

No. 198

SCRIPTURE NUMERATION - PART 1.

An Address by Mr. P.W. Heward
At Campbell Road, Bow, E.,
12th February, 1913.

OUTLINE:

1. A Continual Reminder of 2 Tim. 3:16
2. There are Many Numbers in Scripture, and Nothing Is Without Signification.
3. Methods of Study:
 - a. Direct Statements.
 - b. Words Formed from Numbers.
 - c. Chronological Counting.
 - d. Other Helpful Numberings.
4. The Danger of Fancifulness and the Importance of Spirituality.

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Read 1 Cor. 14.

We start, by the grace of God, dear friends, our fresh subject of Scripture Numeration. We are again reminded, of 2 Tim. 3:16. We can never realize the fulness of God's ways. Oh that the experience of which we were just reading in Psalm 119 might be ours more and more. To love earthly THINGS may oftentimes be very dangerous. Love we rather connect with persons. But there is one thing that is more than a thing that we ought to love, and that is the Law of God. Ah, it is not simply that we have God's words, but we have God speaking. We do not love simply the effect, but we love that which is Himself effecting marvellous and effective "things." Indeed, all love that is spiritual is inseparable from Himself! Scripture is never a dead letter, and never becomes dead to a living saint, led by the Holy Spirit. We always have a living Book. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable! And we would not only say "given by inspiration of God". The word "given" weakens the force. Scripture IS God's breathing now, not only in the past. We have a God-breathed Book today. "And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for discipline that is in righteousness". We want the Scriptures for doctrine. What are we to believe? Let us go to the Bible. The Holy Spirit will make clear. We want the Scriptures for reproof. What are we to do, and what not to do? Let us go to the Bible. The Holy Spirit will reprove thereby. For correction. If we have made a mistake, and have failed, God will restore us through the Scriptures. For discipline that is in righteousness. Doubtless spiritual discipline is the primary thought

but there is also no mental discipline to compare with the Bible. God has so arranged that our physical and mental frames can have the care they need on the line of His will. Our physical frame can be refreshed as well as well as strained in service. Our minds can be trained, as well as strained, in studying the Book God has given. Let us realize that the discipline of Scripture is precious. It is a discipline that is in RIGHTEOUSNESS. God, through the precious Book that we hold in our hand, disciplines us and keeps us in order, and causes us His children to grow, that we may ~~pre~~ press forward, with a view to that wondrous manhood which will characterize the glorious day when we shall see our beloved and glorified Lord.

Scripture Numeration is part of Scripture, and THEREFORE is important. We must not be one-sided in our search of God's Book. We must be all-sided. When we go to the words of God only in one way, we are apt to become unspiritual. We want to come to those words in many ways. We want to take a verse and to let that verse speak to us. I refer to the book of Proverbs, (ch. 6). We want to take a verse, and let that verse, applied by the Holy Spirit show us what God would have us know. But we also want to compare Scripture with Scripture, to take a walk up and down the Bible, if I might so word it. We want to find our food here and our medicine here. We want to compare Scripture with Scripture, that we may say, Lord, how manifold are thy WORDS (as parts of Thy works), in wisdom hast Thou made them all. EVERY part of the Bible is distinct, but every part of the Bible harmonizes. As in nature, the works of God fit together. There is no discord except where sin has come. Scripture is wondrously arranged. There are myriads who spend their time in studying, or at least spend much of their time in studying the marvels of nature. Fascinating indeed! But, beloved friends, Scripture is more fascinating. The Book that we hold in our hands reveals more of God than the heavens do. The true "scientist" is the one who is well trained in the Book. Here we have that which is beyond all parallel. Human books are faulty in conception and faulty in construction. There are no faults here. The only faults are in our perception. Many things WE do not see. Many things we IMAGINE we do see x which are not there, and thus we get twice confused. But if, by grace, we wait only upon our God, and seek to search and learn what He has set forth, we shall find that not only is each verse of Scripture a jewel, but that the WHOLE book is like the High priest's breastplate, and

like the new Jerusalem, - a collection of jewels well arranged. There are MANY numbers in Scripture, and nothing is without signification. We have just read 1 Cor. 14, or at least a part of it. We saw there brought before us the wondrous responsibilities of God's dear people for "one another, their responsibilities in the building up of one another, the strengthening, the edifying of one another, but I did not read the chapter for that purpose. I rather thought of the words in verse 10 "None is without signification". Everything in nature speaks, if only we have ears to hear. You know that "sound" is vibratory. There are vibrations which OUR ears cannot take in, although we have, as it were, the wondrous organism to receive the impression. The ear is not sufficient for all the sounds in nature. Is it surprising that the God of nature should have made an equally wonderful arrangement in Scripture? Is it surprising? Nay, it is what we should expect. I anticipate, and you anticipate, that the Bible will be ~~amazing~~ most marvellous. This gives another reason why we should seek to go back to the original Scriptures. You know, dear friends, that he would be regarded as a strange botanist who did all his botany ~~xxx~~ with "pictures" of flowers. He would be a strange astronomer who spent all his time on maps of the heavens. I do not dispute the value of the maps - most precious at times - but the student wants to go straight to the heavens as well. So in connection with the Scriptures, it is precious to have translations. You would soon find the difference if you lived in a country, and were ~~xxx~~ brought up in a language that had no Scripture translation at all. Then, though you knew the Greek and Hebrew itself, you would find difficulties if you had no translation existing in the language first. You would be disappointed in the way you rendered verses, and you would keep on correcting yourself, and correcting yourself again. The translations we have are most precious, but do ~~not~~ let us spend all the time on the star maps. Let us go straight to the original Scriptures, if the Lord places the power of doing so within our reach.

God has marked upon the Scriptures such marvellous things that are there in order that they may be seen, - ah, not with the ordinary eye, but with the instructed eye, by the heart in union and communion with Himself, for the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way. God has stamped wonderful things in Scripture that we may see

not a single thing is without singification. There is a reason why every word comes where it does. I do not say we can always understand the reason; THAT is not our first concern. We know sufficient of our God to believe that His book is perfect, and that everything will teach us wonderful things. If only by the Holy Spirit's leading we are in a right condition nothing is without signification.

I need hardly say there are many numbers in Scripture. We all think of a few, e.g. the references to the months and the years. Let us recollect, too, the chronology, and think of the many mentions of the ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, sixes, sevens, and so forth. Let us call to mind the allusions to thousands. There are, indeed, MANY numbers in Scripture. Every one of those numbers has ~~in~~ a lesson for us. It is for us in this course of study to seek to find out more of God's teaching. A word of two as to method, or shall I rather say methods. We cannot do all that we would do AT ONCE. We shall need grace to go through this subject in ~~a~~ anything like right order. I propose that we should notice the direct statements as to numbers, where God says for example, 666; where God says to take another case, 153 great fishes, or the 144 thousand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, - and that we should look into those numbers and see what we can understand from them. Sometimes we shall understand much by their relation to one another, at other times by their relation to nature. Then we shall be able to think of words formed from Numbers, and numbers formed from words. We are told, for example, to number 666. Now every Hebrew and Greek letter has a certain numerical value, and therefore the number 666 would have a certain WORD VALUE. The ~~opposite~~ principle is, of course, true. We can form numbers from words. Sometimes I quite confess that WE cannot see the value of certain numbers: - does that at all militate against the suggestion now brought forward? By no means. First of all, the numbers are, in some measure, humanly arranged. In the Greek alphabet to account for 6, 90 and ~~9~~ 900. This seems a human arrangement. Undoubtedly God refers to human arrangements, for the words of the Lord are words of earth, yet this fact may suggest to us that there is something else hidden away beyond what we can reach by this Gematria, as it is called;

yet even now we find certain words have interesting numerical values that cannot be accidental. If, for example, we take the word of the name Jesus in the usual way of reckoning - $\overset{I}{10} \overset{N}{8} \overset{S}{200} \overset{O}{70} \overset{U}{400} \overset{S}{200} = 888$. There you have the name "Jesus", 888; rather a striking contrast with 666. There may be nothing very extraordinary about it, but surely we hardly feel that this is only an accident. There are five books of Moses. The word "law" in the Greek has five letters, (*ΝΟΜΟΣ*). If we call it "The law" we reach the six letters. Five and six are numbers that are closely associated with law. The five books, the twice five commandments. The "Six days shalt thou labor and so all thy work". And what is the numerical value of this? (*Θ*) is, as we have seen, 70; the (*Ν*) is 50, the (*Ο*) is 70, the (*Μ*) is 40, the (*Ο*) is ~~κ~~ 70, the (*Σ*) is 200, so that we get here 500 is the numerical value of "*Θ* *ΝΟΜΟΣ*", the five stamped again on it. We think of the pool with five porches which pictured men who were trusting to law to save them, and we know how that the Lord stepped in with His mighty work. On the other hand, it is quite possible for us to light upon certain words in which WE can see no teaching at all. We may come to an odd number so that we cannot say what lesson there is wrapped up in it. This does not disprove that God has lessons in others. And it may be that God has hidden lessons in the seeming difficulty which we have not yet reached. So we wait for Him to act. Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose a word comes into your mind, and you think over it, - the word "*ΘΙΚΑΙΟΟΟΥΝΗ*" we will say. You put it down, then you take the letter (*Θ*) is 4, the (*Κ*) is 10, the (*Α*) is 20, the (*Ι*) is 1, the (*Ο*) is 10, the (*Ο*) is 70, the (*Ο*) is 200, the (*Ο*) is 400, the (*Ν*) is 50, the (*Η*) is 8. Now the next thing is just to add up to reach the number to see if any help is at once found thereby. So you add up, 773. Then one feels, What is there about 773? Nothing comes into the mind. Naturally then if trying to find out that teaching there was, you would think, Shall I put the article in front? You put the article in front, with its value of 8. No, you have no number that seems at all striking. There may be some teaching there, but you have not obtained anything yet that impresses you. But perhaps if you add the words "*ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ*" - "of God", you might reach in some cases, an impressive number, for the whole expression; but if not, the delay would simply make you cautious, and also careful lest an undue

time should be spent on experiments. I do want at the outset to say what will be dealt with later on, - "Do not be fanciful, do not imagine you know something when you know nothing, and do not read into Scripture what is not there". No doubt God has lessons beyond what we can understand of everything, but, beloved friends, there are things hidden from us at present with a wise purpose. You know how, in astronomical studies, men have made calculations, and have reached a certain measure of confusion, till, for example, a missing planet was discovered. You know, furthermore, how in chemistry the number of elements that have been found is increasing, but these elements are arranged in a certain way, so that it seems fairly certain there are gaps to be filled. We know only the PARTS of God's way's, and if we too hastily draw our conclusions from what we do know we shall find when we learn something more, it overthrows our previous conclusions, and such hastiness does not help us spiritually. If we took all the names of the Lord Jesus, I am not sure that we should find every one have lessons upon the surface for us in the numerical value. Sometimes one will find out many more things wrapped up in varied arrangements. My own inclination is NOT ONLY to count in the ordinary way, but to count leaving out the "extra" numbers that are inserted, and to see the result. This would be to vary all the usual way of reckoning. For example, it would mean reckoning the " } " as 6 instead of 7, and the " 7 " as 7 instead of 8. I believe that God has certain lessons wrapped up for us in precious problems, even as there are years of various lengths according to Gen. 1. That is one form of counting which we shall consider later on.

CHRONOLOGICAL counting is very precious. To gather together all the passages that speak of a period, e.g. 40 years, or 120 years. (We think of the 120 in Genesis, and of the 120 of Moses' life). The forties are indeed numerous. Then again we think of the 480 years, with its four times 120, and the 490 years which occur more than once, as you know, in the history of Israel. To collect these passages, and to consider them, is indeed interesting; for it shows that the God of Nature, and the God of Scripture, is the God of History. Everything is mapped out with a perfect precision, and absolute wisdom, - God knows just what is best. There are other ways, furthermore, in which we may count. We may look and see the measurements of Scripture. Take the tabernacle, for example, make a measurement index

to it. Put down 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and underneath each one of the figures add the passages that allude to them. I do not mean simply where the figures occur on the surface. ~~look~~. Where you get $2\frac{1}{2}$, as that is 5 over 2, it would necessarily have an allusion to the 5 and the 2. You will find it is rather interesting to notice "halves" appearing inside the tabernacle, but not halves inside the court. Why is this? Collect all the measurements and see prayerfully what lessons can be learned. The simplest measurement that gives a lesson is the cube of the Holiest of all. The 10 X 10 X 10 giving the thousand, pictorial of the other thousands of Scripture. This illustrates, too, how that numbers can be reached, not only by direct statements, but also by multiplying two together. As the two numbers are to be multiplied together we have Scriptural numbers not occurring in the concordance of Scripture. I think God refers quite as much to this thousand as in the passages where He says a thousand, and that He would have us to connect all. In like manner, if we have a square, or a cube, in other places, we must divide into factors to connect with other parts of the teaching of God. Where we read of the thousand years reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, we do not only think of the thousand, but the cube of ten. Where we find 120, it is not only 120, but 10 X 12. All multiples contain lessons of their factors, and every number in Scripture has MANY thoughts wrapped up in it.

Then again, it is interesting to find out how MANY TIMES certain words occur, - noting words that occur once, or ten times, or seven times, or multiples of seven. Again, words that occur seven times in one book, for example, you will find certain words that occur seven times in the book of Revelation. It is interesting to gather these together. I need hardly say that such a subject as this we shall never exhaust. We shall all be finding fresh beauties; and one of the difficulties of the study of Scripture Numeration is this, that it is absolutely impossible for the speaker to keep pace with all the hearers. I mean, that if I were to spend my time from morning till night preparing interesting illustrations of numbers from Scripture, I should not find all that you would discover if you spent half an hour a week on it. It would be absolutely impossible, because there are so many millions, that if I were, for example, to go to the epistles of Paul, and find how many times certain words occurred, I could not possibly do all the vocabulary in a week, and you might light on

some word that I had not noticed used seven times, or in a multiple of seven, possessing at the same time numerical values peculiarly interesting, and emphasizing some portion of Divine truth, just as we have seen the Name "Jesus" ~~being~~ bringing before us that He was the One raised from the dead, since eight is the number of resurrection.

Hence, let me commend to you this study, as much more "interesting" than many forms of the world's recreation. When you have a few moments, find out the numerical value of a few words. If you have ten seeming failures, and one encouragement, the one encouragement will surely make you forget the ten failures. If you come across some word concerning Satan which has a numerical value of six, six, six, you will perhaps have surprising light on that deeply important Scripture. You see here, dear friends, that we are on a field which no one has yet explored. There is something fresh to be found by all, not only in the sense that all Scripture is fresh to our hearts if our hearts are fresh, but that there is much that no one has yet seen. I do not say that it will be equally easy for all to take up this study. It is quite possible that one who knows nothing of botany may come across a fresh plant. It is more likely, however, that one who studies botany carefully will come across it. In like manner, you must not EXPECT so many encouragements at the beginning of a study as you will a few months later, but have a try. See how many times words occur. If you have a Greek Concordance you will be helped; or if not that, sum up a few words in Greek or Hebrew particularly, for Hebrew has not the added "letters" of the Greek. We know the order of the Hebrew alphabet without doubt. GOD HAS PROVED THIS by the acrostic psalms. Psalm 119 is therefore, an absolute proof that God stands to the Hebrew Alphabet in the order in which it occurs. It is true that in one case of the acrostics (not in Psalm 119) we have certain deviation, but there is a SPECIAL reason for that. God has proved the general order.

Just a word in closing, as to the danger of fancifulness and pride. Do not try and make Scripture fit in with your pre-conceived notions. Do not be quite sure that you are on the right tract because of something that looks possible, with a little "twisting". Never twist ~~to~~ make a thing fit. I have seen a book on numbers in Scripture which ~~is~~ contains excellencies, and also something twisted so crudely and unsatisfactorily

that one is inclined to shut the book. I do not mean God's Book, but the human book about it. Now, if you and I do a little twisting in our own study, and then tell someone of the blessing that we have, that person will doubt the blessing, and not value our conversation. Better tell other one little point that is interesting, than six points that are "made up" Do not read into the Scriptures. Add not to God's words, lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar. Beware of fancifulness, and do not dear friends, be unspiritually clever. Many reach heaven without knowing anything of Scripture numeration. Scripture numeration will never suffice us instead of FEEDING on the Scriptures. Unless it is part of our feeding we had better put it on one side. We should never be bare students. We should always come to God's words to have a spiritual meal. We have not simply a book, but a table spread in God's banqueting house. Let us not simply want to obtain fresh facts that will make other people think we are clever, or that will satisfy ourselves in our brains; but let us desire that by the working of God's holy Spirit, we may be satisfied in our hearts, and yet in another sense never satisfied, - I mean, never satisfied with our knowledge of Scripture, or our knowledge of Christ, though always satisfied with Christ and the Scripture, to the praise of His glory.
