

No.
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***"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH
ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."***
COL.3.1

SCRIPTURE NUMERATION.

"FIVE".

An Address (revised)

At Campbell Road, Bow, E.,

14th May, 1913

by

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"FIVE".

An Address by Mr. P.W. Heward,
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OUTLINE:-

1. Some occurrences.
2. Spiritual Lessons.
3. Multiples of Five.
4. Application of God's Truth, and Growth in Grace.

Some occurrences may be noticed: Gen. 43. 34; 45.22. To Benjamin a portion was given five times as large as to the others. Exod. 26. 3; 27.1,18; 30.22-24 (five things); 25-29, 34-38. Lev.26.8; 1 Cor.14. 19; Luke 12.6, 52; 14.19; 16.27,28.

Now, dear friends, we can ponder our subject - "Five", that is to say, we can consider the spiritual lessons wrapped up in the number five. We have the precious MATERIAL of Scripture examples. We believe every number has a meaning. Five is one of the odd numbers, and odd numbers usually have some definite reference to God Himself. You recollect how we saw that "one" brings before us the unity of God, "three" the tri-unity. This is the first odd number after "three", and as "one" and "three" bring before us the Person of God, we expect that "five" and "seven" will bring before us the work of God. "Seven" undoubtedly gives the thought of a complete working. We anticipate, therefore that "five" will not bring before us a complete work finished, but rather that which leads up to a complete work, inasmuch as "five" is three plus two, and as "three" is tri-unity and "two" suggests witnessing, we rather anticipate that "five" will be a Triune God witnessing. Now we expect that "five" will be a Triune God witnessing in TWO ways. One is the law, and another is the Gospel. I believe that "five" is the number of law and grace. No one will have any doubt about it as a number of law. The law of Moses is found in five books. The ten commandments on two tables of stone suggest two "fives". The very word "law" in the Greek contains five letters, and its numerical value is a multiple of five. Five is continually brought before us in connection with the law, but not only so. God has more than shown Himself as the Righteous One. He has shown Himself as the Gracious One. The word "grace" in the Greek, like the word "law", has five letters. The fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is that letter which God inserted in the name of Abraham when He changed it from Abram to Abraham, - the fifth letter, the grace letter, that God put in, just as God emphasized that letter with regard to Sarah. And five is the number of Grace very manifestly in other connections. We remember the five loaves of that wonderful feeding on that day of miracle; and we have noticed that Benjamin had five times as much food, and five times as many clothes, as the other brethren, because he was closer of kin to Joseph. I believe Benjamin, the son of the right hand, pictures the heavenly redeemed, and the other sons picture the tribes of Israel during the millennium to be blessed on the earth. So we have five brought before us as the number of grace in Joseph's gifts. I referred just now to five as indicative of grace in connection with the five loaves. Is there not another meaning also? Five is a small number and is sometimes used in this connection, just as we say "Five minutes", denoting a brief period. In like manner we find the number five used in Scripture. Now is this strange. There has always been a tendency with

man to count things in tens; and five being half ten is the smallest number that comes especially into the mind with respect to ten. In accord with this we find "Five of you shall chase a hundred". "I would rather speak five words" means, I would rather speak a short message that is God's message than a long speech that is not from God. So the five barley loaves bring before us God's wondrous use of little things. He is not dependent on anything, but He graciously employs that which is very small. Five loaves would in any case be small for five thousand, but barley loaves were normally smaller than other loaves, and the Lord particularly tells us that the possession of the little lad was limited to BARLEY loaves. A barley loaf was almost "looked down upon". When God was showing Gideon that it was not by might nor by power, but by a Divine enabling he must conquer, - when God was bringing *him* to doubt himself but to trust in the living Lord, Gideon was sent down to the army of the Midianites, and he heard one tell another his dream, and it was simply this, that a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian and destroyed a tent. The barley bread was the poor people's bread, the insignificant bread; and the Lord's people need to be brought to realize that they are, at best, cakes of barley bread, - to see their nothingness. So the five loaves of barley bread were particularly small, and five is often so used.

But this does not alter the fact that the usual employment of the word is either for law or grace, - some expression from God. In connection with the Tabernacle, too, five is very common. We have the five cubits high of the curtain round the court, pictorial, I suppose, of the obedience worked out in the life of the Lord Jesus. The five cubits, each way, of the altar of burnt offering, are again pictorial of the life of the Lord Jesus as the One Who kept the law. So we have Him brought before us by these different fives. We have seen, furthermore, there were five bars keeping the boards of the tabernacle together. I believe therein we behold the working of God's grace, although His commandments are equally important. Then again we notice five things together in the anointing oil, and also the five ingredients in that which was made at God's bidding from certain different choice spices with a view to a confection after the art of the apothecary. Five is pictorial of grace, - a revelation from God of His own way of working.

Shall we now turn to one or two more passages to see if our information obtained hitherto will be borne out. Exod.13.18 (margin). "And the children of Israel went up by five in a rank". The redemption-deliverance was connected with a march. Five in a rank. Grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, all the way along. Redemption blood was the background. Incidentally we see that God is not the author of confusion. It is the privilege of some of the Lord's people at various times to visit a procession which contains some who openly declare themselves as opposed to God, on the first of May. The procession has been characterized by a paper that supported it as a march of ten thousand "rebels". Now one thing I have always noticed in connection with the procession is that those who have at such a time banners mentioning "anarchy" and similar words, can never walk in rank properly. I have never seen a more disorderly procession, and it always seems to me a little illustration of the position. To see men marching along with a banner with the inscription "Anarchy is the true order" and similar words, and to see all stepping out of order as to one another, seems almost to bring before one's eyes the goal of man's anarchy and confusion. Everything with God is well arranged, and the crowds of Israel, thousands upon thousands, went up from the land of Egypt marshalled by fives. One of the greatest miracles in Scripture is the organisation of the two millions and a half, of Israel who went up from bondage. If any have tried to organize a few hundred, they

will begin to realise what organizing two and a half million means. There was, indeed, a Divine work. Well there plainly we have grace marked out.

Shall we next turn to John's Gospel, the fifth chapter. Says verse 2 "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market, or sheeppcote, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In those lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water", and so forth. You know Christ found a man lying there who had been in that position thirty eight years. Here we have brought before us a man who, as it were, tries to get saved by law, and it fails, and then grace steps in, and with one word the Lord is able to change everything, and the man is raised up. Thirty eight years of struggling and no success. Here is Divine grace. The five porches were the place of impotent folk, suggested by the five books of the law. The place of impotent folk,- for the law can save no man. The law can only show us our sins. I might mention in this connection how it seems to me that the woman of Samaria- among many other different lessons, gives another type in this connection. She may be viewed as one who had been married to the law. But instead of being brought in the right way to union with another, there had been no legal settlement of law's demands, and hence she was indeed a criminal. Romans 7 is the Devine comment. It says that man by natural position is married to the law, and only death can sever, but that God's people are become dead to the law by the body of Christ that they should be righteously married to Another. Married to another without death would be totally unsatisfactory. Without the atonement of the Lord Jesus there is no escape from law. It can only bind its chains round us, and sink us into judgment. I think that is one of the figurative interpretations of the five husbands of the woman of Samaria. I have not the slightest doubt that literally this was true, and that the Lord dealt with the woman, showing His knowledge of all her history, all her heart, and all her actions. But there are Divine parallels, as the Holy Spirit shows a wondrous allegory in Galatians 4.

Will you turn next to 1 Sam. 17. 40? David took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones^(X) partly with reference to the five Philistine lords. We are told that there were five Philistine cities especially standing out, Ashkelon, Ekron, Ashdod, Gath and Gaza, and these cities had lords. The exact position of these lords is hard to find out, because we discover a king of Gath, and yet the lords of the Philistines are mentioned in the same context. The lords were very high in their office, because we are distinctly told how that when the ark had been stolen from Israel and was returned, there were certain models returned with it. Five golden mice, for example, according to the number of the lords. They were the leaders of the Philistines, and David doubtless meant when he took the five stones that he would attack ALL the Philistines. They should ALL be laid low. But I believe there is another lesson; indeed, two other very evident lessons. The five smooth stones seem to me to go with the barley loaves. The Lord uses little things! And do we not also see the carrying out of God's law? Goliath is a type of Antichrist, and Antichrist will rise up against the Lord and the Lord's servants, but the Greater than David shall deal with him according to law, and so there will be wrath and judgment. It is rather remarkable that in Joshua 10 we have five kings specially brought before us. The passage at which we have looked in Luke 16 "I have five brethren", is rather difficult. Does it picture those who are under law? Or ought we to count the five with the one and make the number six, man's number? I rather incline to the second interpretation as being the primary one. We have the SIX under judgment. The contrast with Abraham and Lazarus - the TWO receiving blessing.

Now we can consider multiples of five. That is to say, 10, 25, 50,

out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip, and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistines. I suppose that David took the five stones

(X)

500, 5000 and so forth. As a rule, multiples of numbers contain the lessons of the number and something more. Ten is, I believe, not only five multiplied by two, but the lesson of five and two joined. Five is grace. Two is fellowship, friendship; and ten is the number of a fellowship which is made by grace. A number multiplied by itself has always the thought of the number intensified. Twenty five, therefore, is a very intense form of five. The altar that pictured the perfect life of our Lord Jesus was five cubits by five cubits, twenty five. It pictured His finished work. It pictured His entire obedience to law, when in grace He became man. Indeed, in the tabernacle we find any number of multiples of five. The court is a hundred cubits by fifty. The tabernacle is 30 by 10 by 10 cubits. All these are multiples of five. In the temple it is the same. Indeed, we cannot view it as simply an accident of calculation that we have so many fives to do with the various buildings of which God tells us by His own appointment. You find "fives" in the prophecy of Ezekiel. You have multiples of five with respect to the ark of Noah, Five is the number of law; five is the number of grace, and in all these things we have a stress on law being honoured, and grace being manifested. Our beloved Lord was seen in resurrection by above five hundred brethren at once. The firstfruits of grace. The largest number that we know He fed was about five thousand men, beside women and children. There we have grace displayed. The largest number of early saved ones seen in the Acts is five thousand, in Acts 4. So we have God's teaching brought before us, and impressed upon us, - grace, grace, grace.

Lastly we come to ask ourselves, Are we growing in grace through the study? It is not enough to know that five is the number of grace, but are we growing grace? I think we realise that Scripture is more and more wonderful; that though our knowledge is small, the book which we search is vast. I think we realise that God has many lessons for us wrapped up in every word, and that we want eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to ponder, and lives to practise. Are we not only feeling these things mentally, but are we growing in grace, aye, and growing in grace through this study? Dear friends, unless we receive a blessing, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in that we are drawn nearer unto our Lord consciously, the probability is that we are wandering away from our Lord. It is blessed to know some of the deep things of God, but the greater our knowledge the greater will be our loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ unless we use that knowledge aright. Information is a privilege, but information should lead us on to conformation of our life, a conformation to the things of God. Be not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Let us indeed seek, if we have been brought out from law, to live as those who are free from law in THIS aspect, but not lawless. Let us remember the Divine statement "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace". We might have been left thirty eight years in misery trying to save ourselves, but God has drawn us to Himself, and saved us by His own lovingkindness; loved us with an everlasting love, and drawn us out from the waters of judgment, and He will never let us go. The law is now written on the heart. Having received such grace, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness. How we should make manifest that we are not our own, but we are bought with a price, and would glorify God in our body and in our spirit, for everything that we have and are belongs to Him. As we think of the large number whom grace has reached, not only the five thousand who our Lord fed, but the vast number that no man can count, oh how grateful we should be that the precious blood of Christ availed for men of all nations and all conditions,

and that those who are far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In closing, one more word. Five is the number of grace and law. Is there a contradiction? Does it seem strange the same number should have both lessons? I suppose we at once answer, No. Grace and law are closely associated. Law is an expression of God's righteousness. Grace is an expression of God's mercy; and grace meets the demands of law. The law is NOT against the promises of God. The promises of God are not against the law. There are two spheres, but there is no contradiction. Law is a revelation of what God must do against sin. Grace is a revelation of what God has done in connection with sin, for the number five is not only used of grace as grace viewed in the abstract, but grace MADE MANIFEST by the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Hence the fives, and the multiples of five, in the tabernacle, and it seems to bring before us that where sin abounded, and where there was law to threaten, there grace stepped in, and God met us in our lost estate that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Oh that it may be so. Oh that we may indeed have a victory over ourselves in the Holy Spirit, that the words of our prayer this evening may be, "Order my steps in Thy Word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me". Oh that those words may be lived out in our lives, and that we may walk with God as He would have us to walk, in the devotedness which befits blood-bought ones, and pleases Him.