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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me."
Isa. 12. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

A FEW PAGES,—that is all. Nay, these pages are a testimony for GOD, or nothing. If He is exalted, and souls are blessed, it is well. But if not, although thousands approve and applaud, it is not well. Everything has its PROFIT OR LOSS in the light of God's will. Truth is precious: a lie, however attractive and fascinating, is not precious. And we would not only set forth truth, but the truth He wishes us to set forth at this time. His beloved people need meat in due season. To give a child long words when he has just learnt his A. B. C. is unwise. O for grace to SUIT THE NEEDS of the children of God, that they may press forward and upward, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Amusement do you seek, dear reader? Life has something more than this. Is eloquence your quest? It may only decorate empty thoughts. Unless these pages lead to Christ, they are vain, and the work is in vain.

"A PROPHET . . . LIKE UNTO THEE."

Deut. 18. 15-19.*

"THERE AROSE NOT A PROPHET SINCE IN ISRAEL LIKE UNTO MOSES, WHOM THE LORD KNEW FACE TO FACE."

(Deut. 34. 10).

TWENTIETH-century Judaism has NO ROOM for the Prophet like unto Moses. It does not desire the Prophet like unto Moses. The wish of the present-day Jew is very different. Why is this?

God did NOT say that He would at once send this Prophet. On the

* Being prepared in Yiddish also, the Lord enabling, for His work, in this and other lands, among Israel.

contrary, Deuteronomy 34. 10 is definite, immediately after mentioning Joshua in verse 9. The idea that the great promise was then fulfilled falls to the ground. Is such a theory an attempt to get rid of a part of truth which is "NOT WANTED?" It may be so, alas, but truth is NEEDED.

Further, God did not say He would send TWO prophets like to Moses nor MANY, but ONE. This is a striking fact in the Hebrew Scriptures. There were many SERVANTS of God, there were many prophets, but ONE is always described as DIFFERENT from others. Who is This One? Here is NOT a mere riddle, it is far otherwise, it is a matter of life and death, for the verses before us say that One, ONLY ONE, would come to fulfil Israel's wish, "THAT I DIE NOT" (Deut. 18. 16).

Either He HAS come, or He WILL come, or He will NOT come. If He will NOT come, God's words are broken: --THAT is quite impossible, and the very thought is sinful. If He will come, when will He arrive, and WHO is He, and HOW will He be known? If He HAS come, Israel are guilty if they do not know and honour Him. The question, therefore, is vital. WHO IS THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES?

Some will still answer, Joshua, although Deut. 34. 9, 10 has been before us. Further, no one can compare the two men in the matter of knowing God face to face, and receiving commandments for the children of Israel. Possibly the reader would like the words, already quoted, once more:—"There arose not a prophet like unto Moses" to show such a Prophet did not arise at once. Yet it is written, "I will raise" (אֲרִיז). Evidently God intended a break of years. Joshua was NOT the Prophet. Who then shall be proposed? What if we say, Elijah? Did HE give a law? Or Elisha? Was HE thus appointed? Does anyone suggest Isaiah? His book is very precious but it does not mark him out as the prophet like Moses: he is not God's messenger with the appointed signs and marks. So it is as to the other prophets. And, beyond everything, the words ring out, "According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God . . . THAT I DIE NOT." Who can dare to say that such godly men as Jeremiah and Ezekiel fulfilled this? They did not bring eternal life. This is vital. It is a matter of LIFE AND DEATH. Have you a Prophet through Whom you will possess eternal life? If not, acknowledging your need, dear reader, will you not seek Him? Do you not feel yourself a condemned sinner, in want of eternal life? "That I die not" is the request that God honoured (Deut. 5. 28). And Moses prophetically told of such an One, "According to all that thou desiredst." God owns the same desire to-day.

Israel often say, "We do not want Anyone BETWEEN us and God, when He is our Judge." But a desire for One to take the place of a Mediator was THE VERY THING as to which God declared, "They have WELL said all that they have spoken." Then you have not "Well said" if you reject THE MEDIATOR. Where else did God thus approve the people's words? His highest commendation was of the wish for ONE IN BETWEEN. Any attempt to go to God with self-reliance is presumption. How would it have fared if a man had

broken through on the day of atonement? And what happened to Korah and his company when they went to God in their own way, or rather sought vainly so to do?

Observe that Deuteronomy 18. 19 suggests that some WILL REJECT this PROPHET. So the fact that One is "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53. 3) is no evidence against Him. What if, after all, the Prophet like Moses HAS come? What if, after all, it is Jesus Christ Himself? There are some of Israel, and the Gentiles too, who know it is none other.

You say, "No, it cannot be." WHY "cannot" it be? Is not all power with God as to the Messiah's birth? Miracles are no problem to God. WHY cannot this Prophet be the Lord Jesus? He came as Mediator, at the very time foretold by Daniel (9. 24-27), being born at the very place marked out by Micah (5. 2), and walked about the districts named by Isaiah 8. 23 (Heb.); 9. 1. The very fact He gave a law is no hindrance: if it were NOT so, we SHOULD be perplexed.

There is nothing to say against this identification. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not the Prophet like Moses, when CAN He possibly come (the temple has been now destroyed, Messiah was to come first), AND HOW WILL YOU KNOW HIM? If you reject the identification marks in Him, you will find every identification of ANYONE quite impossible. But such an attitude is not only carelessness, it is, dear friend, (let me say it tenderly), pride or obstinacy of heart. Will you persist in this?

If then the Prophet like Moses HAS come, He is none other than the Lord Jesus. If He has not come, there is no room for Him and the prophecy is null! In other words, strange though it seems, you cannot accept the מָלֵךְ without the Lord Jesus. You can, alas, reject BOTH, but you cannot have One without the Other.

Moreover, since the Prophet like Moses HAS come, God calls you to account for YOUR sin in rejecting Him (Deut. 18. 19). But, wondrous love, the Hitherto Rejected One is still the Deliverer from the very sin of refusing Him, for He died, as the Passover Lamb of God, for the guilty. This is wonderful, but true.

Some of Israel think we have a question between JUDAISM and a GENTILE religion. They quite forget that, at the first, the question was before Israel only, and NOT before the Gentiles, "Is this the Messiah, or not?" There were ISRAELITES who said "YES": there were ISRAELITES who said "No." Only afterwards were Gentiles brought in. The fact is that the majority of Israel said, "No": but find me in history where the majority were right, and I will find you more than two or three occasions where they were WRONG. If the Messiah IS "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23. 6), if He HAS come to fulfil Scripture: if He HAS died for sinners, —your carelessness is vanity, and, moreover, you are withholding from God HIS RIGHT, when you refuse to worship Him. To call "the Lord our Righteousness" a CREATED being is to ROB GOD of glory. If you do NOT worship Him, your sin is different, but AS GREAT AS if you worshipped idols. Why not flee unto Him for

safety now, dear reader, that **YOU MAY NOT DIE**? God's way of life was **ALWAYS** by the death of a sacrifice. Why should this be in the types and not in the Antitype? Every objection falls: but 'tis a blessed contrast when the sinner falls down, and cries for mercy, by the precious blood of Messiah Himself.

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD TO SOME OF HIS BELOVED PEOPLE.

"BEFORE HIS TRANSLATION HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY THAT HE PLEASSED GOD." Heb. 11. 5.

THE verse with which we commence is not only a setting forth of the character of a **FAITHFUL MAN**, it unveils the gracious interest of **OUR FAITHFUL GOD**. He knows the strain of the path. He is **FAR** removed from the feelingless impersonal spirit of the universe, which eastern philosophy has conceived.* "Feelingless?" Nay, He loves beyond measure. "Impersonal?" Nay, we receive eternal life that we may know **HIM**. And His beautiful thought for His suffering people shines out again and again in the pages of Scripture. Enoch was a man "alone." But did his God allow an overstrain? Nay, "Enoch walked with God." In like manner, the Lord was with His people in the burning fiery furnace of Daniel 3. Such love is real. And in accord with this thought of intimacy, Enoch received the encouragement beyond all encouragements, even an assurance that he pleased God. He **KNEW** this, but was not made proud. Who can be proud while walking with God (Mic. 6. 8)?

Our hearts think of another, of Moses. His life was crowded with blessings—and trials. Yea, the latter are among the blessings, rightly used. He was opposed and chided by men. Did not the glory of the Lord appear?—Numbers 14. 10, 16. 19. On another occasion, even Miriam and Aaron spake against him. But the Lord was not unmindful. He spake suddenly (Num. 12. 4), and then gave a precious testimony to Moses, "My servant Moses . . . who is faithful in all Mine house." God loves, He cares, **HE NEVER** forgets.

Hear another witness:—"Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"—Job 1. 8. 'Tis precious when **GOD** Himself deigns to speak thus. Yet Job 40. 4 and 42. 6 are **EQUALLY** true:—a wondrous background for the display of the glory of Christ.

And what shall we say concerning David? How tenderly God

* The **CRUELTY** and **HARSHNESS** of heathenism is not only seen in its wild rites amid savage tribes, but even in this part of the scheme of most educated philosophers of Hinduism. And may we add a parallel? The theory of evolution has no love to the weak: it is the **REVERSE** of God's grace to the "unfittest." Man's evil is reflected in his thoughts, however varied or intellectual.

speaks of this servant of His. Listen to the striking words, "To whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will" (Acts 13. 22 see Ps. 89. 20, 1 Sam. 13. 14). Truly the Lord taketh pleasure in His people.

Our mind next travels to such a passage as Jeremiah 15. 1, regarding Moses and Samuel; and Ezekiel 14. 14 is a refreshing testimony to Noah, Daniel and Job. And thus reference to Daniel recalls the witness of Gabriel, "Thou art greatly beloved" (Dan. 9. 23, cf. 10. 11). These are not mere words. God's love is real (John 14. 23).

In the later Scriptures we find the same loving regard for the Lord's dear people. Remember His gracious testimony to John, at a time when it almost seemed as though the Baptist was faltering, and might have been reproved. At once Christ says that he was not a reed, shaken with the wind, nor enjoying himself in kings' houses, but a prophet, and more (Matt. 11. 7-11). In a king's prison, not in a king's house: Christ honours suffering for His sake.

The same loving interest in His people is manifested by God throughout, and in many ways. It was when Paul might "well" have been discouraged that "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul" (Acts 23. 11). Thus these testimonies are only **PARTS** of a larger unveiling of God's deep love toward those who are His.

And there is another thought. God the Father sees in the redeemed the fruit of His Beloved Son's work. The Lord Jesus beholds those for whom He poured out His life blood. How can there be a small value put on such? The preciousness of the purchase price causes their preciousness to shine out.

And thus the words of grace are not only with regard to men of outstanding character as Moses. Far otherwise. Of the whole family of our gracious God we have a beautiful statement in Hebrews 2. 11; Christ "is not ashamed to call them brethren," and the question rings out, "Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou ME?" And another view of love is found in a further testimony. Those who have been faithful over a few things are greeted with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 21). How many of us who confess His precious Name, and who are looking for that Blessed Hope, are concerned so to live daily, in the working of the Holy Spirit, that we may be found faithful in "that Day?" Alas, we often overlook the very **GREAT** privilege of living for Him Who died for us, and Whose Coming is so near.

We would still look "unto the Lord" regarding proposed sale of 61, Upton Lane, where His work has now been carried on so many years. The crisis **SEEMS** nearer, but He **CAN** prevent our compulsory removal, with its heavy strain. He **CAN** even cause a refreshing **PURCHASE**: and we would trust and not be afraid. It is a joy to know others, too, are praying. The "sale" is in **HIS** hands, the owners are in **HIS** hands: but we would **NOT** be "indifferent." We would praise in advance.

A STRIKING PROMISE.

"If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." Jer. 33. 25, 26.

ALL God's promises are precious and exceeding great, for He only doeth wondrous things. Faith believes them, and is simple enough to doubt everything which is against them. This promise MUST be fulfilled. And we learn the way in which it shall be fulfilled in the Holy Scriptures. Everything centres around Christ, and we call to mind Luke 1.32,33, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Moreover, David is to be raised up as a shepherd (Ezek. 34. 23, 24), and there will be also an earthly prince, evidently of his line (Ezek. 46. 16-18 etc.).

This is clear and simple, if we accept the definite prophecy that Jerusalem shall be a praise IN THE EARTH (Isa. 62. 7), but, alas, there are found many who seem to explain away the prophecies. Beloved friends, we can no more rob the prophecies that concern our Lord's SECOND Coming of their literality, than those that concern His FIRST Coming. O for a holy truthfulness, and a recognition OF GOD'S TRUTHFULNESS.

But others have said, with a pendulum swing, that these promises to David's line imply the absence of ANY break, and, therefore, they look for such a king to-day, and, further, make the claim that Britain has already received the fulfilment of this prophecy. To some dear children of God, brought by grace to acknowledge the HEAVENLY calling, such a claim is at once seen to be out of harmony with a dispensation of this "little flock," hated of "all nations," if Scripturally faithful (Matt. 24. 9), a dispensation of strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet. 2. 11). And Anglo-Israelism seems inseparable from a "nationalism" and an excusing of warfare for God's dear people, so contrary to the address on the mount. Indeed, its various proof-passages appear to refute themselves when viewed IN THEIR CONTEXT.*

But for the moment let us ponder Jeremiah 33. Verse 21 is Messianic. The "break" during the captivity, and when the Levitical Maccabees, or the Edomite Herods, ruled, can in no way alter the sure promise, but it answers the error. The contention that this must apply to-day is out of place. Moreover, where are the "Levites the priests, My ministers?" Verse 18 would imply a RITUAL: we cannot explain it away. Animal sacrifices are plainly intended. Even so is it as to circumcision (Gen. 17. 13): to change this to baptism

* The writer is willing, the Lord enabling, to deal with any special two or three passages that may be a difficulty to any reader in these limited pages. If the Lord will, longer type-written notes will shortly be ready.

is trifling with the words of the Holy Spirit. Somewhat similar is the assumption that the sabbath (which is equally "everlasting" when Israel are dealt with by God, Ex. 31. 16) is the first day of the week. To IDENTIFY Levitical priests and gospel worshippers, or circumcision and baptism, is sinful: to acknowledge a spiritual parallel, instead of identity, is to RECOGNIZE the true character of the present dispensation, without an earthly kingdom and priesthood.* And that is the setting aside of Anglo-Israelism.

It is worthy of prayerful notice, moreover, that THE SEED OF DAVID is to be multiplied, but the theory before us thus exalts Ephraim, not the royal family of David (22).† One verse earlier speaks of David's throne which was at JERUSALEM, (Jer. 22. 2, 4, 30 etc.), and if we continue to look backward we find, "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely" (16): yet the British Ephraim theory makes this FUTURE. Such dividing seems hardly consistent. The very passage implies a captivity, and by no means demands a present kingdom. The promised return is surely to be a complete one for the "chosen seed" when God has mercy upon them (verse 26) and sets them in their own land (Isa. 14. 1, 2).§

The parallel passage in Jeremiah 31. 36, 37 at once goes on to speak not of London but of Jerusalem (38-40). Any theory that leads up to the thought that any earthly nation is now in the new covenant nationally is an unwarranted attack, (however unintended), on the Gospel of the grace of God, and a new creation in Christ Jesus.

IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER?

IF, by grace, we are children of God, we shall not answer this question for "ourselves," but seek GOD'S ANSWER. This is the more manifestly important, for, if we once leave His standard, we can find no fixity among men. The human heart is changeable: some will call one condition better, and others another. Many are superficial. Where, moreover, can we find a man who is not onesided? And our knowledge is so limited. You may walk in one sphere, and see "improvements," I in another, and see the reverse. There is a profit and loss account in the kaleidoscope of human history. We need, in this, as in all else, to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and LEAN NOT to our own understanding (Prov. 3. 5).

Believers should look at everything in God's light. The Jewish world was religious in Christ's days, but how solemnizingly HE unmasked even the chief priests and Pharisees. "The thoughts of many hearts" were unmasked at Calvary (Luke 2. 35). Who would have thought

* The theory of a state church, and a caste of priests seems bound up in Anglo-Israelism, if largely logical: though EVEN THEN there is not a LEVITICAL ministry, with animals. Everything is forced.

† It is idle to say that Anglo-Israelism emphasizes David's line. The question here is NOT only perpetuity but unprecedented multiplication.

§ God has no SECOND land of Israel: "their place" is clearly marked in Scripture.

the learned men, who studied the law so earnestly, would have mocked as THEY mocked? It is difficult to tell what a man really is, except in circumstances that analyze his very nature.

Moreover, what is progress? We need to weigh the PRIVILEGES certain nations have received. Everything is involved. A Capernaum is more accountable than a Sodom. And, further, MOTIVES are deeply important. One man may do through PRIDE that which another does through LOVE, and God only can see "motives." Again, behold a man who will do in a carnival that which he would not do at another time. Thus his abstinence from degrading buffoonery AT OTHER TIMES is not on moral grounds. Many were unwilling to dress immodestly till fashion permitted this: but the AUTHORITY of fashion brings to light the lack of moral strength, which was THERE before it was seen. Hence it is very difficult to speak on this subject, yea, impossible, without the authority of the revelation of One Who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4. 12).

"The signs of the times" are very impressive, though a believer needs to beware lest THEY occupy his heart, and take his mind off Christ. It is possible to read the newspaper to illustrate the Scripture, TILL the illustration becomes more than the Scripture.* Perils and pitfalls abound. But it is evident that Jewish and Gentile signs, everywhere visible, seem to point to the near Coming of the Lord Jesus. Does Scripture give any suggestion of improvement at "the end of the age?" If so, let it be produced. Is it true that transgressors will come to the full (Dan. 8. 33), and that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse (2 Tim. 3. 13)? Does not the Lord Jesus indicate that His people will be hated to the end of the age (Matt. 24. 9), and that when He comes He will not find faith on the earth (Luke 18. 8)?

It is readily acknowledged that, oftentimes through the indirect influence of the gospel, men lay aside practices of open blood-thirstiness. But is a CHANGE of tactics an improvement? Is science-organized slaughter kindlier than hand to hand conflict? Is mutilation by engines of destruction, which one knows will mutilate in mass, yet cannot say HOW, more refined than deliberate personal cutting off of limbs? The writer realizes that these things MUST BE, and that God's providence appoints government, and he respects this. But the claim that earth is improving BECAUSE ancient "rough and ready" means of death are discarded is baseless.

("If the Lord will," to be concluded next month).

God does not meet a sinner HALF-WAY, but He has come to sinners the WHOLE WAY, to bring them, moreover, THE WHOLE WAY into His presence.

* A graver danger than many realize. How many have been led away from the Lord by "newspapers"!

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The Lord said:—"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14. 23.

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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

BY continued mercy we have the privilege of sending out a few pages concerning our glorious Lord Jesus. Popularity can never be the aim, if He is loved. Nor can it be an expectation. Nor even a wish! The great privilege of life is pleasing HIM. And yet one feels ashamed at the smallness of love to Him. If there are those who seek to serve Him, who welcome these pages, and if there is, by grace, a drawing of heart to heart, and a desiring to know more of God's words, unto Him be all the praise. It will always be a joy to hear from such as to how we can encourage them yet more, and how we can together more fully illustrate the precious words of 1 Corinthians 1. 10. The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh. This is an incentive to revival, and truth is always humbling.

FAITH, WISHES, EXPECTATION.

How Can We Link These?

MANY beloved children of God confuse faith with their own natural desires. They long for certain "encouragements"—"desirable" as far as they can see,—and then urge faith, without sufficient waiting for God's counsel (Psalm 106. 13). But it may be said, "Should not our wishes be in harmony with the will of God?" Granted, but are they always thus conformed? A believer needs much humility. And further, even when his wishes are thus beautifully harmonized, by the working of the Holy Spirit, WILL THERE ALWAYS BE KNOWLEDGE? Will it not be rather, "I desire to do

this, IF THE LORD WILL ! ”* This answers the objection that may be raised from Psalm 145. 19, “ He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.” Our desire IS fulfilled, whenever we say, and mean, “ if God will.” The promise stands. Moreover, there is sometimes a humbling contrast between our desire and our desireS. That our Father does not intend us always to know, is clear from Romans 8.26, and such passages as 1 Corinthians 16. 7 and James 4. 15. The suggestion “ Have faith ” for “ whatsoever WE wish ” may be a claim to “ perfection,” and also an assumption of the knowledge of all God’s will, which is out of harmony with true humility, and His appointment for us in a day in which we know “ in part.”

But the flesh usually seeks a swing of the pendulum. There is often a LACK of faith, and we content ourselves with the thought, “ God’s will is best, our times are in His hand, we wish to know nothing,” whereas He may draw us to know His will, that our faith may be EXERCISED for some DEFINITE blessing (cf. Ezek. 36. 37). By a DUE proportion we are held back from pride and indifference alike. O that it may be so in our daily experience in the power of the Holy Spirit, and, whenever God HAS REVEALED His will, it is presumptuous to ASK Him to reveal it, even as it is sin to beseech God to show us His will regarding His commandments, while we reject the study of His will regarding these very commandments.

And now the thought of “ expectation ” is before us. Confidence in our Heavenly Father’s wisdom is precious. But if we remove expectation we grieve Him. Psalm 27. 14 signifies, “ Expect unto the Lord.” Not that expectation makes the fulfilment, or that prayer of itself changes things, but prayerfulness brings us into a position to be able to receive God’s changed things. Lack of expectation involves a misuse of sound doctrine, even as a settling down because of God’s election is a serious evil,—God uses means, and believers should be more expectant because of God’s character, and His promises to EXPECTANCY. To be afraid of expecting is vain: the right attitude is hopefulness, within the Lord’s will, and with a humility that seeks to confess failure if the blessing is graciously withheld still.

IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER?

(Concluded).

In other spheres we find men suffering from the same self-deception. Spiritism is more “ refined ” than witch-doctorism, but it is equally demonism. Higher Criticism is more respectable than mid-19th century infidelity, but it is no holier: it adds the element of dishonesty. The murderer who coats his poison with nutritious sugar is no less a murderer. Men are deceived in these matters, and deceive one another. “ Come with me to certain streets,” says a man: “ you could not have gone there twenty or thirty years ago.” But

* Or, “ IF THE LORD WILL, I desire to do this.” The order is not unimportant, see James 4. 15.

WHY is the change ? Is there more deep love to others, and more real care for human life ? Education is not godliness. If a man ceases to kill me with his hand, but murders with his false teaching, shall I say “ Improvement,” because of changed methods ? The devil is no better when he comes as an angel of light than when he prowls as a roaring lion. If you say a proud Pharisee is better than a savage chief, it is difficult to find Scripture support. O that our eyes may be opened to look at things from GOD’S standard !

And now, at the risk of being misunderstood, I would earnestly acknowledge that there IS the goodness of the flesh (Isa. 40. 6, 7). Have we not found kindly men, unsaved, yet kindly in CERTAIN directions ? Do we not honour God’s justice, and will there not be a “ more tolerable ” judgment for some than others ? But I deny that we have an INNER knowledge of men, and deny that such kindly men are ONLY FOUND TO-DAY. There is no proof that the world is getting better, no Scripture for such a contention. Children are apparently MORE lawless and irreverent than they were. The mystery of lawlessness goes on inworking, and God Himself sets forth that the climax will be the worship of the man of sin, and bold defiance of the Lord of glory face to face. Is THAT an improvement ? The fact that the devil’s tactics do not yet show their true character is rather an evidence of his subtlety, and our hearts should be brought down, in lowly concern.

The world is still the same world that crucified our Lord Jesus ! The EXTERNALS may change, even as one nation is DIFFERENT from another, but the heart is still deceitful above all things, and incurable. The FLESH remains the same. The theory of improvement is “ evolution ” or a misreading of the parable of the leaven. Those who make MAN the centre may think there is improvement, because in SOME things men show more humanitarianism. But the FIRST commandment is, “ Thou shalt love THE LORD THY GOD.” And He is still REJECTED. The LAST book of Scripture is the death blow to this lulling theory, and in holy witness against it let God’s beloved people sound forth, and live forth, the gospel of the GRACE of God. The Holy Spirit ever shows the need for REGENERATION: the flesh profiteth nothing, and “ that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Let the striking words of Christ be realized that the generation would remain unchanged, and we shall not dishonour Him, or flatter ourselves, by feeling that the evil age from which we have been delivered (Gal. 1. 4) has been made better. Beloved friends, this error is Satan’s attempt to make the Lord’s people into the friends of the world (Jas. 4. 4). O for grace to be humbly separate.

Not foreseen FAITH, but foreseen UNBELIEF is the background of election, as it has well been said.

How many have faith in THEIR FAITH instead of in Christ. They believe that they believe, and without faith’s rest IN HIMSELF imagine they are saved. Faith that goes no further than SELF, and lacks a simple dependence on Christ and His work, is dead faith.

A LETTER TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC Who Rejected a Scripture-Booklet.*

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter, safely received in God's providence. I do not resent, but wish for frank speaking. But how I long to receive a letter that shows a delight in God's grace also. Do you think yours can be so described?

May I, too, be frank? Our earthly life is short: we stand before God. There is no time for flattery, or amusement: but there is time for loving concern that others may be blest. Does your letter illustrate this love to sinners? If not, why such an omission? If any hold the truth **ARIGHT**, they ought to show the love of Christ.

And I find one other matter quite absent, namely—proof, from the testimony of God, of what you assert. Why is this? If you **HAVE** the proof, and you feel I am in danger, why do you not produce it? Ought we not to remember that **ABUSE** is not **EVIDENCE**? A foolish man can abuse. An infidel can abuse. A child can abuse. But only a spiritually wise man can **SET FORTH THE TRUTH** with earnest proofs from the **VERY WORDS OF GOD**.

It is my desire to test all by this Divine touchstone—the witness of God. Do you want another? Why does your letter leave this out?

The literature sent you contains the Words of God. It is true to its name, "**ALLA TCHELLEM**."† If the booklet is wrong, then the Scriptures are wrong. Will you venture to say this?

You know, my dear Sir, that you have not pointed out one error in the booklet. You speak of cowardliness, yet when we openly send you a book, you raise an objection. We do not hide our address. You speak of the opposition to the mother of the Lord Jesus. Where have I said a single evil word against her, as you imply? She herself spoke of her Saviour. I esteem her, as privileged and godly, and I honour, too, her words to the servants concerning Christ, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John 2. 5). Are you, dear friend, prepared for "**WHATSOEVER HE SAITH**."

You tell me of the many languages the Maltese people know: I do not concern myself with this, but I am concerned to ask, "Do they **KNOW** the Lord Jesus Christ?" He died for sinners, and is now in glory, and He said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14. 6). Do you know **HIM**? Boasting is like abuse:—often an evidence of a weak cause: if you love the Lord Jesus, rather speak to me of Him, and "Whatsoever He saith," as His mother witnessed.

You refer to the Maltese as "The sons of St. Paul." How I long that they would imitate that faithful apostle of the Lord Jesus when he said, "Not having **MINE OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS**." He rejoiced in

* In reply to a letter received. Thanks be unto God the booklet-witness still continues through the post. May He have all the glory.

† "**GOD HATH SPOKEN**" (Maltese).

justification freely by God's grace (Rom. 3. 24), leading to a holy life.

My dear Sir, is your hope the same as his? Read his epistle to the people of God at Rome, and see his resting place. Tell me where this apostle of Christ appointed the traditions to which you cling. Or, on the other hand, tell me where I have contradicted his words. The **DEPARTURE** is on **YOUR** side. The Lord Jesus said, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I SAY?" (Luke 6. 46). And it is not enough to **CALL** yourselves "the sons of St. Paul," unless you walk in the same path.

This matter is one of eternal importance. I am glad you do not **LAUGH** it aside, but I regret that you **THRUST** it aside, without concern. Again I say, abuse is not evidence: nor is it the fruit of a tree which God has planted, and every other tree shall be rooted up (Matthew 15. 13). You tell me of my books destroyed. I remind you earnestly how when the king of Judah thus destroyed God's words they were written again, and many like words (Jeremiah 36. 28, 32). The book is not mine. God will vindicate **HIS** Words. He beholds when **HIS** Words are torn up, and, it may be, through that very bitterness, some soul will have eyes opened to see the emptiness of human opposition to God's precious truth. And if **ONE SOUL** is troubled about sin to seek Christ, all the labour of love is well rewarded.

I plead with you not to trifle with these things, my dear Sir. If you have one testimony **FROM GOD** against what we have printed or sent, produce it. But if not, own His witness, while He waits in mercy. I grant your zeal, but be sure if it is a zeal according to knowledge of His truth, else you come under the judgment of Romans 10. 2-4. The whole passage is striking: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the **END** of law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Although you have said much, may I earnestly remind you that some of old laid "many and grievous complaints against Paul, which **THEY COULD NOT PROVE**" (Acts 25. 7). But how blessed to realize his own testimony that the grace of God changed him. Before he was saved, he thought "he ought to do many things" which afterwards he saw to have been sinful, and then he preached the true faith he formerly sought to destroy. He was zealous, mistakenly, as you are, and **THEN** God opened his eyes. That the like mercy may, if God will, **SOON** reach to you also, my dear Sir, through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, is the prayer of

Your sincere well-wisher **IN** Christ Jesus, all by grace,

Percy W. Heward.

"Sit down quickly and write," said the **UNJUST** steward. Happy are those who are made to sit together in heavenly places, because the handwriting against them is blotted out, since grace reigns through righteousness.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS In the Searching Light of Scripture.

ENTHUSIASM often runs high for that which is largely "untried." Natural disappointment with man's past, makes many grasp at "any hope," but the child of God is called to God's standpoint. The League of Nations SEEMS, to not a few, an encouragement in which believers can take a share. Hence it is well to ponder the path God has marked out for His "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2. 11). Accordingly we would venture to suggest a few reasons why such cannot Scripturally attach themselves to this movement.

1. Children of God are called to avoid fellowship and partnership with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6. 14-18). But the League CANNOT be worked on these "narrow" lines.

2. Believers are NOT entrusted with authority now, but are to wait (1 Cor. 4. 5, 8) while their Lord waits, "sitting" UNTIL the appointed time (Psalm 110. 1). There is no SCRIPTURAL authority for believers to take any part in "politics" in the present time (John 12. 31; 17. 14, 16). They are not even to "police" the world, correctively (Matt. 26. 51, 52; 10. 24, 25).

3. However earnest the desire of many in the League to hinder perpetual strife may be, and however conscientious, the methods have no parallel with the commission Christ has given to HIS beloved PEOPLE. They are to deal with the ROOT of war, and the need for a NEW CREATION personally. All human methods would, FOR THEM, involve doing evil that good may come. We would readily own the GOODLINESS* of man (Isa. 40. 6), whenever manifest, and hate the thought of MERE criticism for criticism's sake, but when the Spirit of God lays hold of a man, HE blows upon this goodness (Isa. 40. 7), and the things that were gain are counted loss (Phil. 3. 7): so much higher is the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus.

4. The arrangements would take the Lord's servants from their infinitely greater work FOR ETERNITY, and give the world a false idea of the Christian concern for souls to be saved. There would be a linked modification of the uncompromising gospel of grace which regards ALL as children of wrath (Eph. 2. 3), and cannot view improvement, in itself, as better than the healing of a finger WHILE a man is bleeding to death elsewhere. It is remarkable that Scripture does prophesy a nearing "League of Nations," but links it with Antichrist. What if present amalgamations and unions are unwittingly preparing for his rising up? The fact needs to be emphasized that "peace and safety" (1 Thess. 5. 3), while God's claims are unrecognized, cannot be viewed as necessarily progress. To be "at ease" while God's arrangements are ignored (Ps. 2) is to be in a sad state (Zech. 1. 15).

O that the Lord may awaken many to seek a personal salvation by the blood of Christ, that they may be a real and eternal blessing to needy souls, ALL classes and conditions, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

* It is only of the flesh (John 3. 6), NOT spiritual.

SOME LESSONS FROM THE LORD'S WORDS IN LUKE 5. 36-39.

REALIZING that many dear children of God are concerned as to "wine," we would, in the Lord's enabling, add a few further suggestions, longing that His truth alone may be recognized, and His Name honoured. One correspondent quotes from the article,— "The Lord Jesus has long ago decided that UNFERMENTED WINE is to be called new wine. Thus the language argument (i.e. of those who object to the term) falls, and, not only so, but the theory that the Easterns did not know unfermented wine falls by the same verse, and remarkably the object that they could not keep it seems anticipated by His words, 'Both are preserved' . . . If He made the new wine a picture of His gospel, and condemned the fermenting of it by the old wine-skins, we can no longer say that UNFERMENTED WINE does not exist." This dear friend adds, "I cannot understand how you can build so large a superstructure upon such a small foundation, and cannot understand your reasoning." We rejoice in loving frankness, and all YEARNING to be of one mind in the Lord. It is granted that the foundation SEEMS small, but the writer has been amazed to find a fulness in the words of Him Who "Only doeth wondrous things," and all of Whose actions were amazingly "large" (John 21. 25). Two illustrations will encourage, namely, the Divine teaching as to sin, judgment, substitution, holiness, a new creation, the evil of sectarianism, resurrection etc., wrapped up in baptism. In like manner, the word "BROKEN-OFF branch" in John 15, has a wealth of blessing.† Hence we are not surprised at an APPARENTLY "small foundation." But it IS important to "search and see," lest we depend on OUR inferences. Earnest and prayerful ACCURACY will glorify God.

The letter before us goes on to say that, "The only difference between new skins and old is that the new are tough and pliable, the old are not . . . New wine ferments spontaneously without any addition of any kind until a limit is reached. Old wine could safely be put into old bottles without danger of bursting them. At least so this Scripture seems to suggest." Very many dear believers have thought this is the meaning, hence it may be a blessing if a few reasons against it are stated.

1. It assumes that new wine contains the germ of ferment. But this is not so. Ferment is not in the grape. The chemical process is an ADDITION, a SUBTRACTION, a re-arrangement of PROPORTION. Nor is this only chemistry: as the Lord Jesus ANTICIPATED other scientific "discoveries," so here He alludes to the spiritual teaching. Let us remember that true science is the expression of God's will, and chemistry the outworking of HIS arrangement, surely with a view to deeply important lessons, although we know in part.

* The earlier article, and a leaflet on New Wine and Old Bottles, may be used to help. If so, we shall be thankful. As all literature, they are "free," in the Lord's gracious enabling, † A Leaflet gladly sent,

2. Can we say that new skins WILL necessarily resist? Job 32. 19 seems to teach otherwise ("READY to" is not in the original).

3. The suggestions do not seem to fit the context, and the perfect instruction of our adorable Lord. It is evident HE makes the OLD wine-skin parallel with the OLD garment, and the "changing" of the new wine seems indicative of FAILURE, which is before us in both parts of the parable. The interpretation that the new wine-skin would allow and approve of a change is out of harmony.

The doctrinal lesson seems to be reached thus:—The old garment of self-righteousness cannot be mended by Christ's finished work (no one taketh a patch from a NEW garment).^{*} Let the rags be thrown away, and the robe of Isaiah 61. 10 thankfully accepted in its unchanged entirety. In like manner, let the old wine-skin of self be PLACED ASIDE, (it is NOT mentioned as KEPT for the old wine), and the new wine skin be acknowledged, for the wine that IS CONTRASTED WITH THE OLD. (See verse 39).[†] To suggest that this wine is changed, and that the new life is STRONG enough to allow of this change—till that which is agreeable to the natural man is reached—would surely overturn the parable, and the glorious contrast in God's new creation.

The new wine is cast into new wine-skins: here is a complete work. Is it then surprising to suggest that both are preserved in their original condition? Is not this a fact in THE SPIRITUAL PARALLEL? Earnestly we ask why does Scripture condemn certain wine (Proverbs 23. 31), and why is the blood of the ungodly likened to ferment, (Isaiah 63. 1), and why is the unequivocal term "fruit of the vine" used of the type of Christ at the Lord's Supper? Ferment is NOT the fruit of the vine: it is a chemical action by addition of a foreign substance. Every word of God is pure. The Lord Jesus had a REASON for emphasizing the new wine. Alas, the changed wine is "AGREEABLE" (Luke 5. 39): it is "kindly" to man and so he does not want the gospel AS LONG AS the taste of the "changed" gospel is his.[‡] This is a wondrous unveiling of human character, and of the need for grace. Thank God grace HAS abounded!

* Distinguish the "UNCARDED cloth" of Matthew 9. "Both the new maketh a rent" seems to render the words of Christ inaccurately. "But if otherwise, he BOTH rends the NEW, AND the patch from the NEW agreeth not with the old." (TWO failures).

† The old is AGREEABLE, evidently to the man who disapproves of the NEW (i.e. the natural man): a very striking condemnation.

‡ No interpretation can undo the Lord's statement that the new wine, which HE HIMSELF has likened to the truth, is UNACCEPTABLE to the man who has had old wine. But if the new wine skins ALLOW of the fermenting change: the OLDER believer comes to approve of that which hinders the taste for the gospel. Is not this decisive against the erroneous explanation?

An unsaved soul could not enjoy God's presence. Heaven is for a grace-prepared people.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.

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A Word of Introduction.

IT is wondrous to have the very words of God. It is unspeakably precious, indeed, to know that His love is not only CALLED "love": there is a fulness of reality. God's interest in His redeemed people is beyond all human words. Earth seems so near, and earthly things seem so large, that we often forget the reality of salvation, and the blessings united to acceptance in the Beloved. The fact that God's Holy Spirit indwells IS a fact. There is no room for doubt. The language is not mere poetry or hyperbole. There IS a new creation, and believers are looking for the REAL Coming of their REAL Lord Jesus. To help His people in the enjoyment of these realities, and that separation from this world, and its aims, may be a daily experience, are these pages sent forth.

ARE THERE ANY PRIESTS TO-DAY?

YES, undoubtedly, for the Scripture says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal PRIESTHOOD" (1 Peter 2. 9). But to whom are these words addressed? To ALL the believers to whom this apostle of Christ was writing. He gives no limitation. Then there is a wondrous priesthood of CHILDREN OF GOD, because they

are made nigh in the blood of Christ. They are in **THE High Priest's** family, and can draw near, offering up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." How real, and wondrous, is this appointed privilege.

But **THIS** priesthood is not the one which many would emphasize. It allows of **NO** distinction between priesthood and "laity," but only a distinction between believers and unbelievers, the **LATTER** remaining "far off," even when episcopally ordained. Such Divine teaching humbles man, and is unpopular with many.

Is there **ANY EVIDENCE** for a further restricted priesthood of a **SPECIAL CLASS** of men? Those who maintain this often undervalue the Scriptures, saying, "The church gave them to us," whereas **GOD** gave them, to **INSTRUCT** "the church." But even if the claim be granted, "the church" will surely give a clear testimony on this subject in Scripture. If "the church" professes to "teach," and the doctrine of Scripture contains nothing of **THIS** priesthood, but gives contrasts with the language "she" uses elsewhere, is "she" the church Christ appointed, or is there a false profession to-day? Contraries cannot be true! Many try to avoid the difficulty by saying, "the church must explain the Bible," but this is a poor claim if there is nothing of a priestly caste in its pages to explain.

Is it a fact that God appointed to Israel of old a priesthood, **WITH** animal sacrifices, and a temple? Is it equally a fact that the new Testament again and again uses the word "priest" for those in this hierarchy? * Is it also a fact that though it speaks in **VARIOUS** ways of apostles and teachers who ministered God's truth in the early Christian assembly, it never, on one single occasion, transfers these names to them, but uses **OTHER** non-priestly words, and strictly confines priestly names to **SPIRITUAL** parallels among **ALL** the people of God? Ephesians 4. 11, Philippians 1. 1, and 1 Timothy 3 will illustrate. If these **FACTS** can be disproved, it is easy to do so. The books are accessible. **BUT THE FACTS STAND.** Thanks be unto God.

The Priesthood of the Lord Jesus is unchangeable (Heb. 7. 24). It is a serious thing to encroach on His rights. How few have felt this. In every sphere we find an attack on the glory of Christ. May it be ours to behold **HIS** glory (2 Cor. 3. 18, 4. 4, 6).

Our mind goes back to Numbers 16. We hear the words of Moses, "Seek ye the priesthood also?" It was a **SACRIFICIAL** priesthood that these wished to take. Who are the usurpers to-day? Who are those that rise up against the Greater than Aaron?—for such was the opposition, as Numbers 16. 11 and 17. 10 make clear! Romanism and Rationalism stand convicted. Christ **NEVER** appointed a priesthood of special men. The names of gift and office are not names

* How easily is the human mind led astray. A few days ago I heard a man argue for "priests" now, because Christ sent the leper to the priest. He would not ponder the added words "as Moses commanded," or the fact that these priests had animal sacrifices. Evidently he did not realize that these priests took counsel against the Lord Jesus, a more striking parallel with his priesthood than he meant.

linked with **WORSHIP** from men to God, but with **MINISTRY** from God to men. And so **HE** named them apostles (Luke 6. 13), **NOT** priests; and, when Paul was about to die, he instructed Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. Observe, not the work of a priest, not even an "APOSTOLIC" succession (2 Timothy 4. 5 with Ephesians 4. 11). Let God's words be accepted. Further, Hebrews 8. 4, 5 has a solemn message for those who claim a new-covenant priesthood on earth. They forget that "sacrifices" were linked with the court, which is cast out (Rev. 11. 12). Do they not thus acknowledge themselves **CAST OUT**, and outside the heavenly calling? Romanism thus condemns itself: but O that we may lovingly pray, and lead some from its ensnaring meshes to our exalted Lord Jesus, and heavenly worship (Heb. 10. 19-22).

In this context it is important to remember that the Lord Jesus appointed the Lord's Supper before He died, i.e. before He took wrath for His people on Calvary. Hence transubstantiation would be an attack on His finished work, and on His gracious bearing of judgment. It would assume His death before His death, and nullify His becoming, (in amazing love), a Curse for unworthy sinners (Gal. 3. 13). The **DAY** of appointment was no accident with God: He **FOREKNEW** the evils of ritualism, and we adore Him.

While speaking of priesthood, we do well to notice that the Scriptural parallels for an assembly order are drawn from the synagogue, and **THE HEAVENLY ASPECT OF WORSHIP**, belonging to all believers, is linked with the temple. And we find definite prophecies of the restoration of Israel's priesthood on earth (Ezekiel 44), when the seventh day shall be observed, and an earthly temple owned. The **INTERVAL OF CONTRAST** shines out in the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit, and partakers of the heavenly calling dare not be blind to this.

INTROSPECTION.

INTROSPECTION is not the whole of the Christian life. Moses endured as seeing Him Who is invisible, and there is the wondrous privilege of "looking off unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of the faith" (Heb. 12. 2, cf. 2 Cor. 3. 18). **THE DEVIL CAN USE INTROSPECTION TO HINDER A VIEW OF CHRIST.** Disproportion is one of his chief weapons against some dear children of God.

But introspection has its appointed place when in the light of the Lord. "Let us search and try our ways," and "let a man examine himself," for "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" It is important to be trained to ponder motives. David is Divinely blamed, because he had not trained his son in this way, "His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" (1 Kings 1. 6). * We can-

* Other thoughts are Divinely wrapped up: e.g. the absence of **REBUKE**; Parents cannot surrender God-appointed authority, nor delegate it as they please. They must be willing to displease their children, in true love.

not be too concerned if we "assume" good motives in ourselves and "impute" bad ones to others. The condition of heart that acts thus is radically wrong. There is more dross than we think in our own lives. And actions done yesterday out of love to the Lord will become merely an echo of such love, and nothing more. If we do somewhat to please our Heavenly Father, and THEN rightly enjoy the privilege, Satan will strive hard to effect a transfer and to make the enjoyment THE OBJECT, and pleasing God "a make-weight." But we are not ignorant of his devices.

If the enemy fails to make us proud, he will strive to make us depressed. Our gracious God only permits us to see our failures that we may SEEK HIM MORE: Satan seeks to make us see them, that he may shut out the light of God's grace. Hence depression is NOT a proof of spirituality, nor of wisdom. To view ALL our motives as bad, and to refuse to see any love to the Lord, when all the time we long to see this, is usually the evidence of an OVERWROUGHT condition. If we behold SELF it is well, that we may abhor it. But Job 42. 6 was not the whole of Job's life. Romans 7 is not a complete epistle. For every one look at self we need two unto Him Who loveth; for the joy of the Lord is our STRENGTH, and self-occupation, OF EVERY KIND, forgets Him. If we feel our failures too strong for His working, we have a sad pride—inverted pride it is true, but pride nevertheless.

Some have no time for introspection. They have never been in Isaiah 6. They speak of getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8, but one wonders if they have ever been in the former chapter, or ever become the contrite and humble ones with whom God dwells (Isaiah 57. 15). The trembling of Isaiah 66. 2 has its precious parallel in 1 Corinthians 2. 3. O for a holy proportion, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation cannot be the work of a creature, yet the human heart always seeks to emphasize something of SELF, or of some other created being. The Romanist speaks of the Lord Jesus AND "our Lady" (precisely as the Mohammedan of God AND "the apostle," meaning Mohammed). The human heart always seeks some "and." This is the great sin of giving God's glory to ANOTHER. It is idolatry, and the INEVITABLE result is that the glory is soon given primarily to the created being,—albeit this is not confessed. Indeed, NO real glory to GOD is then given in His unique work. But the heart that mourns over this often urges men to do their "part," and depends on unscriptural methods, and speaks AS IF salvation were a development from the ruined condition of the sinner. Nay, "If any one is in Christ, there is A NEW CREATION." O that we may be taught of God, and that we may give Him all the GLORY, while never forgetting the accountability of men, and the way God deigns to work IN and THROUGH the one He humbly saves. If we cannot explain HOW He quickens, let us not deny HIS quickening, as if that were the way out of the precious praise-awakening difficulty.

"AND WAXEN FAT"

Deut. 31. 20.

BUT Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Deut. 32. 15). "God made him to prosper," "God helped him," "he was marvellously helped, till he was strong: but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (2 Chron. 26. 5, 7; 15. 11). Is the solemn message out of date, beloved friends? "Lest when thou hast eaten and art full . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget . . . and thou say in thine heart, MY POWER" (Deut. 8. 12-17). It has well been said that it is hard to carry a FULL CUP. We often pray for outward blessings, but need rather to pray more often for grace to USE them aright. We little realize the danger of a misused encouragement. We sometimes think, "How So-and-So has been prospered." But possibly the Lord keeps others low, because He is graciously responsive to their cry that they may not wander from Him. Even Paul needed a thorn in the flesh that he might not be lifted up. The tendency to pride was NOT eradicated, ONLY SUBDUED: a precious "ONLY."

"Fulness of bread" is Sodom's central sin in Ezekiel 16. 49. It is a sad thing to be "waxen fat." Answered prayer for physical blessing may be a peril, as Hezekiah found. The cave is sometimes safer than the housetop of a palace, as David experienced. Gideon had a similar LOSS THROUGH GAIN. Never complain of trials, and apparent "leanness" as to earthly things. God loves His people much, and, if they are in earnest, He may answer their prayers for spiritual prosperity by a path that seems strange. But He never errs. Disobedience may make the way easier, but it will make the reward lighter. Are we willing for God's training, or do we think we know best?

"WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH"

John 3. 16.

"WHOSOEVER WILL"

Rev. 22. 17.

A PRECIOUS invitation, and wondrously wide, to men of all nations and classes, is found in the gospel of the grace of God. We rejoice in a FREE gospel. Hence it is the POWER of God unto salvation. But we must not MISUSE the glorious freeness of the gospel to assume that dead sinners are not so bad after all. They ARE evil, and they go their own way. "There is none righteous, no, not one." It is GRACE, if we are humbled. "There is NONE that seeketh after God." None of the men that were BIDDEN taste of the supper in Luke 14, but those who are BROUGHT (verses 21-24). "Where sin ABOUNDED, grace did much more abound." 'Tis not only "whosoever" but "whosoever BELIEVETH" and "all men have not faith" (2 Thess. 3. 2). 'Tis not only "whosoever" but

"whosoever WILL": —wondrously showing that though men "will not come" (John 5. 40, Eph. 2. 3 lit:) the Lord's hand is not shortened. The Holy Spirit does not tell us all in one verse. Salvation does not work in man as if he were mere machinery. But the grace that teaches him to praise, and will, is more than a mere influence. Those who imagine "whosoever WILL" proves anything against "the election of God" seem to believe that the will of one dead in sins is sometimes spiritual. These are not themes for mere philosophy, and analysis, and argument. We do not plead for a disproportion of stress on God's sovereignty, but the disproportion is the other side to-day, and the fallen condition of man is denied. If I willed NOT, the fault was mine: if I WILL, the grace is His! I would rather praise for election on my knees, than undervalue the mercy that reached me, by indirect self-esteem. O how precious is THE GRACE OF GOD.

TRUTH FOSSILIZED.

TRUTH is very precious. The Lord Jesus emphasized it (John 17. 17, 18. 36). Yea, He Himself is the Truth (John 14. 6). But how important it is to hold the truth aright. The Holy Spirit shows, both in Hebrews 10. 26 and in 2 Peter 2. 20, 21, that it is possible to fall from the knowledge of the truth, but the love of the truth is permanent (2 Thess. 2. 10). SPIRITUAL perception is valuable beyond all human understanding. Truth must be the believer's food, affecting his daily life. We do not feed on fossils, Truth must be a living power, applied by the Holy Spirit. Fossils are not alive.

✱ "Strict accuracy" is empty in itself. We may have PRESERVATION FROM DOCTRINAL ERROR BY FOSSILIZING TRUTH, but another sin is not the Holy Spirit's way of warfare against evil. Truth realized cannot be fossilized. If there is a dead orthodoxy, if there is a form of sound doctrine, if there is an outward harmony with Scripture apart from an inward communion, all is vain. The attitude of the Lord Jesus, "I delight to do Thy will," must be, in measure, ours, or we are not living as His disciples. Fossilized truth may be beautiful in a museum, and it may show what "soundness" is, but THAT is not the spirituality which glorifies God.

It may be well to give a word of love's warning as to a swing of the pendulum. When a believer is awakened to please his Lord, he dreads "fossilizing." And he may be led astray, even amid living energy, toward fleshly zeal. If any advocate "fossilized truth" they will then argue, "The ERROR results from the energy." But it really springs from lack of communion with God, under the new covenant. Let us ever remember that THE DEVIL USUALLY TEMPTS US ALONG THE LINES OF OUR OBEDIENCE, to a counterfeit which looks like the very obedience which has just then been made precious to our souls.

A REPLY TO A QUESTION.

"A Scarlet Robe"

"They Clothed Him with Purple"

"A Gorgeous Robe"

"A Purple Robe"

Matthew 27. 28, 31. Mark 15. 17, 20. Luke 23. 11. John 19. 2, 5.

IS there any difficulty? Let us read, and ponder, prayerfully, and carefully. We remember that the Lord Jesus drove out from the temple before the judgment on the fig tree in Matthew 21, and after in Mark 11. In other words, there were TWO solemn witnesses, in His driving out, on two successive days, yet men would not be humbled. Is it surprising to find more than one arraying in mockery? Indeed, do we not ALL acknowledge AT LEAST TWO ARRAYINGS? Luke 23. 11 refers to Herod and his men of war. May there not have been THREE such mockeries? Is not John 19 before Pilate's sentence, and Matthew 27. 28 after?

At first this seems to remove the problem of SCARLET and PURPLE,—similar, but not, apparently, identical. But we realize Mark 15. 17-20 remains. Then we see how exact are the words of the Holy Spirit. We have a robe in Matthew—in both verses—but in Mark we have purple, and NO mention of the nature of the garment, in BOTH verses. Is this an accident? A merely human writer would have fallen into a mistake. God reveals His wisdom. Isaiah 61. 10, with the ROBE of righteousness and GARMENTS of salvation, shows us that more clothing than one robe was used, and John 19. 23 strikingly illustrates where the soldiers parted Christ's GARMENTS, and cast lots for His ROBE. And inasmuch as Mark 15. 20 records the putting on again of His garmentS, how naturally they used several articles of clothing in their sad mockery.

And now, in the light of Exodus 26 and the tabernacle veil, we realize the precious counterpart. Scarlet suggests the humiliation of Christ: the Hebrew word sometimes contains the very word for a worm, and we remember Psalm 22. 6. We think, too, of His blood. Purple refers to His Kingship. As Caiaphas unwittingly set forth the truth (John 11. 49-52), so was it with the soldiers, whether in the "common hall," or at the side of the cross. The Lord Jesus, the Humbled One, is seen in His glory as the rightful King. We bow the head and worship, and join, in contrast with the priests and soldiers, the heavenly song, "Worthy is the Lamb That was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12).

Love's "ought" is very precious, but, if love is missing, the 'ought' is worthless, and becomes, indeed, a nought BEFORE GOD.

THE PARABLE OF THE ONE PEARL.

Matt. 13. 45, 46.

SOME years ago an address was given on this precious parable.* Since then I have felt much impressed by THE WAY in which a pearl is formed.† It has seemed to me that we behold the Lord Jesus in His work of COMPLETE obedience to the Father's will, and His love and tenderness even amidst the wicked. But the perfect pearl could not be "OBTAINED," to present to the one Who received it, except VIA death. What wondrous love. But the reader may rightly ask, "HOW could He purchase His own obedience, and HOW can the pearl also picture His people?" 2 Corinthians 5. 21 may help: His people are made the righteousness of God in Him. Let us view the plan of grace. Christ's last appointed act, in the Father's will, was to die for His guilty people; when He took their place He completed the Pearl of obedience and ALSO bore the judgment. Hence He went under wrath. But, in accord with the promise, "The Man Who hath done these things shall live in them," (Lev. 18. 5, lit:) He must be raised. BY GIVING UP ALL, as the appointed act of climax-obedience, He obtains all, even His own obedience, which, in its fulness, is justly reckoned by the Righteous Judge to be righteousness (hence "the righteousness of God"). This is His reward (Ps. 24. 5). But His giving up is substitutionary. The HOLY One could not have died otherwise: so His people lose their own legal position in HIS, and have HIS life in resurrection. "Because I live, ye shall live also" has more than one precious lesson. THUS He purchases them when He receives the award of His own work: and the Pearl at once represents BOTH that work, AND His redeemed ones, since these are identified VIA His death. Thereby each part of the parable comes true:—The making and the purchasing of the Pearl are alike fulfilled by Christ. He obediently gave HIS LIFE, and thus is seen as entitled to LIFE, but, as He gave it for His own, they cannot have another life apart from HIS, but He is THEIR LIFE (Col. 3. 4). They are viewed as His work—His obedience would not be obedience if it did not secure for those for whom it was wrought in life and death. What human mind would have conceived this? We adore our adorable Lord, and long to know Him more. The overwhelming fulness, yet accuracy, of the Divine language seems too much to bear. The mind almost fails, but we know in part, and THE HEART PRAISES.

* Obtainable, as other TYPE-WRITTEN NOTES, for a fortnight.

† The pearl-oyster's gentle and beautiful "response" to the IRRITATION of enemies without, wounding the humble-looking shell (a type of Christ's body, Isaiah 53. 2).

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy Countenance."
Psalm 89. 15.

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A Word of Introduction.

THE privileges of God's dear people cannot be enumerated in a few lines of print. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, and made the righteousness of God in Him, their sins being removed as far as the east is from the west. It is because of such wondrous privileges that so much is rightly expected from them. And, therefore, to encourage ourselves, and other believing ones who read these lines, to walk worthy of the high calling, are these pages sent forth. We need to be concerned for the interests of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His joy. Exaltation of self is vain. We would not plead OUR thoughts, or exalt OUR arrangements, or build up an organization of MAN, but we would humbly desire to glorify Christ in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

ETERNAL SECURITY and JOHN 17. 12.

"NONE OF THEM IS LOST; BUT THE SON OF PERDITION,—
THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED."

THE prayerful Bible student is willing to trust God even as to difficult verses, knowing that HE cannot contradict Himself; and, moreover, that by difficulties He leads to faith, and prayerful

searching, and holy thoughtfulness. This is so with many Scriptures which set forth the eternal security of God's beloved people.

Even as it is with justification (Rom. 3. 28), so with endless salvation, truth is dangerous **WHENEVER THE FLESH GETS HOLD OF IT**. But this is the case with **EVERY** part of truth. The Tridentine objection to justification by grace through **FAITH** assumes that the faith is **NOT** a living one, whereas those who, in mercy, realize the power of Romans 4 humbly acknowledge that "faith without works is dead," and that such a faith is **NOT** the faith of God's elect at all (Tit. 1. 1). In like manner, some who question "eternal security" seem to ignore that when there is continuing in sin we have no Scripture warrant to assume salvation. The ground in Hebrews 6 is **NOT** said to have given up fruit-bearing: the iniquity of Hebrews 10. 26 is after receiving the **KNOWLEDGE** of the truth, **NOT** after receiving its **LOVE**. The **DOG** and **SOW** are before us in 2 Peter 2. 22, **NOT** the sheep and dove. The branch in John 15 is **NOT** declared to have become gradually fruitless: there is not the slightest suggestion that it **EVER** had fruit. When God saves there is "a new creation." The **GOOD** ground in the parable of the Sower **REMAINS** good; though there is need for **MUCH SPIRITUAL CONCERN**, for (a) we cannot see the Lamb's Book of Life, and (b) there is a vast difference between thirty-fold and a hundred-fold. The Judgment Seat of Christ is heart-searching.

This may help us as to John 17. 12. Since there was no punctuation in the original, much prayerful thought is ever needed; but may it not be submitted that our translators should have **TRANSFERRED THE COMMA AND THE SEMICOLON**?

First, this suits the context, and the stress on "them" (mark also verse 8, 9, 10 where we cannot rightly include Judas).*

Secondly, it is in accord with the Holy Spirit's application of the words in chapter 18. 9. If Judas were one of those once "given" the language of verse 8, including him, would be out of place, and likewise, the fact that the sentence **ENDS** there with "LOST NONE."

Thirdly, such verses as John 6. 37, 10. 28, 29, would be invalidated by any other interpretation, and—

Fourthly, the very principle of **SUBSTITUTION** would be overthrown, and the power of God's grace would be nullified.

Finally, there is nothing in chapter 17 or elsewhere to suggest the authorized version punctuation as appropriate here. (The language of 17. 12 has an **EXACT** parallel in Luke 4. 26, 27 where the "SAVE unto Sarepta," and "SAVING Naaman the Syrian" refer to **ONE OUTSIDE THOSE ALREADY MENTIONED**. Thus was it with Judas,† and we see how near a man can be to many privileges, and **YET** go on frowardly in his own way).

These thoughts may be well-known to some of God's dear children, but it is well to record again that which will strengthen grateful faith, and cause those who are pondering truth aright to be humble before

* Note 13. 30, 31 with "I am glorified in them."

† The words "lost" and "perdition" are from the same Greek root. This strengthens the thought.

their Heavenly Father, lest they dishonour Him by a careless walk. How can saved ones dare to disgrace grace? God's matchless love is a call to holiness in the indwelling power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

"OF THE EARTH"

In the Book of Revelation.

THE solemnly repeated description, "They that dwell **ON THE EARTH**,"* in the last book of Scripture, reveals for us a contrasted heavenly standpoint, and the true attitude of God's people. And this prepares for the precious language of 14. 3, "Redeemed **FROM** the earth." True, in the future, when the meek shall inherit the earth, Christ will be unveiled as "The Prince of the kings of the earth" (1. 5, cf. 5. 10; and God **IS** the God of the earth (11. 4), for the heavens do rule. But to be "of the earth" **NOW**, with respect to man, means failure and ruin. This thought is deeply helpful in this book, both as to its moral bearing and its right interpretation.‡

The kings **OF THE EARTH** are not yet in harmony with Christ (6. 15, 16. 14, 17. 18 etc., contrast 21. 24). The beasts and scorpions **OF THE EARTH** remind of Adam's sin (6. 8, 9. 3). And in how many other passages "the earth" is linked with heralds of judgment. In 6. 8 we have the fourth part of the earth, and in both 6. 13 and 9. 1 a solemnizing falling unto the earth. Chapter 12. 4 shows Satan's animosity against God's people, but their life is hid with Christ in God. And God's power over the material earth, even before He claims it manifestly, is seen in 12. 16. He will not forsake His people.

How momentous are the parallel words of 14. 15 and 18, "The harvest **OF THE EARTH**," "the vine **OF THE EARTH**." The Lord's firstfruits **FROM** the earth is quite distinct, and so is His harvest **FROM** it, when Israel are blessed. Satan has his travesty-field throughout. It is a great mistake to separate the "DRIED" harvest (literally) from the end of the chapter. "The hour" is before us in verse 15, and believers will **NOT** be left for this.§ The Holy Spirit's allusion to Joel 3. 13 is evident, and the harvest and the vintage there, are **ALIKE** evil.

We have seen the separation of those who suffer with their Lord from the kings **OF THE EARTH** to-day, and we notice the same separation is needful from "the merchants **OF THE EARTH**" (18. 3, 11), even "the great men **OF THE EARTH**" (18. 20). What a mercy to be willing to be slain (verse 24) rather than to join with the world's schemes. And of old many children of God thus bore their witness. Are we more compromising to-day? O for grace to be bold in the Lord, and to realize the heavenly calling is a precious **FACT** as well as a **WORD**!

* See with slight modifications, 3. 10; 6. 10; 8. 13; 11. 10; 12. 12; 13. 8, 12, 14; 14. 6; 17. 2, 8.

‡ E.g. "The harvest of the earth."

§ The distinction between the **GREAT TRIBULATION** and the **HOUR** is surprisingly overlooked. Leaflets gladly sent.

CURIOSITY.

HOW many children of God have lost much spiritual power through curiosity. The "interest" of Eve in the forbidden-tree is solemnly instructive. Satan's bait included the words "KNOWING good and evil." Men still ever DESIRE something fresh, and, as Athenians, often wish to hear some "newer" thing (Acts 17. 21): hence the holy warning of 2 Timothy 2. 22, which may be rendered "Flee also NEWER desires."

Curiosity is perilous even as to the precious things of God. When Moses turned aside to see the "great sight," God led him to reverence instead (Ex. 3. 3, 4), and we call to mind "Lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish" (Ex. 19. 21). When the people at Bethshemesh looked into the ark, how many were slain. Scripture is not given for curiosity, but for food. Mere mental interest is often irreverence. Moses and Joshua both learnt the holiness of God in a striking way from His own utterance (Ex. 3. 5, Jos. 5. 15). It may seem "enjoyable" to study for self's amusement, but this is not well-pleasing to God. We long rather that truth may lay self low. Particularly in prophetic study we need grace to be on our guard, lest the numbering of 666, for example, be only a matter of curiosity, instead of part of God's instruction that we may grieve over sin, and be SEPARATED from its coming climax. The Holy Spirit never leads to fleshly curiosity, but ever GLORIFIES CHRIST.

However long we have known the Lord we must beware. Satan does not give over his subtle efforts. They are usually the more subtle as he realizes that he is working against older believers. But how blessed to remember the sufficiency of our God. Yet we must not view sufficiency in the abstract, but seek application to our immediate need. Even as in Bible Study, so in Christian service, curiosity may hinder. The attractiveness of some new work may draw the mind from the great object. Every humble believer is surely conscious of the attractions of the flesh in this way, and none who know themselves can claim they have never been affected thereby. How we need to confess the iniquity linked with our holy things.

When we leave the special aspect of Satan's attacks on our service, we find the danger of curiosity is ever manifest. The natural inclination of some is to read—for curiosity rather than godly use of knowledge. Information instead of pleasing God is a poor motive. And when the information is WORSE THAN WORTHLESS, what are we to say? O the wasted hours of believers, occupied with newspapers and similar literature. The occasional discovery of a thought that illustrates Scripture is used to approve the prodigious outlay of thousands of moments that should be used for the Lord. The glibly uttered thought that one desires to see "the signs of the times" is introduced to justify a likeness to the world, that is more evident in newspapers and in fashions than in almost anything else. We would seek grace to be concerned about these things.

Curiosity extends beyond reading, into every part of daily life. Sight-

seeing may hinder more than we realize, and its comparative infrequency may be the excuse of the flesh. I do not mean that dear children of God are not to behold with delight the setting sun, or walk a few miles on certain occasions, to see His handiwork in nature. Far otherwise; but the thoughtful believer will know there is much OTHER sight-seeing, even though he may naturally stand aloof from all theatres and cinemas. A Wembley may lead a child of God far from Christ before he is aware. And "shopping" may appeal to the lust of the eyes in this direction. Curiosity, and an unwillingness to be unlike the world, may be twin-sisters.

We are all conscious of the peril, yet popularity, of an open ear for tittle-tattle. A slanderer can usually be sure of a hearer. Why? CURIOSITY loves to hear something about "others," and there is an innate wish in the natural heart to know that which is "secret," and ought not to be known. That which is "forbidden" is always attractive to a sinner. Believers, saved by grace, should be fore-armed against these evils, and refuse the sin in others, WHILE DEALING STERNLY WITH IT IN THEMSELVES.

The encouragement in Revelation 2. 24 to all who are IGNORANT of the depths of Satan is precious and forceful. If we do not know all the "isms" of to-day, it is well. Why should we be ashamed when men taunt with ignorance of evolutionary and similar literature? We may wonder at their ignorance, oftentimes, of the inspired Scriptures: yet it may not always be well to SAY so, but rather to LIVE as those who are in communion with God, and thus make manifest a heavenliness of character with its beautiful Christlike gentleness. We shall have neither time nor inclination, for much of the world's vain curiosity, if we long to live up to our privileges of "walking with God." The blessedness of His children is beyond parallel. HE has opened to them His good treasure, and they are never really in need of that which will satisfy their heart. He has given instruction that will never be exhausted. May we accept His gracious provision, and be full of praise, in the daily enabling of the Holy Spirit.

PRAISE.

PRAISE is fitting to a child of God, and he is bidden to do all things without murmurings and disputings (Phil. 2. 14) and to be anxious for nothing (Phil. 4. 6). Prayer, with thanksgiving, takes the place of the worldling's anxiety. And this is logical, since God IS God. How can a child of God complain WITHOUT denying his Heavenly Father's love and wisdom and care? His plan is perfect: His knowledge is infinite: His affection is immeasurable:—all anxiety implies some doubting OF HIM. It is, therefore, expressly forbidden, and praise is beautifully appropriate. Let it not be ONLY a command which the brain owns, but a command WRITTEN ON THE HEART, which the believer loves to carry out in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we only give thanks for the things which please us naturally, what do we more than others, and what confidence in our Heavenly Father do we show?

THE GLORIES OF GRACE In The Parable of the Feast That Men Rejected. Luke 14. 16-24.

THE glories of grace,—ah, well may we ever speak of these. Parable after parable reveals the wondrousness of Christ's fruitful work, and believers may well adore. The very language indicates His consciousness of His own majesty, and of the ONE hope for poor guilty sinners. When He came into the world, He Himself knew what He would do, and at the climax He triumphantly said, "It is finished."

The parable of Luke 14. 15-24 is to be distinguished from Matthew 22. 1-14, though there are striking similarities.* We observe that we have not a BREAKFAST or DINNER from which one may be cast out, but THE SUPPER in which EVERY place is filled. Such precious thoughts may have been brought before readers oft-times before, but the Lord's redeemed will never weary of them. The ONE Servant sets forth the gracious covenant-working of the Holy Spirit, and the REFUSAL of His TESTIMONY makes the glory of His quickening (John 3. 6) shine out the more. After His witness in verse 17, verse 18 prevents US from being discouraged by opposition. It is deeply solemn to see that men reject God's COMMAND "Come." They will not come and see what His grace has provided.†

The NATURE of the excuses must pain us. Satan constantly uses ORDINARY things of home and business against the gospel. EVEN BELIEVERS EXPERIENCE HIS EFFORTS THUS to prevent time for spiritual things. Thus a piece of ground, and the oxen, and an earthly marriage may hinder the pressing forward for the Millennial land, the fellowship of believers (typified by the number "ten"), and heart-longing for the Marriage Supper.§

The holy ANGER of God against such flimsy excuses, HOWEVER POLITELY MADE, must be remembered. Sin cannot be excused. But, His purpose of love is not thwarted, and poor, maimed, halt, blind sinners with ALL FOUR DISABILITIES COMBINED are not INVITED, but sovereignly BROUGHT. NOT ONE "refuses": grace REIGNS. The "COMMAND" of God stands (verse 22), and the house is now "nearly" filled. BUT one place remains. Most translations by adding "them" in verse 23 miss the further precious teaching. ONE seat is empty, but that seat CANNOT remain empty. The Servant refers to this. He is not content for ONE absentee. Christ SHALL see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. However much seeking is needed, the place must be filled. "Go out into

* Cf. the parallels and contrasts in Matthew 9. 16. 17 (margin) and Luke 5. 36-38 (a new garment). An illustrative leaflet on the new wine gladly sent.

† Observe there is NOT a promise, nor a statement "Ready FOR YOU," which their rejection would make untrue. John 6. 37 CANNOT be broken by man's wilfulness. Thanks be unto God.

§ It is striking in view of Rev. 19. 7-9 to notice that the objection to the SUPPER of Luke 14 is ONE'S OWN wedding.

the HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES." The plurals here have led some to add the word "them" already noticed. But rather we have "one" who seems bent on escaping. In verse 21 sinners are viewed in their helplessness, here we behold one in his defiance:—ANOTHER aspect of deep importance. But election is stronger than the man's natural will. Grace reigns. The sinner erects an obstacle. "The hedges" are "barriers" as the word signifies. But the One Who seeks will not be disappointed: the sinner is grasped by grace: he is not only "brought," he is COMPELLED. WE can preach, only the Holy Spirit can "compel," and, blessed be God, He will "compel," that the house may be FILLED. How encouragingly this parable calls us, as believers, to continue praying for those laid on our heart. There is One Who is mighty to constrain, and, though a sinner entrenches himself behind hedge after hedge, the sweet compulsion of sovereign grace shall finally draw out from every nation those who were laid on the heart of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to God for the glories and triumphs of free grace!

"BUT THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM." Ezekiel 37. 8.

THE wondrous message of Ezekiel 37 primarily portrays the people of Israel when God will make the spared remnant, His nation; and, others having been cut off (Zech. 13. 8, 9, Jer. 50. 20), all Israel shall be saved. The hearts of humble believers look forward happily to God's fulfilment of His own words. He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? The call to prayer for Israel is very important, and Romans 10. 1 reminds of Psalm 122. 6.

But the dealings of God with Israel have parallels to-day. The apostle emphasized this when he said that the Lord's longsuffering made him personally a PATTERN of those who will afterwards believe (1 Tim. 1. 16). He was convicted, and saved through the revelation of Jesus Christ, and there is a close similarity between Zechariah 12. 10-14 and Acts 9. 9. The work of God was deep: this was no case of "anon with joy" receiving the word, in a rootless and selfish profession.

Accordingly do we not still find God's WONDERFUL DEALINGS sometimes before He puts BREATH within? Are there not many souls who can testify how they were moved, and kept back from many forms of iniquity, even before they knew WHY? This Divine care is again and again manifested BEFORE a soul is called by grace. Galatians 1. 15, 16 shows how suddenly God worked at the last. But may there not have been some DIVINE PREPARATIONS? Surely these are examples of bone coming "to his bone," and of the Divine forming of sinews and flesh (Ezekiel 37. 6, 8) before there is breath.

This is in accord with God's election, and so we find that those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life will not worship the beast (Rev. 13. 8), even though they be still unsaved when he erects his image.

Romans 11. 4 illustrates. Verse 5 is the DIVINE explanation: there is no statement that the 7,000 had manifested any POSITIVE love to the Lord Himself. But they were held back by ELECTION. How many there are who have spoken against election who forget this.

Matthew 25. 31-46 confirms. The thought expressed in "Ye blessed of My Father" PRECEDES the feeding and visiting. And the kindness shown is not said to spring from knowledge of Christ (37). Human reasoning has given the EXACT OPPOSITE of the correct interpretation. It has assumed "merit" instead of seeing THE EFFECT of "Ye blessed of My Father." Grace is so mighty that it works even when there is not the knowledge of grace, and so there may be very manifestly the SINEWS AND FLESH before the breath.*

This is a key to many problems. Sometimes we almost think that "a man prepares himself for salvation," but there is none that seeketh after God. True the flesh has its imitation, but its goodness is like a fading flower (Isa. 40. 6, 7), whereas God's work is with a view to a climax. Parents have at times been too quick to treat their children as saved, instead of longing to see the proof of breath, in a changed life.

How many difficulties have we made ourselves through ignoring God's right to work in this way, and assuming our natural knowledge. We cannot analyze, but we can leave all with God, and our hearts rejoice that, though a dead man does NOT produce living actions, God can cause MOVEMENT of bone to its bone FIRST,—BEFORE THE BREATH. Let us not misuse His mercy to argue that the sinner can produce spiritual actions and do his part with a view to salvation. God's key is our delight, and we will not resort to others for His lock. With ever grateful praise to Him, we would look around and feel that, although we do not see the Lamb's Book of Life, yet if a soul is the more impressed upon us, through some actions of kindness to God's people, these may be sinews, to make our prayers a wheel in the same Divine plan, of which the sinews themselves and the subsequent breath are alike unfoldings. Thus no flesh shall glory in God's presence, but believers can rejoice in the grace of God, through the delightful unfolding of His plan by the Holy Spirit.

* Probably there is a fuller application: THE UNITING OF THE PEOPLE may be before us, even as in Ezekiel 36. 26 with Jeremiah 32. 39. Each BONE may be a MAN, and the precious harmony of "one another" may be set forth. But the INDIVIDUAL application is not omitted.

It is only by GRACE that we know the Gift of God. Apart from grace, we should still remain dead in sins. And thus gratitude to God should shine forth. PRAISE grows when GRACE is recognized. The more thorough the recognition is, the more hearty will thankfulness be. Any self-esteem is a tremendous hindrance to praise. Humility glorifies God.

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

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"The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do"
Daniel 11. 32. "That I may know Him" Philipians 3. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN, in God's mercy, we send forth a messenger of His truth. And, blessed be God, it is not truth in isolation. "Mercy and truth are met together." Otherwise it would be impossible to draw near to God. His holiness would drive us all back. Yet because, where sin abounded, grace overflowed, the poor guilty sinner can be changed into a child of God. Nor is salvation merely a PARDON. Believers are made the righteousness of God in Christ. Thus He is glorified in their salvation. Nothing of compromise is found, but grace reigns through righteousness. What manner of persons ought His people to be; and, with a view to His praise, in love's obedient gratitude, are these pages humbly sent forth.

BALAAM'S ASS REALLY SPOKE.

THANKS be unto God for all to whom the heading of these notes (on Numbers 22) is no surprise. Some are still SIMPLE enough to be made WISE by accepting the Scriptures as they stand. It is painful to realize that men are found who argue that "nature" could lift up itself FROM AN ANIMAL TO A MAN, but who deny that God could give an animal power to speak "with man's voice"

(2 Pet. 2. 16)! The writer has long felt that the majority are quite unaware of what a "miracle" is. The growth of corn is as great a miracle as the manna. **INFREQUENCY DOES NOT MAKE A MIRACLE**. Is not the man who replies, "The former is not a miracle but nature," only begging the question? Is he not **HIDING**, from himself and others, the reality, by the (to him) inexplicable word "Nature"? Without God nature is only six letters, - **NATURE**, with a conventional meaning, describing an effect, and ignoring a cause. **WE NEED GOD, IN ORDER TO HAVE EITHER SCIENCE OR LOGIC**: and, thanks be unto Him, when we are brought to Himself, we have infinitely more than both, even **SALVATION**.

To return to Numbers 22. Some are found who acknowledge readily God's **ABSTRACT** power, but have a tendency, to try and see if they can explain "naturally" as many miracles as possible. For example, the writer has heard the suggestion, "May not the narrative of Number 22. 21-35 be part of the "dream" of verse 20?"

The following thoughts may be helpful as a **WITNESS** against this:-

- (i) The Holy Spirit does not use the word "dream."
- (ii) The added statement, "And Balaam rose up in the morning" would not be taken by any one to describe a dream-experience, unless the context made this clear. Scripture is truthful.
- (iii) The same language occurs in verses 12 and 13, where we have no doubt as to the literal rising up.
- (iv) "God's anger was kindled because he went" (22) is a statement of fact, and cannot be made part of a man's dream-experience. So is it with verse 31.
- (v) The angel of the Lord is not said merely to be **SEEN BY BALAAM**, but to be present, again and again.
- (vi) There is not a single word to suggest anything but reality throughout the conversation.*
- (vii) The testimony of 2 Peter 2. 16 is deeply important, and decisively helpful to many hearts at once.

The whole narrative is impressive as a **REALITY**, and intensifies Balaam's sin. Why should we avoid the thought of a real experience? We may ask, "What is the **UNDERLYING REASON** of a suggestion, 'Is this a dream?'" Do we not well to search prayerfully as to our wishes?" We cannot tell the **MOTIVES** of others, nor are we to grieve God's Holy Spirit by unkind words, but is it not right to ask, in earnest concern:—"What is the difficulty of accepting the literality, even as

* We would desire never to "overlook" objections, even though earnestly opposing. Verse 35 may seem a difficulty. But why? Have we not a "**KEEPING ON GOING**" with the men in **BOTH** clauses? It is by no means strange that Balaam, the mystic seer, should be a little separated from them (cf. 23.). Moreover, if any urge, "The princes of Balak are not found in the narrative" we reply, "**NOR ARE THEY IN VERSE 36.**" And, again, the Holy Spirit has **MET** this difficulty by mentioning (some would think "unnecessarily") Balaam's **TWO SERVANTS** in verse 22, and **THEN** leaving them out **IN THE RECORD**. Possibly this shows **WHY** they are mentioned, and would illustrate the Holy Spirit's foreknowledge, and answering (in advance) of the objection as to verse 35—a wondrous **FACT THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE**, and illustrative of its inspiration.

Christ accepted the literality of Jonah's experience?" We would not wish to meet half-way those who demur as to miracles. There is no reason why God should be bound by His own usual arrangements? He, Who made man's mouth (Ex. 4. 11), can as easily make an ass to speak on one occasion, as make men with this power in general. We need a simplicity of faith that is the only true logic in a world of miracles,—a simplicity of faith which is a witness for the Lord, and which is powerful even when men say that it is not. How many have laughed at faith because they could neither answer nor endure its mighty testimony.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN LUKE 15. 6, 7 and 9. 10.

"Rejoice with Me; for I have found **MY** sheep which **WAS** lost."

"Rejoice with Me; for I have found **THE** piece which I lost."

THE believing reader who sees Christ in the parables will delight to notice that the Shepherd says "My"; the woman, though having responsibility in the house, and picturing the people of God (the bride) does not claim the silver as **HERS**: for the primary possession of the redeemed (each one a piece of **SILVER**, 1 Peter 1. 18, 19) is the **LORD'S** not ours. Secondly, the Shepherd is not convicted of sin—"which **WAS** lost." But the Lord's people own, if any go astray, **THEIR** own blame, as well as the sin of the wandering one: "I" lost.*

Observe, also, that as the sheep was "lost outside," and is, we believe, brought **INTO** the house ("home"), the silver was **LOST INSIDE**, and was not cast outside (picturing a believer who loses fellowship with the Lord and the Lord's ways). Hence the added words "which need no repentance" (speaking of those in the **WILDERNESS**, NOT said to be safely in the **FOLD**, cf. Matt. 9. 13), are not added regarding the nine pieces of silver, inasmuch as they are true children of God, not professing ones. How exact are the precious words of God. May our hearts feed on them in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

How easy it is to pray selfishly, or, at least, to ask selfishly, in that which we regard as prayer. How important to be gladly in the will of God, and to ask unto **HIS** praise. We are not to be without **WISHES**, but without our own wishes. Worship and praise are appointed checks to selfishness. The flesh misuses all truth, and seeks to turn the tender fatherly love of God into a reason for self's expectation on its own lines.

* The more evident because, in the initial statement of the "**EARTHLY** parallel," we have "**IF HE LOSE**" AND "what woman **HAVING**"; nor (as the language concerns the **TYPE** rather than, the **ANTITYPE**) **NEED** it have been varied, but it **IS** varied to **HELP** us as to the spiritual parallel, **AS SOON AS WE HAVE THE EXPLANATION OF THE SHEPHERD AND THE WOMAN**, thus illustrating consciousness of **HIS OWN SINLESSNESS**, etc.

SOME SOLEMN WARNINGS LINKED WITH WONDERFUL PROMISES.

THE fact that the Lord Jesus gives unto His sheep ETERNAL life has NEVER excused one sin, and never will. The eternal preservation of believers has never modified the Divine principle that the wages of sin is death, never changed the fact that a state of sin with a high hand (Heb. 10. 26) leads to WRATH. The blood of the Lord Jesus NEVER undoes the righteousness of God's throne: rather it is part of the same righteousness.

Hence the precious and searching words, "My sheep HEAR My voice" in the same context as the PROMISE. If there is a persistency against HEARING the Shepherd's voice, to assume the condition of "a sheep" is daring presumption. While we cannot find any Scripture for a sheep ceasing to be a sheep, we can find many Scriptures that show it is easy to imagine salvation when there has been no salvation at all. The "goodliness" of the flesh has been mistaken for grace (Isa. 40. 6).

The branch of John 15 is NOT said to have BECOME fruitless: the passage implies there was never any fruit at all, and we have no hesitation in using God's solemn warnings, which are given to keep His people from the path of DESTRUCTION. If they continue in sin, election will not prevent eternal judgment, but He Who elected can prevent this DIRE CONTINUANCE, and Scripture surely shows He will deign to work thus. Hence obedient love to God is the only proof of salvation, and the man whose only hope is built on "I know I was ONCE saved," is trifling with realities. Fruit TO-DAY must be the evidence, beloved friends, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

And the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3. 15) has much to awaken concern. To lose the Lord's "Well Done" is not a small matter. "An eternal weight of glory" is blessed, but any parallel with being shamed from Him, or rather the suggestion that we should live with the holy fear that this may not be, must stir up a believing and humble heart. Indifference to Christ's interests cannot be the work of a LIFE from above. How many do not really know HIM.

In so writing, we do not wish to assume any of US can see "the Book of Life." But if we ask, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" we hear the deeply impressive and personal answer, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able" (Luke 13. 23, 24). To use a promise AGAINST a warning is iniquity. EVERY word of God is pure. To comfort the FLESH by a promise is daring effrontery. Scripture is given that we may WAR AGAINST the flesh.

Some beloved ones have thought that this involves the possibility, though perhaps rare, that a believer may undo his salvation. It seems to us that this, (though quite distinct from the usual theory of falling away again and again), seems to us to dishonour God, and to assume

salvation HAS existed where there is no Scriptural evidence. And two solemn thoughts are before us.

First, would not this "undoing" mean CHRIST'S loss of one given to Him? Would it not be HIS LOSS beyond ours? Would it not UNDO the substitutionary nature of His precious sacrifice?

Secondly, would it not imply, that, as WRATH BELONGS TO LAW, a believer's sin would bring him into wrath, and, therefore, involve CONVERSELY, that a believer's victory over sin has SOME RELATION TO LAW, AND SOME FULFILLING OF LAW? It seems to the writer that we cannot take one side without the other. If my preservation from LAW'S WRATH depends on my work, then "my" work has a legal value and legal acceptance. But, beloved friends, I must confess there is enough dross in one day to condemn me LEGALLY, yea, in one hour, in one action, when I think of the majesty of God, and His glorious holiness.* In His relation to His people as FATHER He graciously sorts out the gold, and receives this. BUT "LAW" ALLOWS OF NO SORTING: the whole must be perfect. And if my sin can NOT ONLY bring me severe chastisement and loss, but also judicial wrath, the holding back of that sin holds back wrath, and my life is still under THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH. This is momentous. Surely some beloved children of God have confused "the law of the house" (stewardship, and "a law to Christ,") WITH the law of God as Righteous Judge. Penal wrath does not belong to the former, but the one who would misuse the fact to tolerate sin, shows no sign of ANY RELATION to "the house" or family. O that we may, in opposing errors spiritually, be kept from the swing of the pendulum to ANOTHER ERROR. Earnestly would we plead with all believers to acknowledge that their obedience now is not viewed as under the holy condemnatory law of God. Any claim that it is, invalidates Christ's work, and assumes PERFECTION, OR condemnation. The PURPOSE may be a dread of self-confidence in eternal salvation, but the unintended result becomes LOGICALLY a confidence in one's own obedience, though many beloved ones are "illogical," and we thankfully own that they with heart and soul deny this. May the Lord use His own truth to bring hearts and minds together. Our only desire is that He may have the glory, of devoted lives unto Himself.

God's love to sinners was not conditioned on their love, but unconditioned, and He causes their love (1 John 4. 19).

The problems of the Christian life are not imaginary, BUT the grace to meet them is not imaginary.

* The thought that continued sin would bring under wrath but one sin may not do so, quite overturns the righteousness of God's law. If the arrangement is PENAL, we must not forget that one sin would bring the doom.

LUKE 22. 35-38.

THIS passage is of deep importance to children of God in connexion with the simple path of TRUSTING HIM. At first it SEEMS to suggest a marked contrast with the Address on the Mount (Matt. 5. 38-41), and the principles of "the kingdom of the heavens," which are to be humbly illustrated in the present dispensation. The strange part is that few who urge the objection would venture to CARRY OUT what they suggest is its meaning. They do NOT sell their garments.

Nevertheless, the inconsistencies of others are no help to those who would love their Lord, AS He desires them to love Him (John 14. 15). But they seek a plain path for His glory. Some, will, alas, use this passage to make the words of Christ merely mystical, and hyperbolic. O for grace to be kept from explaining away what HE HAS SAID. He is Truthful.

The testimony of Peter 4. 1 certainly does call to a holy warfare AGAINST THE FLESH, and we would emphasize the spiritual sword. But the other words in the Luke 22 context are MATERIAL, e.g. the scrip and the garment. We would not shrink from the language of Holy Scripture.

Granted that Christ's added words "It is enough," (though there were ELEVEN apostles), and His appointment in verses 50, 51 (with Matthew 26. 52), prevent any thought of worldly warfare or self-defence, we still must humbly ask, "What did our Lord mean?"

The precious thought that it is important to learn NON-USE, when USE is possible, may ever be a blessing to us. If we have no power, obviously we CANNOT do anything, but when we have a sword, or its equivalent, grace is needed to be PATIENT. The believer who COULD go to law, and WILL NOT, for Christ's sake, may know the meaning of this lesson.

But this is hardly the INTERPRETATION: the words go further, and humbly so: Peter had not accepted Christ's statement in verses 31 and 32. Verse 34 is followed by TAKING THE DISCIPLES on their own ground. "When I SENT you," is found in verse 35, NOT IN 36. "But NOW" if Peter would act as one "ready," without being SENT, he would need to depend on his own purse and scrip and sword. Verse 37 shows the contrast again: CHRIST WOULD USE NO SWORD. 'Tis therefore, a wondrous message of loving and holy reproof and warning AGAINST dependence on self, but put in the form of a command to one in a wrong state, to awaken concern by showing up the FORBIDDEN condition, to which SUCH a precept would seem suitable.* It is so often that the Lord Jesus deals with some on their own ground, to humble them. Compare Luke 15, and the ninety and nine JUST persons. Ezekiel 18. 31 illustrates this, from another standpoint. But, appropriately, the wondrous message definitely OMITS any instruction to use the sword, but sets forth the futility of anything but faith, by showing how impossible it is to blend CHRIST'S pathway of faith, and the way of

* Cf. 2 Chron. 25. 8, Matt. 23. 32, 1 Cor. 14. 38, Rev. 22. 11.

man. Alas, Christendom has sought the impossible, and the missionary has been linked with commerce, and his murdered body has been avenged before the time. But the Lord Jesus would use definite language, to indicate that from which a Christian SHRINKS, as a corollary if he leaves the path of BELIEVING his Lord and being "sent." The silence of the Lord Jesus between verses 49 and 50 gives a wondrous key. We are called to WAIT FOR HIM (Ps. 106. 13, Isa. 30. 18b).

GOD'S "INSTEAD" or MAN'S?

WHEN God appoints, those who love Him may well be satisfied. Such therefore can read with joy, "Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering IN THE STEAD OF HIS SON" (Gen. 22. 13). The whole nation of Israel springs from Isaac, and thus the whole nation was then very NEAR TO DEATH. The earthly life of the entire nation is symbolically seen to depend on God's "INSTEAD." Hence every TRUE Israelite must believe in THE FACT OF SUBSTITUTION.

When Israel were in Egypt, God granted His "instead" once more. This time He dealt with the FIRSTBORN, the chief of all their strength and every firstborn son lived BECAUSE the Lamb died. That was God's "INSTEAD," was it not?

The chapter that follows the passover refers again to the Lord's possession of the firstborn, and says, "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all THE FIRSTBORN OF MAN AMONG THY CHILDREN THOU SHALT REDEEM (Ex. 13. 13). A third time we see the strength of the Hebrew race depending on SUBSTITUTION.

Indeed, every day of atonement the same lesson was repeated. The Law of God is full of precious instruction as to God's "INSTEAD." What wondrous mercy He showed in providing thus. How few realize His love.

When Israel stood under Mount Sinai they, on one occasion, asked for a SUBSTITUTE. "If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die . . . Go thou near" (Deut. 5. 25, 27). The Lord heard the voice of their words (Deut. 5. 28), and added, "THEY HAVE WELL SAID." But Moses told them that ANOTHER and not himself, should be the SUBSTITUTE, according to ALL that they desired, that they might not die (Deut. 18. 15, 16). Moses once sought to be a substitute, but his offer was NOT admitted (Ex. 32. 32). One who has some sins cannot atone for those who have more. A perfect SUBSTITUTE is needed.

The history of Joseph's brethren also is instructive.--Judah said "Thy servant became

SURETY

. . . let thy servant abide INSTEAD OF the lad." The surety must

act on behalf of another, MUST, if need be, suffer "INSTEAD."

But where Moses was quite refused and Judah failed, MESSIAH did NOT fail: He is still God's "INSTEAD," the Holy and Perfect Sacrifice, Who bare the sin of many (Isaiah 53. 12).

Will you, dear reader, still prefer YOUR OWN "instead"? Do you think He, Who rejected Moses' offer, will receive your proposal? A PERFECT "INSTEAD" is your need. And have you this? Will you dare to ask God to accept something INSTEAD OF righteousness, and INSTEAD OF a true sacrifice? Your kindness, your fasting, your religious duties, and what not, cannot avail instead of COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Why do you imagine a vain thing? Why will you continue to despise that COMPLETE WORK which honours God's holy law, and displays the meaning of ALL the types? Salvation without MESSIAH is an empty hope, and worse than empty. If you value your soul's welfare, dear reader, do not, I beseech you, put aside the thought of GOD'S "INSTEAD!"

WHAT IS TRUE LOVE?

"I FOUND more love—in a broader sphere." Yes, but WHAT love? Was there room for love as to many things which are NOT the Lord's will. WHAT love?—we would earnestly ask.

If "more love" is like the joy of the rocky-ground hearer, does it PLEASE THE LORD? If there is room for love of more independence of belief, is that OUR FATHER'S WILL? Love that does not trouble to reprove may be selfishness. It may bring "happiness," but—!

Love of music, love for a "little" more changeableness in clothing, and so forth, love for excursions and social arrangements:—those are pleasant diversions, but are they safe? The great question is—"Is there more love for CHRIST, AND HIS REPROACH (Heb. 11. 25, 26; 13. 13)? Is there more love for His PAINFUL Words?"

How frequently one may find some who plead for love who speak unkindly of those who are not so broad. The test is not love as an emotion, but love to Christ, and His word still says, "If ye love ME, keep My commandments." The devil will not try us so much, if we make His appointments optional. As the strong man is in "peace" till the Stronger comes, there can ever be much apparent happiness TILL the Truth is applied by the Holy Spirit. But O to have this! O for reviving of love to CHRIST, beloved friends. O that our LOVE may ever be IN THE TRUTH.

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

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"I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" Luke 4. 43.

"He must needs go through Samaria" John 4. 4.

"I must work the works of Him That sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" John 9. 4.

A Word of Introduction.

ENABLED BY GOD'S GRACE, WE WOULD AGAIN SEND FORTH A FEW PAGES CONCERNING A THEME THAT WOULD MORE THAN FILL EARTH'S LIBRARIES, AND STILL BE ONLY FRINGED. THE GLORIES OF CHRIST, AND OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, MUST EVER BE EMPHASIZED. THESE DAYS ARE DAYS OF MAN'S BOASTED GLORY, BUT HOW POOR IS EVERYTHING OF EARTH. EARTH'S HONOURS VANISH. BUT THE GLORIES OF CHRIST ABIDE. THAT POOR GUILTY SINNERS MAY SEEK HIM, AND THAT HIS BELOVED PEOPLE MAY FIND THEIR ALL INCREASINGLY IN HIM, AS THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKES OF THE THINGS OF CHRIST AND SHOWS TO THEM, ARE THESE PAGES WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED. ANY OTHER OBJECT IS WORTHLESS. MAY THE GLORY OF OUR TRIUNE GOD BE OUR JOY INCREASINGLY.

EVOLUTION JUDGED.

WHO can honestly claim that Genesis allows of evolution? * A humble disciple may be expected to recoil from the thought. And Scripture statement is evidence enough. If God says He created Adam, faith believes it.

* Genesis 1. 26, 27 (also 12, 21, 24, 25), and see Luke 3. 38 (direct relation to God, omitting the italics), 1 Corinthians 15. 45.

But not only is man's theory unscriptural, and anti-scriptural in ITSELF, it is deadly in its FRUIT.

1. Evolution denies THE FALL. "God hath made men upright; but they have found out many inventions." Evolution has no room for this. The word "offence" in Romans 5. 15 is literally "fall."
2. Evolution thus advances to the denial of HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY. "Sin" is explained away: it is regarded as a relic of a lower nature. A beast would not be accountable before God's law in the SAME WAY AS a real man.
3. Evolution next assails the foundation-facts of REDEMPTION, and REGENERATION. Salvation depends on the righteous wrath of God. If man is not fallen, where is the need for the death of the Son of God? If there is no ruin of a first creation, what is the necessity for a new creation?
4. Evolution continues its attack on the very principle of GRACE. "The survival of the fittest" knows no mercy. Grace to the underserving is the reverse of evolutionary philosophy. And the precious ethics of "The Address on the Mount" will not befit a doctrine that crushes out the "unfit." The morals of evolution are brutal, even as the imagination that man is but a developed brute.
5. Evolution will not give place to God's WRATH. It argues, though with self-contradiction, for UNIFORMITY ("All things continue," 2 Peter 3. 4). It has no room for God to step in. A theory that attacks Scripture, that undermines God's gospel, that subverts love to the outcast, should find no quarter with believers.

With relief, our hearts turn to the majestic contrast, "God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created He him," and, though the fall has come in, the grace of God is not defeated, but the Son of His love took upon Himself the form of a Servant that believers might enter into the joy of the Divine words "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him That created him" (Col. 3. 10). Glory be to God.

To be reprinted (God willing).

A bad motive can make a good action bad, but a good motive cannot make a bad action good.

We are responsible for the TENDENCY of our actions, and our inactions, and not merely the actual result. Ezekiel 33. 1-3 shows something of this principle, when we think of the spiritual parallel. Any other responsibility would be unequal. If, in mercy, any are saved from the result of our bad example, we must not think that we are less to be blamed than those who do the same action, with more serious results in the experiences of others.

ROMANS II.

EVERY chapter of Scripture is wonderful, and the simplest passages are far more precious and far deeper than any realize, however humble and disciplelike they be. But some verses seem designed by God, in His love, to make His people conscious at once of His majesty and their own need. Possibly some feel almost overwhelmed in an ocean of covenant grace, and we long for such experiences, however long we have known His Name! Everything that awakens more praise is delightful, and the goal of this chapter is, "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen" (36). Rather, this is ONE goal: the OTHER is, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." Worship and fruitful obedience are as the golden bell and pomegranate of the high priest:—ever together, and each leading to the other.

God has been pleased to make Romans II a blessing to the writer, and he would pass on a few thoughts. The contrast between "A people" of 10. 21 and "HIS people" of 11. 1, 2 is impressive. Election is a fact. ONE example proves that Israel will not be blessed in a universalistic sense (Judas, Matt. 26. 24); and ONE case is here brought forward to prove the stability of grace, "I also am an Israelite." The message of verse 4 is not that 7000 were secret believers, but that 7000 were elect. They, like to the elect in Antichrist's reign, are seen as HELD BACK, by grace, from worshipping an idol, but possibly, when Elijah spoke, few of them KNEW the Lord. So is it now: election comforts us even when many still reject (5). Election wrongs or excludes none: it tells of grace picking out for blessing. Election does not keep one soul out of heaven, but free will would keep every soul out, if it were not for election. Beloved fellow-believers, never undervalue GOD'S electing grace.

The condition of those who do not believe, remains one of blindness. They are "left" where all are by nature and practice. Viewing such, the apostle asks regarding Israel, "Have they stumbled THAT THEY SHOULD FALL?" Is this the goal? And he answers, No. "THROUGH their fall (a) salvation is come unto the Gentiles, (b) for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy." The (a) is evidently now, the (b) is specially future (verse 26). He Who ever overruled the wrath of man to praise Him, and Who worked redemption when men did THEIR worst at Calvary, has overruled Israel's rejection to the salvation of sinners from ALL nations, and will yet gather the remnant of Israel, and show that He has not lost the threads of His purpose, nor broken His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Great is His faithfulness.

After verse 12 we reach a different part of the chapter. What is the Olive Tree? And what the casting away? What is the grafting in? Have we here Judaism, or relationship to Christ? Or something else? Into WHAT are believers engrafted now? If the reference is to Christ, could any have been united to Him before Calvary (John 12. 24),

and is there cutting off from Him AFTER living union?*

As we ponder these questions, two or three very remarkable facts come to light.

1. The HOLY "Firstfruit" is not mentioned TILL after the reference to the casting away of Israel: nor is the HOLY Root. Every word is Divinely placed.
2. UP TO verse 16 the Holy Spirit declares a casting away, but AFTER that verse He never states that a branch will be broken off.† Rather, He QUESTIONS the real condition of the one who may be cut off: whenever He describes this one the word "IF" is found somewhere in the context. The REPEATED "if's" of 17-24 are striking. The only passage without an "if" is where the MAN himself assumes he WAS grafted in (19).§

Is it likely that we have a CENTRAL change in verse 16, and that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, bringing in a new dispensation, are there marked? BEFORE He died, the tree was one of PRIVILEGE, but NOW God has associated all privileges with His Beloved Son: He has become the HOLY ROOT. Observe that there is NO GRAFTING IN prior to verse 16.

Would not ANY OTHER INTERPRETATION fail as to the different language BEFORE AND AFTER verse 16? This is an important negative help to the true solution. Now we realize the tree of privilege brought no INDIVIDUAL permanency TILL redemption was made, but that on Calvary "the Root and Offspring of David" secured His beloved people. We can, therefore, answer the further question as to the CASTING AWAY. Israel, IN THEMSELVES, were CUT OFF when they refused Him, and are never to be restored apart from Christ (Isaiah 53). We see that the grafting in now is living relation to the Holy Root, i.e. PERSONAL salvation. Happy are we if this is our joy, whether Jews or Gentiles by natural birth (Eph. 2. 17, 18).

Is this thought corroborated by the whole chapter? We venture to say that it is. For when God pardons those whom He reserves for Israel He will not receive them only as Jews, but INDIVIDUALLY "in CHRIST." "Even so have these also now not believed YOUR MERCY (salvation to Gentiles in Christ), THAT they also may obtain mercy" (31, 32 lit.). THEY will not be saved AS Jews, but obtain personal mercy in Christ, even as believers from all nations are received now.

This ENTIRELY harmonizes with the prophecies of the Old Testament that, when Israel are again welcomed, ALL will be righteous (Isa. 60. 21), being accepted in the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

* The branch of John 15. 6 is marked out as one cut out from another vine first, and it is not said to have BECOME fruitless. It IS fruitless throughout: hence VITAL union is never suggested (a leaflet will be gladly sent).

† "Fell" in 22 is PAST.

§ Yet the "if's" are so arranged that they give much NECESSARY CONCERN, and searching of our ways, to a believer, and rebuke all FLESHLY CONFIDENCE in election. FRUIT is the TEST of LIFE.

"LIFE from the dead" in Romans 11. 15 agrees, and verse 26 has NOW its right application. Nor can we overlook John 11. 51 with Ezekiel 37.

Does this help as to any other Scripture? To the writer, it solves the GREAT problem of Matthew 21. 19, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward FOR EVER." God HAS set aside Israel as a fig tree, of national and unstable privilege, FOR EVER:—when He restores it will be in the Olive Tree which has now become the Lord Jesus Christ. He is NOW the HOLY ROOT in Romans 11. 16 (cf. John 12. 24: the Seed becomes the Root). Acts 3.23 strongly confirms this, ("Every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people").* But the national election is NOT thereby broken, for among "the preserved of Israel" national and personal election will be CO-EXTENSIVE, as Ezekiel 37 (already noticed) shows, and thus BOTH parts of God's plan will come true at once. Well may we say, "O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

At first sight verses 23, 24 may seem a difficulty. How can this be "THEIR OWN OLIVE?"† But may we not reply, How can it be otherwise? Is not Christ to be the Glory of His people Israel, AS WELL AS the Light to lighten the Gentiles (Luke 2. 32)? Mark the Divine order in Simeon's words. Verse 28 may help: the election of Israel AS ISRAEL is before us an election to definite privileges, which MUST be reached, for God cannot break His Word. Hence when a day dawns in which all the spared of that nation are personally elect in Christ, they, individually and collectively, VIA His wondrous saving grace, will reach the very privileges which God has appointed in that Day for the united nation, Christ Himself being their own "Olive Tree" in accord with Jeremiah 23. 5, 6. It is the coalescing IN CHRIST of (a) ETERNAL blessings and (b) of privileges, within God's covenant dealing, which we behold here. The Lord's people from among the Gentiles will share the glories of that Day, as well as eternal salvation, so they do not cease to be in the precious Olive Tree. Everything centres around Christ. The first Adam is replaced by the Last Adam, and the True Israel takes up the threads when the rest of the nation, apart from Him, (Rom. 11. 7) becomes under judgment (Deut. 18. 20). Thus all the prophecies of blessing find their fulfilment in Him, and millennial and eternal glory are alike through His wondrous atonement. The Holy Spirit ever exalts Him in His people's experiences, and our hearts can truly say: "BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3).

* This definitely suggests CUTTING OFF of all who rejected Christ.

† Some may also find a problem as to the grafting in again. But passages like Jeremiah 31. 10 will help. Scripture does not mean the same INDIVIDUALS when it speaks of "Israel" at different times of history, but the same nation (Jer. 33. 19-26). He refers to those whom He reserves (Jer. 50. 20). "WE which are alive and remain" is a helpful parallel in Scripture language.

THE TAKING AWAY OF HUMAN LIFE.

GOD'S unchanging prerogatives can never be rightly questioned. "Man" understands so little. **WHATSOEVER** God does we know to be holy, and **WHATSOEVER** He says He will do should awaken His people's approval. Jeremiah said "Amen" to God's will, and Babylon's judgment is linked in Revelation with heaven's "Alleluia." Any other attitude is a denial of His authority and wisdom. And it is impious to criticize Him. The writer is quite aware that such a standpoint is unpopular to-day, but reverence and self-abasement before God alone befit those who are first limited as creatures, and, secondly, as members of a race that has sinned against Him.

Hence we acknowledge God's absolute right to take away human life. He has never abrogated this. And He can rightly use **ANY** means which He appoints. The opposition of some to a whirlwind, or an earthquake, is based on human ignorance. God is acquainted with **ALL** the persons involved, and no "premature" death can alter the eternity of one individual. God knows, moreover, what men **WOULD** do under other circumstances, and every objection to a catastrophe is essentially an objection to death **ALTOGETHER**. The circumstances are not the primary matter, but the fact. If we humbly own that men are fallen, and that God controls and knows everything, and not only a part, the difficulty is changed to reverence. We only know the parts of His ways, but it is enough that **HE** has no limits, neither of power, nor of knowledge.

And thus we approach, for example, the extermination of the Canaanites. Guilty of unspeakable sins, the land spued them out, (Lev. 18. 28). The wisdom of God dealt with the **WHOLE** nation, and those slain in infancy were marked out as chosen and redeemed. All the problems of death in babyhood are safely left to God, and His electing love. All perplexity, as to pain and inequality, is linked with our attempt to explain the whole with a limited knowledge of a part. Transmigration and other human theories are man's grappling with the fact of sin, and its recoil, in **HIS OWN WAY**. How blessedly contrasted is God's wisdom, and faith's simplicity. And faith has found the preciousness of **ATONEMENT**, as well as a resting place, God's perfection.

Moreover the words "by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9. 6) are by no means contradictory of "Thou shalt not kill." Acting in God's Name was not personal killing. Israel, even as Noah, had God's executive.

But, for this very reason, a spiritual nation of "strangers and pilgrims" cannot take any part in penal justice. Likewise they cannot rightly share in warfare. God appointed war when He had **ONE** nation: now His people are in **ALL** nations, and the theory of participation in war would involve the **DUTY** of a child of God to kill a child of God. This is sufficient proof of the sin of the theory, and the Address on the Mount intensifies the precious thought of love in its

dispensational manifestation. Socialism has a wrong foundation, "universal fatherhoodism" has an untrue argument. The command of Christ, and the fact that His people are to preach and live the gospel of the **GRACE** of God, must be the one ground of entire separation from use of violence by disciples to-day.

But in the sphere of providence, the appointment of Gen: 9 remains. The abolition of capital punishment is not a Scriptural abolition. **GOVERNMENT** has a sword and God would deter evil doers. Romans 13 is clear as to this. But when one is brought into the heavenly calling, he can no longer Scripturally execute wrath. The same salvation should cut off a believer from all voting, for the franchise not only involves fellowship with the ungodly, but voting, through a representative, for war, and other things which are inconsistent with the walk of God's rejected people to-day.

Death legally inflicted is a solemnizing reminder of God, to Whom the sinner is handed over. It is oftentimes verbally linked with a recognition of His authority. Originally this was prominent. But now the human heart finds interest in sensationalism, and many a newspaper looks for its gains thereby. Cut out records of crime and gambling, and the evening newspapers would fall. Such is the carelessness of man about life and death. The humble believer sees the need for a definite separation in these things.

If a war breaks out, there are mingled feelings internationally. Bitterness arises, yet if a man is not fully slain the ambivalence of his enemy seeks to restore him to a measure of life. National victory, not the execution of God's judgment is the object in view. If the opposing army uses methods that slay non-combatants, those who themselves kill infants by their habits of drunkenness are the first to declaim, and to declaim against God as well. There is no self-judgment. And many a politician pleads for adopting condemned modes of warfare, IF the enemy first uses them. "I will give them up if you will" is his attitude. There is no thought of truth, nor dependence on God. Can there be twentieth century warfare without a **WISH** to deceive the foe? All these mingled feelings show that God is not sought, His will is not wanted. How real is the contrast with the Scriptural standard that God alone has a **RIGHT** to take away human life, and that He has a right to deal with all as He pleases, and when, and where. The executive is **HIS**.

Men frequently speak of illnesses and death, quite forgetful of God's permission. To excuse insanitary conditions, and say a man will not die before the time, is unscriptural fatalism. There is no warrant to **TEMPT** God. But, amid human schemes of protection, God is left out. His voice is not heard in an epidemic. He is not sought, and it is not realized that there is **One** Who is able to save and to destroy. The tendency of to-day is the exclusion of God from birth and death, and human tampering with His prerogative will bring serious results.

Blessed be God for **ONE** life different from all others, that was taken from the earth (Acts 8. 33). The Son of God loved and died for guilty sinners. The denial of substitution makes His precious death un-

righteous. If He had not borne WRATH, the Holy One could not have righteously died at all. The putting aside of legal wrath charges God with injustice. But how happy are those who rejoice in their Saviour's finished work for sinners, and THEIR eternal life shall never be taken AWAY. "They shall never perish" is His delightful promise, to awaken obedient love. But the sheep who have eternal life are equally described as the sheep who hear His voice. O that every Scriptural subject may lead believers to a walk with God, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

SOME PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

THE enthusiasm for something "new" is often great, and the man of the world takes advantage of this in his business appeals. But the test is CONTINUANCE. Many a dear child of God has taken up fuller learning of Scripture regularly, or some part of Christian labour, and, after a while, the tempter acts on the flesh, and seeks to produce the feeling of drudgery,—“What a weariness is it.” One is not throwing stones in so speaking. Who has not felt this, with shame, personally? The prayerful believer will surely seek unto his heavenly Father at such a time, for RENEWED vigour and zeal in whatever is His will. The problem is felt in the training of children. One word of an unwise parent may undo twenty actions of a wise one, because the child's NATURAL condition RESPONDS to the former, unless born from above. We little realize how much WE can spoil, and then meanly say, “The children can't do this or that.” We gain our reputation for truthful delineation of their character by SPOILING it, more and more, to bring it into line with our words. O that it may not be so. When once a child is turned against anything, it is HARD to change the attitude. United parents, with love's enthusiasm, have a winning power. Disunited parents hinder unspeakably. The people of God in training their children should be concerned to illustrate earnestness themselves. Imitation is powerful in a child. We see this even in the way a child learns a language. It is important to bring this characteristic into the right channel. How often we fail to realize our influence. “Little things” lead astray more effectively than we think. We imagine the child will not “take notice” of an unguarded word. We err exceedingly. Actions have fruit that cannot be recalled. In the learning of Scripture, young people will sometimes show marked zeal, if it is regarded as a privilege, and a joy in which parents join. But if parents themselves do not learn the Scriptures, I am doubtful if children will normally CONTINUE long with affectionate earnestness.

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(NO messages on the Lord's Day).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

“GOD . . . hath quickened us . . . hath raised up . . . and made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS.”

Ephesians 2. 4-6.

“He will revive us . . . He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”

Hosea 6. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

THE message of GRACE often seems too good to be true, but it IS true. Many esteem themselves till they see themselves in the light of Christ's work on Calvary, then they abhor themselves. Many have much to say for self, till they learn how wondrously they have been protected; and thus they begin to feel how miserably they would have failed, had not God diminished the strain and stress for His feeble people's sake. Ah, then the cry is not “my strength,” but, “my weakness.” And, admiring His love, they wonder they have not been more grateful. And their heart-longing is to please Him more, and to be willing for greater trials, though their hearts cry out “Lead us not INTO temptation” (God grants a goal BEYOND, see 1 Corinthians 10. 13).

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RESPONSIBILITY.

A MAN sits down to think. He rarely has time to THINK. The wheels of time hurry round. Day follows day, and night follows night, and so he whirls along, without time to think. He rises to have a quickly partaken meal before work, but how can he find leisure for thinking then? When the day's work is done, he wants his pleasure. He MUST have that, even though there be no time to think. And the

majority speed thus along life's journey. They WILL have their cinema or their dance, their football or their fashions, but there is no time for realities. There is other drunkenness than with wine, and a master of deceit is lulling men to sleep, that they may not have time to ponder their need.

But, last of all, a man sits down to think. He looks at his life, and asks, "What do I really possess?" "Pleasures" can only become a memory, and pain can more than blot them out. "Riches" can only be held a brief time, they make to themselves wings, and, in any case, they are NOT POSSESSED IN DEATH. Men can build a house to stand, but cannot lengthen their own lives as they would. Death baffles them. They have no freehold. To-morrow is uncertain. What do I possess? And what am I,-- the possessor?

Is this life all?-- This life with its uncertainties and vanities? Am I only a child of a few days, to seek bubbles that break as soon as their beauty is admired? Am I living for nothing more? I want something real, something precious, something permanent--ah, more than some THING!

The thinking goes on. I cannot have yesterday again. I cannot recall one action. The foolish word that sped its way had SOME effect on one or two who heard it, and their after words and actions were, in measure, changed, and this change became, in time, a factor in a hundred other lives, and thus the ball set rolling cannot be stopped. I may call the effect "slight," but that is only a question of degree. The ripples from the stone cast into the water become wider: I cannot be blind to this. I cannot call back the effects of one action. And one foolish word is not my only sin. An angry deed comes up in view:-- it provoked another's anger, and habits were influenced thereby. Possibly I had more to do with war than I thought I had. The results of ONE sin are incalculable.

The thinking goes on. Perhaps I am over-estimating:--but, no. An epidemic may be started by one case. How ghastly are the thoughts that spring up. "Responsibility" is a maddening thought.

And you cannot quarantine sin. O the terror of influence. And yet I cannot resign it. I am in despair. And if there is One who totals up my share in all the sins of others, I have no hope in His judgment. And there is One.

The thinking goes on! An awful sense of need becomes greater, and greater. What about OMISSIONS? Their effect upon others is more than I can tell. It is only begging the question to say, "They are responsible for themselves." If I set a place on fire, I AM responsible; and, not only so, if the effects do not take place I am JUST AS GUILTY. This is a climax of horror. I HAVE NO ESCAPE. Thinking over realities is too much for me. What can I do?

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1. 15). Whence come these words, more than passing strange? I need Some One to deal with my desperate case. Can it be I have

found that "Some One" here? My burden is an agonizing sense of RESPONSIBILITY which I have never had before. If I could live a spotless life FROM TO-DAY, the awful thought that I have already an investment in myriads of others' sins, still bearing interest, would appal. If one issues an infidel book, and becomes a Christian, how he grieves over the work of evil still going on, even though he recalls the book. Memories and second hand copies exist. And all my actions are of the same character. RESPONSIBILITY, and a partnership in the guilt of untold millions, can only crush a man who has TIME TO THINK,-- until he is brought to the precious Saviour Who, knowing the WHOLE case, has met the WHOLE need. None but God could apportion my share in others' sins: none but God could judge me, and trace my guilt to its tenth generation, and more. But-- O the music of the gospel HE HAS DONE THIS and laid my iniquity on my Saviour (Isa. 53. 6). The debt was exacted, and Himself answered, answered for me. And mingled love and righteousness shine forth in the words, "I HAVE BLOTTED OUT," as a thick cloud; thy transgressions" (Isa. 44. 22). I could trust no one else,-- no one but my Judge Himself. But He is the very One Who has paid the full penalty, and now welcomes me with a heart of love. I understand now why none but the Mighty God could come to deal with my case, and feel, beyond measure, the holy solemnity of the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The burden of my sins has been borne, every claim has been met, and NOW I want to live for Him, to have TIME TO THINK of His love, and to please Him, day by day. Riches-- ah, there are riches in Christ, never to pass away. Pleasures-- they, too, are to be found in Christ, and pleasures for ever!

Dear reader, is this Saviour yours, or are you still under the load of a terrible responsibility before God's throne, from which there will be no escape? Will you not heed this loving word of warning, and stop and think ere it is too late, except to awake in dark despair! A living Saviour still welcomes. There is the open door of mercy, and, "Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6. 2). "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth from every sin" (1 John 1. 7). Thanks be unto God for SUCH A GOSPEL!

(If the Lord will, available as a gospel tract).

"They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties." Mark 6. 40.

EVERY word of God is precious. Nothing is recorded in vain. How grateful we should be, even if we do not understand.

When we think of the arrangement of the Lord Jesus for the multitude, we see that there is an order in that which pleases Him. Nature at His bidding is full of order. The work of the Spirit of God is not confusion (1 Cor. 14. 33). Further, was not the

counting of the many made easy before the disciples' eyes, that they might realize just what miracle the Lord Jesus had wrought? The number 5000, in the light of Acts 4.4,* seems important, as a picture of His redeemed in this dispensation, and the twelve baskets (after) may suggest the blessing to Israel's twelve tribes "in that day." Possibly the hundreds and fifties give us pictures of LOCAL assemblies, all dependent on the Lord for all spiritual supplies, ministered by His servants and in loving fellowship with "one another." It is evident from Acts 2.42-47 that when believers were very numerous in one city, they, though one church, met to break bread, in different HOUSES, and the suggested numbers here may help as to a usual maximum in one house. Every message of God is helpful to His believing people.

**"He Saith Not, And to Seeds, as of Many;
but as of One, And to Thy Seed,
Which is Christ." Gal. 3. 16.**

EVERY difficulty in Scripture is precious. Here is one. The word "Seed" is singular in the Hebrew when it refers apparently to a NATION: hence it seems clear that the Holy Spirit's argument, (for it is not only Paul's), alludes to the word in its inspired contexts.

The passages are Genesis 12. 7; 13. 15, 16; 15. 5, 13, 18; 17. 7, 8, 9, 10; 21. 12, 13; 22. 17, 18; 24. 7. Added words explain a plural seed in 13. 16; 15. 5, 13; 17. 7, 8, 9, 10; 22. 17; and 21. 13 refers to Ishmael. Now it is remarkable that where we have the fulness of the promises, e.g. 12. 7, 13, 15; 15. 18; 21. 12; 27. 18, the plural is not mentioned. The word "their" is NOT then added. The blessing of ALL NATIONS OF THE EARTH is linked with the Seed WITHOUT a plurality. Long ago it was pointed out that the promise of "the land" seems specially for the Seed, WITHOUT a further word as to multiplication. But Genesis 17 adds, "I will be THEIR God." The further difficulty will surely bring a further blessing. We have HERE a limitation of the word "land" "the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan." But what about Genesis 12. 7?

It may be replied, "This is the same." The answer is, "The same is INCLUDED, but the Holy Spirit's omissions are perfect, and there is no limitation to Canaan here." The word "land" means "earth," and, indeed, is the very word of Genesis 22. 18. Abraham, in Christ's work, is Heir of the world (Rom. 4. 13). And thus the unlimited land and the unrestricted promises are to the Seed WITHOUT ANY PLURAL, which is exactly what the apostle declares.

But let us suppose some passage is speaking both of the One Seed, AND the multiplied seed? This problem also is met. In Genesis 13. 15 we have the fulness, but the word "seed" is REPEATED,

* The largest number of united believers given by the Holy Spirit, -- before the glory.

with an "and," where we have the nation in verse 16. So is it in 22. 17, 18, but here the PERSONAL Seed is mentioned second. The same "and" and the same repetition of the noun are found. The like distinction is found after Abraham's time. Observe the repeated nouns and the "and's" of 26. 4, 28. 13, 14, and 48. 4. And the same distinguishing care marks each passage in Genesis (e.g. 24. 7 and 60, the latter having the word "them"). The objector who says, "Too small a point," seems to forget that the smallness emphasizes the Holy Spirit's work. Inspiration is on the edge of a precipice, but it never falls over. A human writer, not knowing of the precious lesson of Galatians 3, would have made some slip. The apostle shows that the promiseS of the original covenant belong to the singular Seed, the fulness is His. The fact that the plural seed also will reach their blessing in Him is hinted in Genesis, and worked out in Romans 11.

Undoubtedly there ARE difficulties in the wondrous words of God, but faith has learnt enough to prevent anxiety or haste. So we ever praise God, and wait for further light. Exodus 32. 13 may seem the chief problem, because the whole verse seems to refer to the plural seed, and "they shall inherit." The omission of the word "it" may be important, in this connexion, but, apart from this, the land here IS restricted, "That I have spoken of." In other places we have seen a reference to Christ as the Seed of Abraham, and the Second Man to inherit this earth, as well as the land which was a miniature, as it were.

Moreover, it is Abraham and Isaac alone who seem specially associated with the world-wide promise, possibly Abraham only, if Genesis 26. 4 is the quotation of the oath to Abraham. Certainly Abraham alone is named in Galatians, and the plural pronoun in "YOUR seed," when INCLUDING JACOB, appears to be linked with the nation, and the "This" of the land in THAT case (Deut. 34. 4) is the land of CANAAN,* a type of the wider "this" which will belong to our beloved Lord, and to Israel in Him (Dan. 7. 27). It is interesting, and helpful, in this connexion to notice the reference to the Seed of David in Psalm 89. 29, 36. And our hearts cannot but adore. We remember the similar twofoldness in the use of the word "Servant," and every attempt to exclude the PERSONAL Servant fails (Phil. 2. 7 with Isaiah 52. 13, 53. 11). In like manner, we note the singular Israel in Isaiah 49. 3 when the plural Israel fail (verse 5). God granted a type of this in Numbers 14. 12, for Moses was of Abraham's family, and thus the promise would have stood. But he was not equal to this glory, and felt his unworthiness. In Christ, as the Heir, the danger of Numbers 14. 15 will NOT arise, but all glory will belong to our glorious Triune God. "O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." Redeemed by Christ's precious blood, we would overflow with praise.

* The BREADTH of Genesis 15. 18 seems excluded, for Moses was WITHIN that limit. So exact are the words of God in every place.

SATAN'S DECEIVING WORK.

THE Devil is marked out by Christ as a liar (John 8. 44), an entire contrast with Himself, the Truth (John 14. 6). Hence it is not surprising that he particularly aims at deceit. He does not wish men to realize realities. He has blinded, and still blinds, the minds of them that believe not (2 Cor. 4. 4). If God has given a statement, the tempter says, "Hath God said?" (Gen. 3. 1). Nor is he clumsy in his methods. The bait is skilfully laid. The stress on deceiving Eve by subtlety is important in Genesis 3. 1 and 2 Corinthians 11. 3 alike. There is a Satanic SKILL. And when he had decoyed Eve, Adam, who was not deceived (1 Tim. 2. 14), was unwilling to be apart from the one to whom he was attached. Hence, by deceit and affection combined, the devil gains his purpose.

And continual deceiving is implied by Revelation 12. 9. Men may be of different abilities and temperaments, but they are alike deceived. Not that this fact nullifies sin. God has given testimony regarding Himself, and, when we turn to our own way (Isa. 53. 6), we are culpable. "My people love to have it so" is the solemn verdict (Jer. 5. 31), they walk willingly after the commandment that misleads (Hos. 5. 11), and do not cease to hear the instruction that causes to err. Whether for curiosity's sake or with some other reason, they CHOSE that which cannot bring lasting peace.

This Satanic method is unchanged at the end of the thousand years (Rev. 20. 8). Nor will the privilege of enjoying good government make men say, "No." The human heart is willing to be ignorant (cf. 2 Pet. 3. 5), for the "affections" are charmed by the tempter. We remember how Absalom responded to Hushai's suggestion that he himself should be commander in chief, and the exalting words, "Ye shall be as God" have appealed to many as well as Eve. Antichrist will delight in glory. Men are deceived to imagine their own power is greater than it is really, and they dislike the HUMBLING witness of the gospel, showing up their guilt and strengthlessness.

It is well to remember that Satan does not limit his attacks to the unsaved (Eph. 4. 14)*. He has weapons of deceit, as well as of physical pain, against the people of God. It is true that "the elect" in Matthew 24. 24 may include those who have not yet been brought to know the Lord, but those who own Him are VISIBLE as the elect before the arch-tempter. His "devices" are many, and the word used in 2 Corinthians 2. 11 implies thoughts in the mind. Just as we find the unsaved "thinking" they do God service when slaying His servants, even a believer may be misled to imagine his methods are pleasing to God. To the Lord Jesus, Satan offered food, and, apparently, recognition by Israel,† and it is undoubtedly possible to gain seeming success in the way of disobedience. Even feelings of earnest wishes for souls to hear, and desires to lead souls to Christ, may be

* Observe the repeated command, 1 Corinthians 6. 9; 15. 33 and Galatians 6. 7 (Cf. Rom. 16. 18; 2 Cor. 3. 18; Eph. 5. 6; 2 Thess. 2. 2).

† If He would but cast Himself down from the temple wing.

fostered, if the mind can thereby be led to certain methods which are not of God, or the vessel be made less clean, that God may not approve or use.

Strangely, yet not strangely, the devil may counterfeit peace, and withdraw much "conflict," that the one misled may be less conscious of backsliding, until, in some cases, he proclaims an approach to perfection (cf. 1 John 1. 8). And there are numerous other ways of side-tracking.

But, as it is with the unsaved, and more so, we are responsible. A remarkable case in point is found in 1 Kings 13. "The man of God" should NOT have been misled by the "old prophet." We have God's words, we have the throne of grace, and "the meek will He guide in judgment." If we have been deceived, it is for us to be humbled: and who of us does not feel the deep need for this, that, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we may henceforth be on our guard more earnestly, and walk with God?

GOD'S TRUTHFULNESS.

WE cannot emphasize beyond measure the fulness of the glory of God. ALL His attributes shine out in wondrous perfection. His wisdom is infinitely beyond all earthly wisdom. His power excels all human power. Everything of God is great. He only doeth wondrous things (Ps. 72. 18), for He makes the tiny things wonderful in the WAY in which He does them.

And how glorious is HIS TRUTHFULNESS contrasted with the untruthfulness of Satan (John 8. 44). God's very Name is truth (cf. Deut. 32. 4), and He has never broken His Word, nor will. He is true to every promise, and every warning. Seeming delay is neither forgetfulness nor inability. God is truthful, without any failure. How happily we realize this when we ponder His mercies. He will not fail to meet every need of His people. Great is His faithfulness (Lam. 3. 23). Simply and confidently His redeemed may enjoy every promise.

But we would not forget that even Moses was kept out of the promised land because of sin. God is truthful, and will not take back His words (Isa. 31. 2). How solemn is this to His beloved people, "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" (Job 23. 13). Ah, we would not wish to change His truthfulness: prayer would be a burden if it COULD alter God's will. Blessedly, indeed, His humble people realize that it is rather a means in His hand to bring about His will, and to bring them into a condition to receive it. How glorious it is to be able to **DEPEND** on God amid all the uncertainties of a changing world. He is worthy of all praise. May our reliance be on One Who is altogether reliable.

Many speak of religion, but few know the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If He were on earth, He should not be a Priest." Heb. 8. 4.

LET us ever emphasize the heavenly glory of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 4. 14; 9. 24). Romanism is not the ONLY setting aside of this, but it is one serious example of the sin.

Every theory of transubstantiation detracts from His ONE sacrifice, denies "till He come," and dishonours His appointment, by assuming that He presented His disciples with His sacrificed body BEFORE His life-work was complete.

But this is not our thought just now. Rather we ponder PRIESTHOOD. The Lord Jesus is a Minister of the true sanctuary. Its holy place is in heaven. Hence "if He were on earth, He would not be a Priest." Those who profess to be priests on earth do not belong to the heavenly sanctuary. Romanism testifies AGAINST ITSELF that it is "cast out" (Rev. 11. 2).

Some dear children of God have failed to see that Hebrews 8. 4 implies ONE past priestly work of Christ on earth, FOR THE BLOOD IS NOT POURED OUT IN THE SANCTUARY. The One Who is now there, in the heavenly glory, OFFERED HIMSELF on earth. He was both OFFERER and OFFERING (Heb. 9. 14). The "court" WAS ON EARTH. But to CONTINUE His priesthood here would be to imply the imperfection of His work, or that He belonged to a "shadow" tabernacle and priesthood.

It is remarkable that we can only deduce ONE Sacrifice from the narrative of Melchizedek. So perfect is the silence of Scripture, as well as its testimony. The Lord Jesus is now in the glory. Let this thought be realized again and again. Nothing can be added to His work, nothing taken from it. We look upward, and remember He lives to intercede, and when He comes it will be as the Glorious Lord (Heb. 9. 28). All ritualism is thus set aside, and the believer's heavenly worship established. EARTH is the place of pilgrimage, not of vestments and gorgeous buildings now. In the rejected court, and in the place of reproach without the camp, there is no room for elaborate display. The humbling immersion of believers, and the simple breaking of bread, bear their witness to His glory, while our hearts say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45. 5). But there ARE great things, precious contrasted. The same book contains the exhortation, "Call upon Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (33. 3). May the hearts of God's beloved people be toward Himself, and may they value that which is HIS. Earth's greatness is worse than a failure: but His treasures are treasures indeed.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."
Mark 5. 19.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the mercy of God, we continue unto this day, and would make known His grace and truth, which are indeed met together in the work of Christ. How gracious is His grace. These pages are to set forth What He is, and what He has done, and what He has lovingly appointed His people to do. May the simplicity of faith's dependence on Him mark their daily walk. The path of success and popularity are not the path He has marked out. The Lord Jesus chose neither. The disciple is to be as his Teacher, the servant as his Lord. Glory belongs to THAT Day, not THIS. But love's obedience is GLORIOUS BEFORE HIM.

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MAN Has Spoilt the ANIMALS.

A Counterblast to Evolution.

MAN is not a developed animal, he is a separate creation of God. This is the uniform testimony of Scripture. Who can suggest ANY harmony between Genesis 1 and evolution? There HAS BEEN, it is true, a change since man was first on the earth, but that change is A FALL, and a terrible fall indeed. Its results are everywhere manifest, and its climax will be THE BEAST of Revelation 13.*

* A Leaflet on this gladly sent.

Entirely contrasted with the thought that man has risen from an animal, we have the striking declaration that the animals have been LOWERED through the fall of man. Hear the testimony of Scripture, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same" (Rom. 8. 20).^{*} We look on the brute beast, and speak of the wildness. But whence is this untamed condition? It WAS not natural, it has become natural BECAUSE OF MAN. Adam was placed in authority over the animals (Gen. 1. 28). Even after the flood this sovereignty was entrusted to Noah (Gen. 9. 2), though the repeated STRESS on dread implies a difference. But what do we see now? Is there a willing subjection? Are not the MAJORITY of living creatures outside man's control? We speak of the DOMESTIC animals, and thereby own the ruin. The lion's future eating of straw like the ox suggests that carnivorous animals have a changed condition, and this has entered through MAN'S sin. Man himself has become like the beasts, and he has marred the animal and vegetable creations alike:—as the thorns and thistles still bear witness. The theory of progress of man from a lower stage is a fiction, and worse. It is an attempt to hide the facts of the case, and to ignore accountability for sin. But by the grace of God we will not hide this. The sad testimony must be given, but, beyond this, the glorious unveiling of the mercy that delivers from the ruin linked with the first Adam. The Last Adam, the Second Man, is our precious Saviour, Who came down to redeem, and He is still Mighty to save poor guilty sinners. We MUST and WILL preach Christ crucified: there is none other name, none other hope. But He is Altogether Worthy, and salvation is a reality.

"God Had Mercy on Him."

Philippians 2. 27.

WE learn more and more of our need for mercy,—mercy after we have been saved, mercy when we have known the Lord ten, twenty or more years. "Mercy," ah, it is a sweet word.

God is INFINITELY holy. In the light of His holiness we feel ashamed. The seraphim sounded forth continually this aspect of His character, THIS ALONE (Isa. 6. 3). Has He not equally infinite power, and wondrously unlimited wisdom? Without question; but HIS HOLINESS needs emphasis in worship. And THIS is the ascription of the living creatures in the later Scriptures also. "Holy" is the word they repeat (Rev. 4. 8). 'Tis not an accident. "Holiness" is to be impressed upon us whenever we draw near. O how amazing it is that we CAN draw near. Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12. 28). Moses hid his face, but even then God stressed His holiness yet MORE.

^{*} The words "in hope" belong to 19—verse 20 is a parenthesis. Thanks be unto God for the change as to the animal creation when Christ returns (Isaiah 11. 6-9).

And when Joshua fell on his face he still had to learn holiness YET MORE (Isa. 5. 14, 15). Isaiah felt his uncleanness, and Job abhorred himself. O to be more conscious of the holiness of God.

Hence we see that it is because of MERCY we are saved. It is remarkable that Paul writing by inspiration, adds the word "mercy" to the "grace and peace" salutation, in his private epistles to GODLY MEN, who were well-known servants of the Lord. WE STILL NEED MERCY (cf. Heb. 4. 16), however long we have walked in His ways. "Who can understand his errors?" (Ps. 19. 12). And the one who was conscious of a tendency to being lifted up in HIMSELF (2 Cor. 12. 7 contrast John 14. 30), realized that all chastisements are for a holy purpose. God does not refine gold that is already pure: He sees more dross than we see. Hence the "MERCY" to Epaphroditus in raising up, giving a precious view of our Father's loving hand as to our body. It is a MERCY that we are not "cut off." It is a MERCY that He is so patient with us. The trial is never too burdensome. We may feel, "Why is this?", and may cry out under the load, oftentimes because we are not "exercised" as we should be. Our Heavenly Father "sits" as a Refiner. He is never in a hurry: but He never leaves us to cause needless pain. Lack of gratitude for chastisement is one of the most seriously resultful sins of to-day.

And the words "ON ME ALSO" linked with mercy, show us that a brother's physical trial may be partly in connexion with our spiritual condition, and to teach us gracious lessons. How beautiful is this thought of our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12. 10). O for more fruit from all His dealings, in all our experiences.

"Let It Rather Be Healed."

Hebrews 12. 13.

HOW precious is healing. We enjoy it physically. But how much more wondrous is healing spiritually when God healeth the broken in heart (Ps. 147. 3), and saves the utterly unworthy. And the same thought applies after salvation. A believer is passing through a world of dangers. There are many spiritual diseases and infirmities. Are we not concerned that our brethren and sisters in Christ should be strong spiritually? How much is the interest shown as to bodily health. But this should not be.

If there are hands which hang down, they should be lifted up, in earnest prayer, as those of Moses in Exodus 17. If there are lame feet, they should be healed. Is this a matter of indifference? Surely not, if we are members one of another, and have been taught by the Holy Spirit to love one another.

Discipline in an assembly of believers is not with THE AIM of exclusion. Far otherwise. It is with the delightful object of inclusion VIA healing. "Rather let it be healed" is a holy thought at all times. Galatians 6. 1 comes to mind, and Christ's beautiful words

as to "GAINING" a brother. "Rather let it be healed" should prove an impressive message. We are not to be careless of others becoming cold, and embracing errors. We are not to be off-hand towards the Lord's redeemed. What can be done to help them? Is no further effort of love possible for their revival? We should rejoice in healing. Such words come with searching power to a believer. He **MUST** feel, "I have often failed in this." We have not been sufficiently concerned for others. It is easy to blame them for wandering, but O that we may see our share in the sins of others, and seek henceforth to walk more closely with God.

"Take ALL the People."

"The Spoil . . Shall Ye Take."

Joshua 8. 1, 2.

TWO striking commands. Possibly God will grant us, in some measure, to see the reasons. He has lessons to teach. Some among Israel had spoken of Ai as a small city, and had said, "Let not **ALL** the people go," and had repeated this, "Make not **ALL** the people to labour thither." This implied the victory over Jericho had been **THEIRS**, and that numbers decided. Counsel was not asked at the mouth of the Lord. Was it not this **CONDITION** that made Achan's sin exist among the people without judgment, and hence, **OTHERS** were smitten (Jos. 7. 5)? Achan's evil was a climax, but the **SYMPTON** of self-will was **EPIDEMIC**. And God dealt in holy firmness. We cannot be too dependent on Him.

Whether in connexion with Jericho, or Ai, whether through one means or another, God showed that all the glory was His. He can work **WITHOUT** us, but may cause us to step forth and stand still, as in Jehoshaphat's days. We must learn to be used, or to be "ready," and yet caused to wait, that we may feel He does not need us.

But why was the spoil for Israel? Was this an encouragement? May it not have been a rebuke? Had there been sufficient love to God's will? Had not the glorious victory been marred by Achan's action? The very tribe of Judah was involved. God would not on the second occasion entrust them with the special privilege of giving up. He would let them have the spoil!

How often we rejoice in gifts and in encouragements which seem to us so real, but which may be granted because we cannot bear a fuller test. Thanks be unto God for His patience and forbearance, but O how earnestly would we wish to give up all for Him, and to be **TRUSTABLE** with greater trials, if He sees they will bring Him greater glory. It is this that concerns us. We long to please God and long to receive blessings, but let us not forget the peril:—a "blessing" may be His loving strengthening of our weak faith. Let us look up for grace to go through any tests our loving Heavenly Father appoints, with love's gratitude.

THE AMBUSH OF JOSHUA 8.

WE need to be careful lest we add to God's words, or to His arrangements. When, in His lovingkindness, He still remained with Israel, and led their armies, He appointed an ambush close to Ai. But He did **NOT** command that the rest of the people should **PRETEND** to be defeated. "When they come out against us, as at the first, . . . we will flee before them." Is it not important to distinguish the **LORD'S** plan, and **THESE** human additions? We cannot be too definite in setting forth that God is a God of truth, and that His plan of warfare was continually contrasted with that of men. Modern strategy is necessarily deceit: this alone separates God's beloved people from conflict—offensive and defensive—if they would simply please **HIM** and trust **HIM**.

The fact that the plan succeeded does not prove it was of God, any more than the flowing of the water from the rock in Numbers 20, justified the uncommanded smiting. Rahab's faith received the spies and sent them forth: it was **UNBELIEF** that told a lie, and God never commands this. Dross is near to gold. It may be said, "HOW would He have protected otherwise?" But the question is empty to those who know Him. He has a thousand ways of acting, and myriads more. In like manner, if any ask, "HOW would the men of Ai have left Ai apart from the strategy?" we answer, "God does not need **OUR** advice." We remember 2 Samuel 5. Could not the Captain of the Lord's host (Jos. 5. 14, 15) have caused the sound of a going to be heard (1 Chron. 14. 15), and sent **HIS** forces (see 2 Kings 7. 6)? Let us never limit God, nor add to His words. It is a privilege to be permitted to serve Him at all.

"A New Creation . . . This Rule."

Galatians 6. 15, 16.

THOSE who are a new creation are not lawless. As Jeremiah 31. 33 beautifully shows, they have the **LAW** of God written on their hearts, and they desire to do His will. Accordingly we read, "This rule." Salvation does not make a believer careless, but brings him to a new reason and standpoint for obedience. There are many to-day who would urge the absence of a "rule," but there is no glory in every man doing what is right in his own eyes (Jud. 21. 25). Far otherwise. It is our privilege to please God, and to walk in His ways. "Statutes" are not a burden but a song (Ps. 119. 54). The law of God was in Christ's heart (Ps. 40. 6-8, 37. 31). And if we are a new creation we shall have new wishes. His commandments will not be grievous. (John 14. 15, 1 John 5. 3). There will be no delight for the new creation in the ways of the old man. There will be a walking in accord with the words of the Holy Spirit, since we have been born of the Spirit. Surely every believer cries unto God to experience this more and more, and longs that the judged flesh may be put aside more and more definitely that God in all things may be glorified. So shall we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling.

What Does Baptism Set Forth ?

1. A belief in our Triune God. (Matt. 28. 19).
2. A confession, that, from head to foot, we, by nature, deserve wrath, and feel repentance for sins committed (Col. 2. 12). Note Luke 7. 30, Acts 2. 38.
3. A realization that Christ died under wrath in our place (Ps. 42. 7, Matt. 3. 15, Rom. 6. 3).
4. A separation from the world (Rom. 6. 4, cf. the Red Sea in Ex. 14).
5. A request for the Lord's blessing and teaching (1 Pet. 3. 21), and a wish to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6. 4), that all may be done IN the Name INTO which we are baptized, self being thus condemned (Col. 3. 17, See Gal. 3. 27).
6. A desire for Scriptural unity, and denial of sectarianism (1 Cor. 1. 10-13, Eph. 4. 5).
7. A willingness to suffer—to fill up the ranks of those who die, if need be, in their Lord's service (1 Cor. 15. 29). See Mark 10. 39.
8. A witness for the Lord (1 John 5. 8).
9. A hope of resurrection (Rom. 6. 5, 1 Cor. 15. 29).
10. Thus a reminder of "That Blessed Hope," (Matt. 28. 20, Col. 3. 1-4).

Incentives to Prompt Obedience.

1. The Lord's exhortation: His hints are law to His own disciples. "IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS," John 14. 15.
2. Godly examples.
 - (a). "I made haste, and delayed] not to keep] Thy commandments." (Psalm. 119. 60).
 - (b). "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the SAME DAY there were added about three thousand souls," (Acts 2. 41).
 - (c). "He received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized," (Acts 9. 18).
 - (d). "He took them the same hour of the night, and was baptized," (Acts 16. 33).
3. The danger and sin of delay (Prov. 3. 28, 27. 1, Jas. 4. 17). See Ex. 4. 24, Jas. 5. 9).
4. The power of influence when we sin (Gal. 2. 13).

Can we preach rightly the whole counsel of God without emphasizing BAPTISM? (Acts 8. 12, 35, 36). "WHAT DOTTH HINDER?" (Acts 8. 36), "WHY TARRIEST THOU?" (Acts 22. 16).

Observe that there is NOT A WORD in Scripture as to

- (a) "Infant Baptism."
- (b) Sprinkling.
- (c) Baptismal Regeneration.
- (d) Priestly Administration of a "Sacrament."

May children of God be kept from these errors, and likewise be

kept from omitting acts of literal loving obedience in the Holy Spirit, because some spiritual counterparts are already possessed.

And how important it is to see that baptism is not a climax, but a beginning. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" comes AFTERWARDS (Matt. 28. 19). It is easy to "settle down" after one appointed act, but that is the devil's temptation. May love to Christ ever grow.

God's Lessons Through Judah's Kings, And Their Illnesses.

SCRIPTURE history is full of food for thought. The contrast between the kings of JUDAH and ISRAEL is striking, for not only did God fulfil His promise to David, and keep to ONE line, (whereas the northern kingdom often changed), but some placed on the throne at Jerusalem served Him, but NOT ONE in Samaria reigned to please God (the most encouraging perhaps is sadly summed up in 2 Kings 10. 31).

God frequently deals with men through the body. Job 33. 19-30 may well illustrate this. We do not know the illness and mode of death for each king of David's line, but several examples are Divinely recorded. Are we not called to ponder them together?

Asa is a sad case. He "in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." NOTHING more is recorded of him, and within two years he died (2 Chron. 16. 12, 13). How we should have rejoiced to read of spiritual reviving after an early life of such promise.*

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, walked, alas, in the way of the kings of Israel, and he, too, was smitten with an incurable disease that held him for two years (2 Chron. 21. 18, 19). Yet he never learnt God's lesson. We are not told the nature of the diseases of Joash (2 Chron. 24. 25): they seem to be connected with his defeat in battle, evidently God's warning. After his repairing of the house of God, it is painful to see the departure and serving of idols. Amaziah, his son, appeared to be earnest at first (2 Chron. 25. 2), but he was slain when he turned FROM the Lord (verse 27). Uziah, his son, "sought God in the days of Zechariah," and was "marvellously helped, till he was strong; but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction," and, smitten with leprosy, through coming to God his OWN way, he "was a leper unto the day of his death" (2 Chron. 26. 5, 15, 16, 19, 21). Hezekiah presents a refreshing contrast: he was "sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and He spake unto him, and He gave him a sign" (2 Chron. 32. 24). Alas, he rendered not again according to the benefit, but afterwards, in mercy, humbled himself (2 Chron. 32. 25, 26), and the story of Manasseh, though at

* Leaflets will be gladly sent.

first heart-breaking, shows grace when he was humbled in affliction (2 Chron. 33. 11, 12, 13). It is very remarkable that in the case of the believing king and the hitherto unsaved one alike, we have grace in the SAME way—a stress on prayer and HUMBLING. We call to mind that Asa did not seek UNTO THE LORD. Surely God's lesson is becoming clearer. O that we may SEEK Him.

Josiah was slain in battle at the very age when Hezekiah was first warned of death. One wonders this event had not spoken to him. Let us be more earnest to wait for God's counsel. Zedekiah suffered inflicted blindness through "his own way," and there is no record of repentance. Thus the narrative has a very definite message, showing the blessedness of bringing everything to God, and of concern to be humbled, and hear HIS voice. May this ever be the joyous privilege of those who know redemption by the blood of Christ.

"And Jehoahaz Besought the Lord, and the Lord Harkened unto him."

2 Kings 13. 4.

WE feel very grateful to God for answers to prayer, but let us ever remember the need for waiting on Him still, that we may learn His lessons and please Him more. The answer to prayer may not prove we are on the lines of His will, but that He has mercy on us and graciously sees a little measure of faith. Thus we need to be on our guard before our gracious Heavenly Father, lest we dishonour Him by misusing blessings.

How wondrously patient He is. Possibly this passage may help us in connexion with some unsaved ones who receive, apparently, answers to prayer. God has never said that He will not thus deal in His providence. We acknowledge HIS wisdom, but pray that some unsaved ones may not draw inferences that they are saved.

If, in God's grace, we want to please Him more, He may seem to withhold His answer for our testing. He is too gracious to wound without love, and too wise to act without a purpose. If He sees we can bear further refining, He may grant this. Those who had less faith than Job would not have reached "the end of the Lord" (James 5. 11): few could have been entrusted with Paul's thorn in the flesh. So we learn the privilege of thanking our Heavenly Father for trials permitted even as trials removed, and His seeming silence is as precious as His answer. Saul, when God was silent, went to an evil spirit (1 Sam. 28. 6, 7): O that we may wait till He guides. Numbers 9 shows how He works for those who wait for Him.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"FEAR NOT, NOR BE DISMAYED: FOR THE LORD GOD, EVEN MY GOD, WILL BE WITH THEE; HE WILL NOT FAIL THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE, UNTIL THOU HAST FINISHED ALL THE WORK." 1 Chron. 28. 20.

A Word of Introduction.

"*GOD hath spoken.*" His words are precious beyond measure, and we praise Him. If we only read a book, what have we? But if we feed on His truth, how precious is this. God delights to be trusted, delights to be owned and honoured. How glorious is the privilege of believing Him, and speaking with correctness and assurance. We have not a half hearted faith in a half salvation or in a half-inspired book, but a simple confidence in God and His words. May this ever be our joyous simplicity to the praise of His joy.

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WHO Can Make The Atonement?

"And He, Being Full of Compassion, Maketh Atonement for Iniquity."

Psalms 78. 38.

JEW and Gentiles are alike in one respect: they are sinners. But the claim of the Jew is still before us, that HE has an atonement, and by that claim he also declares that the Gentiles have NONE. And THIS lack we cannot deny. Alas, the Gentiles have NO ATONEMENT. Later, we must consider WHO the Gentiles are. But at

present we cannot hide the alarming fact—The Gentiles have no atonement. But HAVE the Jews a REAL atonement, or is the claim only an empty human boast?

Such a vital question needs a thoughtful answer. What is atonement? The Hebrew word, (not the English) must be decisive. Atonement is a covering UPON (על), so that the sin is righteously removed from the holy eyes of the Righteous Judge. It affords an entire contrast with Psalm 90. 8, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance."

Have the nation of Israel such an atonement? A man's WORD, however often repeated, is NO PROOF. The NAME "atonement" is not the FACT of atonement, and, therefore, are we not warranted in demanding proof from the תָּנִי* itself that atonement has been made? Not only are we warranted: we are unkind if we do NOT urge earnest consideration of this.

Who of us would wish to arise in the Judgment Day WITHOUT the atonement we thought we had, and WITH the sins we thought we had been forgiven? The very mention of such a POSSIBILITY would terrify, if men had not become used to treat the things of God lightly. But surely some FEAR so to do. O that many readers may be among those who realize that God is great and that His holy anger is to be dreaded more than all else.

"Atonement" is a precious word, a beautiful word, a word rich with the grace of God. He Himself has chosen the word, and the חֹמֶשׁ† is full of atonement. We find it in Exodus (§ שְׁמוֹת 30. 10); we find it throughout Leviticus (§ וִיקְרָא), the first chapter sets forth acceptance before God AND atonement together (verse 4). But, observe, the sacrifice is essential to the atonement. And this seems the lesson throughout. Remember the Day of Atonement itself (יוֹם כִּפּוּר), the high priest went in with the blood of atonement. And again we see acceptance and access to God united to atonement. This is all very wonderful. It shows us GOD'S mind and standpoint, and we do well to ask ourselves, "Is this MY standpoint too?" If not, the mistake is MINE: God has never made a mistake. Startlingly one is impressed by the fact that the people could NOT make an atonement, NOR could the "day," NOR could the fasting, however religiously observed. It is not בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר דָּם הוּם יִכָּפֵר (Leviticus 16. 30): the "day" can do NOTHING: unless the One Who can make an atonement is there, the DAY is vain. And when the afflicting of the soul is mentioned, atonement is not mentioned. Notice, for example, verse 31 of Leviticus 16:—

"AND YE SHALL HUMBLE YOUR SOULS:
AN EVERLASTING STATUTE."

Not a word suggesting any power in the fasting, or in the blood lost by fasting, to remove sin. Atonement IS found in the verse BEFORE,

* The Hebrew Scriptures, (Jewish name taken from initial letters of the THREE parts, Luke 24. 44).

† "The Five Books."

§ Hebrew names of the books.

Not "The day will atone," but "In that day he will atone."

and in the verse AFTER, but linked with the sacrifice. In verse 29

"YE SHALL HUMBLE YOUR SOULS"

stands alone, and the added words are "FOR he shall make an atonement." How definitely the atonement is joined to the sacrifice. If this be so, can we say that Israel have an atonement now? Or are they ALSO WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT, EVEN AS THE GENTILE? We read, "By MERCY AND TRUTH iniquity is made atonement for" (Proverbs 16. 6). How wondrous is this! But "mercy and truth" do not meet together without RIGHTEOUSNESS (Psalm 85. 11).

Ah, dear reader, let us be honest, though we must be ASHAMED. Fasting gives NO righteousness. God's TRUTH as to punishment of sin must stand, and a "DAY" cannot meet His holy claims. PERFECTION—OR A PERFECT SACRIFICE INSTEAD. There is not a third alternative. And what if you have NEITHER? I beseech you not to put aside the solemn enquiry. In view of the holiness of God, and His holy law, face the deeply important question. Have you an atonement, or have you NONE?

But if sinful man is unable to make atonement, the fact that God so frequently uses the word shows HIS DELIGHT IN THE REALITY, and surely every serious reader longs to possess this, and to have God's OWN TESTIMONY instead of personal imagination and vain hope! And, in His love, God has shown clearly how THE true atonement is made. Let us listen to His words afresh? Compare everything with your OWN copy of the תָּנִי*. We do not want you to accept any statement except HIS WORDS.

The first verse we read above is decisive

"AND HE, BEING FULL OF COMPASSION,
MAKETH ATONEMENT FOR INIQUITY."

God Himself is the Glorious Atoner. Nor could we expect anything else. The glory must be HIS. This is clear. But such an expression is not the only one. Very remarkably we have the stress on THE PRIEST in this connexion. E.g. Leviticus 5. 10.

Observe that no FORGIVENESS can be granted without righteous ATONEMENT. Many verses are similar, Ex. 30. 10; Lev. 4. 20, 26, 31, 35, 5. 6, 13, 18, and so forth. The priest was needed. But the priest could not do the work AS he pleased. The sacrifice MUST be brought. An equivalent would not suffice. If the sinner had brought money of the same value as the sacrifice, or twice the value, or a hundred times, it would have been in vain. Nor is the sacrifice mentioned VAGUELY in connexion with the atonement. The NATURE of the sacrifice is shown, and the reason for its value. "It is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement."

Herein is the worthiness. Other sacrifices illustrate: e.g. 2 Chron. 29. 24. Nothing would avail instead: the life was in the blood; and the life must be poured out. THERE MUST BE A DEATH OF ONE WHO DID NOT DESERVE TO DIE, of One NOT personally guilty.

* See footnote page 66.

Another remarkable verse is illustrative. It is not, at first sight, so definite, but becomes rich with teaching, as the thoughtful believing reader looks upon it. "A Wise Man will make an atonement." Who is this WISE MAN? Men are not by nature wise. Psalm 14 shows that none understand, and Ecclesiastes cryptically refers to the ruin of man by speaking of the fool's heart at his left side (Eccl. 10. 2). The wise man with the right-side-heart is like THE ONE among the thousand of Eccl. 7. 28.

Now let us put the verses together. God makes the atonement: the Priest makes it: the Sacrifice makes it: and the Wise Man. The priests of Israel could NEVER become the Sacrifice—they were needing a sacrifice and offered FOR themselves (Lev. 9. 7; 16. 6). The Sacrifice could not become a Priest. A Wise Man can never become God: the thought would be blasphemy.

But GOD CAN become the Priest: did not He make the coats of SKIN for Adam and his wife? God can do ALL THINGS: He can become the Sacrifice. Man cannot become God, but God can become Man! Here is the solution. How can the atonement be made by God, the Priest, the Sacrifice, a Wise Man? Only if God becomes a Man, and Priest and Sacrifice, and this He HAS done in the Person of the Lord Jesus, the Child, and yet the Mighty God of Isaiah 9. 5, 6. Here is the key, nowhere else. And similar words in the חוֹמָשׁ* are now clear. When the Lord proclaimed His Name to Moses, He said "Bearing iniquity" (Exodus 34. 7). And Micah takes up this wondrous expression, "Who is a God like unto Thee, BEARING INIQUITY" (Mic. 7. 18).

It is in the work of Messiah that the words of Psalm 65. 3(4) come true:—"As for our transgressions, Thou shalt make an atonement for them."

The חוֹמָשׁ* is a sealed book otherwise. This is God's plan. Again we repeat it—Man cannot become God, but God CAN become Man. The Sacrifice cannot become God, but God can take a body and become the Sacrifice. It is wonderful, beyond words, but it is not impossible. The only problem is:—Can we think such amazing love possible? The answer must be "NO, UNLESS God Himself has revealed it." But this is exactly what He has done, and the believing heart responds, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

"The Gentiles have no atonement," nor have the nation of Israel. But there IS a nation out from Israel, and out from the Gentiles, who rejoice in this atonement,—not an earthly nation but a heavenly one, made near to God by the precious blood of the Sacrifice He has 'given.' Ah, dear reader, is this your hope, or not? You can find none other atonement, but how blessed if you are brought to feel the burden of your sins and to rest simply upon the Lord Himself for the free salvation which He has provided, and which He now so graciously bestows. The door is open. The troubled sinner is welcome. The Blood of this Atonement is enough. We need NO OTHER PLEA.

"If the Lord will," to be issued in Yiddish. Copies gladly sent.

* See footnote, page 66.

**"Ashamed, when he is found."
"They were not at all ashamed,
neither could they blush."**

Jeremiah 2. 26; 6. 15.

THESE words are deeply impressive. Sorrow because of the punishment of sin is "natural": it may have a large amount of selfishness. Sorrow because of sin in God's sight is altogether different. We find the same thought with regard to God's holy warnings of coming judgment. Many are afraid because of these, but they think far more as to hell than as to the sin that takes there. But is not the SIN to be our concern? Punishment IS holy: there is nothing wrong in due punishment. We should have a godly respect for this, even when God uses a man to execute it, whether a parent, or one in governmental authority. The GREAT problem is SIN.

Israel, in Jeremiah's days, were not ashamed of evil, only ashamed when evil was FOUND OUT. This brings before us the desire of a criminal to escape. THAT is the addition of another sin. It may seem strange, but it is true that a child should rather wish a parent to know, and to have opportunity to punish. This is not usually expected by present-day parents. How many UNFOUND-OUT sins exist, not only in the home but in the state. We remember reading that there are an appalling number of undiscovered murderers in a "free" country like the United States? How many thieves are at large in England? How many offences against the law are NEVER known? And yet the law is very limited. It deals with very few words, and no thoughts, only overt actions. In the light of God, how many sins exist? But He WILL bring every work into judgment (Eccl. 12. 14).

It is a privilege to know a Saviour Who has borne our guilt. But how humbly obedient we should be! How earnestly concerned to glorify God by a holy dread of sin. We should not be alarmed at the DISCOVERY of sin, but at the FACT. It matters not if none see. Our Father seeth in secret. Are we ashamed, and do we blush at that which is displeasing to God?

The present-day tendency is to prevent blushing at sin. Let a drunkard act foolishly men laugh. Evil pictures are displayed openly. Horrors are a help to newspaper circulation. CURIOSITY is the delight of men: there is no blushing at sin. Men glory in their shame, and women too, even in fashions as a glance at 1 Corinthians 11. 6 will soon show any Bible loving believer. This is not an isolated action. It is part of a gigantic scheme of Satan to frame iniquity by a law. That which God commands is to be punished: that which God condemns is to be approved. Here is the climax of iniquity. O that we may never be moved from God's way by such a device, but have a holy hatred of sin wherever it is found. We remember the attitude of holy men as Daniel and Ezra (9. 6), and would thus please the Lord. If we have done anything against Him, let us be ashamed. It is noteworthy that the rich man in Hades (Luke 16) showed no shame for sin, none at all.

One word more. Is it not possible that in present-day preaching we may hide the thought of grief for sin, and rather encourage the thought of deliverance from punishment? O that there may be a godly contrast with this in our concern henceforth for God's honour in the salvation of sinners, rejoicing in the blood of Christ aright, because they have seen and felt their sins. A DEEP EXPERIENCE is a real need, not a shallow root-less profession. May this be ours too, in increasing measure, to the praise of His glory.

THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

THESE are not unimportant in God's sight. "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands: **THY WALLS** are continually before Me" (Isa. 49. 16). And the spiritual parallel is suggestive. The walls suggest a holy separation from all that God hates, and a fixed salvation as the ground of this holiness (Isa. 60. 18).*

It is often suggested that the walls were not built till Nehemiah's day. But a mistaken chronology appears to have forgotten Isaiah 44. 28. Do not the "seventy sevens" begin with Zerubbabel, and have we not the walls in Ezra 4. 12? Probably the work was not finished (verse 13, 16), and there seems to have been a further decay afterwards (Neh. 1. 3). It is true that the **SPECIAL** stress in Ezra is on the altar and the house, and in Nehemiah on the walls (mentioned over 30 times), and **THE ORDER** is spiritually suggestive. Thank God for worship **LEADING** onward to godly separatedness.

Israel's failure was linked with breaking down the wall (2 Kings 14. 13; 25. 10): a city in this condition affords a sorrowful picture in Proverbs 25. 28. There are many sad spiritual parallels, individually, and collectively.

Nehemiah's work was typical of "that Day." A definite testimony was set forth. But the walls of old suggested **DANGER** as well as **SAFETY**. In the future the types of strength, and of peace in the feast of **TABERNACLES**, will be united. A Greater than Solomon builds the temple (Zech. 6. 13), a Greater than Nehemiah builds the walls, for the Lord Himself will fulfil David's inspired prayer, "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem" (Ps. 51. 18). How great is the contrast with the broad walls of Babylon utterly broken (Jer. 51. 58, see 50. 15; 51. 12, 44; and Isa. 2. 15; 25. 12). Truly the Lord alone shall be exalted in **THAT Day**.

We have seen the plan is already before the Divine Architect, (Isaiah 49. 16), and He will not fail nor be discouraged. Moreover, "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isa. 26. 1; contrast 30. 13).

And what shall be the result then? What is to be the result now in the spiritual parallel? Let Isaiah 60. 21 give the inspired answer.

* Why the walls "in that Day," as Psalm 51. 18 shows? There will still be a separation in view of Isaiah 66. 24: a type of Revelation 22. 14, 15. This is deeply impressive.

"Thy walls **SALVATION**, and thy gates **PRAISE**." The spiritual parallel is important. If, in mercy, we have the walls of godly separatedness unto the Lord, we should in everything give thanks. No word of murmuring is to be allowed. Praise and praise only is to come out from the gates. They are opened to **GIVE THANKS**. Another object ill befits a child of God. Every gate is to be praise, and all that is within us is to bless God's Holy Name.

"They all made us afraid."

"Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin."

"And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear."

Nehemiah 6. 9, 13, 19.

THREE times over we have this stress on Satan's attempt to cause God's dear people to fear. The fear of man is a deadly enemy. It is a privilege to seek victory, in the Lord's enabling, and to enjoy the most frequent repeated prohibition of Scripture, "Fear not." How many failures are through cowardice. How often children of God compromise in actions and in dress, because of what others will say. How deeply important it is that we should not fear what men will do. God is able to make all grace abound. He is so gracious, and mighty. We think of our bodies, and are often afraid to trust God. We look at difficulties in business, and draw back from the simple path of looking upward, and putting **ASIDE** anything we feel to be grievous to Him. It is so natural to do little things that trouble the conscience through fear of losing trade or a situation. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." May we never fear man.

"My Heart Shall Rejoice, Even Mine."

Proverbs 23. 15.

IT is a good thing to rejoice. Rejoicing in the Lord is not only permissible, it is commanded to God's people. But there is a forbidden rejoicing. We dare not rejoice in iniquity, or when sin is excused. Joy must be the joy of the Lord, or it is empty. How much vanity is there found in the world's joy.

The Holy Spirit shows us in the verse before us the joy a parent should have in a believing child. The stress on this delight in the home is found throughout Scripture, and 3 John 4 illustrates, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Here we find a spiritual parallel. The grief of a parent over the sin of a child is the holy converse.

And our hearts are brought thus to realize the joy we can be to our Heavenly Father. If we love and please Him, how we delight His heart. But if we are unwise, how different it is. Are we often contemplating the way we may rejoice our Heavenly Father? Do

we lay this to heart? Do we feel sorrowful because of what sin is to Him? We know what sin cost Him on Calvary. At least we know in measure.

And this verse specially emphasizes wisdom, and unwisdom. Is our heart wise? The UNwisdom of the foolish virgins is emphasized. They made no preparation. How often we seem unwise, and unmindful of the true preparation for that which glorifies God. We remember the words to Israel, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? (Deut. 32. 6). Why do we not feel more concern, beloved fellow-believers, to show the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom? Our gracious God is worthy of all our praiseful obedience, and much more. May we have wisdom in our heart to do the will of the Lord. So shall there be our joy in His joy to the praise of His glory.

"Without the CAMP, bearing His reproach:
for here have we no continuing CITY."

Heb. 13. 13, 14.

"They compassed the CAMP of the saints
about, and the beloved CITY." Rev. 20. 9.

THESE two passages impressed on the writer the remarkable contrast between the present dispensation and that Day. No "camp" position now, no earthly glory, no human warfare:—rejection belongs to the people of God. No CONTINUING city:—"When they persecute you in this city, flee into another." No thought of permanence should be ours. It is not "To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain" (Jas. 4. 13). Every "to-morrow" is in our loving Heavenly Father's hand, and we would be willing for His will. Having no camp, having no abiding city, we take no national position and glory. It is enough for the servant to be as his Master. The apostle was ready to be the offscouring of all things, but how often we shrink from this. How sad it is to try and blend the pilgrim path with earthly pleasures and worldly success. And many dear children of God are feeling the need for bowing down. Conversations that reach us, perhaps unexpectedly, indicate this. And yet—ah, what is the "yet?" Are we not all more "tied" than we care to acknowledge? I ask myself, "Is there enough childlike simplicity in my faith?" The camp is future, not now. The city is future: "we seek one to come." THEN the glory is to be manifested. There will be a change, a wondrous change, but NOW the Lord invites His people to bear His reproach. Shall we propose an alternative? Shall we seek to reign before the time (1 Cor. 4. 8), or humbly seek to suffer with our beloved Lord, that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy?

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way."

"What man is he that feareth the Lord? Hfm shall he teach in the way that He shall choose." Psalm 25. 9, 12.

A Word of Introduction.

THE amazing grace of God calls forth gratitude. It is the privilege of children of God to have more than a head-knowledge of God's truth. Only as we have a heart-knowledge can we truly please Him. Our desire is to know His way, and to walk therein. It is so easy naturally to make a mistake. But whenever we thus go in our own way, we dishonour Him. These pages are sent forth in humble recognition of our need, in this evil age, and with a prayerful expectation that God will condescend to use them to lead His people to His words of truth and thus onward. O that He may be exalted in the quickness of love before Him, that waits to hear what He speaks, and dreads to act without His guidance, through the application of the Scriptures in His own gracious power.

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BRIEF THOUGHTS on CHRONOLOGY.

GOD has perfect control of the "times and seasons," and He has revealed many dates in Scripture. We thank Him for these, and rejoice in His knowledge—including His foreknowledge. We admire His arrangement of everything in nature, time, and grace, and

the PARALLELS in history, e.g. the various 40 years under His perfect control.

But we cannot all study chronology to the same extent. Godly proportion is needful. Our primary concern should be FEEDING on God's words. Every believer should read the Scriptures THROUGH, and spend time prayerfully upon them, and never become weary of this. But not every child of God COULD even add up all the dates found therein, and find out just which are consecutive and which contemporary. Nor has every one the Lord's time for such labour. There is a danger, too, in the fascination of mental research. And it is possible that He Who has hidden the birth-day of the Lord Jesus has hidden other FACTS to help FAITH, and to keep from brain progress. We must not neglect prayer, or practical living, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is fairly evident that we have almost reached 6000 years from Adam to the present time. The MARGINAL chronology of the Old Testament is, however, human. It is often accurate, but we must notice two important matters modifying the data:—

- (a) 93 years omitted in Judges (Divinely excluded in 1 Kings 6. 1 because Israel were "sold,"* but included in Acts 13. 22-30).
- (b) Man's erroneous lengthening of the Persian chronology (without Scripture or other basis) so that the "seventy sevens" are not reckoned from Cyrus and the decree of Isaiah 44. 28, Ezra 1. 1-4.

This is important, because Russellism (for instance) builds on this lengthened Persian period, to obtain ITS 7 times, or ITS 2520 years to the present time. Many have seen the 607 or 606-1914 theory. But this fails if 606 is Scripturally set aside. When everything is searched out, do we not find ourselves NEARER the end of the 6000 years than at first appears, but UNABLE to tell the exact dates (Mark 13. 33).

It is needful, too, to remember 2 Samuel 5. 4, 5: we cannot always tell if a "part" year is counted (cf. Matt. 17. 1, Luke 9. 28: both reckonings are true, from DIFFERENT standpoints).

It is helpful to notice 2 Peter 3. 8 in the light of man's week of 6000 years before the Day of the Lord. Revelation 20. 7, 12 with John 5. 29 help us to understand "AS 1000 years" and to prevent OUR hurried conclusions as to the EXACT duration of the 6000 years. We KNOW years of three lengths in Scripture—(a) 360 days (Rev. 11. 2, 3; 12. 14 with Dan. 9. 27) and (b) sun and (c) moon years (Gen. 1. 14). Of one thing we are certain: God will not be late. Hosea 6. 2 is helpful in this connexion, describing the present death of Israel as 2000 years,† and appointing a parallel with Christ's burial and resurrection, and thus the TWO "difficulties" are brought together by God, and we have help as to both.

Let our hearts rejoice in what He HAS revealed, yet never seek to pry into what He has not revealed, but while living to please Him, let our whole being say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Thus will He be glorified.

* 3. 8, 14; 4. 3; 6. 1; 13. 1.

† Luke 10. 35 is helpful, when we recollect the penny for a day, and the words "When I come again."

Of What is Leavened Bread a Picture? Scriptural Meditations for Believers who would Obey their Lord.*

See Page 83:
An Omission

THERE is clear Scriptural evidence that leaven is INVARIABLY a type of sin (see e.g. Ex. 12. 15; 13. 3, 7; 23. 18). Nor, surely, can there be any real objection (i.e. Scriptural objection) to the precious thought that unleavened bread, picturing holiness and affliction, was not only used at Passover time, but by the Lord Himself, in the Lord's Supper, as symbolic of the Sinless One.* Fermented wine implies the ungodly ("dyed" is "leavened," or "fermented" in Isaiah 63. 1). But what is God's teaching through leavened bread? May our hearts be ever open to His instruction.

I have heard the suggestion that the ungodly are symbolized, but I do not know SCRIPTURE for this. There is a plain difference between a fermented liquor, and the leavened bread, in which the leaven has been made to cease its progress-working, by fire, so that the EFFECT of partaking is very different. We have striking words of the Holy Spirit as to wine being a mocker, but NOTHING comparable as to leavened bread.

At first the problem seems very real. The reminder of leaven is painful, but leavened bread is NOT leaven, nor leavening. There is, rather, an "after-condition."

To me it seems that Leviticus 23. 17 gives a Divinely appointed key. Here we have the Pentecost firstfruits, accepted with the sacrifice. "Two" is the number of fellowship and witness: the Lord sent the disciples forth by "twos." When the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit descended as Fire, (contrast the likeness to a Dove on Christ, the Sinless One), dealing with and equipping God's dear people. Believers HAVE the flesh in them, and in their flesh dwelleth no good thing, but they should WALK in the Spirit and not in the flesh, for to the flesh they owe nothing (Rom. 8 12, see the whole chapter, also 7. 12-25 [and Gal. 5]). Is there anything against this interpretation? I think not. Leviticus 2. 11, 12 would confirm it. Christ ALONE was on the altar in His perfect service. Mark in Leviticus 7. 13 leavened bread connected with the peace-offering (AFTER verse 12). And believers can now enjoy friendship with God because of Christ (1 John 1. 7) and He delights in them. Viewed IN Him, as ONE company, they are "all fair, there is no spot," but in their fellowship and service, though they want to please God, they

* A R:print, enlarged: Copies will be available, if the Lord will.

† The woman and ephah (3 measures), as in Zechariah 5. Mark the corruption of sound doctrine in Christendom's "kingdom of the heavens" (Matthew 23. 1, shows that the kingdom is not necessarily viewed as REAL saints only: we recollect description by profession in Luke 15. 7).

§ "THIS do" is definite. Literature on this subject will be gladly sent to any enquiring believers, who want to follow their LORD'S will SIMPLY AND CHEERFULLY, and who dread even unintentional traditions, for His glory's sake.

cannot boast. But the enjoyment is as sin is judged and, accordingly, kept UNDER. We are CHANGED from what we once were. The leaven is NOT working as of old, and sin must not have dominion over us, else we "take," if only for a few moments, the place of ungodly ones: hence when we appear before our gracious God, we judge ourselves, or rather, have judged (1 Cor. 11. 28 lit.; 31). THAT is the CONDITION set forth by leavened bread.

We should possibly have expected a symbol of EVIL, and good acting upon it. Why is the fine flour FIRST, then the leaven, and next (immediately) the judging fire? The problem is full of heavenly teaching. The leavened bread does NOT deal with our "acceptance," that is the work of Christ alone. Hence it does not bring in our old life, but STARTS with the moment of our NEW life, when the truth came (the fine flour). Even then the flesh in us sought to change the truth and fire was necessary,—sanctification began as a painful, yet blessed experience (cf. Isa. 6. 6). But there is not only the thought of the PAST. EACH TIME we come before God we are conscious of the importance of self-judgment: since we LAST came the leaven has been seeking to hinder, the flesh has NOT become holy: we have needed the warfare, needed the fire, and we thank God for chastening. Hence we see this striking, and humbling, view of believers, appearing before God, with sin condemned.

Thus our Lord Jesus, Whose Name we bear, is seen as the One Contrasted with His people, in the unleavened bread, and as the One Contrasted with the ungodly, in the fruit of the vine. Thus He is twice exalted, and all theories which suggest believers are viewed, in symbol, on the Table of the Lord, miss the precious teaching, though there is the glorious fact that we are made the righteousness of God in Him, and this oneness and perfectness are portrayed after we HAVE partaken of this one loaf (1 Cor. 10. 17). But at the Lord's Supper we FIRST behold a beautiful setting forth of Christ for His people and His perfect work ALONE! WE have, by grace, the fine flour of sound doctrine, though our perception and illustration of it are marred by the flesh, and the effects of its old-time power,*. Yet would we never excuse one sin, but long, in the Holy Spirit, for the day when we shall be perfected in our experience also, and with our loving Lord for ever.

"Symptoms."

A BELOVED friend remarked that with all their pleasures men seem without rest. And so we pondered the pleasure loving—as a symptom and evidence of the very unrest. A healthy man can eat a crust: one with diseased appetite needs something "tempting" as men, alas, say. The craving for pleasure is an ATTEMPT to fill the void which is too great to be filled temporarily in any other way. Normal arrangements have lost their power. The disease is too far

* The "texture" of leavened bread is very different from unleavened. It reminds us of the past. Hence we can see the inappropriateness as a symbol of Christ, as well as the (unconscious) alteration of HIS command.

gone. BUT, Blessed be God, He can fill the void truly—AND ETERNALLY.

There are other linked thoughts. Is it not possible that we sometimes "try" to deal with loss of spiritual power by some SUBSTITUTE? Thus, oftentimes, as to the absence of manifest unity, we try to make an "inter-denominational" organization of our own, instead of being humbled before God, and bowed before Him, that we may get back to His will?

The knowledge of His truth VIA communion is deeply important. We can fill a cistern, and bring forth the water, but this is A SUBSTITUTE, not a real fountain. Ah, it is not truly a substitute, it is an IMITATION. May the Lord Himself be known more in our daily lives.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

THIS sentence is among the most difficult to TRANSLATE into English, but GOD Himself has a message thereby. He reminds us that no man knows the things of a man save the spirit of a man that is in him, and we cannot tell all that Agrippa felt. He appears agitated, but—! And YOU, too, have INNER feelings that I cannot see: YOU have been "troubled," it may be, troubled about your soul, and yet . . . ! What if you COVER UP your real self? God will unveil! Agrippa's words MAY also imply something of irony.* How often a man, who is made to feel his danger, seeks to put off the feeling by sarcasm or "a witty remark." The jester against truth is not at peace. There are many artificial smiles. But O how miserable the laughter, how horrible such irony: it is the trifling of a madman on the edge of a precipice.

Agrippa speaks but little, in the Scripture record, but his other words are striking. In Acts 25. 22 he says, "I WOULD also hear the man myself." Ah, here is a WISH: how different the first verse before us. Curiosity soon led to a wish: but he neglected his deep soul need. He did NOT say, "I WOULD be a Christian." His dire need remained,—and, (must we say it?), "WITHOUT A WISH!" Ah, dear reader, are you too without a wish for Christ? Without a wish for an everlasting salvation? Without a wish for God's glory in your deliverance to-day? Are you indifferent to Christ? Then you need not look far for your worst enemy.

Again in Acts 26. 32 Agrippa opens his mouth. "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." Such words beg the question and avoid the real issue. Why comfort oneself in keeping Paul bound, though he did not deserve it, by this "if"? Nevertheless Paul was not the real prisoner: his judges needed

* "Almost"—"in a little." This occurs in Ephesians 3. 3. It is possible to read:—"In (or with) a little thou persuadest,—to have made me a Christian." A Christian is more than our MAKING, or self's BECOMING: he is a new CREATION. (2 Cor. 5. 17).

LIBERTY. THEY were the criminals awaiting judgment, NOT HE. They knew not redemption (the word "liberty" is from the same root). But what about YOU? O that some who read these lines may even now CALL UPON the Name of the Lord—the very word "appeal"—for "whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10. 13). Salvation is free to-day.

On the first occasion, Agrippa appears to have been silent at the beginning: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets." NO ANSWER. And so Paul added, "I know that thou believest." But the head-belief, as God's servant showed, was not enough. And many to-day are even without this, and **NEGLECT THE SCRIPTURES.** Permit a word of loving plainness. God has given His testimony here. God has one way of salvation by the death of His dear Son, for sinners, and **THUS** He shows His holy hatred of sin. Can you remain vacillating—as Agrippa? Will you dare thus to despise the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it nothing to you to remain **UNSAVED**?

Some Earnest Considerations for Serious Roman Catholics.

IF you say, the actual body of the Lord Jesus is present in that which claims to be the Lord's Supper, do you affirm it is His living body, or His dead body? If His living, resurrection body, how could He have given **THIS**, to His disciples before redemption's **WORK WAS FINISHED**,—before He died? If His living body, moreover, how can the Holy Spirit say, "Ye do shew the Lord's **DEATH**,"—and add "**TILL** He come!" If you reply "His dead body," what do you understand by the words, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more" (Rom. 6. 7)?

You say there is no "certainty" outside the "Catholic Church." The first step of every convert, therefore, was an **UNCERTAIN** one, and all the other steps rest on this. Is not such a position a proof that **SOMETHING IS WRONG**?

Why does Peter the apostle address believers generally as a "royal priesthood"? Young believers seem to be included, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word," occurs in the same chapter (1 Peter 2). Is there any Scripture for a **CLASS** of sacrificing priests, in the New Testament?

I can rightly call a map of Palestine **BOTH** Palestine **AND** a map: but I cannot call Palestine itself by **BOTH** names, it is only "Palestine." The Holy Spirit speaks both of "eating the **BREAD**" (1 Cor. 11. 27, 28), **AND** records the words, "This is **MY BODY**." If we have a type, (as the map), **BOTH** names **ARE** applicable: if it is the Antitype, would not only one name seem fitting? (In like-manner we have **TWO** descriptions in Matthew 26. 28, 29).

"Lest I Should Be Exalted Above Measure."

2 Cor. 12. 7.

THE Holy Spirit led the apostle to write these words. Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, was conscious, amid his earnest desires for humility, of the tendency to pride in his own, and every, heart. **HE CLAIMED NO PERFECTIONISM.** He saw his need, and thanked God for the trial that cast him on his Lord the more. He preferred physical suffering to sin. His great dread was grieving the Lord.

Further, the apostle realized that God teaches by physical experiences. The thorn was "in the **FLESH**." Our bodies are used by God to instruct us. Physical strains are not a curse, they are appointed in love's wisdom. It is not for us to complain.

Yet the "thorn" was a "thorn." And as **SUCH** it was not joyous but grievous. Granted that the word is not the one found in Matthew 7. 16, it denotes something sharp.* The suffering was suffering, but the Lord was over all. Hence, though Paul recognised it as "a messenger of Satan," he also felt it was "given" to him. He knew the Lord could make it depart. If He did not so, He had a purpose of love. Of this, there could be no doubt. And He is the Same to-day.

How many of us are aware of our limitations? Do we esteem ourselves better than we are? We little know our weakness. The apostle would not boast. A severe trial was necessary. This is the more manifest as we realize that the same word is used of Antichrist, and his lifting up of himself in 2 Thessalonians 2. 4. The germ of this evil is found in **OUR** hearts, and we need grace to be humbled before our Heavenly Father, and to dread every form of self-assertion. It would seem from this passage that one of the most subtle forms of sin is **SPIRITUAL** pride. Boasting of blessings seems to be peculiarly easy, and it is so natural to distinguish this from ordinary self-esteem, but it is just as sinful.

JOHN 1. 1.

SOME, with a parade of knowledge, attack the translation of John 1. 1, "The Word was God." They propose "The Word was a god" or "a god was the word," with or without capital letters. The Emphatic Diaglot thus renders, and this is sufficient evidence of its unsafe character, as to Greek and doctrine alike.

The mistake is a natural one for those knowing a **LITTLE** Greek, but it is inexcusable to spread it, without seeking more knowledge. Vital matters are treated so carelessly to-day. Many have been told that the absence of the Greek article corresponds with the English "a." But often this is most misleading. Even the English "a" has more than one meaning, e.g. "We trust in a living God" does not mean

* The word "buffet" is found in Matt. 26. 67; Mark 14. 65; 1 Cor. 4. 11.

"a God" but it gives an emphasis on the word "living" in contrast with idols. "Anthropos tis"—a (certain) man (Luke 15. 11). "Theos tis" would signify—a (certain) God.* But "Theos" without the article, even as "Kurios" without,† may be used with strong emphasis on Deity. Let any who bring up John 1. 1, and mis-translate, be referred to verse 18:—"No one hath seen God at any time":—would they render "a God"? There is no article.§

The Greek idiom with the verb "to be" is simple. When the article is employed with both nouns they are COEXTENSIVE, "THE Life was THE Light of men" (John 1. 4): so "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3. 4 Gk). When it is omitted with ONE noun, THAT is the PREDICATE (i.e. the complement of the verb "to be"), and the wider term. An example may help:—"God is Light," "God" has the article in the original, so we could not make "Light" the SUBJECT and say "The Light is God." Light must be the PREDICATE, and hence the WIDER term,—for God's WORDS ALSO are light. Thus "the Word was the God" would have made the terms COextensive, and excluded the Deity of the Father. But "the Word was God" appropriately emphasizes that the Lord Jesus was God, even as the Father was God. The OMISSION of the article calls attention to His NATURE and CHARACTER.

And the Greek has another help for the reverent believer. This language allows of words in unusual order. Hence "God" is put FIRST, not that we may render "God was the Word" (that would break the rule as to the article), but that the EMPHASIS on "God" may be much more definite. Accordingly the most accurate literal rendering would be to the effect, "The Word was GOD!" or "The Word was (essentially) God." English tone of voice and punctuation are needed to bring out idioms which Greek ORDER of words can appropriately express. May our reverent hearts say with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God" (John 20. 28).

* Needless to say, this, is NOT found in John 1. 1.

† "Lord": frequently without the article renders the Hebrew "Name," of Exodus 6. 3.

§ A few other examples may help: Rom. 1. 16, 17; 2. 17; 1 Cor. 3. 9; 2 Cor. 5. 19; Gal. 1. 1; 1 Thess. 1. 10; 1 Tim. 2. 5; 3. 15.

Self-satisfaction is possible only in the dark.

If I look at the work ahead I am overwhelmed: if I look to the Lord I am borne up.

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

The Lord Jesus Said :—

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."

John 14. 21.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a precious fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and poor guilty ones are so completely saved that they are made the very righteousness of God in Him. No merit is theirs. Grace reigns.

But when any have been saved, it is their privilege, in the power of the Holy Spirit and of a new life, to be obedient, and thankful. It is their prerogative to please their Lord, in all. Hence the importance of the words of commandment which He has given, not to burden, but to direct. And love to Him is not talkative of giving up, love to Him does not argue against the legalism of being told what He wishes, but joyfully and loyally delights to bring joy to Him. Self-will is a caricature of love. Love can be more of a reality in the Christian life than many of us realize,—overflowing love to Christ.

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The Perils of Science.

THE child of God can restfully accept Scripture whatever men say. Their ever-changing and contradictory theories are strengthless against the abiding Word of our God. The perils of science,

falsely so-called, when it dares to criticize God's revelation must ever sadden the humble believer. He hates error, and grieves over those who are decoyed. Renowned names, fair speeches, and great swelling words of vanity lead many astray. Faith is simple.

But there are other perils of "science." We think of its use to make warfare an extermination of non-combatants, entirely apart from any thought of Divine authority. Thus we realize the cruelties to which scientific research can be prostituted, and we stand aghast. What will man's climax be? The head, without the humbled heart, can only lead to doom.

Not only so, but under the guise of improvement, man can gradually destroy himself and his fellow-creatures. Are there not diseases unknown to uncivilized nations, occasioned by the scientific treatment of God's gift of food? There are more perils here than man realizes. The principle of 1 Timothy 4. 5 is important that we may escape. And what if human methods of dealing with the body substitute one trouble for another, and cause effects that are less noticed at first, but not less dangerous? The peril is greater if the consequences are not immediately manifest.

Man to-day is intruding proudly into every sphere with irreverent independence, and he is in danger of harming himself at every turn. How blessedly the child of God can look away from these things, and, look forward also to the Coming of the Lord; meanwhile desirous to present his body to the Lord, and to live a simple life, with more and more dependence on Him, and more willingness to learn His loving lessons from everything physical. Bodily pain is not permitted that God's people may aim PRIMARILY at ITS removal, but rather that the SPIRITUAL lessons may be learnt, and that God's glory may be central. Nothing comes by chance, and nothing is to be viewed only in itself. "In EVERYTHING give thanks," and "in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

Bells and Holiness to the Lord.

"A H, you refer to the High Priest of Israel," says one. Yes, but not only so. Behold in Zechariah 14. 20, 21, "Upon the BELLS of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD . . . yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD of hosts." What a striking contrast with the horses that Solomon brought up for the kings of the Hittites?

Surely there is a wonderful lesson here. God desires our little things, our common things, our background things. Details are sanctified. Nothing is trivial when spiritually done unto Him. The language of the Holiest of All is to become the language of daily business and of the very kitchen, as it were: "Every pot in Jerusalem." It seems too wonderful, but it is God's standpoint. How precious is the grace of God that He is willing to enable this.

But, beloved friends, are we willing to expect this? Are we unwilling to trust? It is easy to have a theory for some one else, but we need—O how searching to us all is this thought—a confidence in God that we may trust Him for ourselves.

The bells speak of true music, the music of praise. Our Heavenly Father is worthy of thanksgiving. If we go about our daily toil with a murmuring lack of praise, we fail altogether.

There is no holiness except that which is unto the Lord. Everything else is sentiment, without reality. May it be ours to rejoice in the amazing privilege of pleasing Him Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. Such is the honour of a poor, worthless sinner, saved by grace, and made a member of Christ!

"That is EVEN ALL ONE as if she were shaven."

1 Corinthians 11. 5.

YET many children of God who would rightly condemn with horror the cutting off of the hair, say that the omission to cover the head, at prayer, is "A small matter." THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS IT IS "EVEN ALL ONE."

And He says nothing here of meetings. Indeed, the reference to women praying or prophesying could not have been with regard to assembly gatherings (1 Cor. 14. 34). Hence the words must not be thus limited. Observe 1 Corinthians 11. 14, "Is it comely that a woman pray UNTO GOD uncovered"? Not a word about meetings.—"Praying UNTO GOD" is a wide term. Why should some believing women "except" praying at a meal table, or "exclude" praying to their Heavenly Father when they are alone, from this commandment? Have you His warrant, dear fellow-believer, for this? If not, WHY CHANGE HIS WORDS? Remember it is not a man but the Holy Spirit Who says that such an action is "EVEN ALL ONE" with the cutting off of hair that your heart condemns.

AN OMISSION.

In the article on LEAVENED BREAD (Oct.), several references were omitted in the 2nd line namely, Lev. 2. 11; MATT. 13. 33, 16. 6, 11, 12; 1 Cor. 5. 6-8, Gal. 5. 9, and it was to the SECOND of these that the footnote on the woman and ephah applied. We much regret if any dear children of God were not able to follow, through this omission, and are very conscious of the need both to be humbled by typographical errors, and to seek grace, and the power of God's exercised people, that misprints may be kept out, to His glory. The reprint leaflet will be correct, God willing.

PAYING TAXES.

"A VERY ORDINARY ACTION." Stay one moment, God has invested this common, and **NATURALLY** undesired action, with a new and precious meaning. "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: **FOR THEY ARE GOD'S MINISTERS, ATTENDING CONTINUALLY UPON THIS VERY THING**" (Rom. 13. 6). The added verse emphasizes with a "therefore." "Render, therefore, to all their dues." The privilege of doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus extends to this also.

It will not need much reflection to see that jewels of holy thought sparkle in this Divine arrangement. For example, our Heavenly Father takes away the burden from the routine of life, and makes everything **SACRED**.

Again, He reveals His loving concern for our conscience, inasmuch as we should have wondered otherwise whether we were responsible for governmental **USE** of money, and we learn that we are no more involved than in the shopkeeper's use of our payment. How gracious-is our God thus to guide, and calm our minds.

But we also see that He has given us clear instruction as to **WHAT** we are to render—tribute, custom, fear, honour (Rom. 13. 7). And **PERSONAL** service is **NOT** included.* The child of God cannot Scripturally use violence, and the arrangements of modern warfare, emphasizing strategy and deceit, are quite out of keeping with the attitude of "strangers and pilgrims." Since believers are in "ALL nations" (an entire contrast with a previous dispensation), how can one rightly take up arms? Nor is **ANY** service under **SIMILAR** regulations, even if it does not wound but heal, exempt from the explicit rule that conscience must **NOT** be pleaded for example as to work on the Lord's Day and arrangements of regimental "amusements." Surely the Lord's freemen must respectfully but firmly stand aloof, if they would live in the searching light of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Hence the Lord indicates limits, by the nature of the taxation and respect which He unreservedly appoints.

We pay taxes in acknowledgment that Christ's earthly Kingdom has not come (Matt. 17. 26). In His rule we are not subjects but sons: we belong to the palace. Thus every coin, and stamp, and treasury note we handle, unites with every tax to impress the words, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5. 8). And so the payment helps as to unworldliness, and godly contentment amid trials, whilst we cry "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

For the very reason that we pay taxes we refuse to vote. A vote is a share in government. We recognize nothing between an outside position now **AND** reigning with Christ then.

To some this appears strange. The intense contrast of simple Christian faith with socialism, and the humble acknowledgment of the

* Except "COMPELLED" showing of the way: the context deals with unjust impositions, and the overplus which grace shows, to the surprise of the oppressor (Matt. 5. 41).

powers that be, must be enigmatic. But the child of God goes steadily on. He honours God's ministers in the sphere of His **PROVIDENCE**, but dare not deny the position granted to him personally in the sphere of **GRACE**. In providence, law has not carried out the sentence — there is **FORBEARANCE**. In grace, the death sentence has fallen on our adorable Substitute, and we stand on resurrection ground in Him. And so the official envelope has a new meaning. The surveyor of taxes is caused to remind us of our Lord, and the rating demand note is brought to proclaim our heavenly calling, and the receipt not only speaks of godly honesty, but of the privilege of doing ordinary things in the glorious Name of the Lord Jesus.

PRISONERS.

"FOR THE LORD HEARETH THE POOR, AND DESPISETH NOT HIS PRISONERS." Psalm 69. 33.

"LET THE SIGHING OF THE PRISONER COME BEFORE THEE." Psalm 79. 11.

"FROM HEAVEN DID THE LORD BEHOLD THE EARTH; TO HEAR THE GROANING OF THE PRISONER." Ps. 102. 19.

THE Holy Spirit's words in Scripture show us how our Heavenly Father **DELIGHTS** to encourage His people. He Who does not despise a broken and contrite heart, and Who dwells with him that is humble, Who has respect unto the lowly, and looks to him that trembleth, is gracious beyond human measure and conception. And this is always His attitude.

First, we think of sinners. Truly they are prisoners, and in darkness. The words of Psalm 79. 11 seem to apply to such, and Isaiah 42. 7 confirms with the tender message of Isaiah 61. 1. Christ is Real to a troubled sinner.

Psalm 69. 33 appears to refer specially to God's beloved people in their strain. The humble have not always an easy path here. But the Lord sees, and the Lord cares. He does not forget. Beautiful is the pleading of Psalm 74. 19. It shows one who knows the character of God, "O deliver not the soul of Thy turtledove unto the multitude: forget not the congregation of Thy poor for ever."

Nor can we forget the **PRISON**-experience. Psalm 143. 7 may include this. "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name." Sometimes every door seems closed, but God does not shut us up to depression but to Himself, and thus Paul and Silas found they were shut up to a song (Acts 16. 25), and that song was used to open the prison doors.

Psalm 102. 20 is capable of a wide fulfilment. It includes all we have already seen, and also suggests the change when the Lord returns. The world is out of joint now, but Christ will reign in righteousness, and every word of promise causes His beloved people to say, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

GOD'S LOVING FATHERHOOD.

GOD has graciously chosen many names which have earthly parallels, and, therefore, we rightly learn more of His beloved people's attitude to Him from the relationships of a loving and well-ordered home.

We think of a great mathematician: his little child knows HIM better than those who are only acquainted with his fame and his works. Have we not a deeply important lesson? But as the child grows OLDER we expect increasing interest in those works. Thus is it spiritually. And there is more than a parallel, for the child may specialize on something else, but no child of God can grow up rightly without increasing affection for His Words of truth.

Again, we have a precious warning when we picture to ourselves a son who studies his father's treatises, but has no time to be with the father. Is there not a hint for us here?

Or, further, let us think of one who spends much time in lecturing on the subjects of these volumes to others, yet ignores companionship with the writer. And in this matter, once again, we have something BEYOND A PARALLEL. A son MAY be distant from a parent: we cannot be rightly distant from our Heavenly Father. Again, a father may be ill, or may not even seek the fellowship, but our gracious God and Father deigns to urge THIS. It is wonderful: how often we fail to grasp what HE means by the word "Father."

Further, we picture to ourselves, an earthly son who obeys his father's regulations exactly, and never breaks his prohibitions; but how great the defect if he finds no joy in his father's presence. He may manage a department of his father's business, and THEREBY feel he has no time for his father's company. Are there not spiritual lessons here for each one of us?

Let us take another thought to heart. A child may be very expressive of love, in language and manner, yet careless of a parent's revealed will. He may omit to go promptly on a journey, and prefer caressing to obedience. Is not this one-sided?

May we not go further? There is a saddening variety of affection to-day which loves while the one loved does not cross the wishes of the one loving, and a similar love which is enthusiastic because of earthly advantages received. O how bitterly sad are the spiritual parallels.

But why should we close our meditations thus. We would not, and by grace, we will not. It is possible to love with heart-affection that speaks lovingly, yet also obeys, and obeys with love's promptness even when absent. It is possible to do the commands of a parent, and yet have a right proportion to attend to the personal joy of a parent in the company of beloved children. And though we would humbly own our falling short, this is the love we desire to have increasingly, toward our Heavenly Father, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, day by day.

It is easier to talk spiritually than to walk in the Spirit.

SAITH He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt this is WRITTEN.

1 Corinthians 9. 10.

THE importance of prayerful accuracy in the reading of INSPIRED words cannot be over-estimated. If God has written through His servants, there can be no mistakes. We dare not speak lightly of "synonyms" or of interchangeable expressions. Men often mean the SAME thing by two different sentences, but God always has a reason for every word He deigns to use.

The Holy Spirit shows us in 1 Corinthians 9 that although those who rightly minister in spiritual things are entitled to the loving support of His people, yet they may give up this, at any time, for varied reasons of witness. And the chapter shows the blessedness of "giving up" more than "seems" necessary. One almost feels afraid to use this too oft-uttered word "giving up." We receive so much more—"in Christ."

The apostle was inspired of God to show that arrangements as to oxen were PART of a Divine principle. There is a holy honesty throughout Scripture. There must be no stealing of labour, no oppression in any sphere. Many would agree with these words who do not know their meaning, and who would oppress the man unable conscientiously to join their society. Such is human "consistency."

But the principle is important. We all, unconsciously, "take advantage" of others. We let others toil for us, with muzzled mouths. Love is less common than we realize.

To return to 1 Corinthians 9. God not only commanded care as to the oxen, in accord with Proverbs 12.10, but He caused this precept to be written. The apostle does not declare that "God SAID it altogether for our sakes." Far otherwise. He uses "SAITH" in the question and "WRITTEN" in the answer, and this gives us much instruction. First it prevents any charge of indifference to oxen, and secondly implies that believers now are not necessarily an agricultural people. They are distinguished from Israel who had a land. Both thoughts are important.

And not only so, but hereby we have added reverence for the VERBAL inspiration of Scripture. That which is written may be also said, but the emphasis is different. The Lord Jesus apparently used both expressions in the wilderness (Luke 4. 12 with Matt. 4. 7), thus showing that Satan could say, "It is written" without feeling the living force of the word that was SAID. And that which was WRITTEN by one prophet (Zech. 11. 12, 13) might well be SAID by another (Matt. 27. 9). These may seem "details," but they are precious to the believing heart, and we rejoice in our Heavenly Father's lovingkindness. He leads us to compare Scripture with Scripture, and we are never ill repaid for faith's earnestness. Above all, He draws us to love Himself more. May this be the fruit of every article that is sent forth.

"BUT AND IF SHE DEPART."

1 Corinthians 7. 11.

THESE words have been a problem to many dear children of God.

They SEEM at first like permission to break the command of the Lord in verse 10. Our hearts realize that this CANNOT be, and rejoice that there is no suggestion of such an attitude. It is a matter of translation. The Holy Spirit uses every tense accurately. The R. V. misses the point even as the A. V. J. N. D. rightly renders, "But if also she shall have been separated." If we keep more nearly to the A. V. we shall say, "But and if she HAS DEPARTED."* The Holy Spirit deals with the case of one who had acted before the epistle arrived, and in ignorance of the precept of the Lord Jesus,—possibly before salvation. What could be done? Two positions were possible: (1) To seek no marriage yoke, though remaining as if widowed: no lapse of time could ignore the existing marriage relation. Or (2) Reconciliation. Thus everything becomes clear, and the Divine plan for those who are found in a difficult position shows God's grace in dealing with all our circumstances, and with the results of past sins. So tender and loving is He.

A quite different tense is found in verse 15. If is NOT, "If the unbelieving one has departed." Why this difference? Because here we read of unsaved ones. Hence, "If the unbeliever depart": it is quite likely he will thus act. The Lord regulates (in 10) the lives of HIS PEOPLE. How we would praise Him for the accuracy of Scripture, and seek to live according to it. These old principles and precepts are still of living power for children of God in their relationship to unbelieving partners, though if any are saved BEFORE marriage their path is quite clear, viz inability to contract this partnership with an unbeliever. If any are in a remarkable emergency, because of long intention, God will solve the problem, without untruthfulness, if He is trusted, and if the expectation of faith is continued without wavering.

Who can estimate the power of a LITTLE ACTION? It may influence one's own character, and that of two or three others, who, in their turn, will affect thousands. We cannot be too careful to seek grace that we may heed the command to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Faith is not an uncertainty, but much uncertainty is misnamed faith.

Satan, it would seem, seeks to change the words of sound doctrine, or to use the words with changed meaning.

* Subjunctive, "If she have departed" is yet more literal.

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The Lord Jesus Said:—

"After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."
Matt. 26. 32.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Lord Jesus rightly attracted to Himself. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." He alone made atonement, and He is the One Head and Leader of His redeemed people "When He putteth forth His own sheep HE GOETH BEFORE THEM, and the sheep follow Him" (John 10. 4). Am I a sheep? The test is not profession, but following Him, and hearing His voice. A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him," and again, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" It is deeply important to realize Christ's AUTHORITY (Matt. 28. 18, 19). And the stress on "Galilee of the GENTILES" is precious: we have a responsibility to the nations, and it is a joy to seek to declare the Gospel of Christ to those of varied nations. But it is vain unless He goes before (cf. 2 Sam. 5. 24).

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ETERNAL SALVATION, AND THE DANGER OF DENYING IT.

THE GRACE of God can be turned to LASCIVIOUSNESS (Jude 4), even as sin takes occasion by the LAW, which is holy and just and good (Rom. 7. 11-13). The misuse of truth is no argument

against truth. The contention of the Council of Trent against **RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH** illustrates the standpoint of the carnal man. He puts **GRACE** in a **FLESHLY** context, and then declares it to be dangerous. Many to-day will tell us that salvation by grace means a man can live as he likes afterwards. But they forget he is a new creation, and has put on the new man. Grace never excuses sin, but teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Tit. 2. 12). This is fundamental. But although the misuse of truth is no argument against the truth, it is an argument against the **BOLD** statement of truth, **WITHOUT** a right context. The flesh has a fleshly idea of salvation, it desires freedom from punishment: the flesh has a fleshly conception of heaven, a self-indulgent theory: the flesh has a fleshly theory of prayer, even an attempt to obtain blessings cheaply. But the flesh is **NOT** the **NEW** man, and the flesh has been judged, and not justified, and is to be treated as judged in our daily experience. **GRACE** is not given to the flesh.

We find no Scripture that relationship to Christ can be undone, or that "my" eternal life can be killed. For life is not only a general fact, it is a personal blessing. "I" am born again, "I" have life now (John 3. 36, 5. 24). Myriads who have never been born again assume this, and say "Lord, Lord," but they as rocky ground hearers shall perish. The engrafted branch that was never united* must be cut off.

And the assurance and joy of salvation are **NOT** unconditional. The rewards and losses at the Judgment Seat of Christ are far more **SERIOUS** to a believer than most realize. "To a believer," for his Lord's joy is intrinsically more to him than his own (Matt. 25. 21, 23). Salvation is not a comfortable escape from wrath, it is far more, even a God-glorifying deliverance from **SIN**. The professor abhors wrath but loves some sin: the believer abhors sin, and **HONOURS THE WRATH OF GOD**. This is a heart-searching distinction.

Some have earnestly urged that a believer can be lost after he has been quickened from above. Quite apart from those who hold this as part of the sad doctrine that salvation is by man's effort and working, there are some who have grieved over the **MISUSE** of grace, but their swing of the pendulum surely dishonours our Heavenly Father in **ANOTHER** way. **MANY** Scriptures warn as to loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ, **MANY** Scriptures show that many are only "believers" in name, **MANY** Scriptures urge godly concern and make clear that continuance in sin involves doom, but can a Scripture be found that one born again will **THUS** be left to continue in sin? I do not know one. The grace that plucks a brand from the burning is continued, and God will not suffer His faithfulness to fail, but will bring many sons unto glory (John 10. 28, Phil. 1. 6).

And we would earnestly commend to dear and humble children of God, who, pained at the low standard of godliness to-day, have adopted this interpretation, a solemn Scriptural thought which seems to show that in seeking to avoid one error they have fallen into another.

* A leaflet, showing this alone fits the Holy Spirit's words, gladly sent.

This is always the tempter's aim, is it not, beloved friend? He lays a trap for us on **THE LINE OF OUR WISH** to please God. And it is deeply important to learn the danger of opposing any error with **OUR OWN WEAPONS AND IN OUR OWN WAY**. This is a common mistake. We try to protect God's truth instead of letting **HIM** be the Protector. We all bring in our reason rather than our reverence. Suffer the word of exhortation: it is in love.

The simple thought on my heart now is that the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the **LAW OF SIN AND DEATH**" (Rom. 8. 2). Blessed be God, I am in a law to Christ (1 Cor. 9. 21), and long to keep His commandments (Rom. 14. 15), but I am not under law (Rom. 6. 15), so that the wrath of God cannot be against one in Christ Jesus. Now some dear believers have suggested that **MY CONTINUANCE IN THIS DEPENDS ON MYSELF**. If then by my actions I can bring myself under **LEGAL WRATH**, must it not be that my present obedience is **LEGALLY ACCEPTABLE AND MERITORIOUS**? IF the **ABSENCE** of my doing would mean penal judgment, it is my doing that prevents this: in other words my actions have a standing before God's holy law. Does that law admit **LESS THAN PERFECTION**? My obedience holds back wrath, my obedience is therefore my justification!—O beloved reader, do we not shrink with horror, from such a deadly mis-statement? Christ alone is our Righteousness if we are His, and we reject any other thought or claim.

One further word, in affectionate concern. If my disobedience brings into **PENAL** judgment, **EACH** sin would bring me into that overwhelming doom. **ONE** sin is enough to condemn, one omission is sufficient to ensure wrath. Do you not see the danger of such teaching? The believer holding it **LOWERS GOD'S HOLY LAW**. Earnestly would we plead with God's beloved children to accept the Scriptural standpoint that shows **EACH DISOBEDIENCE IS SERIOUS, AND BRINGS CHASTISEMENT FROM OUR FATHER**. Holiness is thus truly emphasized, without invalidating the precious and permanent work of our beloved and adorable Lord Jesus Christ.

We need not look far to find something to criticize. Self-judgment is deeply important if we love the Lord.

How easy it is to mistake the enjoyment of loving, for the desire that there may be the joy of the One Loved. If I am occupied with my loving I may think nothing of the wishes of Him Whom I love, and this is selfishness, whatever I call it.

When a man who delights in architecture beholds a beautiful building, he is not occupied with his appreciation, but with the building. His appreciation is an **EFFECT** not an **EFFORT**. O that we may be occupied with the One Whom we praise rather than with our praising, and that the realization of Himself may awake in us spontaneous spiritual praise.

"DIVINE HEALING FOR THE BODY IN THE ATONEMENT."

DO those who speak of healing in the atonement go far ENOUGH? Is not a PERFECT body in the atonement? And does not such a body belong to THAT DAY? To say that the resurrection is past already is serious heresy (2 Tim. 2. 18), as most will heartily agree, and therefore if the body is NOT perfected now, may not God permit varied PHYSICAL defects for our training and chastisement?

Are those who accept the theory before us willing to THANK God for physical trials and what we call "illnesses?" But if they regard the NON-removal as SIN, how can they thank God for it? In Scripture we are caused to thank God for infirmities (2 Cor. 12. 10), and are not in a condition to pray God for the removal, IF IT BE HIS WILL, until we thus thank Him.

The fact that Satan has power, as to illnesses, no more makes THEM to be sin, than the fact that wicked men have persecuted believers, can make the SUFFERING OF PERSECUTION to be sin. But we must be humbled. He does not purify perfection: there is a "needs be."

If any dear children of God think prayerfully, surely they must acknowledge that illness is usually an effect, sin is rather an active cause.* We are RESPONSIBLE for sin. If there is illness, it is for us to seek to our Heavenly Father, first to thank Him for chastening, HOWEVER IT HAS COME, and then to seek to get to His standpoint concerning it, and the reason; for the FIRE WILL NOT CONTINUE ONE MOMENT LONGER THAN THE DROSS, and the special dross in view MAY BE the dross of not trusting Him for the removal. But if a believer thinks he is now at any time quite free from dross, HIS THOUGHTS AT THAT MOMENT ARE VERY FULL OF DROSS.

Christ's atonement INCLUDES deliverance from other effects of sin, but is not the believer NOW conscious that many things which to the world are "natural" results of evil, (e.g. taxation as the result of war), STILL affect believers also, but affect with quite a different MEANING, and our Father can remove whatever He pleases, but it is for Him, not for us, to "please" first.

The theory before us is, in many hearts, a reaction from the sad tendency of many to act as if healing were in the hands of the doctor. Hence the stress on redemption instead of the doctor. But, though this underlying principle is precious, healing is not only in a WORK of grace, but in the PERSONAL appointment of our Heavenly Father Himself. Hence we should seek HIM, and not merely claim IT. Faith is NOT bare omission of medicine, but definite seeking unto God, our Heavenly Father. May He enable His beloved people, in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be kept from contrasted errors on the RIGHT hand and on the LEFT, which alike lead to self, however unconscious we are of this. May we be drawn and kept to Himself, and His way, more and more.

* In some cases, e.g. hysterical illnesses, the cause and effect are closely linked, and FAITH healing is manifestly precious.

"The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Song of Songs 8. 6.

A QUESTION has been asked on this precious verse. All Scripture is full of meaning. The primary reference, as with so much in the Song of Songs, is to the Lord Jesus, and His wonderful love. Many waters could not quench HIS love, albeit He came into deep waters (Ps. 69. 2), and ALL the waves and billows of Divine wrath for His people went over Him (Ps. 42. 7, note Lam. 3. 54). Nothing could alter His purpose (Isa. 50. 7). And nothing could have been given to cause this love (Song 8. 7): it was gloriously spontaneous. Now we can understand verse 6. The bride is upon the heart and hand of the Heavenly Bridegroom (an allusion to the High Priest's breastplate and onyx stones). Death is mighty: but love is mighty, even as death, to snatch, and there is no escape. His holy jealousy, that will not "share" His people with the world, or with the enemy, is firm—nothing can make any impression on it—it is diamond-like (see margin), and as unbending as Hades, with ITS holding power. And the reference to death and Hades is not without a further force, for our Lord saves body AND soul, and death and Hades are not able to RETAIN His people (Matt. 16. 18, 1 Cor. 15. 55). So we have the coals of fire— a burning love. The VEHEMENT FLAME is not a warm love, there is more than warmth. Still less is it a WARMED LOVE. Love that "responds" may be as water, boiling one moment yet becoming cold. But a cold flame is not to be found. His love is the cause, it is not caused. "The flame of Jah!"—if we may render this UNIQUE word for UNIQUE love, with the covenant and redemption name of Psalm 68. 4. 'Tis not a merely human love, but a love that reminds of all His own past love, and specially of the redemptive deliverance from Egypt where the name first occurs (Ex. 15. 2). Surely He shall not fail, nor be dismayed. His enemies cannot defeat the power of His love.

Questions for Serious Roman Catholics.

HOW do you know, (as you say you know), that your church is the true one? If you refer me to the New Testament, then you must LET THAT CHURCH BE TESTED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT. Is this not fair? If you do not refer to the New Testament, what other ground have you? If you come back to your "feeling," and personal decision that this is the church, how does this differ from the private judgment you condemn? If you say, "The Holy Spirit's guidance," why do you assume you have that guidance, and deny that I have? Is there not a continual uncertainty, unless GOD'S WRITTEN WORDS are recognized as the touchstone for truth? THESE never put aside the Holy Spirit, but they show if the claim of

any to be led by the Holy Spirit is true, or not. That is all the difference.

You say that Peter is the Rock? How do you know this? You refer me to Matthew 16. 18. Christ COULD easily have said that Peter was the Rock but He did not, if you accept the words of the HOLY SPIRIT. Is it not a fact that the Holy Spirit expressly uses the Greek name "Peter," and then ALTERS the ending of the word for "Rock," so as to suggest relationship, not identity? And this is vital. Christ is the Rock, and Peter was brought into relationship to Him. In 1 Peter 2. 4, 5 the apostle shows this clearly. Why do you reject HIS inspired explanation? Is not the Rock a Name for God (e.g. Deut. 32. 15, 18, 30, 31,—observe, accordingly, contrasted reference to idols—"THEIR rock"), and thus to transfer it from its simple appropriateness here to Christ Himself, just after the mention of His DEITY would be a tremendous strain on credulity.

1 CORINTHIANS 15. 10, 58.

THESE verses alike contain precious repetitions. The grace of God is before us three times in the first. We have His grace UNTO, or INTO, the poor, guilty sinner, making him a child of God. THEN there is a new standing, and the words apply, "The grace of God which was WITH me." "Into" is salvation, "with" is enabling for service. We call to mind, "Peace I leave with you" (salvation): MY peace I give unto you" (fellowship and service): and "I will give you rest (deliverance) . . . ye shall find rest," enjoyment of the yoke of the Lord and His service. WE cannot know the "with" of grace unless we first experience its "into."

Moreover, we find a precious repetition in 58—"The work OF the Lord," and "labour . . . IN the Lord." The natural tendency is to speak of work FOR the Lord, but the Holy Spirit's language here is deeply helpful. It is blessed when believers are concerned that they should keep to God's path as to control and arrangements (OF the Lord), and His holy will as to manner also ("IN the Lord"). If the primary thought is "MY work for Him" there soon will be wrong accompaniments, will there not?

The old garment of self-righteousness is not to be patched. The only thing is to throw it AWAY, but the power, and preparation so to do, are in God's unveiling of the robe that He graciously gives.

Difficulties are a test for faith: natural expectation breaks down, faith looks up.

"If the Lord will" does not only mean "I am uncertain," but "I want the Lord's plan, and none other." The "If" is because of affection to Him as well as consciousness that He can intervene.

Precious Contrasts with Ecclesiastes.

A POOR guilty sinner by nature, and saved by grace, by grace alone, I have not made me great works, BUT my Heavenly Father has shown me the power of His works (Ps. 111. 6), and I have heard the music of the words, "It is finished" (John 19. 30). I have not builded me houses, but in wondrous love the Lord Jesus has builded me into His own house (Matt. 16. 18). Nor have I planted for myself vineyards, but by grace, I have been engrafted in the True Vine (John 15. 5). Gardens and orchards I cannot make for myself, but has He not told me of the Tree of Life, and made me drink of the river of His pleasures (Ps. 36. 8, Rev. 22. 1, 2)? Trees are not of MY planting, but what wondrous grace that I can sit down under His shadow, and would do so, with great delight, that His fruit may be sweet to my taste (Song 2. 3). I have not made me pools of water, but He deigns to lead me beside the still waters (Ps. 23. 2) Servants have I not gotten, but God Himself has called me a son as well as a servant, and the Lord Jesus says "My friends" (John 15. 14, Heb. 2. 10). Aye, and ministering spirits are sent forth to serve the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1. 14). Great possessions of great and small cattle are not for me, but they are nothing compared with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1. 3). I have not gathered for myself silver and gold, but He has given me news of a city, my city, of which the very street is pure gold (Rev. 21. 21). Yea, He has made me to be part of the peculiar treasure of Himself, the King of kings (Tit. 2. 14, Mal. 3. 17). Men singers and women singers may delight the sons of men, but what shall I say when He Himself joys over me with singing (Zeph. 3. 17)? And who can describe the musical instruments of the glory (Rev. 15. 2), unto His praise eternally? Ah it is wonderful to be in Christ, and my heart rejoices in His labour, and He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isa. 53. 11). HERE there is no vanity and no vexation of spirit, HERE there is nought but preciousness and lasting profit, for all is above the sun, and the wondrous words ring out, "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). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3). What manner of persons, beloved fellow-believers, ought we to be, in everything enriched in Him! The earthly wealth of a Solomon is not to be compared with the riches of God's grace and glory, and we were only bankrupt sinners. O why did God love us so wondrously, and why has He brought us so near to Himself? "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all His praise?" (Ps. 106. 2). O for a CONTRITE heart to sorrow over sin, a TENDER heart to hear His wishes, and a WHOLE heart to overflow with gratitude.

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Musical Instruments in the Book of Revelation.

EVERY prayerful reader must notice a REMARKABLE contrast between the Book of Revelation and other parts of the New Testament as to musical instruments. Neither John the Baptist nor the Lord Jesus are brought before us with these "accompaniments." The stress is on the VOICE. And in the Acts we have no suggestion of musical services, no hint even of "singing the gospel." Many believers bring individual cases of blessing as proofs of God's approval, but they would acknowledge that Jacob received the blessing in spite of dressing as if Esau, and, though this is an extreme case, does it not suggest prayerful concern lest we assume God blesses unappointed methods?

The epistles refer to singing in worship, and emphasize this great privilege. But they add NO reference to musical instruments. Indeed, of the three chapters which deal most definitely with this subject two OMIT the reference, while adopting the very language otherwise to which the OLD TESTAMENT adds the name of the instrument (Eph. 5. 19, Col. 3. 16), and the third (1 Cor. 14. 7-15) speaks almost disparagingly,* certainly contrastedly, of such instruments, in THIS sphere. But how different is the Book of Revelation. There we find the elders with harps in 5. 8, and the harpers of 14. 2, and the harps of God belonging to the redeemed in 15. 2. There is nothing like to this elsewhere in the New Testament.

Quickly the lesson comes before us—musical instruments are attached to the appointed resting place of those to whom they belong. Hence when Israel reached their temple, there was a wealth of musical instruments, and when the redeemed reach their heavenly glory, there will be a surpassing wealth. We have a glimpse of the contrast in Psalm 137. 2. "Strangers and pilgrims" look forward for their gold and their glory, for their temple and its harps. They are willing to be outside now. They remember that their Master Himself was called, "A Man of Sorrows," though He had "the joy set before Him. It is well to remember that this is not our rest. We have no earthly temple, no continuing city (Heb. 13. 14). Hence we set forth our pilgrim privileges, and on similar grounds we refuse the wearing of gold (1 Tim. 2. 9). It is not that gold is ugly, it is not that musical instruments are unmelodious. Far otherwise. If we only give up that which is ugly, how small is the test. Our privilege is this glad confession that we are not of this world, but pressing on till we shall see our Lord face to face.

* "Things without life."

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