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

No. 47

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Rom. 7: 5-7.

For (gar); conjunction, second word in sentence.
WHEN (hote); adverb of time.

WE WERE (emen); verb, imperfect tense, from eimi (I am).

IN (en); preposition always followed by dative case.

THE FLESH (tei sarki); article and noun, dative, from sarx (flesh), feminine. This word sometimes denotes the physical flesh; sometimes, as here, the moral. There is, of course, a close connection of both aspects.

THE MOTIONS (ta pathemata); noun, with article, neuter plural, from pathema (what is suffered, suffering); it is employed to describe the sufferings of Christ (Heb. 2: 10; 1 Pet 1: 11) both His vicarious suffering, and that which is left as a legacy to His disciples (1 Pet. 4: 13). It is derived from pascho (to suffer or be affected by anything whether good or bad, opposite to acting of oneself); hence the noun may be rendered, "affections," as indeed it is in Gal. 5: 24, and associated with "lusts." The word therefore denotes an *experience*, which may be outward, as inflicted—by another; or inward and probably evidenced by outward actions as in the verse before us, the following clause making clear the means of such experience.

OF SINS (ton hamartion); article and noun, genitive plural, feminine, from hamartia (sin, in the sense of missing a mark).

WHICH WERE (ta); article, neuter, plural. This is a repetition of the article preceding pathemata, and makes the following words an adjectival clause, qualifying pathemata.

BY (dia); preposition, meaning "through"; when followed by genitive case, as here, means "by" or "by means of."

THE LAW (tou nomou); article and noun, genitive, singular, masculine; from nomos (law). It is frequently used in this context with the article, and would appear to denote The Law given at Sinai. Paul quotes the last of the ten commandments (verse 7). Hence the "ten words" may signify the Law as summarized. Those to whom the apostle wrote were in a church composed of Jews and Gentiles, and they knew the Law (ch. 7: 1). He recalls the time when they "were in the flesh" (see ch. 8: 8, 9), an unconverted state. The Law coming against such an one may stiffen his will and aggravate his rebellion, but when the Holy Spirit uses the Law on an elect vessel of mercy, there is certainly an "experience" of a different kind. He "suffers" conviction of sin, which leads to "the obedience of faith."

DID WORK (energeito); verb, imperfect, from energeo (to inwork, energize). Translate: "were inworking," because though the verb is singular, it is the predicate of "the motions," and a neuter plural may take a singular verb. Observe, the apostle is speaking of a *past* continuing experience, "kept on in-working."

IN (en); see above.

OUR (*hemon*); personal pronoun, genitive, plural, literally, "of us." It follows the word "members."

MEMBERS (*tois melesin*); article and noun, dative, plural, from *melos* (a member of the body). Neuter. Notice the use of this word in ch. 6: 13, 19, and 7: 23. Also in Col. 3: 5, where it is used of sins practised by the members.

TO (*eis*); preposition, "into," but having the thought of "with a view to," "to the end that."

BRING FORTH FRUIT (*to karpophoresai*); article (neuter) and infinitive, aorist from *karpophoreo* (I bear fruit); a compound from *karpos* (fruit) and *phero* (I bear).

UNTO DEATH (*toi thanatoi*); article and noun, dative, masculine, from *thanatos* (death). The whole sentence may be rendered, "with a view to the having-brought-forth-fruit to the death." (Note Rom. 6: 21.)

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

NOW (*nuni*); adverb, usually written *nun*, but strengthened, as here, by the suffix "i." The apostle is contrasting the past experience with the "now" condition.

WE ARE DELIVERED (*katergethemen*); verb, aorist, passive, from *katargeo* (to render inactive, idle, useless). Compound from *kata* (down; against, as when we say someone is "down upon" a person or thing), and *ergon* (work). If there is a force against motion, there is inaction. Hence, our verb implies that the Law, as regards its condemnatory aspect, is no longer against us. Its working "down on" us has ceased. Notice it is a past tense.

FROM (*apo*); preposition, governing genitive case; "from" or "away from."

THE LAW (*tou nomou*); see above.

THAT BEING DEAD (*apothanontes*); participle, aorist, plural; from *apothnesko* (I die). The prefix *apo* (away) makes stronger the word *thnesko* (I die). The death is absolute and complete. The literal translation is "having died away from," and would seem to apply to the believers (see verse 4, "ye are become dead").

WHEREIN (*en hoi*); preposition "in," and dative case of relative pronoun. Render "in which."

WE WERE HELD (*kateichometha*); verb, imperfect tense, passive, from *katecho* (to hold down); compound from *kata* (down) and *echo* (to have or hold). Literally, "we were being held down." The word is used in Gen. 39: 20—"bound." The Law is that which binds and holds fast.

THAT (*hoste*); relative adverb, meaning, "so that."

WE SHOULD SERVE (*douleuein hemas*); present infinitive verb with accusative plural personal pronoun. Literally, "us to serve." This is a peculiar form of syntax, which will often be met with, in the Greek Testament. The accusative case has its predicate in the infinitive. Compare *einai hemas* in Eph. 1: 4.

IN (*en*); see above.

NEWNESS (*kainoteti*); noun, dative, feminine, derived from *kainos* (new). See Rom. 6: 4. The nominative is *kainotes*.

OF SPIRIT (*pneumatos*); noun, genitive, neuter, from *pneuma* (spirit).

AND (*kai*).

NOT (*ou*).

IN (not in text).

THE (not in text).

OLDNESS (*palaioteti*); noun, dative, feminine, derived from *palaios* (old). The nominative is *palaiotes*.

OF THE LETTER (*grammatos*); noun, genitive, neuter, but no article. From *gramma* (letter of the alphabet, something written). Translated, "writings" (of Moses) in John 5: 47, "letters" in the sense of education (John 7: 15). "Scriptures" in 2 Tim. 3: 15. The use of this word in our verse indicates "legality" (as in 2 Cor. 3: 6). The believer serves spiritually, because God's laws are in his heart and mind. (Cf. Heb. 8: 10.)

WHAT (*ti*); interrogative particle, neuter.

SHALL WE SAY (*eroumen*); verb, future, from *eiro* (to speak, say).

THEN (*oun*); conjunction meaning "therefore." This comes after "ti."

IS (not in text).

THE LAW (*ho nomos*).

SIN (*hamartia*).

GOD FORBID (*me genoito*); negative particle, denying a possibility, and a verb, aorist, optative, from *ginomai* (to become). The optative here expresses a wish: "May it not have become." It may almost be rendered: "Let it not have come to this!" Darby's translation renders: "Far be the thought." Young's Literal renders: "Let it not be."

NAY (*alla*); strong adversative conjunction, meaning "but," "on the contrary."

NOT (*ouk*); negative, "ou" denying a fact. "k" is added because the next word begins with a vowel.

I HAD KNOWN (*egnon*); verb, aorist, from *ginosko* (to know). Literally: "I did not know."

SIN (*ten hamartian*); article and noun, accusative.

BUT (ei me); literally: "if not." Often rendered "except."

BY (dia).

THE LAW (nomou); no article.

FOR (gar); conjunction. The particle "te" precedes, meaning "and" or "also."

I HAD NOT KNOWN (ouk eidein); negative and verb, pluperfect, from oida (to know).

LUST (epithumian); noun, feminine, accusative, from epithumia (earnest or strong desire).

EXCEPT (ei me); see above.

THE LAW (ho nomos); see above.

HAD SAID (elegen); verb, imperfect, from lego (to say); translate: "kept on saying."

NOT (ouk); see above.

THOU SHALT COVET (epithumeseis); verb, future, from epithumeo (to have earnest or strong desire). This last command of the "ten words" was the climax for Israel under Sinai (Ex. 20: 17 and 19; Deut. 5: 22, 25). "Lust" has a limited use today, and implies lasciviousness, but at one time it could mean desire for what is in itself good (see Deut. 12:20; 14:26). Such desire did not have place in th Lord Jesus. He would not make bread to satisfy His hunger, but awaited His Father's pleasure. Man is made up of desires.

the more than compensating love and joy of the Lord.

And so we hear the pointed question: "What shall they do?"; and again: "Why are they baptized?" If there were no resurrection, would not the *confession of Christ* in baptism be a delusion? Why should young believers take the place ("huper," "for," "in place of") of the dead believers, and fill up the ranks* of an army in jeopardy and without hope? "Why?"—if there were no resurrection! The holy argument shews the character of the Christian *faith* and the character of the Christian *hope*. O that it may be ours to realize this, in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Among Israel,† one who is baptized is still counted "dead," and is it not so among some of other religions? *Baptism has a meaning then*. And when a man is cast out for his Lord, and is liable to cruel treatment, he values the hope of his Lord's return, and the beautiful picture of resurrection in baptism.

Thus this verse teaches nothing of some mysterious ceremony, but clearly sets forth the work of Christ, and the appointed unity of the redeemed, and their *standing together* as a rejected people, bearing the precious Name of Him Who died and rose for them. May many such be those who are "being baptised" today, and may older saved ones be ready for "jeopardy," or at least for reproach, as they stand, outside the world's wishes and fashions, with their beloved Lord.

Percy W. Heward.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

No. 167

Please explain the words: "Baptized for the Dead" (1 Cor. 15: 29).

How many children of God have felt a difficulty as to this verse. But, if we prayerfully ponder it in its context, I think God will graciously shew how many precious and simple thoughts are easily reached, to His glory.

First, we notice a contrast between "They which are baptized (being baptized—Grk.*)" and "We who are in jeopardy every hour." Secondly, between "They" and "The Dead." Thus there are three classes:—

- (1) The ones just being baptized.
- (2) The apostle and other older brethren in Christ.
- (3) The dead.

In this chapter, "the dead" would seem to refer to *Believers who have died*. Hence we have:—

- (1) The new converts by grace.
 - (2) The older disciples.
 - (3) Those who had departed to be with Christ.
- The older disciples are viewed as in danger, and Paul said he was dying daily. The Christian life was not meant to be an amusement (2 Tim. 3: 12). It was meant to be a strain, which would need

* The military figure (order, or rank) in verse 23, and the reference to the trumpet (v. 52).

† And also Moslems, I understand.—Ed.

“ He went down . . . and was subject unto them ”

continued from page 39

So our hearts are led forward to see the unity which pleases God. And there is a certain parallel in every form of Christian relationship. In business and assembly alike, the believer is to honour God's arrangements, and to shew a beautifully unassertive character. The Holy Spirit never leads to lack of humility.

May our hearts be helped by this Divine encouragement.

"THE MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST"

The world has its customs and its expectations. A parade of greatness and grandness is well pleasing in the sight of unwise men. But the Lord Jesus came not with outward display. Born outside the inn of Bethlehem, He was brought up at Nazareth in Galilee of the *Gentiles*, despised and rejected of men. Thus He lived: thus He died. Yes, He Who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich. Such wondrous loving-kindness is without equal, and we would admire once more, and always, "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

The earlier Scriptures prepare us, if we are under the Holy Spirit's guidance, for this trait in His matchless character. They commend the meek, not the self-assertive. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." "The meek shall inherit the earth." "God arose . . . to save all the meek of the earth." "The Lord lifteth up the meek." "He will beautify the meek with salvation" (Psalms 22: 26; 25: 9; 37: 11; 76: 9; 147: 6; 149: 4). Such should not be forgotten; and "the man Moses was very meek." Even in a dispensation of law, God made manifest that His people were to be willing to suffer amid this sinful world. It is natural to seek great things for *oneself* (Jer. 45: 5), and to desire outward prosperity and exaltation. But God has always marked out the ruin of earth and its unsatisfying insufficiency. Moreover, He has shewn us that if we stand up for our rights, we shall naturally do this in a way that is not good. Psalms 37 and 73 alike deal with the wicked prospering, and both call on the Lord's redeemed to await His perfect time of perfect alteration. He sees, He knows, He cares. Can we, therefore, not be trustfully meek?

In the present dispensation this stress on meekness is intensified. The Lord Jesus appointed for His own a contrast with human arrangements (see Luke 22: 25, 26). "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to *the wrath*" (that is, God's wrath) (Rom. 12: 19). He never acts too late, and He will assert Himself. Faith can trust Him in the dark, and be patient unto the coming of the Lord. There is music in the encouraging promise, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." He Who seeth not as man seeth, Who beholdeth in secret" (Matt. 6: 6, for example) esteems "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Pe. 3: 4). Shall we, then, undervalue that whereof our Heavenly Father says, it is "of great price."

Furthermore, our beloved Lord Himself has set, as we have seen, a wondrous example of meekness. Types failed, and even Moses said, "Hear now, ye rebels," impatiently smiting the rock twice. But Christ never failed. He Who is the Truth said: "I am *meek* and lowly in heart." Here is no affectation—nor can we forget the precious words, "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matt. 21: 5, quoting from Zech. 9). Not on the conquering horse He came, but on the patient ass. He came not to war, but to shew Himself as the Perfect One, to bear witness to the Truth, and yet to be rejected by sinful men (note Psalm 45: 4). Yes, dear friends, here is *the meekness* set before us, and how we fall short!

What advantage is it to gain the world and lose one's soul? What gain is it to a believer, to be exalted now and to lose reward *then*? "Now" in this sense, is "but a moment" (2 Cor. 4: 17). Let us "seek righteousness, seek meekness." 'Tis part of the fruit of the Spirit (Zeph. 2: 2; 1 Tim. 6: 11; Gal. 5: 23); and only in "the spirit of meek-

ness" can we please God (Gal. 6: 1). The words of Titus 3: 2 are very comprehensive; the twofold "all" must not be put on one side (compare Ephesians 4: 2). We may yet be brought before unholy tribunals, for the Lord's sake. Persecution may soon break over this earth—openly and devastatingly. Amid it all, we are to "give a reason of the hope" that is in us "with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3: 15). And other Scriptures urge to this quiet representing of our beloved Lord. We are to "receive with meekness the engrafted word" (Jas. 1: 21), which words lead on to those of chapter 3: 13: "Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." May it be ours to "put on meekness," and to "be clothed with humility" (Col. 3: 12; 1 Pet. 5: 5), that men may see our good works, and glorify our Father Which is in heaven.

What if we are now turned aside from our right (Amos 2: 7)? We have seen that Christ will "reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." Well may we, in holy anticipation, increase our joy in the Lord, and realize that there are, indeed, good tidings to the meek (Isa. 11: 4; 29: 19; 41: 1). O that this part of God's truth may so lay hold of our heart that, looking upon things from His standpoint, we may not count our sorrows with anxiety and murmuring, but remember His uncounted loving-kindnesses, which are new every morning. Then we shall say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name." Trouble and anguish may take hold on us, but His commandments will be our delights (Ps. 119: 143). We cannot right the world, but we can live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, shining as lights amid the darkness, until He come whose right it is to reign, and for Whom we watch, with earnest desire, because He, in love, has made us His very own.

Percy W. Heward.

GRACE AND PEACE

Wonderful words! And they tell of a reality. Grace is real, and therefore the peace that springs therefrom is real. Without God's grace, peace must be a temporary dream, a delusive imagination, a vain and barren "hope." Of old a prophet of God said: "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 8: 11) and men will yet again cry: "Peace and safety" when sudden destruction cometh (1 Thess. 5: 3). "I shall have peace" says one (Deut. 29: 19): "Ye shall have peace" is the empty promise of others (Jer. 23: 17), but God declares: "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word" (Ezek. 13: 6). Oh, the bitterness of a sudden awakening: "I am lost, and it is too late: I am condemned, and there is no escape: I thought, yes, I thought all was well: I have built and expected and trusted — all — all — without a foundation: there is nothing—nothing but judgment now." Reader, is it kind to lull others to sleep in a false security? If you say: "Do not disturb and annoy me," are you not your own enemy? "Peace" without ground or security, is a lying word, calculated

to deceive the heart of him who utters, and of those who hear it. Why not face facts. Have you peace—peace with God—peace for eternity?

"Grace and peace." That is God's order, never "peace and grace." You need "grace," and you can neither make nor earn this. But grace undeserved is the very grace which God gives, PURE GRACE, ABSOLUTE GRACE. It is this completeness which makes "peace" possible. If God waited till men did something meritorious, however small, we should never have peace. The war of the human race against Him is the great world war, and all the petty feuds of race and class along the centuries, are the result of failure to love the neighbour BECAUSE of absence of right love and relationship to God. All earth's strife is but one evidence of the root-enmity—"the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God" (Rom. 8:7). Man is a sinner at heart, and has been at war with God from the day Adam sinned. He cannot make his peace with God, but—wonder of wonders—God Himself has provided a way whereby poor, burdened sinners can acquaint now themselves with Him and be at peace, for Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), and thus peace reigns through righteousness, and the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness, and full assurance for ever, and, being justified, by faith, we have peace with our God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). Hence it is ever "grace AND PEACE." No cheap gospel, but a free gospel: no mere offer, but a gift; not a help but a complete work. Reader, we have no other gospel, none other hope—but what have you?

O how blessed is the fact—Peace with God. No indemnity to pay: Christ has satisfied every claim. No judgment to face. We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). And no longer the enmity felt on our side, but a new attitude, with God's law written on the heart. Such is the change the gospel has brought, within as well as in relation to God, both now and to eternity. "Grace and peace." Ah, the music of the words. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). "Grace and peace," whatever circumstances come, they are only around. "Peace as a river," for the God of all grace is the God of peace (1 Pet. 5:10; Heb. 13:20), and He says to believing souls, as in Isaiah 54:10: "MY kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of MY peace be removed" (cf. John 14:27). Reader, are you content to remain without this priceless possession? Do not misuse God's present longsuffering: it is marvellous, but it is only SPACE FOR REPENTANCE, it is not eternal. Peace, by Him Who is "our Peace," Who died that there might be peace (Isa 53:5), is the only

permanency. Have you such peace with God, or have you not? There is no third alternative, there is no larger hope, there is no "after-chance." CHRIST NOW—or A LOST ETERNITY—WHICH?

P.W.H.

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES

EZEKIEL 34

11. "The LORD God, I, even I." Who else could? 12. There is no Shepherd like the Lord. "Among His sheep." "I will seek, . . . will deliver." 13. "I will." The Lord's word must be *literally* fulfilled. 14. The Mountains of *Israel*, three times mentioned. 15. Rest and refreshment, because God will *cause* both. 16. Divine care for the needy. Divine judgment for the self-satisfied. 17. O My flock. The spared remnant of Israel God's possession. He will make a distinction (cf. Matt. 25:32, 33). 18. The shepherds failed (see first part of chapter. Hence, the strong oppressed the weak. 19. The result of the absence of pastoral care. Are the churches without fault? 20. Cf. verse 17. 21. What a contrast with Hebrews 12:12, 13! 22. "I will save," but *also* "I will judge." Notice how often "I will" occurs, and observe the words of verse 24: "I the LORD have spoken." 23, 24. My servant David. A reminder of resurrection, but perhaps also bringing the Son of David before us. 25. Peace and Safety in a true sense. 26. I will cause (see verses 15 and 25). There can be no blessing apart from His causing. 'Tis all of grace. 27. Great fertility because of heaven-sent showers. 28. Safety because the oppressors will have been judged. 29. "A Plant of Renown." Is this a name of the Messiah? 30. "They shall know" (see verse 27). With them . . . even the House of *Israel*. Who should question the ultimate restoration of *Israel* in the Land (vv. 25, 27, 29)? 31. My flock are men. Thus God delights to speak of His chosen, whether Israel or the Church (cf. John 10).

EZEKIEL 36

1. He who prophesied to dry bones is now bidden to prophesy to mountains. 2. These words represent present-day conditions in Israel. 3. 4. "Because," "Therefore." God will act for His people. 5. Again, we notice how true this is at the present moment. 6. 7. "Because," "Therefore." The redemption of the land will be coupled with the judgment on Israel's enemies. 8. 9. "Branches" and "Fruit." "Tilled and sown." Because God saith, "I am for you." 10. All the house of Israel, that is, the literal earthly people. 11. Man and beast. Notice the words, "after your old estates." This is earthly. 12. "I will cause," a frequent word in this prophecy. God is the Initiator of all revival and restoration, whether it be in Israel or the Church.

EZEKIEL 37

1. A vision "in the spirit" (cf. Rev. 4:2). He was also among "bones"—a living one in the midst of death. 2. Very many, very dry. Utterly lifeless. 3. Can these bones live? Who can tell but God only? 4. A *seemingly* futile and foolish thing, but see 1 Cor. 1:21-25. 5. "I will" *must* lead to "ye shall." Why do we not rely upon God always, whatever the conditions and circumstances? He quickeneth whom He will. 6. Not only skeletons, there shall be bodies. A further reminder of resurrection. 7. The prophet did what God told him, and so must we. 8. God's word in course of fulfilment before his eyes. 9. The words "wind" and "breath" are the same in Hebrew (ruach) and this is also translated "spirit." Hence there

is here a picture of the work of the life-giving Holy Spirit. 10. Again, obedience leads to a fuller view of God's quickening work. 11. God explains the vision, which concerns the whole house of Israel. It is not the church, though the latter was formed by the same quickening Spirit (Acts 2). 12. The Land of Israel. 13. Spiritually, Israel is a dead nation; 14. but, "Ye shall live" is God's declaration. "Ye shall know." Life comes before knowledge. (cf. John 17: 3). 15. The Word came. The mark of a true prophet (note Luke 3:2). 16. An acted parable. 17. Were the sticks joined end to end? Then the union was hid in the hand of the prophet. 18. 19. God expected that the people would be desirous to know the interpretation. A willing ignorance is not pleasing to Him. "I would not that ye should be ignorant" (so wrote Paul). 20. The people were to see and hear. 21 to 24. Note, "one nation," "one king," "one shepherd," as the sticks became "one" in the prophet's hand. And are not the saints one in their Lord's hand? Cf. Rev. 1: 16, 20; 2: 1. 25. The land is clearly Canaan; not heaven is before us here. 26. A covenant, everlasting, and of peace (cf. Heb. 13: 20). The church has already entered into the blessings of the New Covenant. Israel is soon to partake of these blessings as a nation. 27. "My Tabernacle" (cf. My Sanctuary

v. 26). 28. Not only Israel, but the heathen shall know (see Hab. 2: 14).

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

- September
 1. Ezra 6: 16-22. Lev. 23: 4-8. 2 Chron. 35: 1-19. Luke 22: 7-20. 1 Cor. 5: 7-8.
 8. Ezra 7: 1-12. Ps. 40: 6-10. Matt. 7: 24-29. Jas. 1: 18-25. John 6: 62-69.
 15. Ezra 7: 13-22. 1 Chron. 29: 6-17. Ps. 72: 10, 11, 15. 2 Cor. 8: 1-12. 2 Cor. 5: 9-15.
 22. Ezra 7: 23-28. Pro. 21: 1-3. Ps. 127: 1. Matt. 16: 13-18. Rev. 21: 21-27.
 29. Ezra 8: 15-23. Acts 20: 28-32. 3 John 4 8. Acts 13: 1-5. Eph. 4-4-16.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

- October
 6. Ezra 8: 24-30, 35. Isa. 11: 1-5. Luke 16: 9-13. 1 Cor. 4: 2. Heb. 3: 1-6.
 13. Ezra 9: 1-9. Isa. 57: 14-21. John 17: 12-17. Gal. 4: 28-5: 1; 1 John 1: 5-10.
 20. Ezra 9: 10-15. Dan. 9: 9-19. Isa. 1: 5-6, 16-20. Isa. 53: 4-12. 2 Cor. 5: 21.
 27. Ezra 10: 1-14. Prov. 28: 13. Jas. 4: 4-10. 2 Cor. 7: 6-11. Heb. 10: 16-25.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—SEPTEMBER, 1957

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—OCTOBER, 1957

Day	READING		LEARNING		Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Jeremiah	Ephesians	Ezekiel	2 Peter		Ezekiel	2 Thess.	Ezekiel	Hebrews
1	50 1-16	1 1-12	34 11	3 1	1	11 1-13	3 1-18	37 10	1 13
2	17-32	13-23	12	2	2	14-25	1 1-20	11	14
3	33-46	2 1-10	13	3	3	12 1-16	2 1-15	12	2 1
4	51 1-16	11-22	14	4	4	17-28	3 1-16	13	2
5	17-32	3 1-21	15	5	5	13 1-16	4 1-16	14	3
6	33-49	4 1-16	16	6	6	17-23	5 1-13	15	4
7	50-64	17-32	17	7	7	14 1-11	14-25	16	5
8	52 1-11	5 1-16	18	8	8	12-23	6 1-21	17	6
9	12-23	17-33	19	9	9	15 1-8	2 Timothy 1 1-18	18	7
10	24-34	6 1-12	20	10	10	16 1-14	2 1-13	19	8
11	Lam. 1 1-22	13-24	21	11	11	15-34	14-26	20	9
12	2 1-22	Philippians 1 1-14	22	12	12	35-47	3 1-17	21	10
13	3 1-21	15-30	23	13	13	48-63	4 1-22	22	11
14	22-44	2 1-16	24	14	14	17 1-10	Titus 1 1-16	23	12
15	45-66	17-30	25	15	15	11-24	2 1-15	24	13
16	4 1-22	3 1-21	26	16	16	18 1-18	3 1-15	25	14
17	5 1-22	4 1-23	27	17	17	19-32	Philemon	26	15
18	Ezekiel 1 1-14	Colossians 1 1-17	28	18	18	19 1-14	Hebrews 1 1-14	27	16
19	15-28	18-29	29	19	19	20 1-14	2 1-18	28	17
20	2 1-10	2 1-23	30	20	20	15-26	3 1-19	38 1	18
21	3 1-14	3 1-11	31	21	21	27-38	4 1-16	2	3 1
22	15-27	12-25	37 1	22	22	39-49	5 1-14	3	2
23	4 1-17	4 1-18	2	23	23	21 1-17	6 1-20	4	3
24	5 1-17	1 Thess. 1 1-10	3	24	24	18-32	7 1-14	5	4
25	6 1-14	2 1-20	4	25	25	22 1-16	15-28	6	5
26	7 1-15	3 1-13	5	26	26	17-31	8 1-13	7	6
27	16-27	4 1-18	6	27	27	23 1-10	9 1-14	8	7
28	8 1-18	5 1-28	7	28	28	11-21	15-28	9	8
29	9 1-11	2 Thess. 1 1-12	8	29	29	22-30	10 1-14	10	9
30	10 1-22	2 1-17	9	30	30	31-39	15-27	11	10
				31	31	40-49	28-39	12	11

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:—61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.7.

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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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**"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.

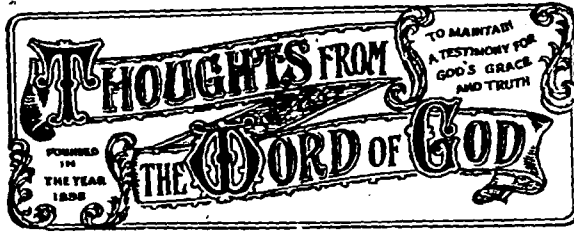
"CHRIST SHALL BE MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY"

"In a strait betwixt two"
Is the lover of Christ,
To depart or to stay—
Ah! What else hath sufficed?

For to be e'er with Christ,
"Far, far better" is this.
Though His service is blest,
In His presence is bliss.

If to stay be His will,
Ere there cometh the night,
Let my love be intense,
Let me serve with delight.

E.K.



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"Awake, awake, put on thy strength . . . put on thy beautiful garments."

Isaiah 52:1.

Encouragement may not always seem to betoken its name. The word is sometimes rendered, "ex-

hortation," and that is not always appreciated. Yet it is a most important factor in the work of "calling alongside," as the word literally means. And do we not need the admonition implied in the words of this text? And are not those solemn words addressed to saints—"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead" (Eph. 5:14). It is possible for a believer's testimony to be so indistinct as to render him indistinguishable from one still dead in sins; yes, even to be "taken alive" in the "snare of the devil" (2 Tim. 2:26). "I sleep, but my heart waketh" (Song 5:2) describes the condition of a saint not enjoying communion with the Lord, yet conscious that He speaketh. One may take comfort from the thought that even a drowsy saint will not sleep the sleep of death, but such a condition is far from satisfactory.

Hence the call to awake and put on strength (2 Tim. 1:2) and to put on our beautiful garments—"garments of salvation" and "robe of righteousness," arrayed in which we appear lovely before God. But how do we appear *before men*? Surely, believers should be distinct from the world around them. O to awake, to be revived, and to be what we are! The Lord enable, in the power of His Spirit!

Poem to Help Christian Experience—No. 250.

"HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY"

Rev. 19:7.

Lord Jesus— Thou art coming—
The day and hour are nearing—
In flaming fire, with judgment dire,
How solemn Thine Appearing!
Dread day for those unready,
For sinners unforgiven,
In mists to grope, and ev'ry hope
From them for ever riven.

Yet we, O Lord, who know Thee
In mercy, have a yearning
To see Thy Face, and O what grace
Will come with Thy Returning.
And quickly Thou art coming;
O grant Thy church revival,
That she may be, prepared for Thee,
Thy Bride, without a rival.

THE PERIL OF THE PENDULUM

PERCY W. HEWARD

Satan has a pendulum-swing as one of his most subtle temptations. He would ensnare us apparently *on the very line* of our obedience, if possible. Here is a believer enthusiastic for Christian witness. Good, but let him beware lest the tempter persuade him to neglect time for feeding on God's Words. Such an one is concerned that some others omit zeal for the unsaved (at least it seems so to him), and his life is a pendulum-swing to an equally dangerous sin. Again, here is a child of God who rejoices in God's election: and well he may! Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world! It is wonderful. But, rightly sorrowful that many seem to attribute salvation to man's freedom, let him not forget that it has pleased God through the proclamation of the truth to save souls. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" is *not* a bare statement (God Himself *can* save without human means), but it is meant to be a searching question. A third believer is pained at the sad admixtures of today. He sees those who bear Christ's precious Name in systems and societies where others deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, and his heart grieves, and *well it may*. "Why do they not step forth in faith?" But it is possible that, by a pendulum-swing, even *while* he is thus troubled over this sin, he omits to guard some other "gates" of his heart, and so he becomes too much occupied with others to see his own failures are growing. Concerned as to the *wrong position* of many, he has become "gradually" in a *wrong condition*, which is yet more harmful, because he has testified for his Lord as to love's separation. And yet, perhaps, he has left first love himself (Rev. 2:4). To grow up "unto Christ in *all things*" means much more than any of us realize (Eph. 4:15). The swing of the pendulum is a subtle contrivance of the enemy of souls, and we would not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). How important it is to seek grace, that we may be kept sensible to God's wishes. How solemn is the description in Isaiah 66:4. "They chose that in which *I delighted not*." Surely we need a keen joy in that which *delights* God's heart (Prov. 15:8).

In some cases the "swing of the pendulum" seems to take place suddenly, in an individual experience. "Outwardly" the cause is obscure. One

who has been devoted to the Lord's will apparently becomes much less devoted, and one who has urged separation from much that grieves Him is suddenly broadened. It is not easy to analyze all, but sometimes the failure is brought about *within*, long before it comes to the surface. The heart has become sick of unpopularity for Christ, and though *the skeleton of separation* has been "kept up," there is a lack of living power: hence the enemy can soon take the fortress, and there is speedy reaction. Or, it may be, that the records of blessing, where the Lord's arrangements are put aside, have been read without spiritual care, and has awakened a certain concern, which is right, followed by a disappointment in self which Satan skillfully transfers to a blaming of the narrow way. It is here that much discrimination is needed. The heart that says "we are right, because they have altered God's commands" is not spiritual. Surely the true attitude is humbling before God to see what part of any rejectedness and lack of outward success is through faithfulness to Him, and what part is through entwined unspirituality, and mannerisms, or lack of godly expectation. We would cling to our Lord's will, while seeking to learn even through those in manifest error, our own lack of earnestness, and *hopeful love*, or whatever it may be that hinders our usefulness in the Spirit. "Reaction" may, moreover, be brought about by a craving for "power," instead of a simple willingness for God's will, and for the undramatic but real power which is found in strength to continue pleasing God, through the little things of the unseen background. As soon as "it" fills our thoughts instead of a quiet desire to *please Himself*, we are in danger of a swing of the pendulum.

But, beloved friends, one of the thoughts that seems most needful must be lovingly emphasized again and again. We are all looking at others' errors in a self-righteous way *before we are aware*, and we *all* find it easy to reply to the sins of others by different *sins*. The true response should be love's obedience, and yearning for *their* revival and *our* own. Only as we are seeking, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to keep from turning *to the right hand and to the left* (Isa. 30:21) can we bring God glory, as we should and would. We need a right position and a right condition, to the praise of His glory.

"YEA"

A Bible Word Study

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent; and hast revealed them unto babes; YEA, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

"Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said unto them, YEA; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? YEA, I say unto you, and more than a prophet."

"But I will forewarn you Whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, Which after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; YEA, I say unto you, fear Him."

(Luke 10:21; Matt. 11:26; Matt. 21:16; Luke 7:26; Matt. 11:9; Luke 12:5.)

Our Lord's whole life was one YEA to the Father. He delighted in His will, and provided salvation for those who had nought but NAY to His righteous requirements. And His: "Yea, I say unto you," again and again, reminds that He spoke, and still speaks, with authority. He is our Lord. His words are binding on His servants.

"And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, YEA, LORD."

"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, YEA, LORD; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

In these two instances, the Lord Jesus delighted in the faith, particularly that shown by the Gentile woman. (Matt 9:28; 15:27; Mark 7:28.) Her faith is marked by a recognizing that she had no claim on the Lord for blessing, being outside the Jewish fold, thus anticipating the Holy Spirit's words in Ephesians 2:11-13. He loves to be trusted. May we love to trust Him.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believeth thou this? She saith unto Him, YEA, LORD."

"Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, YEA, LORD. Then said He unto them, Therefore . . ."

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, YEA, LORD; Thou knowest that I love Thee." (John 11:27; Matt. 13:51; John 21:15-17.) Searching are the questions of the Lord Jesus. We cannot give evasive answers to Him Whose eyes are as a flame of fire, Who trieth the reins and the hearts. What is the quality of our faith, what the reality of our understanding, what the sincerity of our love? Observe that, in two of these instances, there is a "therefore" and a "then." If there is spiritual understanding, a "bringing forth" out of one's treasures will follow. He who loves the Shepherd will feed His flock.

Can every reader say, in truth, "YEA, LORD" to His loving enquiries?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMNS

Reeds and Rushes

We did not finish our little talk on this subject, so, if you are not tired of it, we will write a little more about reeds and rushes, as the Bible speaks of them. *Whatever* we read therein is "written for our learning." And we do not need to be clever, to know much about "natural history," in order to enjoy and understand the Holy Scriptures, because they are written in such a way that even children love to hear them read. So, if you have Christian parents who love the Bible, and seek to explain to you what is therein, how happy you should be, for this is a great blessing.

You remember that the book of Job speaks of "mire and water" as where the flags and rushes grow. In chapter 40, we read of "fens," that is swampy places, where there are "reeds," "willows of the brook," and "shady trees." How pleasant this all sounds in our ears. But these green growing plants and trees are a shelter for a huge and strong animal, called "be-he-moth." We cannot be sure which animal is meant, but some think it is the "hippo-pot-a-mus," because it loves the water. Why did God speak about these things to Job? It was to make him feel how small he was, and how great God is, Who made such creatures.

But I think we may learn a further lesson. Supposing you were walking along a river-side in a foreign land, and enjoying the sight of the rushes and trees lining its banks, and suddenly a huge animal, hidden by them, appeared; would it not give you a great fright? Yes, I think anyone might be afraid. But how many things there are in this world very pleasant to the eye, but hiding something very harmful. How my dear young friends need wisdom as they go through life, that they may not be taken with things of the world, the things they see. The only real safety is to trust in the Lord Jesus; first, for salvation and the forgiveness of sins and then for guidance all through life.

The Betrayal and Death of the Lord Jesus

Twice in the record given to us in the end of the Gospels is the "reed" mentioned. First, in Matthew 27:29-30. "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head." Is it not enough to make us weep when we read of such cruelty to Him Who was "meek and lowly"? The reed which is easily broken, but strong enough to give painful blows, was meant to shew the weakness of the Lord's Kingdom, but that is what *man* thinks. God has said, concerning Christ: "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2);

and again, it is written: "He must reign."

When He was on the cross, He said, just before He died: "I thirst." (John 19:28.) "And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink" (Matt. 27:48). The Lord was "lifted up" high on the cross, and this was the only way in which He could be given the vinegar.

All this should melt our hearts as we read, but how unfeeling many of us know ourselves to be. May our hearts be melted, not only with grief for His sufferings, but with "godly sorrow" for the sins that caused them.

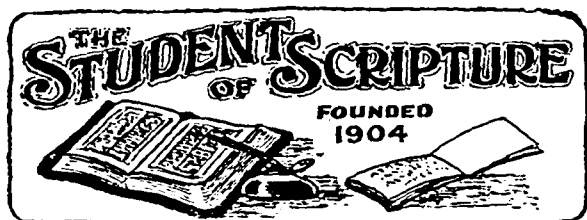
A Broken Reed

Twice we read of a "broken reed" and both refer to Egypt. The Assyrian general taunted Hezekiah with trusting "in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it" (Isa. 36:6). But he was wrong. Hezekiah trusted in God. But Israel, under other kings, did trust in Egypt, and this is what God said: "And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder; and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and made all their loins to be at a stand". (Ezek. 29: 6-7). You can imagine how, if you had to climb a hill, and used a stick to help you, and it suddenly broke, your bones might be broken or put out of joint. So we are to learn not to trust in ourselves or in people, but in God only, when we need help. It is foolish to trust in man's word or in our own works for salvation. Only Christ is "mighty to save."

A Bruised Reed

"A bruised reed shall He not break" (Isa. 42:3). We know who HE is from Matthew 12:20. Believers have great trials, they are tempted by Satan, and sometimes they fail, and become "bruised"; a bruised reed may seem a worthless thing, but the Lord can heal. He will be very patient. It is not His way to "break." If you are a young believer and feel very weak and full of failure, do not be discouraged. Confess your sin to the Lord, for "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." "He restoreth my soul," is what David said, and his Lord and Shepherd is yours also. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2).

We have come to the end of our talk, but may it not end here. The writer desires nothing so much as that young readers may be saved, and young believers built up on their most holy faith. The Lord grant this! Amen!



THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

(concluded)

The Sorrow of God over His people

The deep feelings of the prophet, to whom was revealed the coming punishment of Israel and Judah, have already been mentioned, but was he not, whilst personally enduring a burden of grief, in fellowship with God in this state of heart and mind? O how little are saints in harmony with God's mind and feelings in regard to the sad condition of mankind and especially in regard to the low estate of His children today and the divisions among them! God does not act hastily. He waited long and patiently before dealing drastically with Israel. So "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all such come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). How often that word "repent" occurs in the epistles to the churches of Asia (Rev. 2 and 3).

Although there may be a note of reproof in the words, "O thou that art named the house of Jacob," grace is manifested in the repeated phrase "My people" (2:8-9; 3:3-5; 6:3-5) and "His people" (6:2). God calls them, therefore, to remember and repent (ch. 6 and see Rev. 2:5; 3:3). In tender pleading accents He calls, "O My people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against Me?" (6:3). He reminds them of their having been *redeemed* from servitude, of His leading them by His chosen servants, of His *righteousness* in turning the intended curse by Balaam into blessing, for they had forgotten His work of grace and power. He anticipates the questionings of their hearts, as to the value of *appointed* sacrifices, and as to the vanity and the evil of *unappointed* sacrifices, and declares to them "what is good" and what He, "the LORD," "the high God" requires (6:6-8). The Lord Jesus, be it noted, twice calls attention to the words of the prophets, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13; 12:7). And how He, and only He; understood the mind of God is made clear by His Own words, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come" (Ps. 40: 6-7 and see the Holy Spirit's exposition of this gracious declaration in Heb. 10).

Having reminded Israel of past mercies, the impossibility of transgression and sin being atoned for by human effort, however religious, and of access to Himself not being through her own righteousness, God calls to repentance, in the words, "Hear ye the rod and Who hath appointed it" (6:9). That such a call fell upon deaf ears is seen in the captivities of Israel and Judah, by the Assyrian and the Chaldean respectively. In the end of the age, Christ appeared. He too called for repentance, using again and again the writings of the prophets in His appeals to men, but there was no response, except from a few—a "little flock." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23:37). "And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:41-42). The succeeding prophecy was literally fulfilled, and Israel once more went into a "captivity." For centuries have they suffered, but "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew," and Micah, who saw the defection of God's nation, also *foresaw* their ultimate restoration, for God's word "came to" him; much has already been fulfilled, and the rest shall surely come to pass.

The Coming of Messiah

Chapter 5:2 is a well-known prophecy of the first advent of Christ. That became history almost two milleniums ago. But verse 3 tells of an "until," that is, of an interval of time, beginning with the rejection of Messiah—the Judge of Israel Who was smitten (5:1)—until the time of Israel's "travail" (see also ch. 4:9-10). This coming painful experience is often mentioned in Scripture, for example, in Jeremiah 30:6-7). Today Israel is once more a nation in their own land, but in unbelief, and soon to undergo severe chastisement, at the hand of "the Assyrian" (5:5-6). See also Isaiah 10:5, 12, 24). But when Messiah returns, as He surely will, "This Man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land." "Thus shall He deliver from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders" (5:5-6). Note also chapter 7:12, and the further words of God, "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard" (5:15). The gathering of the nations against Zion (4:11) would seem to be that also mentioned in Zechariah 14:2, but they little realize that God is working out His purpose by their means. Revelation 17:17 throws light hereupon.

The Second Coming of Messiah

If there is an "until," covering "this present age," there is also a "then" (5:3, and notice the recurrence of this word in Matthew 24). Not only will judgment be executed upon the enemies of Israel, but God "will turn again; He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." What other meaning can these words have than that God has a purpose of grace towards Israel?

The sins of the nation shall be dealt with "in that Day" (5:10, and following verses) for God has determined to have a *righteous* people on this earth, a people that He can use as His witnesses to the nations (Isa. 60:21; 66:19). They will also have power over the nations (5:8 and 7:16-17) even as the Lord Jesus, Who will rule all nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). At the same time, "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (5:7). Government will be just and firm, but mercy will be combined with justice, for in that Day, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Ps. 85:11).

And why may all this blessing be confidently expected? Because of the Divine purpose expressed in the last words of this prophecy: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

Conclusion

In the foregoing, it will be noticed that quotations from the prophetic utterances are not given in their consecutive order as recorded, for promises and warnings, prophecies and reproofs occur in close connection. Probably the servant of the Lord repeated his message in varying terms at different periods. The prophets are generally thus characterized, that is, by a retracing of their steps, and a reiteration of the message in *parallel* visions and declarations, not necessarily in chronological sequence. We may well close this essay with the memorable words, "Who is a God like unto Thee, That pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy" (7:18).

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

No. 48

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Acts 20:24.

There are variations in the manuscript; the text followed is that adopted by Tregelles.

BUT (all'); strong adversative conjunction, *alla*, "a" being omitted, because the next word begins with a vowel.

NONE (*oudenos*); negative adjective, genitive, from *oudeis*, -*demia*, -*den*; compound of *oude* (not) and *heis* (one); meaning literally "of nothing."

OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME (not in text).

NEITHER (not in text).

COUNT 1 (*logou poioumai*); genitive case of *logos* (a word, but sometimes used in the sense of "an account"—Luke 16:2 or "a reason") the verb is from *poieo* (I make, and is in the present tense, middle voice; the meaning is:—I am making for myself).

MY (not in text).

LIFE (*ten psuchen*); article and noun, feminine accusative, from *psuche* (soul). See Matt. 16:25; Luke 14:26; 17:33; John 12:25, where the word is translated "life."

DEAR (*timian*); adjective, feminine, accusative, to agree with *psuche*; from *timios*, -*a*, -*on* (honourable, estimable, precious).

TO MYSELF (*emautoi*); reflexive pronoun, dative, from *emautou* (of myself).

SO THAT (*hos*); relative adverb, meaning, "as," "so as," "how."

I MIGHT FINISH (*teleiosai*); verb aorist, infinitive, from *teleioo* (to complete, finish, bring to an end or goal, make perfect). Translate, "to have finished."

MY (*mou*); personal pronoun, from *ego* (I); genitive case. This word comes after "course."

COURSE (*ton dromon*); noun, masculine, accusative, from *dromos* (a running, race, or place of running, a stadium) it gives the ending of such words as *aerodrome*.

WITH JOY (not in text).

AND (*kai*); conjunction.

THE (*ten*); article, feminine, accusative.

MINISTRY (*diakonian*); noun, feminine; accusative case, because like *dromon*, it is the object of the verb "finish." From *diakonia* (ministry). See 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor 4:1.

WHICH (*hen*); relative pronoun, feminine to agree with "ministry." Accusative, because the object of "I received."

I HAVE RECEIVED (*elabon*); verb, aorist, from *lambano* (to receive). Translate, "I received."

OF (para); preposition, meaning "beside, alongside"; it may govern all three oblique cases. In this instance, it governs the genitive, and signifies, "from the side of," "from near," "from with."

THE LORD (tou kuriou); article and noun, genitive, masculine, from ho kurios (the Lord).

JESUS (Iesou); proper noun, genitive, from Iesous. These last seven words (five in Greek) show clearly that the Lord Jesus alone was the Source of Paul's apostolic calling and ministry. It was *from* Him, and *through* Him (Gal. 1:1). It consisted of testifying the gospel of the *grace of God* and preaching the *kingdom of God* (see next verse).

TO TESTIFY (diamarturasthai); verb, infinitive, aorist, from a compound of dia (through) and marturomai (to bear witness). Hence, diamarturomai means "to bear a testimony through and through," "declare solemnly and earnestly" (see Luke 16:28; Acts 2:40; and other places).

THE GOSPEL (to euaggelion); noun, neuter, accusative, with article. The noun is a compound of eu (well or good) and aggelion (a message); the verb aggelō means to be a messenger, to bring a message, announce. Hence, "a good message or tidings."

OF THE GRACE (tes charitos); noun, with article, feminine, genitive, from he charis (the grace).

OF GOD (tou Theou); noun, with article, masculine, genitive, from ho Theos (God). Genitive Case may signify substance or origin, as well as possession. Grace is the substance of the good tidings (gospel). God is the Only Source of Grace.

Note:—In the earlier part of this verse, it would seem as if some words are wanting. The sense of the passage is: "I am making of no account for myself the soul (as) dear to myself." Self in Paul was in the background. As he said later (ch. 21:13) "I am ready . . . to die . . . for the Name of the Lord Jesus."

"IS IT COMELY?"

If a brother, or a number of brothers, entered a gathering of believers, having the head covered, and insisted on remaining so, it would be wrong, and recognized generally as unseemly. The action would be judged by the oversight or by a presiding minister and "church-officers," and firmly dealt with. But why? What authority would they have for disciplinary action? Custom, or tradition? Surely, Holy Scripture is the final appeal for all matters affecting the assemblies of God.

The matter is important, because there appears to be ignorance on the part of many, as to what the Scripture has to say on the question of baring or covering the head in acts of worship. No doubt

many, if not all, sisters would resent the hypothetical happening as described above, but on what ground? Further, are those who rightly believe that women should wear a head-covering in times of prayer and worship sure of a Scriptural warrant for so doing? Moreover, do those sisters who habitually attend meetings with heads uncovered realize they are disobedient to the plain command of the Bible?

Let us turn to 1 Corinthians, chapter 11. The first verse tells us that Paul received "ordinances" to be delivered to the saints. Hence, the arguments sometimes used that the instruction herein given as to head-covering was only for the time then present, or that Paul was uttering his own opinion, must fail. Were they tenable, however, a man would have as much right to wear his hat as a woman to discard hers. It is strange that the inconsistency is not perceived.

"You recognize, then," one might say, "that women may pray and prophesy in meetings." Nay! For a few chapters further on we read, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (14:34). Silence means *silence*, even as it does in regard to a brother (vv. 28-39). Hence, chapter 11 does not deal with "church" gatherings. Philip's four daughters prophesied, but we are not to assume it was public or in the assembly. If we are willing to take a hint, it will be from the words of the apostle, "But if any one seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (11:16). If then, chapter 11 deals with "extra" church meetings, and not the usual gatherings, as for example, on the Lord's Day, how important it is that behaviour of both sexes should not be less reverent during the latter than during the former! Hence, we conclude that the words of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, are binding at all times and in all places.

But what does the passage actually teach? First, the Headship of Christ, and, in a secondary sense, the headship of man. Equality of sex is not recognized, but the inter-dependence of man and woman is set forth. "In Christ," "there is neither male nor female," but in "church" relations, there are clearly marked distinctions. Secondly, the behaviour of "man" and "woman" in spiritual exercises:—"Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered, *dishonoureth his head*. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth, with her head uncovered, *dishonoureth her head*." There are no conditions or exemptions. A woman unwilling to submit ought to be shorn or shaven, for that is equivalent to being uncovered (v. 5). Since, however, that would be a shame, *the only alternative* is to wear a covering on the head.

"But," says one, "her *hair* is given her for a *covering*" (see v. 15). This, however, is not the same word. The word used previously suggests a "veil." Even so, verse 15 cannot contradict verse 6, wherein the natural "covering" is to be shorn if a hat or the equivalent is not worn.

Let the sister in Christ consider this:—If she would be grieved and rightly so, should a brother minister the Word or pray, having his head covered, many a brother in Christ is constantly grieved by observing women without such covering in meetings. Natural courtesy and dignity hinders every man from offending against the practice of baring the head when coming into an assembly of saints. Is it not a grave discourtesy on the part of woman to offend in the manner so many do in the present day? But it is more than that. It is unbecoming in the sight of God., and must bring "loss" at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The inspired apostle challenges the saints in these words: "Judge in yourselves (or among yourselves: is it comely that a woman *pray unto God* uncovered?" It would seem, therefore, that a sister in Christ, when praying, even in the home, and also when alone, ought to wear a covering on the head. Many are known to the writer who take the words as they stand, and act upon them. The Lord will reward them.

SOME VEILED PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

"In the unrolling of the Book it is written of Me" (Ps. 40:7). "They are they which testify of Me," saith the Lord Jesus of the Holy Scriptures. He is, indeed, to be seen in every part thereof, but there is a need that the eyes of our understanding be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). Some of the prophecies are so plain, especially since the Messiah has come, and the later Scriptures have been given to the redeemed. The words of Isaiah 53 are clear, as also are those of Zechariah 11:12-13 and 13:7, even though Israel is still blinded as to their having been already fulfilled.

But there are some foreshowings of the first advent of our Lord, which are not so clear on the surface, and which may be regarded by some believers as not strictly applicable to Him. Yet let the texts be examined, and let there be dependence on the Holy Spirit. May nought written by man be taken for granted. The writer desires nothing but the glory of God, and that Christ may be exalted. If any reader demurs to what is contained in the meditations following, the writer will be glad to be corrected, if need be.

The Incarnation

When God, in response to Moses' request, told him His Name, He said, "I am that I am." The R.V.

margin gives: "I will be That I will be," the translation also adopted by Rabbi Leeser. A possible rendering is "I will *become* that I will *become*." The words are so comprehensive that not only do they declare the eternal existence of God—from everlasting to everlasting—"I AM"; but they also express the Divine will and purpose. "My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa 46:10). He had already promised that "the Seed of the woman" should bruise Satan's head, but here there is a further unfolding—perhaps not realized by Moses—that salvation is to be wrought out by Himself. Since the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the One Mediator between God and men, and all things have been committed into the hands of the Son (1 Tim. 2:5; John 3:35), it may be that He Who came down to reveal Himself and make known the Holy Name and Divine purpose to Moses, was the Son of God.

"In the beginning was the Word . . . The Word was God . . . the Word *became* flesh." And why? "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." And again, we read, "Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, . . . *became* in the likeness of men . . . *became* obedient unto death." The Lord Jesus came to do the will of God. His will was exactly in line with that of the Father. Hence, it may be said that the salvation of the elect was of the will of the Triune God. "I will be that I will be." "In which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 2:15; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 10:10).

What a sure resting-place has the believer in the unshakeable will of God! "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Rom. 9:15). "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12). Further, how encouraged should Moses have been by the promise, "Certainly I will be with thee," since that very Name he was to declare to Israel—"I will be hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:12-14). And may we not, beloved fellow-saints, rest upon this promise also, as we obey the commands of our Lord. Who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

The writer remembers the former editor quoting Proverbs 30:19, the last clause, as actually reading, "The way of a mighty one in a virgin." Reference to the Hebrew confirms that this is a literal rendering, and may be a hidden prophecy parallel with Isaiah 7:14 coupled with chapter 9:6. The thought is commended to the consideration of readers.

The Dependence of Christ on the Father

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). Among these things were hunger and thirst in the wilderness, into which He had been sent by the Spirit. In the wilderness of old Israel was led and fed by God, and near the end of their forty years' wandering, Moses recalled God's merciful dealings with them. "And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger . . . that He might make thee know that man (lit. "The Man") doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man (The Man) live." Israel failed lamentably through want of faith in the God Who had redeemed them, but where they failed—in the wilderness—Christ triumphed gloriously. These words He used in His defence against Satan's suggestion that, though He were Son, His Father had neglected Him. Man, signally blessed as Israel, fell short. "The Man," dependent and faithful, overcame. It is interesting to notice that it is "The Man" in Matthew 4:4 as in Deuteronomy 8:3. So, as the first Adam failed in the garden, it was in a garden the last Adam overcame. Hence we may rightly infer that these words spoken by Moses were truly a prophecy of "the Man Christ Jesus."

The Obedience of Christ

"Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man (lit. The Man) do, he shall live in them" (Lev. 18:5). A continuance of life depends upon a continuance of obedience, under the Law. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, that The Man having done shall live in it (righteousness)" (Rom. 10:5). Moses gave the Law, but he was also a prophet, and in this he was unique, for no other prophet gave a law—they only expounded that which had been written. In this he was a type of "That Prophet" Who said, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." May we not say that the words of Leviticus 18:5 contain a hidden prophecy of "Him that should come"? "For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:5). There is a richness and a fulness in these words, for they not only mean that one having Christ as Saviour no longer has law against him; but it would seem also that, in the giving of the Law, Christ was the End, that is, He alone would fulfil it. Is not this part of the teaching of Galatians 3:19? "Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgressions till The Seed (see verse 16) should come to Whom the promise was made."

"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" was a question twice asked of the Lord Jesus. In

reply to both enquirers, He referred them to the commandments, for life depends on obedience, in the sphere of Law. To go on living here would require a *complete* obedience. Since man has not obeyed, and cannot render such perfection to God, his position is hopeless. Hence his need of a Substitute, in the Person of "The Man." He "has done," and is entitled to life. But He has laid down His life voluntarily (John 10:17-18) and has thereby made propitiation for sins (1 John 4:10). But the perfect obedience rendered in His life, meriting eternal life, necessitated His resurrection. Hence, the salvation of the elect is gloriously complete. They are pardoned, they are reckoned righteous, they live, all because of "The Man" that "hath done."

Christ the Sin-Bearer

"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" (Micah 7:18). We began this meditation with a Scripture emphasizing Deity, God Who wills, and will not be frustrated in His purpose. Then we have thought of "the Man," the Son of God, dependent and obedient; delighting in the Father's will. Now, in the verse just quoted, we return to a re-emphasis on Deity. Though pardon is only received by men through the work of Christ, the "Word became flesh" may not be so apparent here. Yet, when it is remembered that the word "pardoneth" is actually "*bear*eth" in the sense of lifting up, at once the need of Incarnation is perceived. For God, in heaven, could not "bear" iniquity. Yet He Who is GOD did *bear* our sins in His own body on the tree. There He died in the stead of a great multitude which no man can number. He must have been "partaker of flesh and blood" in order to die, and yet He was God. His Deity He never laid aside, but He voluntarily limited Himself, becoming subordinate to His Father in His mediatorial office. So Isaiah testifies "He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He *bore* the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). These words will be uttered by a repentant Israel in a coming day, as will also those of Micah 7:18 But sinners of the Gentiles have already entered into the meaning of them, as well as those following: "He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He *delighteth* in mercy."

Doubtless, there are many other Scriptures with such veiled foreshowings of "the Man Christ Jesus," as Genesis 2:18 and Psalm 1, but those who love Him will often have glimpses of Himself as they meditate on the words of God in the earlier part of Scripture.

OUR LORD'S ANTICIPATION OF GLORY

(concluded from page 27)

In His prayer, the Lord Jesus uttered the further wondrous words, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Yet He still had "a death of a cross" before Him." Upon that cross He was "made a curse for us"; He Who knew no sin was "made sin for us." Solemn, necessary, intervening event, that His elect might be redeemed. He is the "One Mediator between God and men."

The words of Hebrews 12 are *not*, "for the cross that was before Him," but the joy. Rarely do we read of the joy or rejoicing of Christ. He sighed. He groaned, He was "sore amazed" and "troubled in spirit." His joy was future, yet certain, for the "glory" must "follow."

In all this, we see the Lord, not only as our Redeemer, but as our Example. How often it has been thoughtlessly—yet confidently—said to believers who are taught rightly to expect certain signs preceding the Lord's Second Coming, "If you expect intervening events, you are not looking for Christ." How wounding are such remarks, and how utterly contradictory to the expectation of our Lord and the experience of such as Paul and Peter. The disciple is not greater than his Lord. How wrong it is to ignore the holy example of Christ, Who ever taught His disciples to be ready to endure the same kind of sufferings as He, except His vicarious suffering. His teaching is constantly in such a strain.

Is it truly "faith" which expects to be suddenly, "at any moment," caught away from a tribulation which is designed to purify, try, and make white. That is a grounded faith which, knowing that suffering and tribulation precede glory, can endure tribulation with the eye all the while, "looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," and yet can say "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

We *have been* sanctified (Heb. 10:10). No legal acceptance can be fuller than that of a perfectly righteous one. No saintliness can excel that which is called ours. The new nature, moreover, cannot be improved or ruined. The old nature cannot be made spiritual. The conflict between flesh and spirit (Gal. 5:17) continues.

But if we were only "old nature" before salvation, where were *personality and responsibility*? "Ah, then," some will say, "you acknowledge an unfallen *ego*, which may believe before regeneration." Nay. The Lord reveals that the *redeemed person* is, prior to His inworking, unchangingly linked to the flesh. These things may be mysterious, but it is our wisdom to accept Scripture, and to act accordingly.

When, by the grace of God, we are quickened, there is a *new creation*, and the responsible "I" can join itself with the flesh or the Spirit. By the grace of God, it is often constrained to the latter. But sometimes He permits choosing for oneself. Oh for the conquering of *free will*! Surely this is the wish of God's people, and yet actions often suggest a delight in self-choosing. Therefore, though *nature* cannot be altered, the tending of the *person* toward the new life is spiritual progress, and the inclination otherwise, backsliding. Hence there may be progressive sanctification or retrogressive worldliness, and these are in accord with the results of the conflict between evil and good, through the decision of the "I." Thus a believer, having two natures, appears, as it were, to be two persons (see Romans 7). The words of Hebrews 10:14 refer to this sanctification, and the succeeding verses show the works of "those who are being sanctified." They love the laws of God (verse 16) and draw near with covenant confidence.

It is one of Satan's schemes to take the eyes of God's people off one part of God's truth. Hence, some forget their perfection in Christ, and others the holy pressing toward the mark (Phil. 3). If there be not more holiness of character and of action than there were twelve months since, we may well ask whence we have fallen, and if we ever really knew Him who expects growth (Heb. 5:12), and Who has likened His people (Psalm 1, Colossians 1, and elsewhere) to plants and trees.

PERCY W. HEWARD.

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES
EZEKIEL 38

13. These names are all found in Genesis 10. Not only is Gog against Israel, but at this time against others. 14. Israel "dwelling safely," but not that of Jer. 23:6; for these are not the days of Messiah's rule. 15, 16. In the *latter days*, and note the Divine judgment, using evil men. 17. This appears to be an allusion to Antichrist. 18. But God will smite those who are against Israel. 19, 20. A great shaking, affecting the earth, men, and creatures. 21. Against *him*—a certain person. 22. Note "him" repeatedly (and compare Rev. 16:20-21). 23. "Thus." God will get honour and fame to Himself.

EZEKIEL 39

1. Who can stand if God is "against" (contrast Rom. 8:31). 2. "I will." God is in complete control. 3, 4, 5. "I will" leads to "thou shalt," for "I have spoken." 6. "Confidently" (see margin) and compare 1 Thess. 5: 3,7. The heathen shall know, but Israel shall know and *reverence* the Holy Name. 8. The day *come*, the judgment *done*. Note again, "I have spoken." 9, 10. Seven years *burning*, and seven months *burying* (v. 12). Strange that so much wood is to be used in weapons in that coming day. 11. A place of graves for antichristian hosts (contrast ch. 37:12-13). 12, 13. The glorifying of God a day of renown to *them*. An important principle here. 14, 15. God will have nothing of uncleanness in His sight. 16. The land defiled

by blood needs to be cleansed (see Num. 35:33). 17-20. This seems to be parallel with Rev. 19:17-21. The Supper of the Great God. 21. The heathen shall see. 22. Israel shall know. 23. The heathen shall know why, perhaps as a warning. 24. Sin brings chastisement, and hiding of God's face. 25. But *Jacob* shall know Divine mercy. 26. When they dwelt safely (see 28:11). This is not millennial blessing, for they have trespassed and shame. 27, 28. When . . . Then. 29. The secret—reconciliation and regeneration.

EZEKIEL 43

1. "He brought me"—a frequent sentence. 2. The glory of God returns after a long period of absence. 3. The glory overpowers, as the Holy Presence ever does, as with Daniel and John. 4. Into the house. 5. The Spirit brought *him* into the inner court. God filled the house. 6. But he heard Him speaking—"unto me." "The man." "Who was he? (see ch. 40:3). 7. He (the LORD) said. In the midst (see Zeph. 3:17). 8, 9. Holiness precedes the realized presence of God. 10. Divine revealing should lead to His people's contrition. 11. "If"—then further unveiling (cf. John 14:21-23). 12. The law of God's House . . . Most Holy (see Ps. 93:5).

EZEKIEL 44

9. Circumcision in *heart*, not only flesh (note Rom. 2:28-29). 10. Failure remembered, even as believers may suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. 11. Yet not shut out from the Kingdom, nor excluded from service. 12. They shall bear their iniquity. Here is a parallel with 2 Cor. 5:10. 13. Shall bear their *shame* (see 1 John 2:28).

14. A form of service, not the highest. 15. Faithfulness remembered and rewarded. Near unto ME, before ME. 16. An especial nearness—into MY Sanctuary. The lesson for believers, in view of the Bema of Christ, should be obvious.

EZEKIEL 47

1. The altar the source of the living waters. All blessing flows from the atonement made by Christ, and accepted by the Father.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

November, 1957

- 3. Ezra 10:16-9. Deut. 7:2-9. Lev. 5:5, 14-19. 2 Cor. 7:8-11. 1 John 2:1-6.
- 10. Neh. 1:1-11. 2 Chron. 6:36-39. Phil. 4:6-7. Matt. 6:5-18. 1 John 1:5-10.
- 17. Neh. 2:1-8. Prov. 15:28-29. Matt. 7:7-12. Psalms 66:16-20. Eph. 3:14-21.
- 24. Neh. 2:9-20. Psalms 51:17-19. 1 Cor. 16:9. Rev. 21:10-21. 1 Cor. 3:9-15.

December, 1957

- 1. Neh. 3:1-12. 1 Cor. 15:58. Col. 3:23-24. Jas. 1:22-25. John 14:12-15.
- 8. Neh. 3:20-23, 28-30. Gen. 18:17-19. Josh. 24:14-18. Heb. 3:1-16. John 17:4.
- 15. Neh. 4:1-18. Acts 5:33-42. Eph. 6:10-18. 2 Cor. 10:1-5. Rev. 2:1-3; 3:8-9.
- 22. Neh. 5:1-13. Deut. 15:7-11. Psalms 15:5. Rom. 13:8-14. Psalms 40:6-10.
- 29. Neh. 5:14-19. Mic. 6:8. Psalms 15. Acts 20:31-35. Heb. 6:9-12.

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
"IF THE LORD WILL"—NOVEMBER, 1957

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS
"IF THE LORD WILL"—DECEMBER, 1957

Day	READING		LEARNING		Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Ezekiel	Hebrews	Ezekiel	Hebrews		Ezekiel	John	Ezekiel	Hebrews
1	24 1-14	11 1-12	38 13	3 12	1	40 13-23	2 John 1-13	39 20	5 7
2	15-27	13-29	14	13	2	24-38	3 John 1-14	21	8
3	25 1-17	30-40	15	14	3	39-49	Jude 1-25	22	9
4	26 1-21	12 1-17	16	15	4	41 1-12	Revelation 1 1-20	23	10
5	27 1-18	18-29	17	16	5	13-26	2 1-17	24	11
6	19-36	13 1-14	18	17	6	42 1-20	18-29	25	12
7	28 1-10	15-25	19	18	7	43 1-12	3 1-13	26	13
8	11-26	James 1 1-27	20	19	8	13-27	14-22	27	14
9	29 1-21	2 1-26	21	4 1	9	44 1-14	4 1-11	28	6 1
10	30 1-12	3 1-18	22	2	10	15-31	5 1-14	29	2
11	13-26	4 1-17	23	3	11	45 1-15	6 1-17	43 1	3
12	31 1-18	5 1-20	39 1	4	12	16-25	7 1-17	2	4
13	32 1-16	1 Peter 1 1-12	2	5	13	46 1-12	8 1-13	3	5
14	17-32	13-25	3	6	14	13-24	9 1-21	4	6
15	33 1-16	2 1-10	4	7	15	47 1-12	10 1-11	5	7
16	17-33	11-25	5	8	16	13-23	11 1-19	6	8
17	34 1-10	3 1-22	6	9	17	48 1-7	12 1-17	7	9
18	11-19	4 1-19	7	10	18	8-14	13 1-18	8	10
19	20-31	5 1-14	8	11	19	15-20	14 1-20	9	11
20	35 1-15	2 Peter 1 1-21	9	12	20	21-28	15 1-8	10	12
21	36 1-15	2 1-11	10	13	21	29-35	16 1-21	11	13
22	16-27	12-22	11	14	22	Daniel 1 1-21	17 1-18	12	14
23	28-38	3 1-18	12	15	23	2 1-18	18 1-14	44 9	15
24	37 1-14	1 John 1 1-10	13	16	24	19-30	15-24	10	16
25	15-28	2 1-17	14	5 1	25	31-49	19 1-21	11	17
26	38 1-13	18-29	15	2	26	3 1-18	20 1-15	12	18
27	14-23	3 1-12	16	3	27	19-30	21 1-27	13	19
28	39 1-16	13-24	17	4	28	4 1-18	22 1-21	14	20
29	17-29	4 1-21	18	5	29	19-27	Matthew 1-1-25	15	7 1
30	40 1-12	5 1-21	19	6	30	28-37	2 1-23	16	2
					31	5 1-16	3 1-17	47 1	3

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:—61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.7.
Phone: Cranewood 4196. 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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FREE

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"The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men." Psalm 11 : 4.

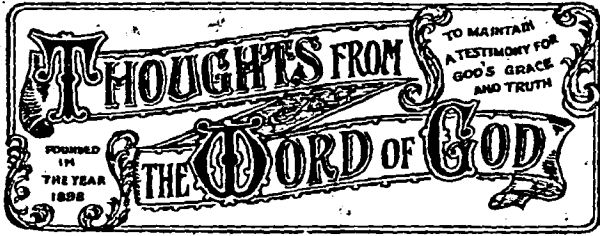
"ALTOGETHER LOVELY"

Lovely in true obedience,
No failure and no flaw
Found place in God's beloved Son,
Becoming under law.

Lovely in His One Offering,
"Savour of rest" was He,
Ascending to the Father when
He suffered on the tree.

Lovely in intercession now
Within His Father's throne;
His righteousness and precious blood
He pleadeth for His own.

E.K.



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

“The First and the Last, Which was dead, and is alive.” Do we always have in mind, beloved fellow-saints, that we have, at God’s right hand, a living Lord and Advocate, a High Priest, Who “continueth ever”? True, He is God, from everlasting to everlasting, yet saith He, ‘I am He that liveth and *became* dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.’ “Being raised from the dead He dieth no more . . . He died unto sin once . . . He liveth unto God.”

There is no room for pessimism or depression in the life of a believer. He may mourn over his sins, for he still is “coming short of the glory of God,” but he does not—or should not—remain in such a state of heart and mind. “That ye sin not,” is the command of the Lord. He calls to holiness. But, “if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins.” Deep abhorrence of sin may not characterize saints generally, but how reviving and sweet to the soul is a sense of the Father’s forgiveness. John fell at the feet of the risen Lord as one dead, but “He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, ‘Fear not.’” May such be our constant experience, by the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

em to Help Christian Experience—No. 251.

“THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE”

Isaiah 57:15

Thou art the High and Lofty One,
Thrice holy is Thy Name;
With Thee is Thy Beloved Son,
In Deity the Same.
And 'tis Thy Spirit, in His grace,
Who causeth us to seek Thy Face.

Thou art eternal, infinite,
And in eternity
Thou dwellest, hid from mortal sight,
For Thee no man can see;
Yet that THOU ART our souls believe,
By faith that we from Thee receive.

Yet, gracious God, 'tis Thy delight
To have a dwelling-place
Within the lowly heart, contrite
And clean—such is Thy grace.
Thy chosen Thou dost make alive;
Such wilt Thou constantly revive.
O keep us lowly, Holy One,
Who madest us to be
“Graced” ever in Thy Spotless Son
Accepted, e'en as He.
We lift our soul to Thee on High,
To Thee we “Abba, Father,” cry.

“To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

THE BEATITUDES OF REVELATION

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

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

“Blessed is he that watcheth, and *keepeth* his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

“Blessed is he that *keepeth* the sayings of the prophecy of this Book.”

“Blessed are they that do His commandments (or wash their robes), that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City.”

(Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.)

It is not without significance that there are in this last book of Holy Scripture *seven* beatitudes, since that number occurs so frequently therein. Also, these sevens are sometimes divided into three and four. In the quotations above, it will be noticed that three of them emphasise the *believer's responsibility*, namely, to *keep* that which is written in the Book, and to *keep* his garments. The other four bring before us the grace of God and His rewarding.

The contexts also should be noticed. The opening verse gives the reason for careful interest in the words written, namely, “The time is at hand.” The third is similarly urgent, preceded as it is by the declaration of the Lord, “Behold, I come as a thief.” So, in regard to the sixth, the same Lord saith, “Behold, I come quickly.” These solemn

words are repeated in Revelation 22:12, and are therefore in the context of the seventh quotation. Whether the blessing is upon those "doing the commandments" or "washing their robes" (see ch. 7:14), it is all in view of the Coming of the Lord Jesus.

There is no suggestion of a Coming "at any moment," yet there is urgency, and no believer may take things easily or say in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming." But some will die, and are counted "Blessed," though, as the preceding verses make clear, it will be during a time of severe persecution. To all such, however, the hope of a "part in the first resurrection," of being "called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," and of a "right to the tree of life" will illumine the dark path of "witnessing" even though it be by suffering and death.

These "blessings" may profitably be compared with those of Matthew 5, for are they not all from the lips of our One glorious Lord?

everything therein is important. The Lord Jesus very clearly took the bread and gave thanks. Why this taking of the bread, *before* the passing round, if there was only the thought of our blessing? Surely there is a lesson beyond that of *definiteness* in prayer (though this is striking), namely a placing in front of God ere participation. The sin of Hophni and Phinehas* comes to mind. The order in Genesis 14:18-19 becomes very forceful, the more so when we recollect that the Lord Jesus is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. The *shewbread*, i.e., the bread of God's presence, affords a real parallel. It was on the pure table for a week, prior to its participation (Lev. 24:5-9). It may be difficult to enter into all the precious instruction of the Lord: but we can praise God for some fuller teaching as to worship in this matter, and we long that He may be exalted in our meditation and corresponding activity.

* They considered their own appetites first; and was not the sin of the Corinthians similar? (1 Cor. 11:21-22.)

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

PERCY W. HEWARD

If we are born from above, it is our privilege to give unto the Lord. And every act of worship is a wondrous privilege, with solemn results. "The breaking of the bread" every Lord's Day involves real responsibilities in this connection. Shall we seek to learn the Lord's teaching and Will?

The *personal* advantage of prayer, and of other parts of the believing life, are often brought into undue relative prominence. While we would never forget the privilege of partaking of that which symbolizes the Lord Jesus, we ought not to put aside other precious lessons.

The stress on "giving thanks" is important in this matter. Self-centred meditation is thus hindered. We, enabled to do so by the Lord's grace, give unto Him that which He receives, when we humbly praise. And the "This do" of the command is not completely fulfilled unless there is "giving thanks."

Further, the primary signification of 1 Corinthians 11:25 is "with a view to *My memorial*," that is, a mentioning of the Lord Jesus before the Father. Hereby we have a parallel with the food linked to the sacrifices, in an earlier dispensation.

And the emphasized word "took," or "received," which occurs in all four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper (including 1 Corinthians 11) is surely suggestive to the Christian reader. The same term occurs in connection with the miracles of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand. No portion of Scripture is unnecessary:

REDEMPTION AND FORGIVENESS

By grace "we have redemption" through Christ's blood, "the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7). In meditating upon such a subject, praise must precede and accompany our study. "Redemption" means "setting free away from." It is the effect of atonement, which is, in its turn, the effect of the Death of the Lord Jesus. "Particular redemption" is, therefore, not a sufficiently strong term. "Covenant atonement" is more emphatic. "Substitutionary shedding of blood" most definite, although Satan* has modified the word "substitutionary." But beyond these long words we have the simple statements of Scripture: "My Blood . . . shed for many," "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep," "He bare the sin of many."

"Redemption" implies we deserve prison and bonds. It is thus both a *legal* and a *humbling* term, and reminds of the words, "made me free" (Rom. 8:2). It denotes an entire change, and an absolute release, not merely out of, but right away from, the place of wrath. "Loosing" indicates altered *condition*—no chains: "away" altered *position*—no prison walls. It cannot be partial, sin-excusing, or temporary. Its enjoyment is, at present, incomplete; we await "the setting free away from" connected with the body" (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30) and with tribulation (Acts 14:22) to chastise (Heb. 12:4-11). Sins—transgression—bind (Heb. 9:15); and this is so experimentally as well as legally—"sin doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1). Hence we oft fail to enjoy redemption, and to realize that our Saviour not merely delivers from the effects but from the cause—"He Himself shall save His people away from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

"Forgiveness" is the Holy Spirit's definition of this blessing from another aspect. Literally, the word means, "the sending away from." Thus the thought of *separation* is twofold. Nothing imperfect could have such a description. And "forgiveness," therefore, is the exact opposite of putting *aside* sin, and of carelessness as to forsaking sin.

May it be ours, in the Spirit of God, as we wait for the return of the Lord Jesus, to claim and enter into our privileges, and deal with our sins as definitely, in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ, as He has dealt with them in view of Legal Wrath. Then we shall be indeed in the Spirit (note Rom. 8:9-14), looking for that Blessed Hope, even the return of our precious Lord Himself.

PERCY W. HEWARD.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Baskets

Not only today, and in this land, but in old times and in all countries, baskets were used for all kinds of things. So we expect to find they are spoken of in Scripture. Let us search our Bibles, and see.

Baskets of Fruit

God sometimes taught His servants, and, through them, the people, by object lessons. Said Jeremiah, "The LORD shewed me, and behold, two baskets of figs . . . One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs: the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil" (Jer. 24:1-3). Now, if we read on, we shall see that two kinds of people are pictured; the good figs, fit to eat, are those who are pleasing to God, but the bad figs speak of those who are not pleasing to God. All are bad to begin with, but God is able to change sinners into saints. It is all HIS work, "for I will set mine eyes upon them for good" (v. 6). He *begins* the work, and goes on with it. "And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart" (v. 7). Who among my readers can say they know the Lord, and have come to Him with all their heart? As we read on, we find that God, Who is so kind, yet will punish sin (verses 8 to 9) for the "evil figs" speak of those who disobeyed God, and wanted their own way.

When God spoke to Amos (8:1-2), He also shewed *him* something. "And He said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, the end is come upon My people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any

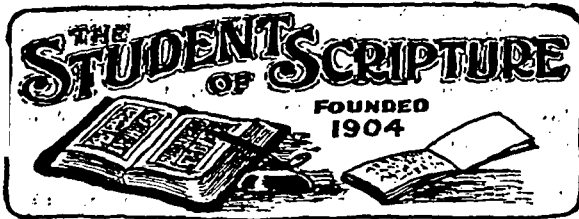
more." This is not easy to understand. But when we remember that the fruit shewed the summer was at its *end*, we see why God speaks of the *end* coming on His people. God is very patient, but if men and women and boys and girls, go on in sin, and do not repent, there will come a time when God will not "pass by them any more." O that many who read these words may repent and believe the Gospel. Remember the words, "The harvest is past, the *summer is ended*, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20).

Baskets of Food

A man had a dream. He was a king's baker. He dreamed he had *three* baskets on his head. In the top one were all kinds of baked food—cakes and pastries, and bread—for the king. But the birds came and were eating them. When he awoke, he wished very much to know what it meant, so he asked Joseph. It was not a good word Joseph had to tell him, for in *three* days the King was going to hang him. And so it was, for Joseph was guided by God what to tell the baker. The baker had done wrong to the king, but so had the butler, and they were both in prison; yet one was forgiven and the other was punished. Thus again we are reminded that there are only two kinds of people in the sight of God, the forgiven and the un-forgiven. Which are you, my dear friend?

But let us turn to a much happier story. You all remember how the Lord Jesus fed "five thousand and men, besides women and children" from five barley loaves and two small fishes, and how there were left over, not a few loaves, but twelve large baskets full of broken pieces. Again, when He had fed four thousand men, besides women and children, His servants took up seven large baskets full of, not crumbs, as some think, but pieces of bread. Now this teaches us that, when the Lord Jesus blesses even a great number at one time, as He did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) He does not use up all His blessing, but many others afterwards were saved, and so it has been going on, right until this day. He gave bread for the bodily needs, but He Himself is the Bread of Life, and lives for ever and ever. How many hungry people—hungry in their hearts, I mean—have been satisfied by the Lord Jesus! We cannot tell, for they are "a great multitude which no man can number." Very many are trusting Him today, though they may seem few when we think of the millions of people in the world. But what about my readers? Have they ever known what it is to be hungry for God's mercy and grace? If you are among those who are longing to be at peace with God, then you are welcome to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He said, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and He that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

(If the Lord will, to be continued)



ABIGAIL

History and Allegory

The unity of the Holy Scriptures is ever the marvel of the reverent reader. Whether its historical records, its laws and commands, its prophecies, parables, and psalms, are considered, a wonderful harmony is manifest. "Doth God take care for oxen?" asks the apostle. Yet Deuteronomy 25:4, "for our sakes, no doubt . . . is written" (1 Cor. 9:9-10). Was the story of Isaac and Ishmael true history, as recorded in Genesis 21? Yes, it is part of that "all Scripture given by inspiration of God." Yet Paul says concerning it, "Which things are an allegory," and therefrom he shews the difference between one "born after the flesh" and one "born after the Spirit" (Gal. 4). Hence, we dare not say, "history or allegory," but inspired history, which may be allegorized. This does not give licence to general "spiritualizing," but it does shew that Divinely selected historical events are meant to teach practical lessons, as well as those which are prophetic and typical. The episode in David's life as narrated in 1 Samuel 25, is, the writer believes, in such a category. These things "were written for our learning." May the Holy Spirit lead us into truth, and guard against fanciful interpretations, as well as fill us with "wonder, love, and praise," as we meditate therein.

David.

The Son of Jesse is the predominant figure here. He had been anointed King of Israel in place of the God-rejected Saul. The people of Israel as a whole continued to follow and obey Saul as king, though there were some who loved David, among them Jonathan. David was man-rejected, hated and hunted by Saul, hounded from place to place, hiding in caves, and finding himself often among the Gentiles. His following, as contrasted with the hosts of Israel, consisted of about four hundred men to begin with, and these did not seem likely to become the mighty men that David rewarded when he came to the Kingdom. "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them" (1 Sam. 22:2). His brethren were with him, and his parents were entrusted to the care of the King of Moab. Others joined David, until his "army" numbered six hundred men. Thus he is a

type of the Lord Jesus, in that he suffered rejection, though He was the rightful king, before obtaining the kingdom. It is worthy of notice that David did not take the kingdom by force or by guile: He awaited God's time, even as our Lord is waiting now, "expecting." Note also 1 Peter 2:23. The prophets spoke of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Even now Christ is rejected, and a day is coming when the armies of the earth will make war against Him, even as "the beast" will "make war with the saints" (Dan. 7:25; 8:11; Rev. 13:7). We may pause here, so that each reader may ask himself whether he is with Christ, rejected by the world, or is still subject to "the god of this age." The last view the world had of Christ was of One on a cross, "without the gate," being mocked, and having been grossly maltreated. Because of this, saints are exhorted, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:12-13).

Those who went to David into the wilderness, sharing his rejection and privations were not forgotten when he became ruler over all Israel. They had various spheres of authority appointed to them, for, under his leadership they had developed into mighty men, loyal and devoted to their leader. So, "it is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:11-12), that is, the Lord Jesus.

Nabal

This man, wealthy and "great," was yet "churlish and evil in his doings." He was a man of violent temper, for when "David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master," said his servants, "he flew upon them" (1 Sam. 25:14 margin). He is revealed, moreover, as antagonistic to David, and hence, evidently, preferring Saul, perhaps not knowing, and certainly not caring, that God had rejected that disobedient man. Listen to his words: "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master?" (v. 10). This affected ignorance of David is much like that of the agnostic. It was a miserable excuse for withholding help from one who needed it for himself and his men. It is to be feared that professed inability to give credence to the Biblical message is often due to a moral unwillingness, not to a truly mental difficulty. To follow Christ means denying self; yea, more, a dying to sin. Further, the hard-heartedness of Nabal, and his self-centredness, have their counterparts in modern life. "Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" What aggravates the evil case of Nabal is his scorn of David's threefold message of peace (v. 6). It was

not only a violation of neighbourly relations, but peculiarly heinous in view of the person of David and his need. Man is inherently selfish, and the way of Christ for His disciples is absolutely contrasted. Hence the necessity of the new birth—a birth from above. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye *must* be born again.”

The callous indifference, and marked antagonism on the part of this evil man would have had dire consequences for his whole household, had it not been for the intervention of—

Abigail

Two things in this record are hard to be understood. First, why his parents gave to their son so odious a name, for Nabal means “Fool.” Did he display some evil characteristics from birth? Or did he earn that name through his subsequent behaviour? Certain it is that men by nature are fools. Unbelief is folly. Neglect of so great salvation is the utmost folly. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Secondly, how came Abigail, “a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance,” to be united to such a man? In the lands of the East, it is indeed customary for parents to arrange marriages, leaving no choice to the young couples. Perhaps it was so in this instance. However, one may ask some hypothetical questions, such as, Did Abigail’s parents think it a good match, because of Nabal’s wealth? If so, they condemned her to lifelong disharmony. Did Abigail herself desire this union for a similar reason. If so, she bound herself for life by an unequal yoke. The narrative does not answer these questions, which certainly are prompted by what is recorded. One practical lesson for present-day saints is that marriage is to be “In the Lord” only.

Abigail must soon have discovered, and grieved over, the defects of being united to Nabal. They were such contrasted characters, as even the servants could discern (v. 17). Her portion was an abundance of the “good things of life,” as they are called, as well as the respect of the farm-workers, but such fellowship as there should be between husband and wife just did not exist. Day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, this sad condition of things went on, with no prospect of release except by death. And yet, just as David waited God’s time before he took the kingdom, so Abigail bore all patiently, depending on God to intervene in His Own appointed hour. In both cases, death, by Divine appointment, prepared the way for future blessing.

The greatest contrast in these two persons is seen in their attitude to David, even as today, “What think ye of Christ is the test, to try both your state and your scheme. You cannot be right in the rest

unless you think rightly of Him.” Nabal saw nothing in David to attract him, and his studied insolence brought him into grave danger. Abigail, on the other hand, saw in the hated and rejected David, Israel’s coming Ruler. Said she: “The LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house . . . The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God . . . When the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel . . . then remember thine handmaid” (vv. 28-31).

These were words of faith, and they seem to be only paralleled by those of the repentant thief. Looking upon the suffering, scorned, and crucified Saviour, at a time when all seemed lost, when all appeared dark without a gleam of brightness, faith saw in Him the coming King. “We receive the due reward of our deeds,” said he, “but This Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.”

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

INSPIRED WORDS INSPECTED

No. 149

“Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

“They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”

Galatians 4:15-18.

WHERE (pou); interrogative adverb.

IS (not in text).

THEN (oun); conjunction, meaning “therefore.”

THE BLESSEDNESS (ho makarismos); article and noun, masculine, nominative. Derived from makarizo (to call happy). The ending “ismos” expresses the action of the verb and its result. Hence our word means “a calling happy” or “happiness.”

YE SPAKE OF (not in text).

YOUR (humon); personal pronoun, plural, genitive, meaning “of you.” This word *is in the text*.

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

I BEAR RECORD (marturo); verb, present tense, meaning “to testify,” “to bear witness.”

YOU (humin); personal pronoun, plural, dative, meaning, "to you."

THAT (hoti); conjunction.

IF (ei); conditional conjunction.

IT HAD BEEN (not in text).

POSSIBLE (dunaton); adjective, derived from "dunamai" (to have power, to be able); hence, "possible" as a good rendering. "A possible thing," the form being neuter.

YE WOULD HAVE PLUCKED OUT (exoruxantes); participle, aorist, from the verb "exorusso" (to dig out or through). Compound of ek (out) and "orusso" (to dig or excavate). The word can be translated, "having dug out." It occurs in Mark 2:4.

YOUR OWN (humon); see above.

EYES (tous ophthalmous); article and noun, masculine plural, from "ophthalmos" (eye); hence the word, "ophthalmic."

AND (not in text).

HAVE GIVEN (edokate); verb, aorist, plural, second person; from "didomi" (to give).

THEM (not in text).

TO ME (moi); personal pronoun, dative, from "ego." The whole sentence may be rendered, "if possible, having dug out your eyes, ye gave (them) to me."

THEREFORE (hoste); conjunction, meaning, "so as to," "so that," "consequently." At the beginning of a sentence means "therefore."

YOUR (humon); see above.

ENEMY (echthros); noun, masculine, nominative; meaning "enemy or adversary."

AM I BECOME" (gegona); verb, perfect, first person, singular; from "ginomai" (to become); meaning, "have I become."

BECAUSE (not in text).

I TELL TRUTH (aletheuo); verb, present, participle; from "aletheuo" (to act truly, to speak truth). Paul not only spoke *the* truth—the doctrine of God—but truthfully (note 2 Cor. 4:2) and acted likewise, as also he exhorted others (Eph. 4:15, where occurs its only other use). It is found in the LXX (Gen. 42:16).

YOU (humin); see above.

THEY ZEALOUSLY AFFECT (zelousin); verb, present tense, from "zeloo" (to be zealous for or against, to desire ardently, to be eager for, eager to possess).

YOU (humas); personal pronoun, accusative.

NOT (ou); negative, denying, positively.

WELL (kalos); adverb, derived from "kalos," meaning "good or beautiful." The behaviour of the false teachers was neither good nor beautiful.

YEA (alla); strong adversative conjunction, "but"; rather, "on the contrary."

THEY WOULD (thelousin); verb, present, from "thelo" (I will). "Would" is not a strong enough word, for the will and intention is meant to be understood here.

EXCLUDE (ekkleisai); verb, aorist, infinitive, from "ekkleio," a compound of "ek" (out) and "kleio" (I shut or close). The word "kleis" (a key) is akin. The false teachers would shut them out from "blessedness" and turn the key thereon.

YOU (humas); see above.

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

YE MIGHT AFFECT (zeloute); verb, present, subjunctive, from "zeloo" (see above).

THEM (autous); personal pronoun, accusative; plural, from "autos" (he).

BUT (de); conjunction.

IT IS (not in text).

GOOD (kalon); adjective, neuter form, from "kalos" (good or beautiful); meaning, "a good thing."

TO BE ZEALOUSLY AFFECTED (zelousthai); verb, present, infinitive, passive; from "zeloo" (see above). The re-iteration of "zeloo" is impressive. The false teachers had an eager desire (note last words of ch. 6:13) after the Galatian believers, wishing for *their* eager desire after them. Zeal, or eager desire, says Paul, is good, provided the object is good, and there is constancy, not dependent on his being with them.

IN (en); preposition, governing dative case.

A GOOD THING (kaloi); adjective, neuter, dative; used as a noun.

ALWAYS (pantote); adverb.

AND (kai); conjunction.

NOT (me); negative, denying a possibility.

ONLY (monon); adjective, used as adverb.

WHEN (en); preposition, meaning "in."

I (me); personal pronoun, accusative, meaning "me."

AM PRESENT (toi pareinai); dative article, because following "en," and present infinitive; from "pareimi," compound of "para" (beside) and "eimi" (to be). Hence, "To be beside, to be present." Literally, the translation is, "and not only in the me to be present" or "in my being present."

WITH (pros); preposition, meaning "toward," having almost the thought of "being at home with."

YOU (humas); see above.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

No. 168

Please explain the words: "Butter and Honey shall He Eat, That He may Know to Refuse the Evil, and Choose the Good" (Isaiah 7:15).

How often have we felt the *preciousness* of prophecies of Christ in the earlier Scriptures. He is *exalted everywhere*, and the Holy Spirit Himself uses the repeated expression, "That it might be fulfilled." Ahaz rejected the sign ("Ask *thee*"), and therefore the Lord gave a sign to *the house of David* ("You," 14, plural), to be fulfilled after the king had long died, but the *house of David* remained in accord with God's "*sure mercies*" to build David a house.

The Child "born," the Son "given," is "Immanuel," "God with us" (14, Matt. 1:21), and He is seen in verse 15. But what is the special power of these simple words?

Without professing to exhaust their *fulness*, the writer has experienced the Lord's blessing in the following thoughts:—

- (1) "The Word" truly became flesh (John 1:14): the Lord Jesus was a *real Man*. Thus was He able to bear sin, and die for sinners from Adam's race.
- (2) The *simplicity* of His life is shown to us, the details were not unimportant (cf. 53:2 "before Him").
- (3) The very partaking of "butter and honey" would seem to suggest that He was associated with *God's unchanged promise* (Deut. 6:3, and many other verses), even in days when the land was down-trodden.
- (4) He humbled Himself, and though the Possessor of the land by Divine purpose (8:8), became as the poor remnant (7:22, cf. 2 Kings 25:12). What condescending love!
- (5) The Lord Jesus is, throughout, the Contrast with Adam, who sought, by *wrong use* of food, "to know" good and *evil* (Gen. 3: 6, 7, 22).
- (6) Wondrously we behold the unfallen humanity of Christ. He *grew up* from *true* infancy, in accord with Luke 2:52, but WE need more than "butter and honey" to bring us "to know to refuse the evil and choose the good." We need "a new creation": He did not: as He physically grew, He, in His perfectly holy nature, always acted aright in choice.

Truly our hearts rejoice in the fulness of such a simple statement from the words of prophecy. Possibly we have overlooked it before, but is there not a call to praise? No word of Scripture is unnecessary or common. Every sentence is a jewel, to awaken love and devotedness and thanksgiving and obedience in a redeemed people! Praise God for the Scriptures.

P.W.H.

also delighted (2 Cor 4:5). Above all, the Lord Jesus, Whose Name and work are before us in the epistle, is most probably the Subject of Psalm 116:15; this verse may be rendered, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death for His saints," though the generally accepted sense is there as well, and Paul also knew the meaning of daily "death."

Two outstanding principles of heavenly truth are thus illustrated; the Unity of Scripture, and the oneness of the redeemed in all ages. The Bible is one volume, yet consists of several books, the writers being drawn from many classes. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and yet He chose to work along the line of their varied personalities. The Divine and human united in the written word is as real as in the Incarnate Word.

"I believed; therefore have I spoken." These words of the Psalmist are taken up by the apostle. "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." Thus he claimed to belong to the family of God, and, in so doing, emphasises—

- (a) a common faith
- (b) a common testimony
- (c) a common suffering
- (d) a common hope.

A *common faith*. "We having the same spirit of faith"; not a dead faith was theirs, but living. Compare James 2:14-16, noting the last verse. There is a tendency in some quarters to over-stress "differences" between the old-time saints and those who are so described in this day. But, although their knowledge was not so full as ours, their faith was the same. Was not Abraham justified by faith? The eleventh chapter of Hebrews confirms that they lived and died in faith. True, death to them was something feared (Heb. 2:15). Upon life and immortality the gospel had not thrown its holy light; yet faith shines out again and again, as in such utterances as those of Abraham (cf. Gen. 22:5 with Heb. 11:19). Thus the faith, whereby he was justified, was proved by his obedience to be real. Job, too, of whom God said, he "*darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge,*" breaks through the darkness with gleams of living faith. "I shall come forth as gold." "I know that my Redeemer liveth . . . I shall see God." "Will He plead against me with His great power? No; but He would put strength in me."

Here we have evidence of "the same spirit of faith" which Paul possessed (2 Cor. 4:13). Thus he linked himself on to all those early saints, and, moreover, by using the words "with you" in the following verse, shews that saints of the present age are one with all who have previously lived

"I BELIEVED; THEREFORE HAVE I SPOKEN"

Psalm 116 and 2 Corinthians 4

Reading these two scriptures together, one cannot but recognise a similarity of language. This is remarkable because the saints who penned them were separated, as to the time of their pilgrimage here, by many centuries. Remarkable, we say, but, although the passages record the experiences of the writers, they are both part of that "All Scripture, which is given by inspiration of God." These "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Hence the likeness of language.

In the portions before us, we observe, common to both, such words as "life and death," "trouble," "brought low," corresponding to "cast down." There are also parallel thoughts, such as that of a future resurrection, and present deliverances. The Psalmist declares, twice over, "I am Thy servant," a designation of himself in which the apostle also

and died in faith. In other words, although the visible Church was not formed until Pentecost, that Church, of which it is said that Christ loved and gave Himself for her, embraces all the elect, from Abel until the last to be called by grace into the fellowship of God's Son. What a privilege, beloved fellow-saints, to belong to such a goodly company, because, by Divine grace, we have "the same spirit of faith."

A common testimony. There can be no true witness apart from a living faith. And yet where faith is in operation, there must be testimony. Else where is its proof? The Lord Jesus, declaring the advent of the Holy Spirit, said, "He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness (testify) because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27). "I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Act 4:20) said the apostles. So it was with Jeremiah. "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9). So with Elihu. "For I am full of matter. The spirit within me constraineth . . . I will speak that I may breathe (margin); I will open my lips and answer" (Job. 32:18-20). Oh that there might be such a constraining of the Spirit today! How dull is much preaching, and oft without power! How indifferent are some believers as to the quality of their witness! "I believed, therefore . . ." What a call to godly living, and verbal witness also. "With the heart man believeth . . . with the mouth confession is made" (Rom. 10:10). "But sanctify Christ Lord in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

The psalmist and the apostle are on common ground. They witnessed to the Lord and His salvation, and experienced—

A common suffering.

A life of *faith* and witness is accompanied by suffering. The Lord Jesus forewarned His disciples, especially during the last discourse (John 13 to 16) before He suffered. To the believers at Philippi are the words written, "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). "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). The Psalmist knew "sorrows" (cords or bands) of death" (Ps. 116:3). "Deliverance to death" and "in working of death" (2 Cor. 4:11-12) Paul experienced. "Pains," suggesting *pressure*, the Psalmist felt (v. 3). Paul was "troubled (*pressure*) on every side." The Psalmist was "brought low." Paul was "cast down." Yet both were delivered and triumphed, and praised

God. Compare the words of Psalm 116:4-8, with those of 2 Corinthians 1:8-10, with their common stress on Divine deliverance. Neither of these "servants" of God had an easy time, yet they were truly happy. "I love the Lord" said the one; and although the exact equivalent may not be found in the apostle's language, his love to the Lord Jesus and desires after Him pervade the whole of his writings. May we hear his words, "Brethren, become ye imitators of me" (Phil. 3:17). We do not "pay vows" (Ps. 116:14-18) but we do need to worship our God, and to do so "now in the presence of His people."

A common hope

The early saints looked for the coming of Messiah. The prophets themselves did not, however, understand the significance of their inspired utterances (1 Pet. 1:10-12). And yet, as we have seen, certain words of Job look beyond the first coming of the Lord, and beyond the grave, to the parousia of Christ, and to the resurrection. "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. 116:9). Surely, in these words is enshrined the hope of a future life of blessedness, when the soul "clothed upon" shall have the eyes free from tears, and the feet shall no more fall. The view may be as "through a glass darkly," but it surely looks onward to Revelation 7:9-17 and 21:4. Abraham's hope, too, was not merely earthly. He rejoiced to see Christ's day, and looked for the city that hath the foundations" (John 8:56; Heb. 11:10). The confidence of Paul is based on a fuller revelation, but the hope is the same; "*Knowing* that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. 4:14). "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" is before us. Let us say with Paul, "That the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God," and with the psalmist, "I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the LORD."

"I AM COME"

"Think not that *I am come* to destroy the law or the prophets. *I am not come* to destroy, but to fulfil."

"For *I am not come* to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

"Think not that *I am come* to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For *I am come* to set a man at variance against his father . . ."

"*I am come* to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled."

"*I am come* in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not."

"And I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is True. Whom ye know not."

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

"I am come that they* might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father."

"Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

(Matt. 5:17; 9:13; 10:34-35. Luke 12:49. John 5:43; 7:28; 9:39; 10:10; 12:46; 16:28; 18:37.)

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." (John 11:28.)

* That is, the sheep.

THE WORST

If a man has enemies, you may feel tolerably sure that you know the worst about him, and perhaps more than the worst. Love, on the other hand, conceals a matter. You never find a man going about telling what an unamicable person his wife is—unless, indeed, love has been extinguished on his part. If you see any inconsistency or any unseemly conduct in one you love, you do not blazon the matter abroad. Instead of publishing the matter, you say: "Tell it not not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon." This is how a friend acts. But how different with an enemy! Yet there is a sense in which enemies may be a blessing. If you had no enemies, you would very likely pass for a far better saint than you are. Through the unbroken calm of friendship all around, you might be puffed up, and fancy that you had attained to a wonderful degree of sanctity. But opposition and persecution, when taken as from God, beget a chastened and subdued spirit. You are more cast upon God than in the "sunny days" when everyone spoke well of you. You have learned not to live upon the breath of men; and to value, as you never did before, the Master's approving smile. Thus "in all things" we can give thanks, and find the balm of heaven in the keenest reproaches of men. The bitter waters can be made sweet; and we learn to say with the Psalmist: "I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it."

Selected.

NOTES ON MEMORIZED VERSES

EZEKIEL 47

2. He brought me . . . He led me . . . Behold. The initiative always with God, as is the end He purposeth—spiritual illumination. 3, 4. He brought me *through*—a repeated emphasis. 5. The fourth thousand. Deep waters, symbolic of God's bounty. 6. Hast thou seen? What do we see when God brings and leads? 7. The blessing extends to the banks, causing fruit (Ps. 1:3; 23:2; Jer. 17:7-8). 8. Not only fruit, but healing. 9. Waters of Life. 10. Abundant life, and food. But there is a *need to work*, even in the Millennium. 11. Yet there will be a reminder of sin. Not all places will be blessed by these waters. 12. Why such freshness, fertility, and fruit, and healing? "Because their waters they issued out of the Sanctuary."

GENESIS 12

1. The Lord had said to Abram, not to Terah (see previous verses. 2, 3. The Promise of God, the only basis for Abram's conduct. "All families" (cf. Matt. 28:19). 4. An act of faith (Heb. 11:8) at a late age in life. But Terah his father only went half-way, and Abraham seems to have awaited his death. 5. Lot had not had the call personally, nor Sarah, yet both went with Abram. "They went forth to go," "They came." It is good to have purpose of heart. 6. The Canaanite then in the land, but, 7. God would give it to Abram's seed. An altar, because he would worship the One Who appeared (note Acts 7:2). 8. A tent (Heb. 11:9-10). An Altar (Heb. 9:22). Calling on the NAME (cf. 1 Pet. 1:17-19). 9. "Going and journeying" (margin). 10. A famine, and grievous. He went down to sojourn in Egypt. Was this right? 11, 12. Was this faith? Or fear? 13. A half-truth, which we must not copy. 14 to 16. A compromising situation, the fruit of unbelief, yet, 17, God did not forsake His servant, but intervened, and over-ruled. 18 to 20. Surely, Abram felt the rebuke.

GENESIS 13

1. All that he had (see ch. 12:16) and Lot. 2. Very rich. Abram was not a mere wandering Bedouin, but a man of culture. 3. "At the beginning," "At the first" (cf. Rev. 2:4-5). 5. What were Lot's thoughts about his uncle's behaviour in Egypt? 6, 7. Strife, though not personal; but enemies were looking on. 8. "We be brethren" (see Acts 7:26) and Heb. 13:1). 9. The elder waives his right of choice—a gracious attitude. 10, 11. He beheld, he chose, he journeyed, they separated. A sad sequence. 12. Both tent-dwellers, yet a tent pitched toward Sodom. 13. But, an awful "but," as subsequent events proved. 14. "Lift up now thine eyes" (contrast v. 10). 15. All the land which thou seest . . . will I give. 16. A promise which was fulfilled, and will have a yet greater fulfilment. 17. Not yet possessed, but "I will give." 18. The tent and the altar. Pilgrimage and worship.

GENESIS 14

1. 2. Four Kings with five (see v. 9). 3. A valley that became the Salt Sea. 4. A rebellion. 5. The King of Elam (Persia) and those with him make a victorious march. 6. 7. And none can withstand them. 8 to 10. The King of Sodom and those with him met a like fate.

SPECIAL READINGS FOR THE LORD'S DAY

January, 1958

- 5. Deut. 1:1-4. Ps. 136:16-20. John 1:17-18.
Heb. 1:1-4. Rev. 1:47.
- 12. Deut. 1:5-8. Josh. 1:3-4. Phil. 3:8-14.
1 Tim. 6:11-12. Heb. 6:17-20.
- 19. Deut. 1:9-18. 1 Cor. 6:1-11. John 7:17-20.
2 Tim. 4:1-8. Isa. 11:1
- 26. Deut. 1:19-33. Ps. 106:13-14, 24-26. 1 Cor. 10:5-6, 10
Isa. 50:5-8. Phil. 2:5

February, 1958

- 2. Deut. 1:34-40. Num. 14:19-33. Heb. 10:35 to 11:2.
Rev. 3:10-13. Heb. 12:1-3.
- 9. Deut. 1:41-46. Ps. 19:9-14. Jer. 17:5-10.
1 Cor. 10:1-6. Eph. 6:10-18.
- 16. Deut. 2:1-7. Ps. 78:52-54. 72. Matt. 6:25-34.
3 John 5-7. Phil. 4:18-20.
- 23. Deut. 2:8-15. Ps. 95:6-11. Heb. 3:16 to 4:9.
Ps. 90:10-12. 2 Cor. 5:8

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—JANUARY, 1958

SUGGESTED DAILY READINGS

"IF THE LORD WILL"—FEBRUARY, 1958

Day	READING		LEARNING		Day	READING		LEARNING	
	Daniel	Matthew	Ezekiel	Hebrews		Amos	Matthew	Genesis	Hebrews
1	5 17-31	4 1-11	47 2	7 4	1	1 1-15	16 1-12	13 1	8 7
2	6 1-14	12-25	3	5	2	2 1-16	13-28	2	8
3	15-28	5 1-16	4	6	3	3 1-15	17 1-13	3	9
4	7 1-14	17-32	5	7	4	4 1-13	14-27	4	10
5	15-28	33-48	6	8	5	5 1-13	18 1-14	5	11
6	8 1-12	6 1-15	7	9	6	14-27	15-22	6	12
7	13-27	16-34	8	10	7	6 1-14	23-35	7	13
8	9 1-15	7 1-14	9	11	8	7 1-17	19 1-15	8	9 1
9	16-27	15-29	10	12	9	8 1-14	16-30	9	2
10	10 1-21	8 1-17	11	13	10	9 1-15	20 1-19	10	
11	11 1-14	18-34	12	14	11	Obadiah	20-34	11	
12	15-29	9 1-13	Genesis 12 1	15	12	Jonah		12	5
13	30-45	14-26	2	16	13	1 1-17	21 1-16	13	6
14	12 1-13	27-38	3	17	14	2 1-10	17-32	14	7
15	Hosea 1 1-11	10 1-15	4	18	15	3 1-10	33-46	15	8
16	2 1-23	16-28	5	19	16	4 1-11	22 1-14	16	9
17	3 1-5	29-42	6	20	17	Micah 1 1-16	15-33	17	10
18	4 1-19	11 1-15	7	21	18	2 1-13	34-46	18	11
19	5 1-15	16-30	8	22	19	3 1-12	23 1-12	19	12
20	6 1-11	12 1-21	9	23	20	4 1-13	13-26	14 1	13
21	7 1-16	22-37	10	24	21	5 1-15	27-39	2	14
22	8 1-14	38-50	11	25	22	6 1-16	24 1-14	3	15
23	9 1-17	13 1-17	12	26	23	7 1-20	15-28	4	
24	10 1-15	18-30	13	27	24	Nahum 1 1-15	29-41	5	16
25	11 1-12	31-46	14	28	25	2 1-13	42-51	6	17
26	12 1-14	47-58	15	8 1	26	3 1-19	25 1-13	7	18
27	13 1-16	14 1-21	16	2	27	Habakkuk 1 1-17	14-30	8	19
28	14 1-9	22-36	17	3	28	2 1-20	31-46	9	20
29	Joel 1 1-20	15 1-14	18	4		3 1-19	26 1-16	10	21
30	2 1-32	15-28	19	5					
31	3 1-21	29-39	20	6					

Correspondence from any Believers and Enquirers:—61 Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.7.

Phone: Grangewood 4196. No telephoning on Lord's Day.

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