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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"If any man speak, as the oracles of God; if any man minister, as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is altogether because of God's grace that we have a gospel. And this is the only gospel. It is altogether because of His lovingkindness that we have a Bible, and His Bible is the only one. There is no rival. It is all of His mercy that we can speak and write concerning our precious Saviour and humbly call Him "ours." Wonderful indeed is the grace of God, and it is our heart's longing that He may use these pages to stir up His people (including ourselves) to seek His will more definitely. How striking would be the testimony if all children of God sought to follow His will in daily "home and business" life, and in assembly details, unaffected by tradition and the world's attractions. Do we pray, in the Spirit, for such a reviving?

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A Food Analyst Dies of Starvation.

IF you saw such a placard, it might impress you, but if you learnt that he was analyzing food when he died, you would be amazed. Working with the very nourishment needed for his body, and yet not partaking of that which was in his very grasp. "Ah," you reply, "no man would be so mad."

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But there are many who study the Bible, and analyze its words, and yet know nothing of its food value. They can write "critical commentaries" without knowing Christ. I grant the parallel is not complete, for are not such spiritually dead? But there is a closer parallel. If we are children of God, we are, by grace, living, yet it is possible to be **very weak,** if we study the language of Scripture without feeding on God's message to our souls. It is wondrously true that His grace has kept us alive, and therefore it is not "death by starvation," but it **is** amazing weakness on this account. Not a few who own the precious Name of the Lord Jesus must acknowledge the peril. Should we not be concerned as to ourselves? Do we find it easier to search into the grammar of a verse than to "eat" it (Jer. 15. 16), and do we discover our tendency to look for a "good subject" rather than to seek God's own necessary food for our personal spiritual welfare? An analyst may know much more than the working man who sits down to eat the provided food, but if the **head** of the latter knows **less,** his living joints and tissues know **much more** of the precious sustenance, for there is "assimilation." Never let us feed the brain at the expense of our spiritua vitality. There is too much assimilation with the **world** to-day, and too little assimilation of the **Word.**

A Question answered regarding John 1 7. 22

"The Glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."

THE words of John 17 affect God's people very deeply. The glory of Christ in His love to His people shines forth. Verse 5 speaks of the glory of Deity which was His. "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was!" No human "explaining away" can be allowed to deny His definite claim. Verse 24 speaks of His resurrection and coming glory as the One Who glorified the Father (verse 4). In between we have the glory manifestly given Him in the days of His flesh. What was this?

Our mind seems drawn to the two occasions when a voice was heard from heaven, and His Sonship was declared. The first gave a picture of His resurrection, and illustrated the words, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," which are thus applied in Acts 13. 33. Truly He was the First-begotten from the dead. Surely His glory was manifested then, and the type of this resurrection showed glory given to Him. "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him." Is He not the Spirit of Glory? (1 Peter 4. 14). Moreover was not the glory of His sinlessness manifested by the dove? (We contrast the cloven tongues of fire on the Day of Pentecost). It was then that He was made "manifest," though many of Israel seem to have gone away first, but John

"saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1. 31, 34, see verses 14, 15, Christ's glory was revealed, and Isaiah 40. 3-5 is deeply suggestive in this connection, for it refers to John's testimony).

The glory given to the Lord Jesus seems therefore to have been primarily the glorious working of the Holy Spirit, and we remember the words concerning Him, "The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John 3. 34). He did not need the quickening of the Holy Spirit, but when He humbled Himself He was pleased, in His perfect manhood, to know a dependence, and this included an emphasis on His working in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The voice of God the Father attesting Christ's Sonship came again on the Mount of Transfiguration. The very number in Luke 9. 28 ("about an **eight** days after these sayings" *) would suggest resurrection, and there is no doubt as to the association with the coming up out of the waters of baptism. And concerning this too the Holy Spirit says that "we see Jesus . . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9). This crowning was "**that** He might taste death," and thus prior to it, so there is no doubt as to the allusion (2 Peter 1. 17 helps us, "He received from God the Father honour and glory"). We observe the reference to the Kingdom in Matthew 16. 28, Mark 9. 1, Luke 9. 27. Our hearts at once recollect that the "promise" is associated both with the Spirit and the inheritance (Galatians 3. 14, Hebrews 9. 15). "The earnest of the Spirit" leads up to the resurrection glory of that Day, in the experience of God's people. And thus we have the **two-fold** aspect of the glory which was given Christ, and which He **gave** to His people. He gave them the glory of the working of the Holy Spirit, and also the assured promise of the Kingdom, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me." He gave them that which was given to Him. And the object was their unity. The power of the Holy Spirit was ever intended to humble, and the glory of the coming Day was (and is) to lead the Lord's redeemed together. And so will it ever be when we rightly realize His coming again. How needful is Christ's emphasis on oneness. Satan would ever sow discord. How real was the glory Christ bestowed on His people, that they might have no excuse for disunion. To Him the glory included a holy living in the light of its climax. But is it so with us? Amid all God's gifts in nature and all boasted human progress, how evident is man's failure, and in like manner how solemn is the falling short of God's people whenever they overlook their Lord's stress on unity. That the

* The exclusive reckoning of Matthew 17 is equally true, and alludes to a completed work. "Six days shalt thou labour." How full is Scripture, and how important to see that a seeming contradiction is actually a twofold aspect with twofold blessing.

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Kingdom exaltation is part of the glory given in John 17. 24 seems to be made very clear, and Christ's joy in His people sharing it is seen throughout (e.g. Revelation 3. 21). And yet we hear little of this prospect to-day! And we enter little into the promises of reigning with Him. May our hearts henceforth take His standpoint, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, and enjoy what He enjoys.

Peter's Next Words.

THE Holy Spirit used the apostles to record, without veneer, their own failures. In Matthew 26. 35 the apostle said, "Though I should die with Thee, yet would I not deny Thee," though the Lord had warned him. In Luke 22. 33 the words sound out "Lord, I am ready," and then we read of the Lord's gracious reply, but no further utterance of Peter. Silence reigned, so far as the record goes—an ominous silence. Peter, it may be, anticipated **he** would be able to make good his words. With many of us the attitude might have been, "I am all right; wait and see." In Gethsemane the solemn silence of the apostle seems to be continued. Christ prays, we have **His** words. We hear of no words from the apostle. Lovingly encouraged to watch with Christ, he slept. That very sleep should have been a warning to him. The very failure should have led him to flee failure. But it was not so. Possibly he uttered the words with the others, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" In any case, he drew it. The Lord Jesus interposed, but again we are not told of any words of sorrow from the disciple. Deathly silence seems to reign, until the next time he opens his mouth, we listen to the awful words, "Woman, I know Him not" (Luke 22. 57). Thanks be unto God for grace, the Lord Jesus will not say to Peter "I know you not" (Matt. 25. 12). We call to mind His words "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22. 32). This was His loving attitude, but Peter did not pray for himself. And the mouth once opened in sin, was soon opened twice more—not with any desire to deny the Lord, but with a natural and so selfish wish to preserve his own life, and with a fear begotten of prayerlessness, and an absence of faith in the power of Christ (John 18. 8, 9). Ah, Peter's next words, after his bold promise to bear all, make us ashamed of ourselves, for in our flesh too dwelleth no good thing, and we need to depend on the Lord in simple humility, else we too shall disgrace His Name. Victory must be spiritual, it is not natural. Humbling, yet beautiful, are the words, "Without Me ye can do nothing!" O to trust Him more, and to realize the responsibility of believers to believe.

How can we close the subject without realizing the power of the words "Tell His disciples and Peter," and the gracious restoration of the apostles in John 21. He speaks now, but it is a contrast with "I know Him not," the words ring out, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," and He Who knew what was in man (John 2. 25) converted His beloved servant that, restored, he might strengthen his brethren. Thus, where sin abounded, once again grace overflowed, and we too humbly thank God and take courage.

* A beloved brother has called attention to Adam's **next** words in the record of Genesis 3. 10, after the previous historical testimony of 2. 23, with its typical fulness. (Eph. 5. 30, 31).

"Because Ye have Known the Father"

(1 John 2. 13.)

THESE words are very simple, but how much they mean. A child of a king may not, in early infancy, know all of his father's earthly glory, but the child knows the father more than many who could write his biography. A child of a scientist may not, at first, be acquainted with the science as many outside the family, but the child knows the father. A child of a godly business man may not understand all the responsibilities of the business,—the training in this may come appropriately after,—but the child knows the father. This is vital spiritually. It is true that no ordinary parallel is perfect, but there is much for us to learn in this. The knowledge of truth without the knowledge of the Father will become very "mental." We do not want to have spiritual education of the brain without that of the heart. Head-acquaintance with Scripture without affection is perilous. We should, and would, learn more and more of the way and will of God, but let us realize that everything must be in the sphere of the knowledge of Himself. Enoch walked with God, and thus he learnt. The Lord Jesus said, "Come unto Me" and then "learn of Me." There is too much mere "knowing about"; let all our knowing about Himself be dependent on knowing Himself. Thus will He be glorified.

God said concerning leviathan "I will not conceal his **parts,** nor his **power,** nor his comely **proportion**" (Job. 41. 12). The three words impress the memory with their alliteration, and how precious it is to think of the parts and power and comely proportion of another work of God, even the precious Scriptures. May we not conceal these, but make known God's revelation to His glory. "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman" (John 4. 39): God used the salvation of a great sinner to the salvation of others. Thus, in this sense also, "Where sin abounded, grace overflowed."

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The Personal Note.

THERE is a strong personal note throughout Scripture. Though God upholds **all** things, and metes out Heaven with a span, and takes up the isles as a very little thing, He can also condescend to gather the lambs with His arms, and this involves a **personal** interest. He, Who is the High and Lofty One, That inhabiteth eternity, still hath respect unto the lowly, and still receives the prayer of the destitute. "I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness," illustrates a very **personal** note. Indeed, the repeated stress on God's love and knowledge implies this, and impresses it on our heart. His love cannot be vague. There is a deep "individuality" in it. God knows those whom He loves, and saves, and draws to Himself.

In accord with this, He is actually willing to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Daniel, and so forth. We might have thought He would be "above" this, but He is not ashamed to be called their God (Heb. 11. 16). Such grace is wonderful.

Hence we find God's dear people of old, while approaching Him with reverence, manifesting a conscious nearness, and expectation of His personal care. Jeremiah, the prophet could say, "Hide not Thine ear at my breathing, at my cry" (Lam. 3. 56), and there is a beautiful confidence in the psalmist's pleading, "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle" (Ps. 56. 8). Is not this a childlike simplicity, because of a heart-realized knowledge:—"God is interested in me!"

It is **personally** that we receive salvation, and **personally** we should seek to walk with God. The intimacy which Enoch was granted emboldens our faith. We rejoice at the striking contrast with the Eastern theory of a deity without feelings, far off, and taking no interest of this character. The **personal** note makes us ashamed of our unbelief, and of our other sins. God is not simply a name. He has drawn near to us, and now invites us to draw near to Him. "The people that do **know** their God" have a **closeness** to Him: they understand something of His ways and His standpoint. There is nothing too small for our Father, if it concerns His children. This individual access to God is a striking contrast also with Romanism, and alters the whole course of life. When we hear unsaved men speaking of "A Supreme Being" and "The Almighty" their tone of voice and manner help to show that He is **personally** unknown to them, and this would have remained the condition with us, had we not been saved by the precious blood of Christ, and been caused to live with a new life in Him.

Memory.

MEMORY is a delightful gift. How wondrous to be able to store God's words for use when needed, and for the Holy Spirit's gracious work in bringing to our remembrance (John 14. 26). But memory is not only a privilege, it is a responsibility. Let us take heed what we hear, and how. Many things that we have forgotten we wish we could remember, but many things we remember we wish we could forget. O for grace not to learn sin; O for grace to forget what God hates.

It is important to bring our memory to God, and to pray that the Holy Spirit may use it, and not the enemy. The devil would seek to appropriate memory in a thousand ways, e.g. to produce pride in some and despondency in others, to cause ill feeling by the recollection of real or apparent unkindness, to burden the soul when at prayer with thoughts which are unspiritual, and to bring about an excusing of sin on the other hand, or anxious distress on the other, by the recall of words and deeds and feelings which did not glorify God. Satan is very subtle, and though we are not ignorant of his devices, we cannot defeat them at all apart from the power of God and His whole armour. How much weaker we are than we naturally think. How much stronger is He. God has not appointed a continual "minor key."

Many things we know, though not positively evil, have kept, and keep our time and memory away from that which is profitable. As a pupil in learning a language sometimes memorizes certain exceptions to a rule which he will **never** need to use, so is it in other spheres. The brain and memory power often spent needlessly on newspapers, by children of God, would have yielded a large crop of Scriptural knowledge. How much of modern education makes part of the memory a useless storehouse. Doubtless God over-rules, and the mere exercise of mind may sometimes strengthen it for subsequent Scriptural studies, but if only the path and the goal were both doubly beneficial, (i.e. in manner and matter alike), how blessed would it be. Many of us are ashamed that we lack concentration, and that our memory has been largely dominated by a fear, "You cannot do this, or that." Such a fear, largely encouraged in conversation, causes the worry that weakens the mind, and may hold back from its godly use unto the Lord. There are limitations, and we must not do too much, but the important fact is that when we do "too much" we frequently seek a remedy by leaving out that which should be kept in, and vice versa. And fear and anxiety make work harmful far more often than the work itself, and the opinions of others (unsaved ones prominently) decide the fear and anxiety of not a few. How we need to be quiet before God, not swayed by our "leadings" any more than by the standpoint of the world, but gladly accepting that which has been set forth in His own precious and authoritative words of truth.

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Chapters Linked.

THE division of Scripture into chapters facilitates reference, but is human: it is often well to "read on," and thus observe further appointed links. Shall we take one book in this way? John 1. 51 leads to 2. 1, the third day type of a greater marriage feast (see Hos. 6. 2). 2. 25, "He knew what was in man"—"There was a man": how remarkably the Lord dealt with what was in Nicodemus. 7. 53, 8. 1: they had their houses, the Lord Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. He was as a Stranger (see Luke 9. 58, 21. 37 and Jer. 14. 8). 9. 1 plainly continues 8. 59: the Lord Jesus continued His gracious work immediately after men had been about to stone Him: let us observe His undeterred love. 9. 41, reveals the iniquity of Phariseeism: and 10. 1 contrasts every thief and robber with the One Who came to give His life. 12. 1 is more definite in the original for the word "then" is "therefore": He pressed on unflinching, His hour was near. After 13. 38, 14. 1 unveils grace in a humbling way. Another "therefore" in 19. 1 is the more outstanding when we see the **reason** (18. 40) for the attitude of one who claimed to represent justice (Acts 25. 16). And in this place again Christ is the opposite of a robber. The active "they laid" of 19. 42, and the passive "taken away," (20. 1) because God had acted, must help our praise, and so is it throughout Scripture.

I passed "Big Ben" last evening, and instinctively thought of putting my watch right thereby. I never thought of putting "Big Ben" right by my watch, yet many come to Scripture to "put it right" by their unsafe opinions. Another lesson has come to me:—How often have I passed, and looked up, but never considered putting my own watch right. Do not we, while condemning the sin just mentioned, often pass by the Scriptures thus? We forget the privilege of correcting ourselves for future actions, as well as knowing God's will for a moment.

God's grace and salvation are beyond humanly chosen words, and beyond human thoughts. The natural man wants something else. He prefers a religion of works which partly flatters him. He does not like to confess he deserves nothing, and can do nothing worthy of God's acceptance. But when a sinner sees himself in God's light, anything else but God's Gospel is useless and even terrifying. The "cheapest" gospel would be too expensive: but the free Gospel of God declares that Another has met the amazing cost. Faith acknowledges this, and is at rest.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Thy Words were found, and I did eat them." Jeremiah 15. 16.
"Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Matthew 16. 12.

A Word of Introduction.

GRATEFUL to God for His constant grace, we would again send forth these pages. We cannot boast of self, nor do we wish that self should arrange a brain-pleasing magazine. Our heart's desire is that God may condescend to enable a testimony which will exalt His Name, and be appointed food for His beloved people, attracting them more and more to His holy words, and drawing more and more away from the world. There are many errors abroad; there is much leavened doctrine; we need grace to be very quiet before God that we may love His truth and detect evil, and walk in His way. How earnestly should we beware of that which is not His will.

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"Hear Ye Him." (Matthew 17. 5.)

THE voice came from the excellent glory, and a wondrous declaration was followed by a gracious command. How can we turn away from Him Who speaketh from heaven (Heb. 12. 25)? Blessed are your ears, for they hear." May this be our daily experience, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

In the preceding chapter we read of a special word of encouragement given to Peter. The Lord Jesus emphasised that the believing disciple was a living stone in the building of which He Himself was (and is) the Rock-foundation. The knowledge of Christ which Peter had shown was not by a human reasoning. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven." There was no room for boasting. To him that hath shall be given, and thus the willingness to accept God's revelation is ever a path of privilege. "Keys" of stewardship were entrusted to be used for their Owner, and binding and loosing were to be according to that which had been bound and loosed in heaven. The "following out" of God's will is blessed, but all else is failure. When therefore Peter spoke as **he** thought, and not in accord with Christ's speaking, the solemn words sounded forth, "Get thee behind me Satan." The previous blessing gave him no personal authority. The things that be of men can never be acceptable; That which is appointed in heaven must be acknowledged, or all is confusion. A week later, on the transfiguration mount, the apostle, not having yet learnt his lesson, **spoke** instead of **hearing.** True, he said, "If Thou wilt," but, even with this proviso, we may be too quick and thus fail to hear. So the arranging (in heaven first, which is the message of Matthew 16. 19, and Acts 10. 15 alike, was impressed again. Out of the cloud God commanded, and Peter was to hear, not speak. Probably we all do too much talking, even as in prayer we are unduly concerned with our petitions, and fail to be quiet before our Heavenly Father to listen to His will. Yet even the further lesson was insufficient for God's dear servant. In the same chapter we read how the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter, and the loving but self-impulsive disciple quickly replied that his Master paid this equivalent of the redemption money (for a sinner (Matt. 17. 24. 25). Very soon the Lord graciously showed that the answer was too hasty. How important to bring all to Him, and avoid the alternative of self-decision. "Hearing" is very precious. "My sheep hear My voice." Alas, there are many who hear not, and many who, like Adam, hearken to other voices instead (Gen. 3. 17). This thought is deeply important, for the church, the bride, was to be "subject to Christ," and the tendency of traditionalism has been to say "Hear her," rather than "Hear Him." The Lord's people are never to seek personal authority. Romanism has talked instead of listening. But the principle of Jeremiah 23. 22, applies to us as well as Romanism. "But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way." Of Israel it is written "They waited not for His counsel" (Ps. 106. 13). God has given us two ears and one mouth. Do we hear enough?

"For Thy NAME'S sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is Great." (Psalm 25. 11.)

A PRECIOUS prayer. I used to think it meant that the very greatness of the sin was a plea, for God only does wondrous things (Ps. 72. 18), and the greatness manifested that none but God could deal with it. Further, we have a parallel with Numbers 14. 17, 19 ("let the power of my Lord be great . . . . . Pardon, I beseech Thee"), and Exodus 34. 9 ("**For** it is a stiffnecked people"). God delights to save beyond expectation, and Micah 7. 18 may well come to mind. Is anything too hard or wonderful for the Lord? Why should that which is marvellous in man's eyes be marvellous in His eyes (Zech. 8. 6)? Thanks be to God for the miracles of His grace (Matt. 18. 27).

But though one would never lose sight of this loving message, as we feel the greatness of our sins may we not also see a reference to the Name of the Lord? Is not this further thought contained?—"For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for It (Thy Name) is Great." True the other word for "Great" is found in Psalm 76. 1, and the word here often signifies "much," but it is also a description of God (Ps. 48. 2). How precious to realise this prayer in the light of Exodus 34. 6, 7, where "abundant" is the very same word. Simple faith has great confidence in God's Name. He has revealed Himself that His people may trust, and it is for the glory of His Name that He deals with great sins (Ps. 79. 9), to the end that His redeemed people may exalt Him continually. O that this may ever be our experience, to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1. 6).

"His Leaf Also."

THESE words in Psalm 1. 3 are impressive. Each leaf is precious, when there is "fruit" first. "Nothing but leaves" is the sad condition of a false professor (Mark 11. 13)! Calling to mind Genesis 3. 7, 8, we learn an important lesson. "Leaves" suggest profession. Adam typifies those who claim a self-righteousness. Yet if, in contrast with this, there is true life, and godly fruit for God, there may and should be the unfading leaf of godly profession or testimony before men. But it must be "His leaf **also.**" And thus it was with the Lord Jesus, the Perfect Contrast with Adam. How definitely all Scripture exalts and glorifies Him. And that which the Holy Spirit does in Scripture should be the joy of believers in daily life.

Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, a Saviour **now** and a Saviour **for eternity.** We do not forget the present when we exalt His Name. He is a Saviour to-day, to be trusted in home and workshop, as well as in a meeting.

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An Earnest Plea for Loving, Learning, and Living—Psalm 119.

WE live in "Perilous Times." Most are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3. 4), and many have a form of godliness, but their words and lives deny the power thereof (2 Tim. 3. 5). They have turned away their ears from the truth, and are turned aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4. 4). They are well described in Psalm 119, as those who keep not God's law, but forget and forsake His Word (Ps. 119. 53, 136, 139, 158). Truly did the psalmist exclaim, "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work:—they have made void Thy law" (Ps. 119. 126). But in what way are men thus opposing God? Some by denying inspiration, or others by exalting traditions, and their own skilfully devised myths. Many desire the wisdom of this world, and enjoy the enticing words of man's wisdom, not the wisdom of the Only Wise One. Their faith is in the wisdom of men, not in the power of God (1 Cor. 2. 5). How many make void God's Word through scepticism, indifference, disobedience and neglect. And among this number now many are professing believers in the Lord Jesus. But we seem to hear anew the message by the Holy Spirit, through Paul, addressed to Timothy, "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4. 2).

Nor can we forget that there are many subtle contrivances of the evil one. Many, by the strain of business, are taken from the things of God. Many, who acknowledge His truth, rise too late in the morning to feed upon it. And thus the sad **neglect** and the sad **opposition** are hand in hand, to put aside the glorious testimony of our God.

Amid all the confusion, the continual "daily" meditation in one verse of Psalm 119 will probably be used to lead many toward the knowledge of, and love for, the entire revelation of God. A few reasons may be given for this statement. This Psalm is written in the form of an acrostic,—each section of eight verses commencing with one letter of the Alphabet, i.e., All the first eight verses commence with the Hebrew letter "Aleph" or "A," and the second eight verses with "Beth" or "B," and so on. The Holy Spirit thus signifies that this Psalm is prepared for memorizing. Shall we overlook His hint?

The Psalm is an "index" to the whole Bible. It is deeply devotional, every verse containing a Noun or Pronoun referring to the Lord. Some of the most godly men bear record to its aid in devotion, and its stimulus in prayer and praise.

God's Word is mentioned under various names, such as Law, Commandments, Statutes, Precepts, Testimonies, etc., in nearly every verse; thus magnifying the truth of God at a time when it is nearly forgotten.

We want to urge a prayerful suggestion, viz., the memorizing of a section **each** week, i.e., two verses on the Lord's day, and one on each subsequent day:—learning the verse in the early morning, meditating upon it during the day, and writing it out in the evening, **in a book kept for the purpose.** This method will place God's Words first, and will encourage consistency and exactness. Further details will be gladly given to any who seek to adopt the plan. Regularity is a help in the spiritual life: persistence is important: God will give strength and purpose of heart. This plan will, or should, in no way, supersede or hinder, but will aid all other Bible Study.

The above suggestion, from my dear father,* with added emphasis because of the permitted trial of blindness, was commended heartily to God's dear children, in 1921. It may well be repeated to God's glory. The **similarity** of some verses to one another, and the fact that many believers are, alas, unused to learning Scripture, at first may be used by Satan to suggest "disappointment," but if we are forearmed with **prayerful** determination, and seek not to allow **one** omission, with "catching up after," we shall gain a twofold victory, and prayerful diligence will bring spiritual reward to the Lord's redeemed. **Parents might well introduce into their homes,** to the glory of God. The Psalm itself says, "O how love I Thy law: it is my meditation all the day." May this be our daily experience!

*I realize in measure, how much the magazines, and myself, owe to his affectionate interest.

God's Appointed Omissions.

SCRIPTURE does not begin with abstract proofs that there is a God. It is written for those who are held back from the folly of which Psalm 14 warns. How different would be a human volume, in what it contained, and what it omitted. No man would have given some of the genealogies and details of history, nor recorded certain events twice. Faith **knows** that God's plan is best, and we oft **learn** more of His wisdom, and this is true gain. Many declare that a clever man could write history, and that no inspiration is needed for this. But what shall be included even in a biography? What omitted? Where is the man who can write history **with** perfect perspective and **without** bias? Thanks be unto God for His **inspiration** of the biographies of Scripture also (2 Tim. 3. 16). How much they designedly omit. How little we know about Adam, and about Noah's first 600 years. And it is the same throughout. God does not give us the complete story. Of how few do we know the birthplace and death?*

Take the apostles. Ah, He Who hid Moses' grave has hidden the tombs of others. Hero-worship and place-pilgrimage are not His will. He teaches us by omission and we rejoice to learn. The life of the Lord Jesus is

*The Holy Spirit shows, in Hebrews 7, the reason for silence as to Melchisedec, to make a fuller type of the Lord Jesus.

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uniquely full. But his birthday is Divinely veiled. Heathenish tradition would step in to fill the "gap," and likewise as to His childhood, but Luke 2. 1, 39, Matthew 2. 23, Luke 2. 42, 52 only give definitely His birth, a period when He was less than two, and one event when he was twelve. The Holy Spirit would not feed our curiosity but our faith. Nor can we dare to paint the Lord of Glory in the days of His flesh. It is strange that believers can venture to put such pictures upon their walls.* Godly intentions do not warrant our own way.

The solemn silence of Scripture as to the spiritual condition of some of its characters is searching. We think of Adam. No word of confession of sin is recorded and his name is not found in Hebrews 11. We cannot but be silenced in heart concern. And so it is as to Demas, and others. Thanks be unto God for the grace that mentions Samson and Jephthah in Hebrews 11. 32.

In types and parables there is often a precious omission. For example, the "green" of **nature** and "black" of **judgment** are the colours absent from the tabernacle, that we may rejoice in grace. The non-mention of the death of the scape goat (rather, goat for Azazel, Lev. 16. 8) speaks much to those who realise that conscious separation from God for ever is a fact.† The measurement of the lampstand and laver, as pictures of the Lord's people, are Divinely kept from us, though the weight of the former and the pattern shown indicate God's perfect knowledge (John 6. 39, 40). In the parables we see His silence. The bundles of Matthew 13. 30 are **not** marked as **burnt** before the wheat is gathered, the "others" of Matthew 20. 3, 6, are not said to have gone into the vineyard, the Good Samaritan is not described as "going down," the ninety and nine of Luke 15. 4 are not said to have been left in the fold, the thief of John 10. 10 is not brought before us as **actually** stealing, killing and destroying (see verse 28, the wolf can **scatter,** 12, that is the utmost), the branch taken away in John 15 is **never** said to have had fruit at any time. All these illustrations of God's silence are rich with teaching.

One other passage may conclude our meditations. Why do we read of **none** of the servants after the second in Luke 19. 11-27, till we reach "another of another kind?" Do the majority of the Lord's dear people "gain" far less than five pounds for Him? Is love's energy that obtains "ten" unusual? This inspired omission of Scripture, applied by the Holy Spirit, may well bring us to our knees.

* May not the general wish for pictures seem inappropriate? Texts, which remind of Deuteronomy 6. 9, are often relegated to the bedroom. A house with texts alone would be no hardship, if our hearts realized the preciousness of **God's words.** Nor should we want floral designs to set off the texts, or attract attention away from them. But a picture of Christ is, beyond measure, saddening.

† Leaflets readily sent.

Taking Away or Purging. Which?

"YE ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13. 14), referred to an appointed spiritual action (for Peter understood the physical, verse 7), an action which ever acknowledged one's own need of cleansing by the water of God's words. Hence the Lord Jesus never said "Ye ought to wash My **feet.,,** He had no defilement in the daily life, and when the prince of this world came he had nothing in Christ (John 14. 30). In like manner, the true **Vine** needs no purging. But what about the **branches?** If they bear fruit this is their need. If there is no fruit, **no** purging is given. The engrafted branch (for such is the thought of the word) has not become fruitless, it **was** without fruit, and remains so. It was never "united." There is no purging for the fruitless branch. But, however fruitful the accepted branch is, it still needs purging, and will receive purging. This is in grace. Chastisement and chastening are not unkind words: they are lovely messages of God's gracious interest. **Chastening and scourging** are in love (Heb. 12.6) "without chastening" means "without holiness" (Heb. 12. 8, 14). 'Tis for "our profit." Again let it be remembered:—"However much fruit there is, there can be **more,** and 'He purgeth it.'" The stress on God's own active interest encourages us. We remember, **"He shall sit** as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver" (Mal. 3. 3). Chastisement is not entrusted to others who will be careless and spoil it, everything is under God's immediate care and control. We **need** purging, are we **willing** for it? Chastening does not seem to be joyous (Heb. 12.11) but it yieldeth a peaceable fruit. We joy in the One Who chastens, but not in "it." If we try to avoid the pain we hinder the profit. If we thrust away the cross we seek to remove the crown. There is a "needs be" (1 Pet. 1. 6). Fire will never destroy God's gold. Our dross never improves: His gold never loses its true character. Why then the fire? That the two may be separated and that whatever is "His" may shine forth, more and more unmarred by that which is of self.

"Taking away" is the only alternative, and He is **not** said to do this, when there has been "fruit." If there has been a sign of life, He will purge. When we remember the only alternative, how gladly we should pass through this trial and stress. Surely such is our desire. The purging is not merely an experience. It is with a definite object now, as well as in the future: "That it may bring forth more fruit." Israel was an empty Vine, and the husbandmen gave the Owner no fruit. May our gracious God grant to us a clearer perception of His loving will, and may we be ready for **purging,** and its precious results more and more.*

* John 15. gives the experience from God's standpoint, with our enduring; Romans 8. 13 shows our loving **actions,** "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

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"He Set Ephraim Before Manasseh."

(Genesis 48. 20.)

GOD'S sovereignty ever shines out. None deserve salvation, none deserve glory. If a sinner is saved, the praise belongs to God, and every believer should rejoice that God does **what He wills,** with His own riches of mercy (Matt. 20. 15). It is only **an evil eye** that disdains His absolute prerogative of grace. And in accord with His sovereignty, we see Abel—vanity, as his name signifies—blest, when Cain went his own way. Shem was not the oldest son,* nor was Abraham,† nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor Joseph, nor David,—"that no flesh should glory in His presence." Thus the wish of the flesh was frustated in Joseph's family also, and Jacob, led by God, guided his hands wittingly (Gen. 48. 14, 17-19).

If this were the only lesson, we should value it. But have we not much more to learn? The names of the two have striking **meanings.** "Joseph called the name of the firstborn, Manasseh: for God, said he, hath made me **forget** all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be **fruitful** in the land of my affliction" (Gen. 41. 51, 52). There is a right forgetfulness (Psalm 45. 10)—it is not well to be occupied with our trials. But this is rather the **negative,** and negatives often have perils entwined. Nor does the Greater than Joseph forget those to whom He became related according to the flesh, and Joseph's own after-yearning (43. 30) would suggest that afterwards he somewhat **judged** the second aspect of his earlier forgetfulness. But how precious is **fruitfulness,** a holy positive for God:—aye, and **double fruitfulness, as** the word "Ephraim" signifies. The very name suggests the firstborn's position (Deut. 21. 17), and Joseph should not have been surprised at his father's action. But in the spiritual parallel it is deeply important for us to learn the setting of **fruitfulness** before **forgetness.** If we become proportionally over-mindful of the latter, we soon become selfish, or, in another aspect, too much like the angel of the assembly in Ephesus. "Fruitfulness" as a holy positive, in the Holy Spirit, must be ever our joyous object, that God may be glorified, and then our right forgetfulness will follow in its appointed position. When Jacob was guided by God, he set **fruitfulness** before **forgetfulness,** and so shall we.

* Genesis 5. 22, 7. 11, 11. 10 **together** show this. See also 10. 21.
† Genesis 11. 26, 32, 12. 4 **with** Acts 7. 4.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a privilege beyond natural comprehension to be "in Christ Jesus." And God's beloved people have His words of truth and the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit. All the attributes of God are manifested on their behalf. It is delightful to realize, moreover, that He also rejoices in their salvation. It is not His duty to save: His love freely saves the undeserving, and He rests in His love and joys over His people with singing (Zeph. 3. 11). It is their privilege to please Him, and to walk with Him, and to know and do His will. With this object, and His glory therein, are these pages sent forth. And the passage in Nehemiah 8 not only brings before us that our joy in Him is strength for service (contrast Mal. 1. 13), but also that His joy and delight affect us graciously. Let us meditate on His joy first, and ours in His (cf. Matt. 25. 21, 23), if we are among the called of Jesus Christ, and seek to please Him.

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Pilate's "Therefore's" (John 18 and 19).

THE Holy Spirit shows much of the *character* of a man in few words. "Therefore" often deals with the motives, which we are not able to see, but God sees, and also records,—sometimes for our encouragement, sometimes for our warning.

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Every believer must feel saddened by the attitude of Pilate. His wish was to release Jesus, but he condemned Him. Why? The Holy Spirit's word "therefore," (sometimes rendered "then") reveals his progress in sin and gives the answer.*

At the outset, in John 18. 29 we read, "Pilate *therefore* went out unto them." Here is a measure of conciliatoriness to the Jews: a Roman official dreaded being accused at Rome. The fear of man, we find afterwards, was a tremendous power. Everything was diplomacy. The next "therefore" shows there was no love between the two parties. "*Therefore*," said Pilate unto the Jews, "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your law" (31). Here we seem to feel his irritation, and yet no determination of character at all with regard to the Lord Jesus. Righteousness is forgotten. The Jews' answer made plain their wish. The Roman governor, nominally in authority, felt perplexed. "*Therefore* Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus" (33). We cannot tell his motive altogether. Did he hope that Christ would deny the charge, or, on the other hand, say something that would appear to justify stern measures? Whatever his thought, Christ spoke in a way that should have touched his *soul*. But, although "Pilate *therefore* said unto Him, Art *Thou* a King then? (37), with an emphasis of surprise, it may be, on the word "Thou," he was not awakened and humbled by Christ's reference to truth.‡ Truth? Nay, *the* Truth. Alas, he only asked, "What is Truth?" and left out the word "the," and likewise used the neuter "What?"—whereas *The* Truth was before him,—a Person (John 14. 6). Nor did he appear even to wait for the answer. Uneasy, he went out. Unhnmbled, he came back, and, feeling he could prevail nothing, "then Pilate *therefore* took Jesus and scourged Him" (19. 1). A sad capitulation to the multitude: there was no spiritual sense of sin, no fixity of mind: self was first. Cruelly careless, the one who should have executed justice handed Christ over to brutal mockery of the Roman soldiers. And the One they mocked was their Creator, and yet He opened not His mouth. Pilate was now in a terrible dilemma. He was permitting shameful punishment, yet owning all the while that the One ill-treated was innocent. So again he led the Lord Jesus forth, but nothing came of this, the chief priests showing their violence yet more. The Roman governor repeated, to his own condemnation, the fact that he found no charge, bnt in vain. They claimed that the Lord of Glory should die because He had said He was the Son of God This alarmed Pilate yet more. He might well have wondered "Am I attacking the Son of God?" "Therefore . . he was the *more* afraid" (John 19 8). It is clear he had been *afraid* much earlier. But throughout there was no confession of guilt. Before him stood the Sinless Saviour, but he sought not salvation from his sins. Again he tried to draw words from Christ, but there was holy silence. "*Therefore* saith Pilate unto him, Speakest Thou not unto me?" It was the "therefore" of amazement, but still there was no repentance. The end was fast approaching. Warning after warning had been granted to the callous Roman, including the message of his own wife (Matt. 27. 19), bu', like Pharaoh in one sense, and still more like Herod, he went on, without anguish of soul His stifled feelings deepened his iniquity. The Jews now made a masterstroke "If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend" (John 19. 12). It was enough. His own public position and life were in jeopardy, and he chose—life, as he thought, but actually DEATH. "When Pilate *therefore* heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat" (13). and, when his enfeebled, or rather, seared conscience heard the claim of the Jews as to *their* loyalty, heartlessly and madly "delivered he Him *therefore* to be crucified" (16). The deed was done: the Roman governor had joined the murderers (Acts 7. 52), and takes his place finally in Psalm 2. 2 (Acts 4. 27), to his eternal disgrace. It is a solemn story. Conviction, trifled with, becomes weaker and weaker, as it was in the case of Felix (Acts 24. 25, 26), If men play with their conscience, and with eternity, is it not folly, with wickedness mingled, in unholy blending? This narrative impresses us with the forbearance of God, and shows the *manner* of His dealing with the ungodly in the time of His patience (Rom. 9. 22) As we read it, we learn how gentle we should be, and our hearts cannot but praise for the mercy that has reached us, for were we not "children of wrath even as others"? Surely everything in Scripture is to awaken praise for God's grace, and, with it, to stimulate obedience in the enabling of the Holy Spirit Let us never, as believers, seem to play fast and loose with God's warnings, let us never slight His hints and workings upon our conscience, let us never seek our seeming advantage at the expense of His truth. Selfishness is the road to perdition. But grace is mighty to-day, and the contrast between Judas and Pilate on the one hand, and Peter and the dying thief on the other must be a message of power to the Lord's people. The false professor hangs himself, and the Roman governor becomes a murderer, but the believer is drawn back again to the music of "I have prayed for thee," and the robber is quickened amid the gentle strains of "Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." An eternal salvation is a reality, but it never makes a soul careless: obedience and holy fear flourish within the circle of preserving grace.

* Sometimes part of the meaning is so clear that we cannot miss it. At other times, God would cause His people to think, and "possible explanations" may well exercise their heart.

‡ See for verse 37, ch. 5. 24, and 10. 27.

The bowed head is vain without the bowed heart.

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Love is not Self-Choosing.

An Illustration from Deut: 16. 5, 6.

IT is important for God's dear people to know just what to do Affection is not freedom to do "what I like" apart from God's will, but freedom to love and do God's will. "Legalism" exists when I want one thing, and God s will is different. But if my love gladly takes the shape of the mould of His will, then my obedience emphasizes both the expression of my heart and His will, or rather let me say, His will and my heart.

God graciously appointed the passover as a memorial of redeeming love. And the feast was to be enjoyed. But this did not give the partakers liberty to alter as they pleased. God gave them many cities: in not one of these could they eat it. The wish to carry out the command did not give a self-ordered freedom. "The place which the Lord shall choose" was imperative: and the appointed time was so marked out. We see the twofold contrast --of place and time—in Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin.

And so is it now. Naturally our hearts think especially of the Lord's Supper in this context. Love does not allow overlooking of these types. It is true we have no special city as Jerusalem, but the Holy Spirit connects the breaking of bread with a Scriptural assembly, and not with anything else. And there is no Scriptural warrant, of which we have yet heard, for the LORD'S SUPPER in the morning. True, the outward observance of itself is but a shell, but the peril of a skeleton should not make us excuse a sin of another character. Rather should we humbly AVOID both sins to God's glory, and so will He be glorified. Love finds no difficulty in God's appointment. It is a pleasure to be obedient to One Who is more than worthy of our obedience.

"When the Lord therefore of the Vineyard Cometh" (Matt. 21. 40).

HOW beautifully does the Lord Jesus use every word. Here we have NOT the coming of the Heir, but of "the Lord of the vineyard" Who had "One Son, His Well-Beloved" (Mark 12. 6). Hence this is not the Coming of the Lord Jesus, which is still future. The very next parable continues with a similar thought. "When the King heard thereof, He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (Matthew 22. 7). Do we not rightly connect this with the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70? How many have confused that event, alas, with the Personal Coming of Christ. Nay, He is still sitting (Ps. 110. 1) and waiting. He is NOT acting in judgment in a dispensation when mercy and forbearance are strikingly displayed, but God

the Father acts as the God of Providence, beyond all dispensations, and, therefore, we read, "HE SENT HIS ARMIES." Like to the Assyrian in Isaiah 10. 5, the Romans worked out His purpose as to the scattering of Israel. Thus everything is in dispensational harmony, and we can now understand 1 Thessalonians 2. 16 and Luke 21. 22 ("the days of vengeance"), without setting aside the precious words of Hebrews 10. 12, 13. So exact are the inspired words, and our hearts humbly worship. There are no contradictions in Scripture, and the believer does well to be more thankful.

GRACIOUS OVERRULING—BUT!

DAVID knew that Ahithophel was a remarkable man. Like Balaam he stands out, showing that varied privileges are no proof of spirituality. And so David prayed, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15. 31). When we thus pray, do we leave the matter in God's hands? Often we hesitate. And so it was with David. Hushai came along, and it appeared to the king that he could thus secure the answer to his prayer, but we are not told that he asked the Lord. This was so unlike David. Hushai, at David's advice, went to Jerusalem. "Thou mayest for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel" (34). What a pity not to leave the matter in God's hands. Absalom at first could not understand Hushai's attitude, and he does not seem to have been present at the meeting of chapter 17. 4. But, when he was called, he "cleverly" exalted Absalom, and gained the day. The counsel of Ahithophel was DEFEATED, but God would have turned it into FOOLISHNESS. The expense was great. Hushai had acted a lie, and the message now sent to David involved another lie (17. 20), and we see the bitter fruit of not trusting God throughout. HE overruled, it is true, and thereby we learn NOT to assume that overruling is His approval. On this occasion, David, like Saul, did not wait for God's counsel (1 Sam. 13.12, Ps. 106. 13). Is there not a lesson for us?

We may be in some physical or other trial. We put the matter humbly in God's hand, but then we think we see a way out. Instead of looking to our Heavenly Father, we take action. Is there not a peril? We would not have "God AND." Let us look to Him more simply. Shall we begin in the Spirit, and finish in the flesh, and let men have the glory for the result? "But it is successful." Yes, (2 Sam. 17. 14, 23), and so apparently was Asa's league in 2 Chronicles 16. 1-6, but it was not the Lord's command. He overrules, but He could have given much more, if only His time had been waited. Be-SURE as to humble faith first, THEN keep to it. Do not act beyond.

The grace of God proves mightier than sin, when a dead sinner is transformed into a child of God. And such miracles are still taking place. Thanks be unto God.

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The Value of Heavenly Faith.

ALL the natural tendencies of the heart to unbelief are worthless as "evidence" against a living faith. All the disappointments of the past, (blamed sometimes on faith, but actually through its lack), weigh nothing against a real faith. Spiritual faith, in the channel of God's purpose, has a precious cause, course, and consequence. Matthew 8 is a stimulus to every believing heart. There we read of the leper's worship, and dependence on Christ's *will* (2). And immediately behold the centurion's confidence in Christ's *word* (8), and his faith was honoured. Presumption rests on *man's* will and word: but how different is faith.

The Lord Himself commended the faith that emphasized His *word*, and declared its *greatness* (10). He also rebuked the *littleness* of faith of His own disciples in this same chapter (26). And *why*? Because of doubting His word, since *He had said* the other side would be reached (Mark 4. 35). He contrasted fear and faith, and so should we. Faith comes (2), and faith also feels unworthy to come (*cf.* Luke 7. 7).

In the next chapter faith brings (Matt. 9. 2), and faith touches (9 20). The Lord always emphasized the need for persistent faith. We recollect Jairus (*cf.* Mark 5. 36). Moreover, we observe the pointed question of Matthew 9. 28, "Believe ye?"—*cf.* John 11. 26. Faith must be supernatural: it must not depend on self's natural inferences (unbelief), nor on self's excitement (presumption). It must ever depend on the Lord, *and His* will, and *His* word. Faith must be restful, and so it drives out fear. That which is irregular, and ever hesitating, seems to suggest a human imitation, although, thanks be to God, he can distinguish real faith even when dross surrounds. Circumstances affect everything that is natural, and destroy that which is manufactured by reasoning from circumstances, but cannot destroy that which is of God. The Lord Jesus did not view the storm as a ground for the disciples' unbelief *when they had His word*. That word was enough. The storm would have been a ground of fear, if faith were built on natural logic and appearance. "Circumstances" may be God's ministers to feed faith, or to test, but they can neither make, nor unmake it. May our hearts have a fuller confidence in Himself, and a closer acquaintance with Him, to know His will and His word.

If practical chemistry is as important as theoretical, how can we approve a theoretical knowledge of truth without practical Christian-living?

God's approval is worth more than all else. If we believe this, we shall seek it.

"Sleep on now, and take your rest."

Is this the translation of Matthew 26. 45?*

THE Holy Spirit graciously gave, and preserved verbally, inspired Scriptures,* that we may humbly test thereby the valued translations which have been made. (No man needs more prayer than a translator. Thousands may be affected by his rendering of the words of God. And there are now more translators in varied languages than ever). The statement of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 26. 45 was meant in loving reproof. But the added words "Behold, the hour is come" lead on quickly to "Rise, let us be going" (46), and there is a like sequence in Mark 14. 41, 42. Hence, though we have not all the words our Lord said, there seems an intended connexion between these verses. At the same time He also said "Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Luke 22. 46). This would make our English translation in Matthew pained irony. But another meaning seems more impressively suited to the context.

Many will recollect that in John 14. 1 "*Ye believe* in God, *believe* also in Me" can be rendered "Believe in God, believe also in Me" The command, the statement and the interrogative in the plural, (when the present tense is used, and there is no negative), are the same in Greek. Compare "Search the Scripture" and "Ye *search* the Scriptures, BECAUSE in them ye *think* ye have eternal life . . and ye *will not* come to Me"; the pained rebuke of the inconsistency of the people is helpful, and shows us the Scriptures rightly searched ever lead us to Christ and—His work.

The passage in Luke 22 seems to suggest a question. Hence should we not read Matthew, "Do ye sleep now, and take your rest?" Then comes the command, "Rise up, let us go." The gentleness and yet earnest reproof of this translation may help us personally. It emphasizes the beautiful character of the Lord Jesus, and shows how inappropriate it is for us also to find a selfish rest in this poor ruined world. May our hearts respond to *His* love. Doctrinal and translational helps are precious, as the Holy Spirit uses them to glorify God in our obedient daily life.

Thy mercy.
Thy faithfulness.
Thy righteousness.
Thy judgments.
Thy lovingkindness.
Thy wings.
Thy house.
Thy pleasures.
Thy light.
And again, Thy lovingkindness.
And Thy righteousness. Psalm 36 5-10.

* The preservation is remarkable. The many manuscripts prevent collusion, and, reducing uncertainties to the merest fraction, give the strongest confirmation of the accurate transcription of all the rest.

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Some Jottings on Isaiah 40.

"COMFORT" is not for all: if there is rebellion, how can there be peace? The words "My people" show to whom the many promises of God are graciously addressed (contrast Matt. 7. 6, Hos. 9. 1). "Speak ye to *the heart* of Jerusalem," such is God's tenderness. "She hath received of *the Lord's hand.*" Wonderful words: the reverse of a bill of divorcement written by the hand of him who gave it (Isa. 50. 1 with Deut. 24. 1 see Col. 2. 14).

Salvation and the glory of the Lord are united, as Isaiah 40. 5 and the quotation in Luke 3. 6 show. The glory of the Lord in salvation includes the laying low of the flesh—all flesh (1 Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31).

The grass of man and the Word of God are contrasted utterly. The Spirit of God Who blows upon the grass, at its best, gives the living and life-giving word. He, Who gathers lambs with His arm (11), measures the mighty waters in the hollow of His hand (12). Nothing is too great for His power, and no one is too small for His love.

Who would think a bucket was not empty if one drop was in it? From the practical standpoint, it is empty, and from the standpoint of *use* men are nothing to God. The standpoint of grace is different. Who would object to the weight of what he purchased because of "the small dust of the balance"? With regard to utility, or affecting circumstances, men are as nothing, *yet God loves*

The beasts of Lebanon are not sufficient for a burnt offering to God (16), and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His (Ps. 50. 10), yet "To this man will I look" is His own word (Isa. 66. 2).

Why "To whom then will ye liken God?" in 18, and "To whom then will ye liken Me?" in 25? Is it not because God refers to *the nations* in 18, and addresses Israel more intimately in 25? Hence the name 'The Holy One." Why "Have ye not known?" in 21, and "Hast thou not known?" in 28? Is it not again God's greater intimacy with Israel, and do we not thus learn also the need for an *individual* knowledge of Himself and our strength?

Deliverance from worry by carelessness is not spiritual deliverance. Let us be prayerfully concerned that we do not change one sin for another.

The promises of Scripture are never intended to encourage laziness, but faith.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The Fear of the Lord, and the Comfort of the Holy Spirit."
Acts 9. 31.

A Word of Introduction.

WONDROUS is the mercy of God to lost sinners. He does not only pardon but justify. Indeed, the holiness of God is such that pardon without justification would be unrighteous. But His complete work IS righteous, and believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. And now, in the interval until the Lord comes, or they fall asleep, their path is a pilgrim one. They have an earthly experience, though not a worldly hope. They have the privilege of representing, even by little things, their Lord amid a ruined race, and in a body of humiliation, with consciousness of need, personal unworthiness, and dependence. "The fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom" is not the fear that hath torment. It is loving and reverential: it is a fear that grieves to grieve the Holy Spirit. Hence it is not surprising that He encourages, exhorts and comforts the Lord's redeemed, in whom He dwells, along this narrow way. And these pages are sent forth to remind the children of God of this privilege, and help them in His love, that He may be glorified in their daily walk and work and witness.

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"A Word Fitly Spoken."

Proverbs 25. 11.

IT is possible to speak unadvisedly, but how blessed it is to speak to God's glory. We remember the striking expression of Isaiah 50. 4, "The tongue of the learned, that I should know

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how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." The added words emphasize the "ear" twice: unless we hear aright, how can we speak aright? The fact that Isaiah 50 is Messianic reminds us that the Lord Jesus had grace poured over His lips (Psalm 45. 2). Never man spake like He spake. But are we not to walk after Him?

"A word fitly spoken." "Let your speech be alway with grace, *seasoned with salt.*" "The lips of the righteous feed many." There is to be life, *not* death, in our tongue (Prov. 18. 21): let there not be the changeableness of which James 4. 11 speaks.

"A word fitly spoken," literally "upon its wheels." God's Word runneth very swiftly (Ps. 147. 15), and has free course (2 Thess. 3. 1). We recollect the cherubim and their wheels, and the swift obedience of Ezekiel 1. 14. How important it is for our words to be according to the will of God. If they are on fitting wheels there will be a contrast with Pharaoh's chariots driven heavily, and a parallel with Christ's promise concerning "rivers of living water" (John 7. 38).

"Like *oranges* of gold," for this seems the thought. We think at once of the beautiful Jaffa orange. One word that pleases the Lord is like orangeS. How precious are "five" words in the Holy Spirit's enabling. But those who are thus helped are humble. To talk of the Lord's leading more often indicates absence of it than we realize. "Oranges of gold in pictures of silver," i.e. amid the silvery shining, on certain occasions, of the leaves. Hence we see that these words are *living* words on the plant of a godly *life.* They are in beautiful harmony with one another, and waiting for *needy* ones to partake of them. It is for such, not for all, that this fruit is borne. Yes, holy words are *fruit:* we cannot "make them up" to God's glory. How we cry unto Him for true spirituality that they may "grow" plentifully. The refreshment of oranges gives a parable of loving words. May we help the Lord's weary ones thus, and glorify His Name.

Freedom.

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."
John 8. 32.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
John 8. 36.

"The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8. 2.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherefore Christ hath made us free." Galatians 5. 1.

"Brethren, ye have been called unto freedom: only use **not** *freedom for an occasion to the flesh,* but by love *serve* one another."
Galatians 5. 13.

Knowing and Doing the Will of God.

"IF any our *will* to do His *will*" is a precious message. Two *wills*: but the believer's will included in God's will, and responding to it. Is it possible that we are not always concerned to understand God's will, that we are too busy to hear Him speak? The "good and acceptable and perfect will of God" is not learnt merely by brain-work. There must be a spiritual experience and separation from the world (Rom. 12. 2). The object of our life is surely not "success" before men, but pleasing Him Who has loved us so much that He has changed rebels into His children.

If I keep to my will, or avoid knowing God's will because I want my way, what love is there to Him? How can I walk in the Spirit, if I put the flesh in the first place. Self *has* been judged. Let us never forget this, dear fellow-believers. Luke 12. 47 has been definitely before me. It is perilous to know the Lord's will without doing it. How can we impress rightly upon ourselves and other children of God the "danger" when they read Scripture, and also when they take up a mgaazine, or leaflet, setting forth their Lord's narrow way, as revealed in Scripture? Unless love is willing to ponder and obey, in the Holy Spirit, the increased knowledge means increased loss, both now in spiritual experience, and also at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I do not mean that the remedy is willing ignorance, but one longs, for himself, and for others, that there may be an open heart toward God.

Do Not Make Promises Hastily.

THERE is a striking omission in Matthew 2. 9. The wise men from the east "heard the king," but we are not told that they agreed to his wish. It is well to know when to be silent. In like manner, there is no suggestion that the apostles offered any compromising acquiescence in Acts 5. 40. There was no untruthfulness when "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (42). They had not bound themselves.

These thoughts are needful. We all remember Herod's hasty promise, and, though in a different category, Jephthah's rash vow. How needful it is to have a guarded mouth. Particularly do we need grace not to be pursuaded, and won over, by fair words to anything which troubles our conscience. It is so easy to make a semi-promise, and then to be troubled after. It is easy to be careless as to one's word, and break it with indifference. But that is evil. Yet to carry out a sinful promise *cannot* be right. The holy path of escape is usually by way of care *before* making any promise. God can extricate us *after,* but godly holding back till we know His will is Scripturally appointed.

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"Such Were Some of You."

1 Corinthians 6. 11

" Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past . . and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Ephesians 2. 3.

THE words of the Holy Spirit are used with perfect accuracy, and yet there is a simplicity, and a holy attractiveness about them. There is no parallel with the awkward style of one who is trying to be accurate. Verbal inspiration thereby shines out.

Every word of the Holy Spirit will bear every investigation. Man's needle and the minute cells of a plant look very different under a microscope:* Scripture shows hidden beauties like the latter : the works of men show hidden imperfections.

If God uses a plural word, it has a force distinct from the singular (e.g. Gen. 1. 26): and if He employs a singular it has a message that would not be given by the plural (Gal. 3. 16). If He has chosen present tenses (e.g. in Romans 7) we dare not make them into futures, but where He is pleased to make use of a future (Matt. 16. 18†) we do not substitute a past or present. Even unusual tenses have a perfect reason.

The verses from 1 Corinthians 6 and Ephesians 2 before us are full of humbling instruction. All who are saved were, first, in the family of Adam (The principle of 1 Cor. 15. 46 applies). Each one needed to be born again. This does not invalidate Ephesians 1. 4. God's gracious purpose ever sheds light upon us that we may praise yet more and more. Christian parents do not have Christian infants : each little one needed to be quickened. True, they may expect this Divine work (Prov. 22.6), the privilege of being born into a godly family is real, but the gracious environment does not prevent the infant from being one among those who are ," by nature, children of wrath, even as others." Salvation by the blood of Christ is a necessity in each case.

Hence Ephesians says " We *ALL*." But 1 Corinthians 6 has another aspect, " Such were *SOME* of you." That is to say, the special sins mentioned in that chapter were not done by all. All were equally sinners, but all were not sinners equally. There are diversities among sins though not one sin is little before God. This teaching may well be used to lead our hearts into helpful meditation. If we were not guilty of the outward sins of " some," we also were " fulfilling the desires, or wills, of the flesh " (Eph. 2. 3). " *ALL* flesh is grass," and " NO flesh " can glory in His presence (Isa. 40. 6, 1 Cor. 1. 29). The flesh has many and various desires, but it is ever the flesh and remains the flesh, and is unacceptable to God (Rom. 8. 7, 8). The " best " of Amalek must be condemned (1 Sam. 15. 9, 21). We do not need to commit manifest sins to be sinners before God.

* Yet men believe in " evolution :" how did an elementary form of life continually produce, with precision, and in symmetry and beauty, that which surpassed itself, without design ?

† Other Scriptures make equally clear that old time saints are *now*, and eternally, brought into a relationship and position which they did not possess before the Lord Jesus died and rose again.

Further, we learn more of the Lord's people at Corinth, and can see from what depths " some " had been graciously delivered (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10). This gives a sidelight on chapter 11. 21, and on the enemy's attack, without excusing the sin. Those who have been brought up in more respectable surroundings are often inclined to be a little Pharisaic, and need to remember Matthew 18. 22. How refreshing to realize that God in grace can lay hold of the " worst " and save such. And the thief, and murderer, when saved by grace, are not to be despised. They are as much " brethren " as the naturally refined and gentle young young believer, whose experience has been so different.

We need, more than ever, *GOD'S* standpoint as to sin. Matthew 5 shows this clearly, and Titus 3. 3 illustrates. We are often affected by human standards and distinctions, but a deeper realization of the essential unity of all sin is important, that we may hate the iniquity which men esteem (Luke 16. 15), as well as that which they condemn (Luke 7. 39). If we think we were better than others, in ourselves, because we did not run to an excess of riot (1 Pet. 4. 3, 4), we forget that if more privileges were ours, our responsibility is the greater. The questions ring out, " Are we better ? " (Rom. 3. 9), and " What hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it ?" (1 Cor. 4. 7).

Thanks be unto God for the past tenses, " *were* by nature children of wrath," and " such *were* some of you." Salvation is a radical change, and believer have now become children of God. The height of blessing " in Christ Jesus " surpasses our words, and the Holy Spirit ever leads us to worship. " God be thanked, that we *were* the servants of sin," but now having " become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life " (Rom. 6. 17, 20, 22). Well may believers praise, and, rejoicing that their Saviour saves out of every condition morally, as well as every tongue and nation, their hearts may enjoy the prospect of soon seeing Him as the Firstborn among many brethren, with a Manasseh there as much as a John the Baptist. Grace shuts all pride out, but brings all praise in, unto Him That loveth us.

Heavenly Faith has a good security, and a strong cable.

We can talk without profit, even though our talk be on profitable themes, if we are not in the attitude that yearns to please God in the application of His truth.

How wonderful is the grace of God to poor guilty sinners. The more we realize the eternal greatness of the Saviour, and the utter unworthiness of the ones saved, and the way in which those in such complete contrast are brought into living union, the more must we be filled with gratitude for this remarkable manifestation of the mercy of our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit never belittles the glory of Christ, and that which belittles Him is not the work of the Holy Spirit.

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"Madness is in their Heart."

Ecclesiastes 9. 3.

THIS striking expression brings before us that a man may be regarded among his fellows, as sane, and yet be *mad before God.* Indeed, all in the human race are thus deranged, till any flee for refuge to the Saviour of sinners. Is it not madness to set aside eternity, to despise God's salvation, and to take a leap in the dark? Those who have experienced His grace have no doubt as to the answer. But the fact that many remain in the same madness themselves prevents them from seeing it in others.

The language is deeply searching. 'Tis a madness of *heart.* The affections are wrong. Men often choose that which they know harms them: yea, they invariably *love* some sin albeit sin is a deadly poison. Here is the madness of a deranged love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," is the only sanity.

We go forth to preach the gospel of Christ. It may be objections are raised,—with trifling, and quibbling. What shall we say? Have the objectors any proof that our experience is a delusion? None whatever. Can they negative God, or the Scriptures, or His salvation on a priori reasoning,or by any logic or any experience of their own? It is impossible. And yet they still mock on. Is it not madness? But we must ask, "Have men anything *instead* of the Gospel, a substitute for it, which makes them so willing to trifle with that which they disregard, without any concern?" They have nothing! They themselves must confess their own ignorance of the future, and yet can dare to act in this reckless manner. How fearful is such madness. But, alas, we must add yet more. The mocker will usually find many who though they would not speak thus themselves, are ready to smile at his trifling. Is there not a wider madness than we have realized?

Apart from Christ, what does a man know as to the past? He may formulate a philosophy, but he only guesses. And likewise is it as to the future. Only a guess. Death seems certain, and the man who mocks knows he has no guarantee of life for one second, and knows he possesses nothing that he can be sure will remain his for any longer period. In nothing else would such carelessness be recognized, but with regard to the things of God, there exists a madness which has no parallel, and many glory in it. This reveals the ruin as still worse. Without revelation a man ought to be a pessimist. All else is utter madness.

It must be acknowledged that if there is a revelation, if there is the gift of eternal life, if there is a blessed relation to One Who has created all, no privilege or joy can be compared with this. Many, with transformed lives, quickly claim that such is their experience. Madly to refuse to ponder such a declaration, and to judge the whole matter, with an offhand and amused attitude, is suicidal. It is madness, that appals.

We go further. One who can act thus, unmindful of the evidences

of that which he despises, makes manifest that he is not worthy to be heard. He is out of court. And the universality of this sad criminal madness—for it is not of the brain, it is a *responsibility* of the heart and the will—shows a master-hand of iniquity. This is *organized* madness. "The god of this age hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." But men are accountable: for they love to have it so.

Yet, on such a dark background, grace still shines out, and God still declares His wondrous gospel, and souls are still brought from darkness to light. Yea, those who have long been indifferent and blaspheming are welcomed to the Saviour Who they have reproached, when they feel their need. He does not despise a broken heart. But how terrible the risk of continuance in guilt. How sad the sin of ungrateful unconcern, when God's grace is so marvellous. "Behold, *now* is the acceptable time: behold, *now* is the day of salvation." Thanks be unto God for a powerful Gospel, proclaiming the ATONEMENT of THE LORD JESUS, to blot out even the sins of those who have mocked at His atonement. Such is the glory of the grace of God. Such is the love of the Saviour Whom we know. How can we praise Him enough?

Spirituality is not merely made up of a number of correct actions, but depends largely on the *manner* in which they are done. That which which lacks the fragrance of Christ is not spiritual, however exact to rule.

"The Greatest of These is Love."

1 Corinthians 13. 13.

WHY the greatest? Ah, surely our hearts realize something of the reason. We do not associate Faith and Hope particularly with Him Who knows all things, and calls those things which are not as though they were. But "*God* is Love."

Secondly, "*faith* is the substance of things *hoped* for," and "what a man seeth, why doth he yet *hope* for?" But love will never cease: it belongs to heaven and *eternity*. Thus it is the greatest indeed.

Moreover, what can be done rightly without love? How can we believe God unlovingly, or have that Blessed Hope" without loving Christ's Appearing (2 Tim. 4. 8)? Again and again our hearts must realize that "faith worketh by love," and that love enters into everything pleasing to God. There are many things as to which it would be wrong to hope, e.g. a *present* salvation. But what is there that excludes love? True, we "hate" lawlessness, but that is inseparable from the "love" of righteousness. If it is only the negative, it is incomplete.

But what is the knowledge of these facts without the experience of the love concerning which we speak? O that it may be ours in the Holy Spirit to enjoy this, and to glorify God's Name accordingly.

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Ananias and Sapphira.

SATAN soon had his parallel with Achan. The "early church" (in the true use of these often misapplied words) was united and "great grace was upon them all." How could the enemy wedge in something destructive of love's unity? He sought to work by the pocket,—by selfishness,—and by pride of reputation. Achan had coveted, and dissembled. And there was death then. Nor was it otherwise with Ananias. It is a sad, sad story, and sin has a bitter end.

But is there nothing parallel to-day. Ah, we think we see it everywhere *around*. Stay, the first message of Scripture is to our own hearts *within*. Let us not flatter ourselves that we are altogether as Barnabas (Acts 4. 36, 37). What if we "keep back part of the price?" It *may* be in money. It need not be. There are many other illustrations of "keeping back." Perhaps we want the reputation of Barnabas without his devotedness. We may, indeed, seek to do something for the Lord, but self keeps back part of the *time* we meant to give to Him, part of the *strength*, or whatever it may be. And if we are *willing* for this cherished sin to be unjudged, are we not as Ananias, in measure? There may not be the cold, calculating attitude which seems suggested, but there is the germ of the same deadly iniquity.

"Self" ever seems to intrude. "Self" becomes a pitiless tyrant. The only path of blessedness is the judgment of *self*, in the Spirit. Self is often willing for God's work, if it can have its pleasure, and pride in "doing" the work. Have we not felt this? Do we not feel concerned because frequently we see the partial domination of self-pleasing, even in actions which we begin in the Spirit? Galatians 3. 3 has a wealth of application as well as a wealth of meaning. We "keep back part" of that which we said was for the *Lord*, to feed self. But have we not crucified the flesh—crucified, that we may not feed it? Denial of *self* is not saying "yes" to it sometimes, and "no" at other times. Ah, it is easier to deceive ourselves than we realise. But let us be concerned before God, for His joy in spiritual victory. He has *never* judged a broken and contrite heart, nor sent away one who is humbled before Him. 'Tis unjudged sin that is the sin of Ananias. And let us remember that to "agree" with it is to take a share, as Sapphira found. But, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11.31). Let not the *lowly* believer, confessing sin, be in dread of his heavenly Father: there is precious safety when there is holy self-judgment, and 1 John 1. 9 is as true as Acts 5. 5.

Spiritual expectation is right, but if everything is veiled, and trials are many, there is no room for despondency, while God is living. If there is no open encouragement to-day, there is a fulness of encouragement for that Day, and nothing can break God's purpose.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee; if I would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered." Psalm 40. 5.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD has wondrous thoughts. But are we surprised at this? Everything that is His is "marvellous in our eyes." He asked the question of old "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes?" Zechariah 8. 6. And there can only be one answer, for it is written "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things." Ps. 72. 18. It is ordinary with God to do extraordinary things. He needs no effort as we need. He speaks and it is done.

When we realise this, we cannot but admire His great grace. His thoughts are not only on the universe, but on individuals. "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me." With His beloved Son He freely gives His people all things, and it is our joy to use these pages to tell forth something of His love and His will, with a prayerful desire that the writing and the reading may be more and more consciously in His presence, and linked with love's obedience in the Holy Spirit, to the praise of the Glory of His Grace.

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The Death of Christ, and Judgment.

THE grace of God shines out in the death of the Lord Jesus. What wondrous love that **He** should be given up by God the Father for **undeserving** sinners. And the love was equally His own (Gal. 2. 20). But we not only see grace; righteousness is displayed, for grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21). The glory of God's truthfulness is manifest. Not one sin can be excused. Every claim of His holy law must be met. It is not, "Take thy bill, and **sit** down quickly, and write fifty," but provision is made for the full payment of the great debt, that salvation may be entirely free. Hence we are made to **sit** in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the resting place of a redeemed soul, the joy of a believing heart, the glad declaration of one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious. And the Holy Spirit ever leads to the contemplation of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, with its manifold blessings in the experience of a Christian. But righteousness is not only the magnifying of law, it is the display of justice which, outside Christ, would be a crushing weight. And if the warnings of Scripture as to future wrath are very searching, is it not clear that nothing is more terrifying to the sinner than the death of Christ,—**unless he finds his hope there?**

The Lord Jesus was personally sinless, yet the waves of wrath broke upon Him when He took the place of sinners. What hope can there be for the **guilty** one? If God would not pass over sin when it was reckoned to the Righteous One, all hope of extenuation is gone, completely gone. Judgment is holy and severe. The alternative is—Christ, or wrath. If I have Him as my Saviour, there is peace; if I have Him not, there is no peace.

The death of Christ is the evidence that judgment is penal, **not corrective.** How could He have taken **corrective** chastisement? **That** concerns the **condition** of the one enduring it. He took the **position** of the sinner. His substitutionary work is the death blow to all **theories of men.** "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" reveals the doom of those who believe not into Him. The ark met the flood for Noah, but those outside the ark met the flood for themselves. The type was a solemn witness.

And, let it be remembered, death is not annihilation, nor is the sinner's death an escape from wrath. When the Lord Jesus had met the sword, it was needful that His obedience should be rewarded, but it is contrastedly needful that the guilty one should be left in judgment. Nor has the sinner ever finished what Christ finished—the full realization of God's purpose and entire acquiesence therein are essential to the bearing of the law's sentence. Hence the death of Christ should terrify the sinner who does not believe. For it holds out no hope of any compromise, but it **reveals a sure and certain hope** to the heart-broken sinner who believes. "Payment God will not twice demand," and so "we have peace with God."

A Few Scriptural Thoughts on Illness.

ILLNESS is not a chance: there are no mere "happenings" in the experience of a child of God. The theory "God hath forgotten" belongs to the wicked.* It is important not only to know the care of God as to everything, but to think, and act accordingly. All complaints and murmurings are set aside when we remember that nothing comes merely of itself. But illness is definitely connected with sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5. 12), and the outward man is perishing because of sin. This is a humbling thought: there is no suggestion of illness in a glorified body. "This corruptible" (1 Cor. 15. 53) is because we are linked with the first Adam (verses 45-49). I do not mean, "so much sin, so much illness": but the **fact** of sin is the ground of liability to illness. Genesis 3. 16-19 is impressive.

Further, Scripture associates Satan with disease. The climax of **death** is thus viewed where we read of "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2. 14). Christ healed those who were "oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10. 38), and the daughter of Abraham in Luke 13. 16 had been bound by Satan. This thought may be included in Luke 10. 19, and helps to explain why Christ "rebuked" the fever. Moreover, Job 2. 7 comes to mind, and Paul's "thorn in the **flesh**" (2 Cor. 12. 7). It is remarkable, too, that in a quite contrasted case the delivering to Satan in 1 Corinthians 5. 5 is connected with the flesh. But we must never forget that God is over all. Satan could not touch Job without God's permission, and the thorn in the flesh was not only "a messenger of Satan." Paul rightly went to the Lord about it, for it was in the Lord's wisdom. We do not know what is needed for our training. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward" there is precious fruit (Heb. 12. 11). A believer, therefore, is not to view illness merely as a happening, but as allowed to bring him a message from his heavenly Father. The parcel may be wrapped up strangely, but there is a needed lesson, with its true blessing, inside. The primary thought therefore, is not "How can I get well?" but "What is my Father saying to me?" He **could** have prevented, He has **not** prevented, He **now** controls and causes a "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further." Let us seek to thank Him before we do

* The utterances of the wicked in Psalm 10 are very striking: "I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity" (6), "God hath forgotten; He hideth His face; He will never see it" (11), "Thou wilt not require it" (13) The believer's **contrast** is marked.

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anything else, and to hear His voice in every rod (Mic. 6. 9). The dealings of God in bringing a soul to Himself detailed in Job 33. 14-30 and Psalm 107. 17-22 have precious parallels, in their measure, in the experience of a believer whose eyes are open to see the ways of the Lord (Ps. 103. 7). And those ways have a wondrous "end" (Jas. 5. 11, see Ps. 107. 43).

The Ethics of Evolution.

EVOLUTION has many suppositions, **not one fact.** It is not science, but defective inference from insufficient data: First, the foundation is missing, then the intervening stories are not to be found, and lastly, the top stone falls. How precious is the contrast of the spiritual building in which we rejoice and of which Christ is the Head-stone. The usual "evidence" for evolution would not stand the test of any just law court. Specialists are usually biased, and unable to see "proportionately." But the general attraction toward evolution speaks of a heart-**wish,** and this, in a ruined race, becomes a further witness against the dogma. I use the word "dogma" advisedly, for it is nothing else, and the tyranny of pseudo-science to condemn and crush out true Scriptural thinking only reveals a plan greater than that of man. But the greatness is from beneath. He who attacked the truth of Genesis when he said "Ye shall not surely die" still attacks it, but "the Word of our God shall stand for ever," and we can rest. O that men would realize that likeness of species is **not** development, but rather one creatorship and one plan, with striking parallels and **contrasts.** But **men** wish to leave **God** out. May His people exalt Him all the more.

At the present moment I feel that the moral evil of the evolution theory should be earnestly emphasized. If the tree is known by its fruits, **and it is,** the logical inferences from this doctrine proclaim its satanic character. For, first, **evolution excludes One to Whom we are to be thankful:** It is a death-blow to a Personal Creator, and provides nothing to fill this vacuum. Nor is it surprising to see that **worship and praise are thrust out at the same time.** Man is made an animal, yea, less than an animal, the beasts of the field depend on their Creator, and he gives food even to the young ravens that cry. Man degrades himself far beyond these: they have no evolutionary theory: animals do not know: but man parades a lie.

Further, **evolution gives no place to conscience and accountability:** development from unconscious matter rules out all real responsibility, and laughs at a heart-burdened sinner. Hence it **drives away confession of sin, and godly prayer.** Moreover, the survival of the fittest involves the destruction of the unfit: **there is no love in evolution, and hence there is no tenderness to the unfit.** Some who hold the theory may be kindly and grateful, but they act **in spite of** their cruel philosophy. Can a system of this character have anything to commend itself to any **thoughtful** heart? Does it not call forth the sorrow of each **believing** heart?

How blessed in the contrast of the Gospel of the Grace of God. There we find His condescending love that awakens gratitude and praise. The conscience is brought to repentance, and a sense of accountability, the sinner beholds not evolution but a new creation. Confessing sins that burden him, he rejoices in the grace that gives a new life to the guilty and the unfit, because the Son of God's love died for such criminals. The Holy Spirit reveals His matchless love. Evolution is a vain dream of matter climbing up: Salvation is a glorious deliverance because the Lord Jesus came down and took upon Himself the form of a Servant and died for sinners. Praise God for **such a Gospel.**

Addressing the Lord Jesus.

IT is a privilege to speak to God. And let us ever recollect that though the Lord Jesus humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, He was essentially God. Hence in the days of His flesh we do not find that men addressed Him as "Jesus." He often spoke to others by **their** name, but none of His disciples spoke thus to Him. He Himself said, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13. 13). It is sad to hear many to-day forgetting this, and addressing Him as "Jesus," and teaching others, including children, thus to approach the Lord in hymns or prayer. The intention may be good, but we all need more reverence, much more reverence.*

The usual mode of address was **"Lord,"** nor was there any "if" about it. The devil inserted an "if" when he said, "If Thou be the Son of God" **immediately** after the words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17; 4. 3), a daring parallel with his sin in Genesis 3. 4 after 2. 17. But, though men who addressed Christ did not realize fully Who He was, it is wondrous to see how God led to right words, and caused a fuller faith and appreciation in some hearts as days went by. Alas, there were those who were spiritually demonstrative without a living love, and the Lord Jesus refers to this in the "Lord, Lord" of Matthew 7. 22, and Luke 6. 46. The rocky ground hearer is emotional, but shallow.

* Luke 2. 48 is plainly exceptional, but, even there, verse 49 sets forth His glory, and implies correction, though without anything out of place. Luke 17. 13 shows the Lord addressed as "Jesus," but "Master" is linked, and even this was rather the attitude of those who were outside the closeness of discipleship (cf. Mark 10. 47).

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We find, moreover, a number of references to Christ as "Master" or "Teacher" (e.g. Matt. 8. 19, Mark 4. 38, 9. 17, 38, 10. 17, 20, 35). He Himself approves of this address, both in Matthew 26. 18, and John 13. 13. Yet it was often used by those who tempted Him (Matt. 12. 38, 22. 16, 24, 36). Another word, which implies One Who is in charge, and superintends is found in Luke 5. 5, 8. 45, 9. 33, 49, 17. 13. It is blessed to realize that He *is* in control, but how easy to use the word while questioning His wisdom (Luke 8. 24). The Holy Spirit never leads thus.

On more than one occasion He was addressed as the Son of David (Matt. 9. 27, 20. 30, 31). When, however, the Syrophœnician woman adopted this language He lovingly led her to a fuller sense of need and the use of the title "Lord" (Matt. 15. 22, 27). It may be said that the Greek word "Lord" could be used in a wider way, but the context shows there was a special force oftentimes, and the application of Psalm 110. 1 by the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 22. 45, illustrates this. It is solemn to hear the evil spirits speaking to Christ, "Thou Son of God" (Matt. 8. 29, Luke 4. 41), and "Jesus of Nazareth" (Mark 1. 24, Luke 4. 34), and "Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God" (Mark 5. 7). They knew His glory, but loved Him not, and He suffered them not to speak (Luke 4. 41). He would have the glad testimony of heart-believers, the demons believe and tremble (Jas. 2. 19).

But our minds are specially drawn to contemplate the addressing of the Lord Jesus when any were brought to holy ejaculations of praise. Nathanael said "Rabbi,* Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (John 1. 49). This was an overflow from his heart, and prepares us for the bursting forth of adoration from Thomas, no longer doubting, "my Lord and my God" (John 20. 28). Thanks be unto God for the little word "my." How much, too, is wrapped up in the brief utterance of Mary "Rabboni, which is to say, Master" (John 20. 16). The delight of the Song of Songs, too, must not be forgotten, and we would long for more wealth of praise and holy joy in every believing experience.

The stress on the **Lordship** of Christ may well come before us once more. Why did the other disciples say, "Lord," in Matthew 26. 22, and Judas say "Rabbi," in verse 25? In the light of 1 Corinthians 12. 3, and the fact that Satan not only desired but worked upon and entered into the son of perdition (John 13. 2, 27) the change is the more striking, and continued in verse 49. And when we realize that, though Judas by transgression fell, the Lord Jesus **shall** make manifest His **twelve apostles,** it is significant that the first humbled utterance of His chosen vessel Paul is, "Who art Thou, Lord?"

* Cf. John 1. 38, 3. 2, 6. 25, also in Mark 9. 5, 11. 21, though otherwise rendered.

(Acts 9. 5), and then he asked "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22. 10). Can we be surprised that the **Lordship** of Christ has such prominence in the epistles, and there are outpourings of grateful delight in Him, and of adoration? Nor was Paul the only apostle to find music, long years after, in the glorious **Lordship** of Christ. The Scriptures close with the exclamation of joy, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and well may our believing hearts still take up the refrain, in praise that shall not cease till we see Him face to face, and reach the praise that will be sinless and for ever!

"I Have Sinned."

HOW important that the right words should come from a humbled heart. The solemn sentence before us has been uttered by a Pharaoh as well as a David. Confession of sin with the contrite heart of Isaiah 57. 15 is ever accepted, but if we say with Saul "I have sinned: yet honour me now," how can we expect spiritual encouragement? Acknowledgment of sin is not merely a quick way of escaping certain dangers. Simon Magas cried out, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of **these things** which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8. 24). But the exercised soul is concerned about the sin, not merely about "these things."

It may be a help to many a believer to collect occurrences of these words, and classify them.

Pharaoh: "I have sinned this time" (Ex. 9. 27). "I have sinned against the Lord your God" (Ex. 10. 16). In each case he soon adds his desire for the removal of the plague.

Balaam: "I have sinned; for I knew not . . . now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again" (Num. 22. 34). Surely he **knew** his path was displeasing.

Achan: "Indeed I have sinned" (Jos. 7. 20): but no confession till found out.

Saul: "I have sinned, yet honour me now" (1 Sam. 15. 24), and "I have sinned: return, my son David" (1 Sam. 26. 21). But how untrustworthy had Saul proved.

Shimei: "Thy servant doth know that I have sinned" (2 Sam. 19. 20). How different would the action have been if he had gone forth to the **rejected** David.

Judas: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood (Matt. 27 4): a bitter cry of remorse, with its solemn message, "Too late." May its message have fruit in our lives.

It is refreshing to turn to holy contrasts. First we think of—

David: "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12. 13), with the holy emphasis of felt sorrow in Psalm 51. 4, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy

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sight." A deep sense of God's standpoint. David sinned grievously, but repented truly. Likewise was it as to his numbering of the people: "David's heart smote him . . and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done" (2 Sam. 24. 10, cf. "I have done wickedly" in verse 1, and note the Holy Spirit's emphasis in the record of 1 Chron. 21 8, 17). Observe the exercise of soul before Gad the prophet arrived. In Psalm 41. 4, too, David wrote "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee."

Nehemiah: "I and my father's house have sinned" (Neh. 1. 6, cf. 11).

Micah: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him" (Mic. 7. 9: evidently the prophet felt the guilt of the nation too).

The "Lost-Found" Son: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee" (Luke 15. 18, 21).

Nor can we forget the one brought before us by Elihu, when God graciously humbles, "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned" (Job 33. 27). How wondrous is the response. "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

The plural occurrences also are helpful. Aaron and Miriam are before us in Numbers 12. 11. In the many cases of Israel's repentance there is much to learn. In Numbers 14. 40 (Deut. 1. 41), there was remorse rather than holy sorrow, but how tenderly God dealt with the nation in Numbers 21. 7. We rejoice in all encouragement in Judges 10. 10, 15: the added words, "Do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee" seem to suggest a measure of heart-brokenness. We are grateful for 1 Samuel 7. 6, and see how Samuel rightly pressed for confession of sin by his record in chapter 12. 10. So it is in the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 8. 47, 2 Chron. 60. 37), and is there not a need for more of this attitude, and less mere profession to-day? Should we not seek for this? The psalmists and the prophets sought to lead Israel to such a condition before the Lord (Psalm 106. 6, Isa. 64. 5, Jer. 8. 14, Lam. 5. 16). Daniel 9. 5, 8, 11, 15, must be impressive to each humble heart. Jeremiah 3. 25, through the introductory parallel with Zechariah 12, 10, seems to lead out our voices in praise that God **will** bring Israel to this holy confession of sin, and we may well close with a personal heart-echo of the language of Jeremiah 14. 7, "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, **do Thou it for Thy Name's sake:** for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee" (cf. 20).

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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." John xiv. 21.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a great privilege to have a message of certainty. There is NO DOUBT as to the gospel. God really saves real sinners, and then makes them His own children for eternity. These pages must have no uncertain sound. They are to exalt Christ, not a man, or a system, or a society. Christ is to be central, else the publication is vain.

And when a soul is saved the words of the verse above apply. How sad it is to make light of Christ's commands. Theories of partial inspiration would leave us in continual uncertainty. The stress of the Lord Jesus Christ on His commands must imply an authoritative message, or all is vain. And how blessed is the attached promise. "Our abode with him!"—marvellous words. Grace is wonderful.

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Loved Less. (2 Corinthians 12. 15).

LOVE, of a heavenly character, is very lovely. God so loved that He **gave,** and He will rest in His love. And the love of His people, caused by His love (1 John 4. 19) is likewise very beautiful,—beautiful to Him. Natural affection, moreover, though like the fading flower of grass, is a wondrous relief in a sad world. We think of a mother's love (Isa. 49. 15), and of affection that "cleaves" closely in home ties (Gen. 2. 24). But there is much "love" that exists only in name. It is paraded,

and it is talkative, but it is not "love." Everything that is beautiful, and that brings advantages, suggests, to an evil mind, "an imitation." The more valuable the metal, the greater is the attraction to counterfeit. And unconsciously many grow in selfishness when they **think** that they love. It is easy to see how this is possible when there is no self-judgment, for true love is occupied with **the one loved,** in a way that may burden the one loving, but many **enjoy their happiness** in **loving.** True, the one who loves does rejoice, for love is not miserable, but if the parent or the child, or the believer, makes personal joy primary, how much selfishness may intermingle. The apostle's love to the Corinthian children of God was "after a godly manner." He loved even when they misunderstood and misrepresented. And His **love still grew.** We call to mind 2 Thessalonians 1. 3, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other **aboundeth."** Living love is able to grow. True the apostle loved less than his Master, but humbly sought to imitate Him. And many waters could not quench the Saviour's love (S. of S. 8. 7). And a redeemed soul who truly feels unworthiness, loveth "much" (Luke 7. 47). But the alternative "loveth little" is mentioned by the Lord Jesus in the same verse. And the Corinthians loved God's servant less. This was evident, for they slandered him, and spoke unkindly against him. But he **would** not leave his first love (Rev. 2. 4); although meeting a spirit of disobedience that reminds of the lawlessness of Matt. 24. 12, his love remained warm—yea, and warmer. The enemy was defeated, even when the thorn in the flesh only brought forth greater praise, and the reproaches caused him to take pleasure in the means of the Lord's gracious refining.

But let us observe why the Corinthians loved less. They were like the Galatians and did not want to be reproved (Gal. 4. 16). There is a theory abroad that love is sentimental indulgence, and never points out mistakes. The condition of heart that hates reproof is not manly, it is worse than childish (Prov. 12. 1). But do not **we** need to beware of this? Paul was **less loved** because he sought the true profit of God's dear people. He does not say that there was no love, but there was **less.** If we have any responsibility in the Lord's service, and care as to others, what need we have to pray for victory over the sin of the Ephesian angel, and if we are cared for by others who guide us, what a danger there is lest we love them less if they are faithful. Hence the loving exhortation of 1 Thessalonians 5. 13, and Hebrews 13. 7. We are apt to overlook that there may be love, and real love, and yet it may be "less." There may be more dross with the precious metal, when there should be more gold, and the dross should decrease. This will be our experience if we are led by the Holy Spirit, and growing in grace.

"The Temple."

"THE temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." Thus said the disobedient people in Jeremiah's day (7. 4), and there is always a tendency to trust to an "it" (1 Sam. 4. 3), and, moreover, to substitute ritual for reality, even as religion for regeneration. The glory of a "place," instead of God's glory **making** the place holy, appeals to the natural man. Wherever God dwells there is a Sanctuary—including the heart of a humble and contrite believer. But Jerusalem's temple without Him was desolate (Matt. 23. 38).

The theory of Judaism was the perpetuity of its privileges apart from obedience. Hence the words of Jeremiah 7. 12-14. Romanism still misuses the words of Christ, "The gates of hell shall not prevail," to assume the continuance of a corporate witness and points to itself. Such is the standpoint of man. He will bend the Scripture to exalt self rather than be bent or moulded himself to fit the Scripture. There are more Popes than one. Every man has his Pope—ofttimes "himself"—till he is humbled before the Lord of glory.

The great outcry against Stephen included this charge, "Blasphemous words against this place," "we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy **this place"** (Acts 6. 13, 14). His accusers could defile the place with their sin, and that was nothing! But when Stephen showed that the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, yet is, nevertheless, willing to come and make His abode with one of a contrite and homble spirit, his words were resented. In like manner to-day a Jew may become utterly irreligious or worldly, and his family are often little troubled, but let him confess Christ, and they regard him as dead. Such is man.

Those who attacked Paul in Acts 21 were enthusiastic for the temple, "This is the man . . that . . brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (28). It is easy to be a ritualist without any real love to truth. How many has the writer met, from other lands also, who have **religion** but no **spirituality.** They can talk religion at length, but never seem to connect it with love and holiness. Religion can please the flesh: it can become a pastime, and a hobby, or a parade and a boast. How different is the deep work of God's Holy Spirit. A man can be an enthusiast without love, a devotee without holiness.

It is not enough to see the faults of others. **We too need more reality.** Orthodoxy often trusts in orthodoxy, and if we do what is right, Satan seeks to make us proud of doing it. If he cannot keep us from obedience, he would nullify by encouraging our confidence in "it." There is no safety except

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in the path of humility, and there we need grace **day by day.** We cannot boast of to-morrow as to our godliness. The Holy Spirit never leads a man to pride. Boasting in self is never heard within the sanctuary, and he who boasts proclaims loudly that he stands outside.

And may not this reference to the Sanctuary introduce our heavenly counterpart with Israel's temple of old? Just as the "things that are made" were to lead to worship of the One Whose eternal power and Godhead they showed (Rom. 1. 20), and just as the animal sacrifices (which could not take away sins) were to lead to **Christ,** so the Jewish temple was to lead to the joy of "the heavenly things themselves." When Christ spake of the temple of His body, the people thought of an earthly building, and 46 years, we rejoice in His resurrection, and His people's union with Him because of His death. "On this Rock will I build My church"—for more than 46 years, His body the church. Here we have the house of the Lord (1 Pet. 2. 5), a wondrous temple. The "supposing" of the Jews of Asia that Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple (Acts 21. 29) contains much food for thought. **They** could not imagine Paul taking a vow, and cutting himself off from his brethren who were Gentiles by birth. They knew his normal concern for Jew and Gentile to be owned as one in Christ. And the Holy Spirit's teaching through Paul **had** shown that Trophimus **was** brought into the temple—a very different one from the desolate house (Matt. 23. 38) from which Paul was drawn out, and of which the doors were shut (30). Thanks be to God for a fellowship from which believers will never be drawn out. Do we sufficiently realize God's stress on His people as His own dwelling place—both individually (Isa. 57. 15, 1 Cor. 3. 16), and collectively (2 Cor. 6. 16)? We have not the deep concern of David (1 Chron. 22. 5, 29. 3): but why not? We do not feel the preciousness of worship. Our Heavenly Father has not simply put His people in a place of safety, but He has given them the dignity of becoming **His** house. and if we remember this we shall see the point of John 2. 16. The individual believer, too, will feel "I am not here to get on in the world or to make money, but to glorify God." How blessed to be thus privileged. And reverting to the unity of the redeemed, it is a joy, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to remember that we, sinners of the Gentiles by nature as most of us were, are in the one temple and the one olive tree, of which Christ is Foundation and Root. Any system that would keep a believing Trophimus out of this temple is wrong. yet we can all keep ourselves out of the present illustration of it by sectarian action or a sectarian spirit: may this thought bring us to holy humiliation, without which revival only exists in name and counterfeit.

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Inferences.

IT is so natural to draw inferences, but is it always wise? The king of Israel drew his own inference in 2 Kings 5. 7. "Consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." But God meant, on the contrary, a wonderful deliverance of Naaman, and meant it with a view to Christ's message in Luke 4. 27. Again, the inference of 2 Kings 7 was a complete mistake: "I will now show you what **the Syrians** have done to us." No! Grace, though promised, seemed too wonderful to the king. Unbelief is always **foolishly clever** at inferences. And there are many examples of this in Scripture and in our own history. Israel's spies said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (Num. 13. 31). Even "David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1 Sam. 27. 1). But had not the Lord promised him the Kingdom? In like manner the disciples drew inferences from the storm **instead of** from Christ's words (Mark 4. 35), and said "We perish" (Matt. 8. 25). Faith also has its inferences but they are based on God's testimony, not circumstances, and the seeming foolishness of faith is wiser than unbelief, because it depends on God. Yet even when we are at prayer there is the danger of an obstinate unreadiness to believe. Mark the inference of Acts 12. 15, "Thou art mad." Then, when Rhoda persisted, "It is his angel." Any inference except the right one!

Another aspect is well known, and comes under the head of evil surmises. We remember the results of the misinterpretation of the princes of Ammon in 2 Samuel 10. 3. And many have had weary days and nights and worried themselves, and some have been unfair to others, through insinuations, and it is grievous to add that children of God have failed in this matter. Moreover, the inference once made is often held with a more and more harmful tenacity. The mind is soon "persuaded" that self's interpretation is a true one, and pride hinders confession of sin, and of the acknowledgement, "I have no proof." The imputation of motives involves one of the commonest forms of bearing false witness and stealing, and believers need to pray for grace to resist this besetting sin. If you think you know why so-and-so did not speak to you, and why someone else did something you do not like, put your hand on your mouth, and judge even your "thinking." "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" This thought is very important. Unless Scripture tells you "why," or a man declares his **motive,** while hating evil wherever found, do not assume you know the **reason** for an action, which may be thoughtlessness, not unkindness. This self-judgment is one of the best medicines for your own heart, but, above all, let

us receive it to the glory of God. Elementary principles of righteousness in these matters are never made unimportant by spiritual heights of experience.

We need grace to guard against wrong inference from Scripture. Satan misused Psalm 91, and the Lord Jesus, in His perfect reply, marked out the meaning of "to keep thee in all thy ways," and unveiled the sin of tempting God. Yet how often even believers have applied a promise wrongly.* and as to actions, let us seek to wait more upon God. The psalm truly said that another was to take the office of Judas, but it did not say who was to appoint, or when. If only the disciples had **waited** till the day of Pentecost, according to Luke 24. 49, the aspect of Acts 1 would be different.† But our Heavenly Father's patience shines out. They **wished** to please Him, yet—Ah, we can draw mistaken inferences even when we are devoted in our love, as Mary Magdalene when she said, "**They have taken away** the Lord out of the Sepulchre." Again we see how mistakes enter, through almost unconscious unbelief. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God," has its message for many more than Sadducees.

Deductions from coincidences also must be carefully tested. We all remember the ship going to Tarshish. If a door is opened, let us find out by humble prayer if it is "in the Lord" (2 Cor. 2. 12, lit.) Even the weather may be misinterpreted. "When the south wind blew softly, **supposing they had obtained their purpose. . .** they sailed" (Acts 27. 13). We know how soon the tempest wind came.

All these things shew the subject is a vast one, and full of spiritual teaching. The scientist has certain facts from which inferences are possible entirely contrasted from his own, yet he often quite confuses the facts with **his** deductions and often seems to come to imagine they are identical. Hence the baseless evolution-theory. If our hearts have been opened to avoid this sin against God's revelation, and error of mind against all sound reasoning, let us not boast of our wisdom. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" was a very striking message in 2 Chronicles 28. 10. How few test their own inferences as earnestly as they dissect those to which they are opposed.

To sum up, beloved fellow believers. This subject is practical for our every day life, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. It seems to the writer that the four main divisions of wrong inference, that works harmfully among believers also, are—

(1) Inferences as to circumstances and the attitude of others, etc., causing despondency and attacking faith. (Common

* Sometimes one finds a dear believer who draws wrong inferences against himself, and misapplies the Lord's warnings. It is Satan's attempt to overburden when he cannot gain his ends otherwise: a **troubled** believer needs to be reminded of **promises.**

† A leaflet gladly sent.

when unwell: the Lord does not lead to remorse but to repentance, and then to rest in His forgiveness).

(2) Inferences as to the attitude and actions of others, advancing to unkind surmises, suggestions and insinuations. (Quite contrasted with the previous failure).

(3) Inferences that bring self-confidence, and are followed by varied bold steps in our own life, which have a reaction (e.g., misapplication of God's promises, causing presumption first and then disappointment).

(4) Inferences which put self's interpretations of Scripture on the level of Scripture. I am not pleading for indecision. We should know what we know. There is no room for uncertainty as to salvation by the blood of Christ. There is no "other side" to such a question. But most humble minded believers, who pray against bias, must surely feel the need for a loving warning against self's intrusion even in our holy things. How we need the gracious humbling of our Heavenly Father, and humility before Him at all times. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). The Holy Spirit ever leads to lowliness and balance of mind; Satan's counterfeit can be distinguished from God's reality in the light of the sanctuary.

Using Psalm 119 to God's Glory.

OUR Heavenly Father enabled a reprint of my dear father's plea for learning and living Psalm 119, and some jottings on the verses. He has graciously added His blessing, as letters testify, and some evidently desire further help in the prayerful study. And this is well, for we do need to **use** the Scriptures. It is remakable how much God has given us there. Spiritual food and medicine alike are in ample supply. And there is more in Scripture for the education of the children and the brightening of their families than we realize. A few suggestions, therefore, may help, but are to be regarded as introductory rather than complete. Many other ways of using the words of God will be impressed on the hearts of those who wait long enough to hear God's voice.

My father urged learning, or revising, a section weekly, two verses on the Lord's Day, and one on other days, though going over the preceding verses again. The thought was, "Ruminate and meditate as well as write out: seek God's application to your own heart and condition."

It is interesting to record that the day before he fell asleep in Christ he reached verses 57 and 58, and his wish was honoured in that the latter verse was then made a blessing in his experience.

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The preparation of a concordance to one book of Scripture is not at all an unnecessary suggestion. The Holy Spirit has "special words" that are not noticed in the breadth of one for the whole Bible. Accordingly my father made a concordance for Psalm 119. It has not yet been published. In some ways it would be more helpful for a believer to get a fair sized "Where is It?" and compile his own. Too often we gather other men's work and lose the privilege of the labour that makes the fruit more refreshing. "Purpose of heart" will be needed: it is easy to begin.

Various other helpful studies will necessarily be linked, e.g., the discovery of varied names for God's commandments, and the frequency and distribution of each: also references to various parts of the body. (e.g., the eyes, the mouth, etc.) in their devoted use for the Lord. Thus one study will help another, and it is important that all should be practical, and in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The prayerful believer may be encouraged in thinking out fresh studies to impress God's gracious teaching. The constant emphasis on "My" and "Thy" is precious. What verses contain these claiming pronouns **more** than once? What verses, moreover, illustrate the stress Christ illustrated when He said, "Me and My words." If in one part we read, "Blessed art **Thou,** O Lord," how often we have in the other, "Teach me Thy statutes," or something similar. Precious, indeed, is this instruction, that we may not have mistaken ideas of communion with Himself apart from His words, and that we may not, on the other hand, exalt a mental acquaintance with His words apart from seeking a holy intimacy with Himself.

The verses are evidently arranged by the Holy Spirit in a very definite way. An acrostic implies this. And even children may be encouraged to recollect the numbers, and their minds sharpened (observe Deut. 6. 7 marg.) by such questions as "verse 23?" Then "twice 23?"—the same theme: "54?"—(My songs): "twice 54?" (the sacrifice of praise): "82?" "add half 82!" (123 has the **eyes** again): "the last verse of section 13?"—"Of three sections further on?"—and so forth. Let all the labour be with love and it will not be lost, but rather there will be the desire to know more fully the meaning of the verses, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light," and "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant." Have not some dear children of God found their enthusiasm for Scripture grow as they have fed it, and shall we not look upward that the verses which speak of loving God's law may yet be more and more illustrated in our daily life?

(If the Lord will, to be reprinted as a leaflet).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"We have thought of Thy loving kindness, O God."
Psalm 48. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is easy, and natural, to be happy in the sunshine: many a man trusts to pleasant circumstances more than he realizes. But the gospel of the grace of God is a gospel for the darkest night. God's lovingkindness is wonderful. Spiritual things applied by the Holy Spirit have a real value to a believing heart. Can we understand why God loved us, with a love so costly, to lift underserving ones to a height so incomprehensible, and to bring them not only to a nearness, but to a living and eternal union and intimacy? Are we expected to understand "why?" or invited to praise, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11. 26)? To glorify God in the realization of these realities, and to lead to corresponding obedience, are these pages sent forth.

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"To the Rest speak I, not the Lord."

1 Corinthians 7. 12.

See Page 68: A Misprint

MANY children of God have pondered carefully, and prayerfully, the words of 1 Corinthians 7. "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment," "Not the Lord," "I think also that I have the Spirit of God." and so forth. They have rightly realized that Scripture makes a definite claim to authority, and, moreover, that "uncertainty," indi-

cated nowhere but possible **anywhere,** might be assumed **everywhere,** and thus the whole fabric of inspiration would be ruthlessly destroyed. Thanks be unto God, a living faith has been graciously granted, and the Holy Spirit has enabled myriads to rest joyfully on the ever assailed, yet overcome, words of truth. The character and history of Scripture entirely harmonizes with the acknowledgment of its verbal inspiration, and with nothing else. Unquestionably Christ and the apostles knew nothing of critical doubts. Hence many dear children of God have learnt (in the mercy of God), that they need not wait till they can interpret every verse before they can testify their unqualified faith: they have known enough, by grace, to be trustful, and by faith they have understood more and more.

The first clue we seem to find here is in the words, "Every man has **his proper** gift of God" (7): The Holy Spirit is dealing with actions as to which **all** are not called to the same path, but the right path for each must be according to his, or her, heart condition, and via personal experience. Hence there cannot be a **general** command. The indefiniteness is part of the training for each. This not only applies to verse 5, but to verse 38. The writer recollects his concern—"How could two actions be good, and one better, if the will of God is holily fixed?" Then he learnt that the two actions are not better for the same person in the same condition. A better action implies a condition to carry it out to God's glory. Finally, he was brought to see "good" and "better" in a contrasted context in verses 8 and 9, where the "better" is because the good path could not be well carried out by some in their spiritual condition then, even though the strenuous times seemed to impress the desirability of this path (verse 26). Carefully distinguish this alternative from anything which is wrong **in itself:** no "condition" can make that the Lord's will.

Next we find a clue in that the Lord Jesus set forth the command of verse 10 in Matthew 5. 32, 19. 6, 9. Hence the apostle lays stress on this groundwork, and indicates that there was no such previous command regarding the other matters, **nor was he inspired to give one.** There was no more denial of **verbal inspiration** than where John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1 John 3. 2.). Is there any difficulty in **complete inspiration** to record an experience, or to record that God was not pleased to indicate one path for all, as to marriage, but to help His people's individual **soul** exercise, by "advice" (verse 25)? Paul records his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, and adds "I suppose, therefore," illustrating his truthfulness, and that he would not appoint authoritatively, as he does elsewhere, without warrant. Hence the statement no more invalidates

inspiration than other equally **inspired records of feelings and actions,** but it illustrates the fact the Holy Spirit marks out what is **authoritative,** and what is **inspired record.** If we have no qualifying words like these here, we grieve Him when we refuse to obey:—e.g., the apostle records no limitation in 1 Corinthians 14. 34-40, yet many sinfully speak of the declarations as "Paul's opinions," when they are "the commandments of the Lord" (37) through him. It is dangerous to withhold love's obedience.

To return to chapter 7. A **third** clue is found when we rightly place the word "also" in the English of verse 40. "But I think that **I also** have the Spirit of God." The very next verse (8. 1) shows a holy rebuke. Many at Corinth disparaged Paul and boasted of themselves: with love's searching irony he said that he thought he **also** had God's Spirit. Again 14. 37 comes to view. There were those who thought themselves to be prophets, and spiritual. And the peril is not passed.

Possibly children of God who have been exercised as to these verses will find if they read the chapter again, in the light of these three clues, from the very passage itself, their difficulties will be changed, and they will be grateful to God for the glorious instruction and **the gracious way** in which He deals with His people to help their spiritual growth and exercise. May this be our own experience.

Some of God's Paradoxes.

"Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew 16. 25.

"He that is called in the Lord, a servant (slave), is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (slave)." 1 Corinthians 7. 22.

"As having nothing and yet possessing all things." 2 Corinthians 6. 10.

"In nothing am I behind . . . though I be nothing." 2 Corinthians 12. 11.

"When I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12. 10.

"I know . . . thy poverty, but thou art rich." Revelation 2. 9.

"Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." 2 Corinthians 8. 2.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child the same is greatest (the greater) in the Kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 18. 4.

"He that is less in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." Matthew 11. 11. (lit.).

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A Few Verses that bring Fuller Blessing by more Exact Rendering.

1 Corinthians is before me just now.* May our gracious God and Father grant His enabling and blessing, with clearness, and simplicity.

1. 13. "Were ye baptized INTO the Name of Paul?" So "into" in Matthew 28. 19, that, henceforth, actions may be "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3. 17). How much more this means than merely utterance of a few words at the time of baptism, however precious those words are in themselves.

1. 31. The words "in the Lord" may go with BOTH parts of the verse; He that glorieth in the Lord, let him keep on glorifying. He **is not** called to stop such holy "boasting."

2. 2. "For I did not determine to know anything among you:" this, though at first sight less emphatic, is more impressive. To be RESOLUTE to declare Christ is easier than to be KEPT FROM ALMOST-UNCONSCIOUS PLANNING to win interest, by worldly-wise methods of conciliation or attraction.

3. 3. "According to man:" the contrast "according to God" is implied, and thus should believers walk "in the Spirit."

4. 4. "I know nothing with myself" seems strange English. The thought is of consciousness of excused guilt, HIDDEN from others. How important is this verse in days when sins of ignorance are excused. "I am not conscious (of anything) (kept) to myself."

4. 21. "With a rod, or in love" may imply that a rod would not be loving. "In a rod (i.e., wrapped up in it) or in love," may sound less idiomatic, but it brings before us the godly use of love's rod, as a contrast with a manner that HIDES LOVE AWAY **INSIDE** THE ROD. How many sins have been increased through wrong mannerisms.

6. 12. "I will not be brought under the power of any-THING" seems to fit the context here.

***7. 11.** "But if she has even departed," i.e., prior to receiving the command of verse 10. The unusual version implies she may break that precept. How exact are the "tenses" of the Holy Spirit.

7. 31. "As not using to the full extent:" the same word in 9. 18. where this thought is implied (see 9. 12).

7. 40. "But I think that I ALSO have the Spirit of God." A rebuke of their boasting of the guidance of the Spirit: a helpful message for to-day. The word "also" is among the easiest to misplace in translation.

9. 4. "Have we not AUTHORITY to eat and to drink?"

9. 17, 18. "I have been entrusted with a stewardship—what therefore is my reward?—that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge." If we read "that" with verse 17, the earnest parenthetic question is clear. What an intense realization of trusteeship! Too often we use the Lord's blessings selfishly. Even spiritual things may be used for self. It is possible to be PROUD of truth as much as of error, and to employ a REAL gift and enabling from God, largely forgetful of love's responsibility.

10. 13. "Temptation belonging to man." "Common to man" narrows the thought. The contrast is between **God** and **Man.** The One Who makes the way out is STRONGER than the temptation. HE DOES NOT TEMPT, but meets the need (Jas. 1. 13). James 1. 14 implies, I think, that "belonging to man" here suggests the man HIMSELF. The form of the adjective may almost signify, "made of a man," and James shows that the "material" of temptation is in SELF ("His own desire"). This is important, when some would rather blame Satan to excuse themselves. How important is judging oneself (and denying oneself) in the light of this Scripture.

See Page 68: A Misprint

10. 31. This verse may be viewed as in inverted commas. It is a quoted objection, which the Holy Spirit answers in 32.

***11. 15.** "Corresponding with a covering," "over against a covering," not "instead of," which would nullify the argument of the Holy Spirit. Many dear children of God have missed this important word of guidance. The same preposition is found in Ephesians 5. 31, 2 Thessalonians 2. 10 ("corresponding with the fact they received not"), Hebrews 12. 2 ("over against the joy"). Naturally that which is "over against" is SOMETIMES "instead" (e.g., Matt. 5. 38, 20. 28), but not necessarily, and each context will make clear.

11. 21. "Taketh before." The italicized "other" is misleading. The thought is taking ONE'S OWN supper just before the Lord's Supper. Many not seeing this, have assumed intoxicating wine at the breaking of bread. But their suggestion is based on the word erroneously added. The one reproved used such wine at his own supper. Lest the reaction should be "fasting communion," which naturally ALTERS the "supper" to the morning, the Holy Spirit graciously inspired verses 22 and 34. How wondrous are God's forewarnings against various errors.

11. 25. "The new **covenant**." The mistaken variation may lead some to FORGET that present-day believers are in the new covenant. We hear little of God's COVENANT to-day: man's glory is emphasized.

11. 29. In this verse the words "of the Lord" appear to have been written as a COMMENT, apparently not in the oldest manuscripts. (How marvellously God has preserved the

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text of Scripture, and enabled, by comparison of manuscripts, the discovery of any errors in transcription before printing: we do not realize the difficulty of preservation when everything was written. Are we thankful enough?) The verb is the same as the first in verse 31. Hence "he that eateth and drinketh judgment to himself eateth and drinketh not throughly **judging the body**" (i.e., his body: some Corinthians were indulging their body, hence this holy reproof). "If we would throughly judge ourselves we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened OF THE LORD." A marvellous unveiling of grace, and CHASTENING grace. Believers may often avoid the need for some chastisement by self-judgment, but if we have failed to do so, how tenderly (yet firmly) our Heavenly Father supplies that which is requisite "THAT we should not be condemned with the world."

14. 11. **Not** a barbarian in the modern English meaning, **but** "one who speaks a language not understood," a foreigner: believers are to help one another as brethren.

14. 23. "On to the same object" (lit.)—more than **physical** nearness.

15. 2. "Through which also ye are being saved. With what word did I preach the gospel to you?—if you hold it fast, except and unless ye believed in vain." The A.V. might suggest salvation by memory, and it misses the graphic question. Evidently the "word" whereby Paul preached the gospel (cf. "the word of the cross," 1. 18) included "the words of THIS LIFE" (Acts 5. 20, resurrection, cf. Acts 17. 18). This emphatically opens a chapter full of stress on Christ's resurrection and His people's.

***15. 29.** "Baptized taking the place of the dead," filling up the ranks of those depleted by martyrdom. Those baptized were enrolled in a suffering army, and took the place of those who had not loved their lives unto the death (Rev. 12. 11).

15. 55. "O **death,** where is thy sting? O DEATH, where is thy victory?" The Holy Spirit does not use the word "Hades" here, although perusal of Hosea 13. 14 would at first have led us to expect this. Through the simple change of one word, He seems to emphasize—

(a) Believers NOW have the victory as to Hades, not only "then," (verse 54). This entirely accords with the fact that since Christ's finished work they go to Paradise (Phil. 1. 23).

(b) "Death" and "Hades," when mentioned together, refer to the body and soul RESPECTIVELY. This prevents a misuse of Psalm 6. 5. "No remembrance" is linked with the body.

(c) Believers have not yet a glorified body. They wait for "the redemption of the body" in the precious "then" when Christ comes again. This is a practical message of deep importance, and helps humble children of God to see HOW they can trust Him for this "body of humiliation," and WHAT they should expect, and WHAT not expect, for their physical frame.

May God's gracious working make all our study practical, and thus resultful in worship, love and obedience, unto His own glory.

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* Similar notes on other books of Scripture are possible, if believers find helpful. Some may wish to let us know as to this. Leaflets are available for verses marked with an asterisk.

"The Passing over of Sins that are Past."

Romans 3. 25 (margin).

THE law made nothing perfect (Heb. 7. 19): the sacrifices offered year by year continually (Heb. 10. 1) proclaimed, by Divine appointment, their own insufficiency. They were intended backgrounds for the contrasted glory of the Lord Jesus. But what did God arrange as to sins in the old dispensation? And how did His people receive forgiveness? "By faith," as Hebrews 11 shows, they embraced promises, and the gospel was preached to believing Abraham (Gal. 3. 8). Galatians 3. 23, 24 makes clear the position of those who received the Spirit of servitude (cf. 4. 1, 2). God gave them foretastes of forgiveness because the work of His beloved Son was absolutely certain. Thus they had "the substance of things hoped for," and could rejoice. But what did God arrange as to their sins? Romans 3.25 gives the only occurrence in the New Testament of a word which is to be entirely distinguished from **forgiveness.** The margin helps us. The verb occurs once also, "the hands that hang down" (Heb. 12. 12):—it signifies, "To let fall beside," or "to send aside." Forgiveness is the "sending away," in Romans 3. 25 we have the "sending aside,"* The accuracy of Scripture is always impressive.

The sins were not judged, not put away, not removed. They were "put aside **in the forbearance of God.**" Forbearance does not save, nor does it condemn. It does not give, nor does it punish. Forbearance waits, grace gives, and grace reigns through righteousness. God's righteousness is now declared, it was **not** declared before! It is by the propitiatory work of Christ that righteousness shines out. It was needful that there should be a vindication of His holiness, **"because of** the putting aside of sins that are passed in the forbearance of God" without any adequate sacrifice. This seemed to be excusing,—nay, it **would** have so seemed, if the sacrifice of Christ had not been typified and prophesied throughout. This verse makes

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very evident that **mercy** without the work of the Lord Jesus Christ would have been indulgent injustice. "Forbearance" is beautiful if there is a righteousness way of salvation as well, but, without this, forbearance would be a defect. The glory of God's character is the **harmony** and working together of His attributes.

Hence this verse, with the use of a unique word, contains one of God's fullest explanations of His attitude as to the sins of His people before Christ came, and the "making to meet" of iniquity (Isa. 53. 6) becomes more impressive. Hebrews 9. 15 illustrates. Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant,† that by means of death, with a view to redemption from the transgressions resting on the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9. 15). Hence saints of all dispensations are now blessed together in a heavenly position (Heb. 12. 23, cf. 11. 40).

The precious type of Numbers 35 gives a sidelight on the condition of old time saints before their Saviour came. The man marked out for mercy was safe from the avenger in the city of refuge, before the high priest died, but he lacked **freedom** and his **inheritance** (verse 28). In the fulness of time the great High Priest came, and His death was a designed contrast with that of those who were not suffered to continue by reason of death. By His death, redeemed ones receive the **eternal inheritance,** and each believing heart may well break forth into praise for the riches of God's grace. It is wonderful to be "accepted in the Beloved," "the righteousness of God in Him."

*ἄφεσις, παρεσις. The Septuagint, it appears, does not use the latter. This emphasizes the uniqueness.

† There seems no Scriptural reason for the altered translation of this word in Hebrews 9. 15-20.

"Till." What a contrast between the "until" of Daniel 11. 36 and that of 1 Corinthians 11. 26. The enemy prospers awhile but he shall be laid low. And then—judgment will fall. But the believer has a bright prospect. His beloved Lord is coming back. And there is no full stop to His glory. Happy are they who rejoice in "that Blessed Hope."

"Thy statutes have been my **songs.**" God wishes us to set all His words (not only His promises) to heart-music. If we find discord, it is because we prefer a house in the cities of the plain to the house of our **pilgrimage** (Ps. 119. 54).

There are many verses of Scripture of which the fruit is still untasted by many believers.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Hebrews 6.19.

A Word of Introduction.

"WE HAVE a strong city;" this song shall yet be sung (Isa. 26. 1), and at once the word "Salvation" is uttered. A precious thought. There is no weakness in salvation. There is no defeat in God's grace. It is on this account that we delight to send forth these pages to His glory. Those who belong to the Jerusalem that is above, have indeed a strong city. Their life is hid with Christ above; they have an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast. The testimony of the gospel has no uncertain note. "In Christ" is "yea" (2 Cor. 1. 19), and we need not be, and are not, ashamed of His gospel (Rom. 1. 16). Amid changing times and opinions, let us rejoice in, and emphasize, God's unchanging words.

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God's Control of History.

MAN still boasts of his "freedom:" a miserable boast. The more he is "free from righteousness" (Romans 6. 20), the more enslaved he is! What freedom is it to be the slave of self? Cravings are not friends, but tyrants, though they do not call themselves such. Yet it is true that God is not working the world as a mere machine. **Man has something of his own,** by Divine permission, but without Divine approval. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God:

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for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of **his own lust** and enticed" (Jas. 1. 13, 14). We repeat the words, "Man has something of his own:" and he is solemnly accountable, and will be held guilty when he uses this self-will—often called "free-will"—against God, and against fellow creatures.

But this revelation of God's holding back of His power, so that He keeps silence awhile, makes more striking the marvellous display of His sovereign power throughout history. He hath His way among "the inhabitants of the earth," as well as in "the army of heaven," as Nebuchadnezzar rightly came to know. The inspired words sound forth, "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice: by Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Prov. 8. 15, 16), to reveal God's wisdom in **all** that He allows. And so we read, "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1). And, lest we should apply only to powers that willingly acknowledge God, we are expressly told that God said of a wicked ruler **overruled**—"O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger" (Isa. 10. 5), and regarding the first king of the times of the Gentiles, Daniel the prophet declared, "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. 2.37), and of Cyrus it is written, "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden. I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me" (Isa. 45. 1-4).

And God's wondrous prophecies of the future bring out this deeply important message. Of no time could it be said more impressively that it is "man's day" than the time of Antichrist. Transgressors then come to the full (Dan. 8. 23), and the remarkable language is used "That he (the man of sin) might be revealed in **his time**" (2 Thess. 2. 6). But as to no period is there a fuller stress on God's sovereignty. Every day is marked out as under His control. The dating is arranged definitely—1260 days. It is evident that the mighty God has power to step in, and that He will not be one hour late. Man may miscalculate: God has His plan. And He will not be **one hour early.** This is equally important. He foreknows all, but will not intervene during the awful year, or even the month before the goal. Men interrupt others according to their power, God acts according to His wisdom. The theory "God will not do this, I would not" always breaks down in the light of what God has made known He will permit. He will not permit through ignorance or weakness, but in His perfection of every attribute, and He has revealed, many years ago, just how long to **a day** He will endure "the vessels of wrath," and suffer the wicked to triumph apparently. Moreover, among the prime movers in the final struggle are the ten "kings" of Revelation 17. 12, but even

they are expressly said to be controlled by His appointment (17). Their **wishes** are their own, their **thoughts** are their own (cf. Isa. 10. 7), but God prevents any fruit of the thoughts except that which will bring Him praise (Ps. 76. 10). **He brings the floods of ungodly men into the channel of His providence, to turn the mill of His purposes.**

These facts are of the deepest importance. They lead a believer to a new standpoint, or rather an old one, even the standpoint of simple faith. Complaining of circumstances is altogether shut out. We go into the sanctuary, instead of saying, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" And anxiety also receives its death-knell, if we become conscious that our Heavenly Father has complete control of the clock of the times and seasons (Acts 1. 7). The sovereignty of God is much opposed, and much criticized to-day, but Scripture is clear regarding this fact. And the attitude which rebels is Divinely condemned. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to Him That fashioneth it, What makest Thou? or the work, He has no hands?" (Isa. 45. 9). "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him That formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9. 20). The glib manner in which some, attacking the revealed fact of eternal punishment, say, "I should not act thus," shows a human incompetence to reason. There are few things in history which the objector would have done or permitted, but **God's way is perfect.** It is for us to worship, not to criticize. The escape from the dilemma that some seek by assuming God does not see beforehand what will happen is not only derogatory to Him, but it overlooks that He has revealed the most solemn events in future history long before they take place, the very events that self-wise men would refuse to permit. 'Tis here that our natural wisdom must be silenced, and spiritual faith must honour Him. This is a test for humility and confidence in Him, and, by grace, we would own that He is perfect in all His purposes, and infinitely wiser than we are. One thing is clear. The **wishes** of sin are the wishes of man: man is guilty: man is to be blamed. But the All-wise God prevents those wishes from producing actions indiscriminately: He compels, as we have seen, the effects of those wishes to take a certain Divinely narrowed course. The floods of iniquity are from the hearts of men, but they are not allowed to cover the land, they are shut up to the channel of God's sovereign appointment, and men unwittingly are thus held within bounds, so that not one iota of God's purpose shall fall. The iniquity is theirs, but the plan, though they mean not so (Isa. 10. 7), is His, and this is the only key to history. It is impressed throughout Scripture, and every humble believer is drawn to be an unquestioning worshipper.

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Again the words ring in our ears, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55. 8, 9). How blessed is this consciousness in times of perplexity. The fig tree may not blossom, and the enemy may come in like a flood, and there may seem to be a loneliness "I am left alone, and they seek my life,"—but God is not unmindful! He is not taken by surprise. Why then should I worry? He knows to-morrow as well as yesterday. This remarkable control of all, so that He has given date after date, and explained event after event, for the time of the end, must encourage a child of God who knows what prayer means, to confide in his, or her, Father as to everything. A froward employer, an unkind landlord, an unscrupulous competitor in business, a heavy illness, a serious loss financially, a closed door as to daily employment,—these things are not unknown to Him. He has something to teach, and **I have something to learn**. The Holy Spirit does not cease to dwell in believers because they are slow to learn, but He cannot be said to lead unless they are willing to be led. The solemnizing history of the entrance of sin, and of the rejection of Christ, and of the setting aside of Israel remind us that if our Heavenly Father allows what we should not have naturally thought He would allow, He has a more wondrous purpose than we know, and overrules to His own glory. We have trusted Him as to the past, we are ready to trust Him for the eternal future, shall we not be willing to trust Him for the present as well? He is worthy of our fullest confidence to-day. Nothing comes by chance, or by course, but everything reaches His believing people in the line of His perfect will (Rom. 8. 28). And thus the words "by grace" have a fuller experimental meaning, and we would ever praise God amid the thunderstorms of earth, and be willing for Him to hold "the times and seasons" (Acts 1. 7), of our individual life also, in His infinite love and wisdom and power.

Abraham and Faith's View.

"AND the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES, AND LOOK from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever." Genesis 13. 14, 15.

"LOOK NOW toward Heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Genesis 15. 5, 6.

"And he LIFT UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED, and lo, three men stood by him . . . Abraham stood yet before the LORD." Genesis 18. 2, 22.

"Abraham LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son: and Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, in the mount of the LORD it (He) shall be seen." Genesis 22. 13, 14.

The Joy of The Lord Jesus Christ.

Wondrously Prophesied.

"I have set the Lord always before Me: because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved; therefore My heart is glad" Psalm 16. 8, 9

(Cf. Acts 2. 28, "Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.")

"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Psalm 54. 7, cf. Hebrews 1. 9.

"Thou meetest Him That rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." Isaiah 64. 5.

Recorded in Christ's Earthly Life.

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Luke 10. 21.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15. 11.

"I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." John 11. 15.

Emphasized in His Parables.

"For joy thereof goeth and selleth all that He hath and buyeth that field." Matthew 13. 44.

"When He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing, and when He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost." Luke 15. 5, 6. (Cf. Matt. 18. 13).

His Future Joy.

"The day of His espousals . . . the day of the gladness of His heart." S. of S. 3. 11.

"Now unto Him That is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

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"His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matthew 25. 21, 23.

He also lovingly urged joy in His beloved people, e.g. Matthew 5. 10, John 4. 63, 14. 28, 16. 22. Well may such "rejoice IN THE LORD alway." (Phil. 4. 4).

"One" in Romans 5.

"By one man sin entered" (12).
"Through the offence of (the) one" (15).
"The gift by grace which is by (the) One Man, Jesus Christ" (15).
"By one that sinned" (16).
"The judgment was by one" (16).
"By (the) one man's offence death reign by (the) one" (17).
"Reign in life by (the) One, Jesus Christ" (17).
"By the offence of one" (or "by one offence," 18).
"By the righteousness of One" (or "by one righteousness," 18).
"By (the) one's man's disobedience" (19).
"By the obedience of (the) One" (19).

THIS twelvefold stress on "one" is very remarkable. It sets forth the parallels and contrasts between Adam and Christ. Sin, offence, disobedience, judgment, death—are linked with Adam. Grace, obedience, righteousness, life are found in Christ. How blessed to be in Him. Thus we have the two positions, and the two imputations. Concerning the family belonging to the Lord Jesus we read "many" and "they which receive" **before** the word "all," lest we should imagine a universalism beyond the seed that serves Him (Psalm 22. 30). "All" is referring to the whole company of those already mentioned as His.

The fourfold mention of the Lord Jesus is impressive.* His glory shines out and no one else can claim a share in His glorious work. Grace is found in Him. But just as none will be condemned apart from **personal** sins, those who are "in Christ" are to manifest love's obedience. No misuse of imputed righteousness will glorify God. The fruitless ground is not good ground. Our beloved Lord is the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** Him (Heb. 5. 9). This is the evidence and proof of life.

It is wonderful to be in the Lord Jesus and to stand righteous in Him. The fulness of grace is ever before us. The repeated "much more" of the passage reminds of this. Even those who imagine a universalism, against the plain testimony of Scripture, cannot make these words signify a greater wideness than the **universal** ruin.† Hence the Holy Spirit prevents

* Possibly the contrast of Adam's **eightfold** mention may illustrate the fact that not all in Adam become in Christ. There are the two world-wide classes (4 and 4).

† Though from their standpoint they ought to do so.

their misuse of that which is meant to be a testimony to the amazing "much more" of the **depth** and **height** of the work of Christ. We have much more than Adam lost, though our sins were many. How wonderful is God's love. One sin lost Eden, but many, many sins have not frustrated the glorious work of His grace. And He has not only given us something with a view to salvation but gives salvation in its entirety, righteousness, and eternal life. How can we withhold praise?

"And let them Sacrifice the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving." (Psalm 107. 22).

THERE is too little praise. In a future day, the walls of salvation will be intersected by the gates called "Praise" (Isa. 60 18), and the principle applies to-day. The Holy Spirit lays an emphasis on "the **sacrifice** of praise to God **continually**" in Hebrews 13. 15. This thought of a "sacrifice" is thus emphasized, evidently to show us how praise depends on the finished work of Christ, and that it is acceptable, and brought into God's very presence, for His joy. The sacrifices were spoken of as God's food (Lev. 21. 6, 8, 17, 21, 22), this precious language showing His delight in the work of Christ, and in the **praise** and obedience which rests thereon.

In like manner Psalm 50. 14 says, "Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving," and in verse 23, "Whoso offereth (sacrificeth) praise glorifieth Me"; Hosea 14. 2 has a similar message, "So will we render the calves of our lips."

The context in Psalm 107 speaks of a gracious deliverance from physical trouble, and, as the whole of that psalm, pleads for more realization of the hand of God in all, and more gratitude to Him. We call to mind Luke 17. 17, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" There is a tendency to think more of **getting** a blessing than of giving thanks for the mercy, and this is selfishness. We are apt to overlook the fact that selfishness may exist in spiritual things quite as much as in earthly things. The **nature** of the blessing does not affect this. The attitude is all-important. If we value spiritual blessings for our own exaltation, and forget God's glory, there is no less selfishness in **us** because **they** are holy.

And Psalm 107. 22 continues, "and declare His works with rejoicing." Isaiah 12 reminds us of the link between praise and declaration of what the Lord is, and hath done. Should not the preaching of the Gospel have this note of praise more definitely in its background, and more than in its **background**? And do we not learn that true proclamation is from praising hearts, and that right rejoicing is the personal experience of thanksgiving?

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Realities or Theories?

MANY spend their time on theories. The words of the prophet still apply, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isa. 55. 2). Theories can only amuse, they can never SATISFY the soul. If there exists **nothing** better than theories, the wish of the human heart, naturally tending toward reasoning, gravitates thither, **but,** if there is revelation, WHY LOOK TO A MIRAGE INSTEAD?

God has set forth creation: men turn to the unproven, and Divinely disproven, theory of evolution. God has displayed redemption: men wish to scheme a human religion of human effort. Every "religion of man" depends on man, and hence it can give nothing to the needy and bankrupt sinner. Alas, there are many who seek to BLEND Scripture and personal opinions, and to construct a theory of atonement. But it is VAIN. Nowhere do we find an invitation to become "philosophers." Our gracious God has wondrous supplies of grace, giving eternal life, that He may have CHILDREN who trust Him implicitly, and that He may have worshippers who glorify His Name. The mind of a man can realize much, but the things of God are beyond all mental scheming, and we NEED REVELATION, we are humbled and lifted up by REVELATION, and any theory that puts aside REVELATION is ruinous to worship, and dishonouring to God.

We cannot form our theory as to the blessedness of heaven, but it is a REALITY. "We know not what we shall be," BUT WE DO NOT DESIRE TO KNOW BEFORE THE TIME WHAT IS NOT REVEALED. We can know what is needful for our present life of love and service. A too brilliant light would dazzle and blind our feeble eyes, and in like manner the unveiling of all God's love would be too much for us to bear. HIS GRACE, fully unveiled, would overpower, and destroy our mental powers. Why then should we be impatient and put our theories in the place of His infinitely glorious ways of which we know already a part (Job 26. 14), and of which we shall know more in the glorious ages to come? We have enough to FILL our earthly life with what is revealed by the Holy Spirit: we have not time, nor should we have inclination, for human reasonings instead.

How often a believer is surprised at himself: "Why do I love the Lord so little? and why do I not hate sin much more?"

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Romans 6. 3.

A Word of Introduction.

EVERYTHING is to be understood in relation to the Lord Jesus. "Baptism" apart from Him is not baptism at all. How sad it is when any children of God make light of baptism, and hinder the precious teaching of this verse. Any denial of baptism, any transference of baptism to those who know not the Lord personally, any alteration of the appointed mode must rob the holy question of Romans 6. 3 of its meaniug. Redeemed ones, who have living faith in their Lord, should see in their baptism a setting forth of "burial into death" (verse 4), that there may be the laying aside of the works of the flesh, and a holy walking in newness of life. Baptism denies perfection, but preaches holiness, and our heart's cry for more manifestation of newness of life in our own experience and that of others. And to that end, and God's glory in it, are these pages sent forth.

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"Shall I Lift Up Mine Eyes to the Hills?"

Thoughts suggested by the margin of Psalm 121. 1.

THE margins are often very helpful, especially when the words Hebrew and Greek (Heb. and Gr.) are prefixed. The Holy Spirit has given us a wonderful book, with twofold, and manifold, thoughts in each verse. If we read this verse as a question, we have the precious lesson of Psalm 75. 6, "For

promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south," and we call to mind Jeremiah 3. 23, "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." We would ever emphasize this. We do not look to circumstances. We do not depend on blessings. God created the hills, but we look beyond the creation to the Creator. And how wonderful it is to know HIM. The nations of old worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator (Rom. 1. 25); they used His works against Himself. And civilisation has only varied the FACE of sin, it has not changed its HEART. The climax of **man** will be the worship of **man.**

The hills are the highest thing of earth. It is worthy of notice that the tower of Babel was joined to earth. In the flood ALL THE HIGH HILLS were covered (Gen. 7. 19). But the ark was NOT united to the earth. God draws our attention away from earth. "Salvation is of the Lord."

And Isaiah 54. 10 helps our praise. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed." It is delightful to look to One Who is unchanging and unchangeable (Mal. 3. 6).

But the usual translation of the first part of the verse is possible, if the second is a question, i.e., "From whence cometh my help?" It is well to look at God's **works** to remember **Himself** more. The mountains were round about Jerusalem as an emblem of God's protecting care (Ps. 125. 2). Everything in like manner is to direct our mind to Himself. In like manner Abraham was bidden to look to the stars that He might learn more of God's mighty purpose (Gen. 15. 5). And when we consider the heavens, the work of His fingers, how utterly foolish our unbelief seems. It is well, moreover, to look **upward.** The Canaanites were a lowland people: Abraham dwelt in mountainous Hebron, and his life was a holy contrast with that of Lot in the deep down cities of the plain. Thanks be unto God, geography does not hinder spirituality, and the believer living in a town may see no mountains, and yet realize God and His majesty. He can enable everywhere. But the tendency to look down, even physically, may become a spiritual indication of earthiness, and fear, and there is a danger if we only see the bricks and mortar of men, and have no time to behold the heavens of the Lord. Satan ever seeks to bind spiritually as he bound the poor woman of Luke 13, 16. for eighteen years. But the Lord breaks the bond, and removes the chain. May we have a heavenward life, and a confidence in Himself and His absolute sufficiency.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "She Judged Him Faithful Who had Promised." Hebrews 10. 23, 11. 11.

First, we have the fact. There is no doubt as to this. "God is Faithful." But facts and experiences are not identical. True, the fact is a fact without the experience, but the experience is nothing, or rather is a delusion, without the fact. Hence we do well to make sure of the fact first. Many to-day are resting on theories of their own, instead of the words of the living God. Many have hopes without a foundation, and the warning should ever sound forth, "Be sure as to the fact."

When in God's mercy we KNOW what He has said, we possess precious knowledge, which the Holy Spirit is willing to apply, in living power, that we may rest upon it. There is no doubt or question as to anything when God has said it. No question whatsoever! Every word of God is pure—pure gold. But it is one thing for the mind to be convinced of this, and another thing for the life to act on it. And this is what we, by grace, desire. "She judged Him Faithful." Hence there was the receiving of strength. These words surely have an important bearing on the enabling of God's people in their bodies of humiliation. We cannot claim just the power "WE THINK DESIRABLE," but if we have a promise of God, or a right APPLICATION of His promise, we can expect the needed strength for any work to which He calls. The apostle knew he would remain in the flesh as long as he was NEEDED (Phil. 1. 25). Our Heavenly Father graciously encourages faith. He is not working by chance, or in a haphazard way. He is using His people, and is ever willing to use His people, in the carrying out of His perfect purpose. We must not assume strength in advance of the need. We may have trials, but "God is Faithful." Nor is this confidence to be limited to the enabling of the body, though that is prominent in Hebrews 11. 11. We can bring **everything** to our Heavenly Father, and we should seek to trust Him implicitly. He never disappoints faith. He stimulates it by difficulties, but never destroys it, never damages it. He knows more about the tending of faith than we do, and cares for it so graciously.

We have seen it is one thing to ACKNOWLEDGE and CONFESS God is Faithful, and another thing to ACT on this reality, and yet another aspect (at least) to REJOICE therein. The best experience includes both a holy activity and a trustful joy. May this be ours, in the strengthening of the Holy Spirit, so that whatever God reveals concerning Himself we may take to heart, and express in our grateful, obedient lives. The daily walk is to be the manifestation of a living union with Christ.

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"The ministration of the Spirit . . . glorious."
"Much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."
"The glory that excelleth."
"That which remaineth is glorious.
"The glory of the Lord—changed into the same image."
2 Corinthians 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 18.

THERE is a wondrous glory in the Gospel: it is the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4. 4). And its glory is associated with its sure foundation, its permanence, and its power. It is not only the glory of a Person, but the glory of One Who makes glorious the vile. There is no power in "it": there is all power in "Him." The law looks to the law-keeper; if he fails there is no hope. The gospel looks to Him Who has met every demand of the law, hence on a firm basis there is salvation for the helpless sinner. The hitherto undischarged criminal bankrupt is made righteous, and given untold gilt-edged securities, yea they are gold through and through. "The glory that excelleth" is found here.

The Gospel does not look to what a man ought to pay, nor to what he can do or cannot, but to what his Saviour has done. "He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33. 24). This glory never fades because the work has been finished. Righteousness cannot be made unrighteousness. Reigning grace can never be robbed of the purchase of Christ's redeeming blood. There is a glory in the Gospel, and we would preach it accordingly.

A Misprint.

ON page 50 we referred to resting in God's words, and of their vitality and value. The sentence reads thus, "The Holy Spirit has enabled myriads to rest joyfully on the ever assailed, yet overcome, words of truth." Probably many will have supplied the word "never"—"never overcome"—or altered to "overcoming." Thanks be unto God for His word which stands for ever (Isaiah 40. 8).

We regret the error,* and trust none were misled. Such reminders of the need for **more prayer** as to all details and "proof-correcting" may be humblingly used to spiritual profit. We thank our Heavenly Father for all prayer and all the background help by many believers in the "ordinary things," including the "proofs," and not forgetting the enveloping, etc., that **many** messages may go forth to His glory in **many** lands. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," but if He graciously uses weak instruments, how grateful we should be.

* Also 1 Cor. 10. 31 on page 53 should be 10. 29, 30.

The Tone.

EMPHASIS on the completeness and authority of Holy Scripture never undervalues the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. He brings the messages home with living power. Indeed, we should always realize the perfect harmony between the written Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Nor is this strange. Are not the words His? Did he not bear along the writers (2 Pet. 1. 21)? The tendency to onesidedness is universal, and if we lay stress on the priceless book, and forget His present living application of its message, we shall become frigid: if, on the other hand, we speak much of Him but omit to study the Scriptures we shall soon become those who imagine "leadings" to be His which are not from above, and our sinful departure from truth will be sadly evident. Let us seek grace to avoid both sins.

When speaking of the Holy Spirit's application of Scripture, the writer is conscious how much more he, too, needs to learn. We do not require to study a tone-language as Chinese, to realize how much is contained in the mode of expression. The word "Yes" may be altered by a man to indicate assurance, impatience, gladness, sorrow, desire, indifference, uncertainty, and much else. If this be so, how much scope is there for One Who is infinitely more than a man to cause the music of the words of truth to fit our needs in many different circumstances. And is He not willing so to do? Let us not henceforth merely read Scripture, but ask God to speak to us thereby, and He will be glorified. Never shall we dishonour the Holy Spirit, by emphasizing aright the inspired words which have been given to us. He never nullifies them, nor leads us against them.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer. And so he rejoiced in the prayers of others (1. 11)). After the longer prayer of chapter 1 we find he was prepared for the emergency-prayer of 2. 4. So is it ever. And he was a man of godly action—"Let us rise up and build," "We will arise and build," "I rebuked the nobles," "Should such a man as I flee? . . . I will not go in," "I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber." Faith and determination are united. It is delightful to see that he would not oppress the people (5. 15). The fear of God meant much to him. Such characters, in the pages of Scripture, show how God has used men of like feelings with ourselves in times past and made them men of power. There is a holy robustness in a life like this. How concerned we should be that there may be more of growing up into Christ in all things (Eph. 4. 15) in our own lives. It is not enough to see what God has done, we need to realize what He will do to-day.

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"In Love."

THE usual word for "love" comes nearly 120 times in the later Scriptures, but 27 times it is translated "charity." The preposition "in" is sometimes in front:—"Continue ye IN My love" (John 15. 9), "he that dwelleth (the same word as "continueth" or "abideth") IN love dwelleth in God." (1 John 4. 16, 17, 18), "Keep yourselves IN the love of God" (Jude 21), and so forth. But the Holy Spirit seems to have used Paul especially to write thus without any added word as "my" or even "the":—simply "in love." We notice 1 Corinthians 4. 21, 16. 14, 2 Corinthians 6. 6, Colossians 2. 2, 1 Timothy 2. 15; 4. 12. However, the chief emphasis on this expression is in the epistle to the Ephesians, where out of 10 occurrences six refer to the sphere of God's beloved people, "in love." The appointed path is thus marked out, and we desire to think of His love to us, causing our love to Him.

It is remarkable that in several of the passages these precious words appear to look both backwards and forwards, e.g., 1. 4,—

"Holy and without blame before Him IN LOVE,"
yet also suggesting "IN LOVE having predestinated us."

In 3. 17 too, we may translate, "That Christ may dwell through faith in your hearts IN LOVE," or, "That ye, being rooted and grounded IN LOVE." And in both verses we first remember that He loved, and loveth us, though in both we are likewise drawn to long for a growth in our love to Him.

Chapter 4. 2 may read, "Forbearing one another IN LOVE," yet there is nothing to hinder the translation, "IN LOVE endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit." Probably our gracious God and Father gives us the twofold lesson with a twofold, or manifold, blessing. In 4. 15 there seems to be a similar fulness, "speaking the truth IN LOVE," and, "may grow up unto Him IN LOVE." Truly we cannot grow unless there is more love. Is it not wonderful that He has placed the words in so many sentences to enable more than one application and encouragement? The remaining passages appear to have one rendering, though they, too, have a spiritual wealth. In 4. 16 "in love" evidently finishes the sentence, "Unto the edifying of itself IN LOVE," and likewise is it in 5. 2, where we are bidden to "walk IN LOVE," i.e., our grateful love to Him Who loved and gave Himself for us.

Hence, associating all the six verses we learn of His love at the very outset predestinating, and the result His own gracious ROOTING of the living trees, and FOUNDING of the living stones, "in love." The fruit is seen in His people's walking and talking, in their keeping of unity and forbearing of one another, in their growing up and their enjoyment of His indwelling "in love," until they shall be before Him, perfect "in love," and perfect in all the will of God (Col. 4. 12). May this blessed Hope be our joy, as the Holy Spirit makes the truth of this epistle precious in our experience.

"As Cold Water to a Thirsty Soul."

Proverbs 25. 25.

GOD has graciously given a wonderful gospel. It deals with the whole being—soul, mind, body. Eternal blessings and present are included. Grace for to-day, and grace for every to-morrow, and the revelation of the precious blood of Christ blotting out the sins of every yesterday also. God not only forgives His people, but grants them daily His enabling, and when they feel ashamed that, in their most earnest service, they fall short, He shows them that He has not only strengthened them but provided a work that still avails for their sins without excusing one of them, and yet removing all of them. If one sin were excused the conscience would be damaged. If one sin were not forgiven, the conscience would be without rest. How wonderful is God's gospel, it meets every demand and condition, yet men see no beauty in Christ: they do not realize their lost estate, nor feel their dire need. The gospel is refreshing, but only to a thirsty soul. The weary, heavy laden one finds everything in Christ. To him, or her, the gospel is indeed "as cold water." It is good news, and nothing but good news, to such. It comes from "a far country," yet this heavenly message speaks simply to the very heart. And no one can change the work of God. The Judge Himself has declared righteous. The Only One Who has power to condemn has said "no condemnation." And God delights to rejoice the hearts of His people. He does not wish them to live in perplexity and uncertainty. He loves more than an earthly father, and has pleasure in the love and confidence of His children. If a believer has tasted that God is gracious, let him declare His loving kindness. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Ps. 107. 2). "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. 66. 16). Salvation is meant to refresh and encourage, and the Lord's people are called to show that they have that which is abidingly precious. The riches of a believer cannot be estimated, and there are no income tax and death duties in connexion with this heavenly wealth. How miserable is everything of earth compared with Christ. Our minds know this, let us seek that our hearts may feel it, and our faces show it, more and more.

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"Baptised Into."

WITH reference to our note on 1 Corinthians 1. 13, a beloved correspondent suggests "baptized to" because of chapter 10. 2.

1. The subject is important. The Holy Spirit uses the ordinary word for "into," and we need strong Scriptural reasons for variation.

2. The emphasis in Matthew 28. 19 seems clear, in connexion with the resultant life, acting in Christ's Name (Eph. 5. 20, Col. 3. 17). We can never emphasize this privilege and responsibility too much. I do not think any other English translation brings out the appointed stimulus to a devoted life to the same extent.

3. "Believing **into** the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3. 18), parallel with believing "**into** Him" in John 3. 16, see also 1. 12, 3. 36, 6. 35, 7. 39, etc.), is a helpful background. We can hardly render this by "believing **on** the Lord Jesus," for the Holy Spirit has a **distinct** way for expressing **that** precious thought (Acts 16. 31, 22. 19). "Into" reminds us of the ark, and also of Proverbs 18. 10.

4. The only difficult passage (1 Cor. 10. 2) can, I think, be easily solved. We read "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses" (John 5. 45), "They have Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16. 29), "When Moses is read" (2 Cor. 3. 15). Moses personally is not before us, but the law **which he represented.** Hence there was a very striking "into." The law became, typically, Israel's sphere, and they abode in Moses. How different is the position of those born again. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1. 17). The earthly nation had a reminder of death, but their "new" life was in a place where they said, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not." But the heavenly nation are brought to a holy restfulness in the finished work of their beloved Lord. Thus the two **Mediators** are before us (Gal. 3. 19, 1 Tim. 2. 5). The reference to a person as a covenant reminds of Galatians 4, 24, "These are the two covenants." Thus everything leads to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith does not depend on circumstances, but on God. It does not even **feed** on circumstances. The inferences of nature are often contradicted by the superior vision of faith, "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw" (2 Kings 6. 17).

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The Student of Scripture

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Christ—in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2. 3.
"Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." John 1. 16.

A Word of Introduction.

THERE is wealth in Christ, and there is poverty elsewhere These pages are to set forth His wealth. Philosophy is not our theme. Religion is not our subject. Human eloquence is not our aim. The Gospel is the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, and there is no real value in anything except that which exalts Him. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and desire to know and please Him more, these pages may appeal to you: otherwise you will find them dry and uninteresting. But our hearts long that some may find Him through the messages, and that we may love Him much more.

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"And Put His Own Raiment on Him."
Matthew 27. 31.

NO words of the Holy Spirit are meaningless. The mockingly misused scarlet robe must be set aside by the soldiers and Christ must be led in "His own raiment"—a picture of His seamless obedience—to Calvary. Everything carries out the perfect Divine plan. He must carry His cross. "His own raiment"—thus we behold the summing up of His perfect life. And then He was put upon the same cross

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—there we look upon His wondrous death, that we might live. "His own raiment"—for this alone portrayed "His own work." "His own raiment" for the Scripture must be fulfilled, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (Ps. 22. 18). The perfect overruling of God ever shines out, and His people can only praise and adore. And so at Calvary, when everything was taken from our beloved Lord, it was not taken to be DESTROYED. His work must meet the needs of others, and so "the soldiers . . . took His garments." And who were these soldiers? They were Gentiles, to mark out His grace for men of ALL NATIONS: four is the world-wide number. Not only so, they were Gentiles for whom He specially prayed: "They crucified Him . . . Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 33, 34). Lest we should interpret this as a GENERAL prayer, and dare to assume that it was, like many human petitions, unanswered, the soldiers are mentioned immediately after it as well as before, and without any further description:—"And THEY PARTED His raiment, and cast lots." "He made intercession for the transgressors," and do we not well to believe that these were saved, together with the centurion (Matthew 27. 54)? A striking parallel in its measure, is the loving prayer of Stephen, and Paul's salvation.

All the soldiers had a SHARE in Christ's garments, but the one robe could not be rent. The type is meant to fall short. EACH believer not only partakes of the garments of salvation, but is covered with the robe of righteousness (Isa. 61. 10). Thanks be to God, we do not have to cast lots for this. The soldiers could not be united, but believers are made one, and there is a complete provision for the need of all, and everything is "in Christ." His seamless robe is the reverse of Adam's apron of fig leaves. Woven from the top, it reminds us of His heavenliness in all His loving obedience: and our hearts link with the veil of the temple, rent in twain from the top. The obedience and death of Christ are alike acknowledged in heaven: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift." The present-day tendency is to exalt man. May a contrast be our humble attitude, and may the glory of the Lord Jesus, and His finished work, be our conscious joy, as we look for His Coming.

What a contrast there is between Him Who is graciously called "The Man of Sorrows," and the one who is named 'the man of sin."

Our Heavenly Father no more gives a minimum in grace than in nature. If we can live on bread and water, is that all that God provides in this earth? And do you think He stints His people spiritually?

Whom God Used.

"Moses hid his face. . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." Exodus 3. 6, 10.

"I am the least in my father's house . . . . and the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee." Judges 6. 15, 16.

"I know that Thou canst do everything. . . . . I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. . . . . My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept." Job 42. 2, 6, 8.

"I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips . . . mine eyes have seen the King. . . . This has touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away. . . . Here am I, send me. And he said, Go." Isaiah 6. 5, 7, 8.

"Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee." Jeremiah 1. 7.

"I fell upon my face . . . Son of man, I send thee." Ezekiel 1. 28; 2. 3.

"I am a sinful man, O Lord. . . . Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Luke 5. 8, 10.

"I fell at His feet as dead. . . . He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the First and the Last. . . . Write the things which thou hast seen." Revelation 1. 17, 19.

There is a need for more humility, and a deeper sense of what sin is, in my life and yours, dear believing reader, if God is to use us more. The unsaved sinner does not value Christ because he has not seen what sin is, and the believer often undervalues his Lord, because we are all so slow to learn that "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. 3. 5).

A believer's sins can be viewed from various standpoints: as the actions of one responsible to God, each deserves righteous wrath, and Christ bore this for His own people (Heb. 9. 28). It is also the action of a child against His Father's will. From this standpoint there is not wrath but chastisement, for our good. Plainly Christ did not bear this for us; if He had, we should lose the humbling blessing of our Father's correction, and, further, penal wrath would then belong to the home. Sin is also the failure of one who **should** serve his Lord faithfully, and, as such, it affects present privileges of service and future reward (to **His** glory), or loss, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is so important not to confuse these three aspects, but to be taught of God and experience the praise for forgiveness, and the deep humbling and confession of sin from the three viewpoints.

The Holy Spirit ever focuses our eyes on the glory of Christ

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A Few Verses that bring Fuller Blessing, in God's Grace, by more Exact Rendering.

2 Corinthians may be prayerfully pondered. It seems among the less known epistles, as a whole.

1. 11. "Helping together" is hardly expressive enough: this one word used is composed of three:—work, underneath, together. Prayer is a godly work, though it be in the background, beneath the surface, and unseen. It is not unseen by Him Who seeth in secret (Matt. 6. 6). How blessed, too, is fellowship in prayer.

1. 17. "THE lightness," with which, alas, they charged God's servant. NOT the lightness of frivolity, but of changeableness, whereas "TO SPARE" them he delayed the visit (23).

2. 5. Probably "It is not ME that he hath grieved, but, in part (that I may not over-burden) ALL of you." The tender ENCOURAGEMENT of their right grief, linked with a gentle reproof, that SOME would think grief a "burden," must impress our hearts.

5. 4-9. At first, there seems a little difficulty, but when we realize verse 4 speaks of the "wish," and the accompaniments of death, whereas verse 8 of the pleasure in God's will whatever it is, and in the result, we become clearer. "We do not wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon . . therefore being confident always, and knowing that being present in the body we are absent from the Lord (for through faith we walk, not through sight, but we are confident), we are well pleased also rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." I would almost render "We do not wish to be unclothed," i.e., this aspect of death is unattractive, but the restful fellowship with the Lord is ever attractive.

5. 14. "Then (they) all died." "The all" literally, i.e., those all for whom He died, were reckoned with Him, and died thus "by the body of Christ" (Rom. 7. 4), and now their life is plainly a new one before God's throne. Righteous, uncondemned—in Christ! Glory be to God.

11. 1. Some may rightly feel that one of the chief disappointments we find in the excellent "Authorized Version" is the insertion of God's name, without any thought of irreverence, in exclamations where it is NOT found in the Greek. "Would that ye could bear." So "GOD forbid" is rather "May it not come to this," or "Far be the thought!"

12. 11. Undoubtedly the word is a strong one, as in 11. 16. 19; 12. 6, but the English rendering "foolish" seems far more accurate than the oft misused word "fool."

12. 16. "Being crafty I caught you with guile" appears to be as much a quotation from what they said of the apostle, as 10. 10. The next verse repudiates the cruel charge. It is important to see this, for some dear children of God have been perplexed by the thought of craftiness, and some have wondered if guile may not be sometimes allowable. Rightly translated, the Scripture reproves ALL sin.

"Ye also are become Dead to the Law by the Body of Christ."

ROMANS 7. 4 bears a striking testimony. In the same epistle we read, "I speak to you GENTILES" (11. 13), and yet such also are viewed as related to the law before they are saved. This does not invalidate Romans 2. 14: the Holy Spirit shows in 5. 13, 14 that there was law before the law, and that the fact of DEATH proves this. Moreover, such verses as Genesis 9. 5, 6 are definite, and in the light of the holy command, "Thou shalt love," and of the inspired words, "Love worketh no ill," we are conscious that every failure as to perfect love is, in God's sight, a step to murder, and viewed accordingly. Human law judges only when the effect takes place: God's decision is associated with the tendency of the action (Rom. 14. 15, 20), even though He may frustrate the effect. Human justice **cannot** be equitable: it is deficient in knowledge: A man who fails to kill, through the strength of his opponent, may have HATED more than another who actually killed. But God alone "trieth the hearts." He looks at the BEGINNING of an action, not only at the END, for the former is SIN before Him, however circumstances prevent the end being reached.

It is true, Israel were specially placed under law. If we may so word it, God showed on a LARGE SCALE, regarding Israel and Sinai, that which was parallel with His dealings regarding Adam and Eden. And, blessed be God, as the promise of Genesis 12 and 15 antedated the law (Gal. 3. 16, 17), and even antedated the covenant of circumcision in Genesis 17, so the promise of eternal life (Tit. 1. 2), made in the eternal covenant with our Divine Surety preceded our fall in Adam (Eph. 1. 3). This is wonderful, but without such grace each humble saved one would be in despair.

Hence **all** need deliverance from LAW. The DEATH of Christ, and the fact that He was made a curse for His people, must imply this (Gal. 3. 13). And so believers have "become dead to the law by the body of Christ." But substitution involves more than bearing of judgment: it is impossible without the imputation of righteousness (see Rom. 4. 8, with Ps. 32. 1). If Christ represented me, the exaltation which is His in resurrection, because of His perfect obedience and His competency to represent me, must be mine, or else He did not truly represent me! Hence, "that ye should BECOME for Another, even to Him Who is raised

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from the dead." The word "married" is not in the Greek, but the same idiom is used as in verse 3, and therefore this thought is evidently implied. Thus there is not only union with Christ, but also marriage relationship to Him. How blessed will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

But what shall we say as to this death? Are we now free from all law? Does this mean that we can excuse sin? BY NO MEANS. "How shall we that DIED to sin LIVE any longer therein?"—Romans 6. 2. A NEW life has been given with NEW wishes (2 Cor. 5. 17). But we are **not** under law to gain an already given salvation, nor can law condemn the righteous, nor are we viewed as those who are "under tutors and governors" (Gal. 4. 2), but as those who have God's laws written in the Heart (Heb. 8. 10) and who take the very standpoint of His will. I BREATHE by a law of nature, but it is **also** my wish, my very life to breathe, and a spiritual parallel is graciously appointed. Hence we are closer to the law of God than if merely UNDER IT: His will is part of our very being. We remember Psalm 40. 8, though our beloved Lord also became "under the law," in His covenant love, that He might meet all its claims for us.

Romans 7 makes clear that there is no escape from law's authority and sentence EXCEPT BY DEATH (1). This explains Luke 16. 17, 18. Some Jews would speak of changing their religion, and many, both Jews and Gentiles, think they can deal with guilt by repentance, and reform. But this is impossible. The law will not let go: its sentence is death: and unless there is a Holy Substitute there will never be release from the place of death. Christ is the only Way of life, the only Hope. How definitely this brings before us God's attitude as to the FLESH in believers, and shall we seek to remove it from the place of death? Shall we pamper that which He condemns? The Holy Spirit ever opposes the flesh, and Galatians 5. 24 has a striking thought with the precious addition of verse 25. How humbling is the truth, and how we long to experience more and more that which is here so graciously brought before us.

Glorying in Shame, and Kindred Thoughts.

THE Holy Spirit in Isaiah condemns those who "call evil good and good evil" (5. 20), but the tendency of the natural heart is ever in this direction. Hence the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16. 15). Many do not realize this, because there is, awhile, so much of the "goodliness" of the flesh (Isa. 40. 6). Grass is not ugly, but it is fading. There are many things which are temporarily attractive, but they lack the true motive, "Do all to the glory of God." Hence there is no permanence: "Ye were willing FOR A SEASON to rejoice in his light" (John 5. 35).

Such thoughts are deeply important lest a believer should be misled when the rocky ground hearer "anon with joy receiveth" the testimony of Christ. How important to have root in ourselves, that there may be the holy continuance in the Lord's word (John 8. 31), even in the things which we have learned (2 Tim. 3. 14). THIS glorifies God.

And though introspection is not the whole of the Christian life, and though we need to look to the Lord Jesus much more than we look into ourselves, yet it is well to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13. 5), that we may seek grace for purer motives, unto the glory of our gracious God.

It is remarkable that the Holy Spirit through Paul thrice emphasizes that which should cause SHAME, and He speaks thus of that which is often regarded in the opposite way, among many who would be indignant if it were suggested that WE must beware lest WE call evil good. Two passages are in the epistle to the Corinthians, where some were puffed up, as to their "liberty," in that which was grievous licentiousness. We draw back startled from their iniquity. But Satan has ever a more "refined" temptation to attract those who recoil from a more open sin. In 1 Corinthians 11. 6 we have the "shame" of removing God's appointment as to a woman's hair: is it a small matter that the devil has worked on these lines, and that some, who own Christ's Name, have fallen in with the fashion, or permitted their children so to do, and more than "permitted"? In the fourteenth chapter we have God's guidance as to sisters in the assembly. Verse 35 is so definite, and all attempts to restrict to "your women" (i.e., at Corinth alone) break down when applied to this verse. Yet many have gloried in the departure from the Lord's will here and have pleaded circumstances, and blessings. Nor can we deny that He Who granted water from the wrongly smitten rock of Numbers 20, and Who is so tender with us all in our misunderstandings, if we are ignorant and not presumptuous, has graciously accepted the love of His less instructed people, which often puts to another, and equally real, "shame" the smallness of love of those who know more of His will, at least in theory. The third passage is Philippians 3. 19. Should we limit this to those who are gluttonous, in such a way that we fail to supply the warning? We may love the Lord Jesus, and YET in some measure set aside "the offence of the cross;" we may own His Name, and still, in larger measure than we realize, "mind earthly things." The **interpretation** of a passage is not its only meaning: there are humbling **applications**, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, of the **principles** involved, that we may be more and more like

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the Lord Jesus. It is easy to be proud of earthly things of which we should be ashamed, and to defend that which we should condemn in our own lives. The contrasted attitude of Philippians 3. 20, 21 must ever be our prayerful aim, that He Who loved, and loveth us, may be owned and honoured in our daily walk.

"I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought."
Romans 15. 18.

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them." Acts 14. 27.

"Without Me ye can do nothing."
John 15. 5.

WE are weaker than we think. But we may become stronger than we expect. "When I am weak," said an apostle, "**then** am I strong" (2 Cor. 12. 10). "Then," not only afterwards. The ministry of the gospel is a wonderful privilege: nor does it need a platform. **Daily** background conversation may represent Him Who upholdeth all things by the word of His power. Salvation confers marvellous dignity, even as to little things done in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Not that we would emphasize this for **our** dignity's sake, but that loving gratitude may be afraid to act in a way that dishonours Him Whose Name we bear. The Lord has given us His Name—shall we besmirch it?

And we need to feel the responsibility as to that which is more commonly called Christian service. How concerned a believer should be that he may not say anything dishonouring to the Lord when declaring the gospel of grace. God is willing to use earthen vessels, and has put His treasure within such, that, whether in public testimony or private conversation, **the treasure may be seen.** The Lord works **with** His people (Mark 16. 20). Indeed, the deeper sense they have of their weakness, more may they count on Him. Did He not say, "My strength is made perfect **in weakness**" (2 Cor. 12. 9), in order that His people might trust Him more? The greatest hindrance is self-confidence. If the Lord uses us at all let the heart think much of the Lord and very little of the "us." What have we that we did not receive (1 Cor. 4. 7)? But if we **continually** speak of this, we actually underestimate His love and power to use the unworthy. It is possible, under the guise of humility, to make too much of our helplessness, as if it could neutralize His power. Faith believes God can use barley loaves, small fishes, and even our "members" (Rom. 6. 13). It was with this confidence that God's servants of old went forth and so they could return and tell what He had done with them. And He is the same to-day

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."
Isaiah 53. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

THERE is a ring of triumph in Scripture. The Lord Jesus for the joy set before Him endured the cross. Wondrous is this thought! His cry, "It is finished," sounds forth with exultation, and He shall see of the travail of His soul. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged" (Isa. 42. 4), but shall accomplish His purpose. It is with joyous consciousness of this, that we send forth these pages in "perilous times," looking NOT for the conversion of the world by human means, but for the salvation of souls by God's miracle of a new creation, and the reviving of His people to be ready for their coming Lord. It is on this account we are encouraged to lift up our heads (Luke 21. 28) even when the darkness becomes greater. We have a mighty Saviour, and a gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.

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"Can a Believer Fight?"

IT is important for children of God to be clear regarding God's will in practical things. Carelessness in such matters produces lamented discussion in days of warfare, and some then take a path that brings them to deep sorrow afterwards.

Scripture is not a book of puzzles. Whatsoever things have been written have been written for our learning, and God will still guide the meek in judgment. The **principle** of John

14. 2 applies in many ways, "If it were not so I would have told you." His words are "all plain to him that understandeth" (Prov. 8. 9). "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things?" (Hos. 14. 9). God does not desire His people to be confused. If it is right for believers of God to engage in warfare, Scripture will be clear. It was quite clear as to Israel of old. "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies" (Deut 20. 1), reads the Divine legislation, and we find the added words, "The Lord your God is He That goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (4). The approved numbering was of "All that were able to go forth to war" (cf. Num. 1. 20). There is nothing like this in the present dispensation.

The circumstances were quite different. Israel were in one nation, the Lord's people now are found in all nations. Israel had an earthly land, the Lord's people now are heavenly: Israel were given a Divine executive of judgment, but "give place unto wrath" is the command now. Exclusion from Israel was with physical death, from an assembly there is only spiritual exclusion (1 Cor. 5). "The **heavenly** calling" (Heb. 3. 1) must never be overlooked.

The question asked should be changed. It is not "Can a believer fight?" but "Should a believer fight?" i.e., can he do this **to the glory of God?** We are not discussing **who** are believers: "the Lord knoweth them that are His." We are not denying that Christians may have been soldiers, and may have prayed about their campaigns! God graciously bears with us, in our weakness: A believer may smoke, but this does not sanctify the sin. We have all prayed about many things we have afterwards seen were not God's will, and He accepted the love, though grievous mistakes were entwined. His patience must never be misused to justify sin. 'Tis not "Can I do this, and be a Christian?" but "what is the revealed will of my Lord, and the joy of His heart?" Every other standpoint is selfishness.

No Scripture allows of personal vengeance. The law knew nothing of malice to a personal enemy (Ex. 23. 4, 5, Prov. 24. 29, 25. 21, 2). But it appointed judgment, **within** the **nation,** even to scourging and stoning to death, and **without** the nation, even to extermination. And thus the wars were in judgment. But no such executive has been committed to God's people now. The words of the Lord Jesus are clear, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John 18. 36). In the absolutely righteous cause, the Lord Jesus forbade the sword, "Put up again thy sword unto his place" (Matt. 26. 52). Believers are bidden to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3. 17), and how

can they take the sword when He is sitting **till** His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. 110. 1)?

But it may be said, "Our Christian position does not remove our responsibility, in God's providence to the land of our birth." But what is our responsibility? Romans 13 makes clear the paying of **taxes** and rendering of **honour.** It gives no authority to fight. If we go **beyond** the command of Him in Whose Name we are bidden to do all, we are a peril, not a blessing, to the land where we live loyally, but where we have no continuing city (Heb. 13. 14). If a believer votes, he becomes a partner in warfare: the separation must be complete to the extent Christ has indicated, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14, 16).

Thus the child of God is not called to solve the knotty question, "Is it a righteous war?"—he has no authority to participate at all. As a stranger and pilgrim (1 Pet. 2. 11), he renders to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's (Matt. 22. 21, taxation), but Cæsar has **not** bought him. On the other hand, Christ has bought His people with a price, and their bodies are members of Christ to glorify God (1 Cor. 6. 15, 20). Without their Lord's authority they dare not execute judgment.

In the old dispensation there was a striking approval of wrath (Num. 25. 10-13): in the present, there is none: on the contrary, when the Lord uses some to execute vengeance, they evidently belong to another dispensation (the two witnesses of Rev. 11).

Any other interpretation would rob many a thoughtful believer of a conscience void of offence, and would involve, under certain circumstances, the **duty** of one Christian to kill another. Indeed, it would make him traitorous in omitting to attack his brethren in Christ: the fruit of a tree shows that its root is not of God. Happy are those who, praising God for the blessings they receive through government, realize that their relation to Christ is of primary importance, and affecting all things. The Holy Spirit never gives a believer of the present dispensation warrant to take the sword. If we turn to such passages as Romans 13 and 1 Corinthians 6. 1, the one using the sword or judging is always regarded as outside the assembly.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. 10. 4): we wrestle not against flesh and blood (Eph. 6. 12), but are bidden to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6. 12). While the Lord's words in the address on the mount remain in force, the Christian attitude in the present dispensation is incompatible with warfare. "Love worketh **no ill** to his neighbour" (Rom. 13. 10), and the approved neighbour of Luke 10. 29-37 belonged to another nation with whom there

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were "no dealings." The definite and firm reply of the lowly child of God is simple—"One has bought me: I am His: I am in a law to Him (1 Cor. 9. 21) show me where He has bidden me to carry out judgment before He comes: while the long-suffering of God waits, in the acceptable year of the Lord, I can only love, and if one must be killed it must be the servant of Christ for refusing to kill, without His authority." The answer is simple now. May we have faith to continue its ringing tone of confidence in Him in times of suffering for His Name's sake.*

* It is important to remember in prayer dear believers who, in other parts of the world, still endure imprisonment (Heb. 13. 3) for "the good confession" Christ witnessed (1 Tim. 6. 13), viz., "My Kingdom is not of this world."

"God Having Provided."

(Hebrews 11. 40.)

IT is well to remember what God has provided. He is not disappointed in His plan. The opposition of men, and of Satan, cannot take Him by surprise, nor change His purpose. He will not be one day late because of the Satanic warfare. "The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9) SHALL BE theirs. We find no "if" in the promises of the coming again and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has dated everything, in perfect wisdom and in full foreknowledge, and He will lay low the power of the enemy suddenly, at the appointed time. God has provided for His blood-bought people, and they SHALL together share what He has provided. Surely our hearts should rejoice in this encouraging call to faith and call to praise.

The last verse of Hebrews 11 indicates that the old-time saints have not entered into the fulness, because God has a plan to embrace us as well. Present-day believers are blessed together with believing Abraham (Gal. 3. 9), and thus we rejoice in the sitting down together in the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 8. 11). "**Some** better thing" does not mean that it is vague from His standpoint, but that He has not revealed everything to His people. The fulness is known to Him alone. "For us" does not indicate that we have a different position. Rather it is that the glory **includes us as well,** as the added words of the Holy Spirit indicate, "That they WITHOUT US should not have been brought to the goal." Hence, though we read of the "spirits of just men brought to the goal," their bodies are not yet raised, for they must not be blest "without us." The first resurrection will include both them and us. It is a refreshing thought. Thanks be to God for the blessed prospect, and the gracious teaching He has given as to what He has "provided."

Jesus—Immanuel. Matthew 1. 21-23.

THERE is a wealth of spiritual instruction in the Holy Spirit's language here. The reader may say, "Why was He not called Immanuel in the gospels, when He was born? Why was not this name given to be normally used?" The critic scorns: the believer beholds God's lessons, and adores. The inspired gospel of Matthew suggests nothing of an "accommodation:" it boldly sets forth the link. And the inspired gospel is right, and the critic is wrong. "All this was done that it might be fulfilled." The Lord Jesus had more names than one, as Isaiah 9. 6 shows, and not all the names were known at once (cf. Luke 2. 11). The virgin **was** to call His Name "Immanuel," and we may ask, Was not Mary accordingly brought to realize His glory more, and more as days went by (Luke 2. 51)? Others also were to join in the ascription "They shall call," even as Jeremiah 23. 6 sets forth the privilege of those who believe, in a day soon to dawn.

The name "Jesus" was not humanly given: an angel bore the message. It is therefore by Divine warrant that the name "Immanuel" is **explained.** There is a wealth of blessing here. How can God be **with** us except in saving love? A barrier has been raised by sin, and if God comes near to men as men it is in judgment (Mal. 3. 5), **unless** He Himself provides a deliverance, and that is the precious lesson. Hebrews 4. 8 is clear that "Jesus" is, in Hebrew, "Joshua," and thus we behold "the Salvation of the Lord"—One Who became flesh to meet every demand, and to bear our doom. Else would there have been "God AGAINST us?" Isaiah 7. 14 does not declare that the name would become His usual name. Nor **need** it have been uttered at once. There is a break of years between the parts of Isaiah 53. 10 and 61. 2.

But, nevertheless, he would be a bold man who would maintain that Mary did **not** use this very name. The Holy Spirit, however, directs our mind also to the further precious thought, revealing **how** God can be **with us.** We think of John 1. 14, and hear the words "I am come down to DELIVER" (Ex. 3. 8). A greater deliverance than from Egypt was needed, and is ours in Christ.

Moreover, Isaiah 7 speaks of MARY, Matthew 1 of the ANGEL and JOSEPH (cf. Luke 2. 21). The two passages together give us the **fuller** unveiling. Mary used the name, "Immanuel," and Joseph was called to announce the explanatory name "Jesus," and we see His Deity and Atonement which Judaism and Mohammedanism and Modernism alike deny, but which is precious, indeed, to each humble believing soul. Thus the more we study the more we realize, and our heart's desire is that Scripture may ever become food for our souls.

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"Without Me ye can do nothing."

WHERE can the believer be found who is too humble? To ask the question is to answer it. Every child of God, who knows anything of himself, desires to be more humble, and to go forward in this holy characteristic, that God may be more and more glorified in his life. Hence our hearts welcome our Saviour's words, "Without Me ye can do nothing." But we rejoice that they are in a context which shows He is not willing that we should be without Him. He delights in His people, and delights in using them as His witnesses, and the instruments of blessing to others.

It is interesting to notice that the very word "do" is found in Matthew 3. 8, 10 for bringing forth fruit. With Christ there is **fruitfulness.** We can do **much** without Him, but it is "nothing" from God's standpoint. Hay and stubble are nothing. Sin is nothing: only that which pleases our Heavenly Father counts.

I am thankful that the Holy Spirit uses this word, for it shows us that we should seek that our "doing" may all be "fruitbearing." Whatever we **do,** let it be in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3. 17), and express His life and living power.

And there is a stress on **our earnest doing.** It is not that God speaks of working through those who are **only** passive. We have a responsibility to be lovingly active. It is not, "Ye can do nothing." "**Without Me** ye can do nothing" implies that "ye" are to "do," WITH the Lord's enabling (Mark 16. 20). In like manner, "Put on the whole armour of God," "take unto you the whole armour of God." God does not make His people mere channels, and pens, and unconscious instruments—as the axe of Isaiah 10. 15, for the Assyrian king did not "mean" to do God's will (7). But we are to "mean" it: we are to **will** to do **His will** (John 7. 17). The Lord does not work instead of His people. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 127. 1), but, observe, this implies that they do build when He builds. And so the Lord's keeping of the city is not to supplant the watchman, but to prevent his waking **in vain**. Believers are to "do." The precious context in John 15 shows our responsibility both of **abiding** and of **doing.** We are not to sit still, and practise laziness while professedly waiting for the Lord to work. Some of us may have wished naturally that Romans 8. 13 had read "If the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body," but He has Divinely written, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," and we own His wisdom. Thus our hearts desire to bring forth fruit by love's dependence on, and responsiveness to, our loving Lord.

"Arrive Beforehand."

THE Holy Spirit uses one word, rendered "attain," "attain already," "come," and "prevent," in seven verses. The Old English "prevent" (1 Thess. 4. 15)* has been misunderstood by many. Living believers will not be caught up before the "dead in Christ." There will be no outstripping, but a precious "together" (cf. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; Heb. 11. 40).

In general, the meaning of this verb is "arrive in advance," but we may well ask "in advance of what?" The various contexts seem to be applied by the Holy Spirit to give the suited answer in each case.

2 Corinthians 10. 14 suggests that the labour of love at Corinth was in advance of other service, that the dear Christians there might help further witness (verse 15, 1 Cor. 16. 6). This is a precious thought. We never receive blessings merely for our own advantage. May this be our experience as to the more difficult passages to come before us.

Matthew 12. 28 and Luke 11. 20 set forth the wondrous ministry of the Lord Jesus. Special privileges were granted IN ADVANCE to the nation which had received the oracles of God (Rom. 3. 2), but, alas, they "received Him not." Moreover, were not the miracles "the powers of the age to come" (Heb. 6. 5), and therefore did not the kingdom come, as it were, by anticipation? How this emphasizes the need for a personal new creation. No "circumstances" can quicken a soul.

1 Thessalonians 2. 16 speaks of wrath arriving "by anticipation." This appears to clear up certain difficulties. The events that led up to the destruction of Jerusalem were very solemn, and some have confused them with the Coming of Christ, but the King Who made a marriage feast for His Son, was acting then, in His sovereign authority, not **the King's Son** (Matt. 22. 7). A typical warning was given, but men heeded not. Hence there could be the "days of vengeance" of the King, though the King's Son was (and is) seated, "from henceforth expecting **till** His enemies be made His footstool." This may explain 1 John 2. 18. "It is **a** last hour," not **the** last hour of Revelation 3. 10. but an appointed type. Thus the wrath arrived anticipatorily, in the general providential government of God which is throughout and beyond all dispensations, although "the day of salvation" still remained and remains.

Romans 9. 31 may suggest, by contrast, that those who are saved "reach in advance," not a LAW of righteousness, but righteousness itself, for "Christ is the End of the law into righteousness to every one that believeth." And surely this is so. The "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31. 33 is reached in advance by all such, and they may well rejoice in the

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hope that the remnant of Israel will attain, not through the fig tree of natural nationalism, but in the olive tree of personal union with Christ (each branch grafted in personally), that blessing which is only possible through "mercy" (Rom. 11. 32). Thanks be to God the "mercy" which shuts out merit shuts out despair. And His mercies are still new every morning.

The remaining verse (Phil. 3. 16) explains verses 12 and 15—"Not . . already perfect," "as many as be perfect." In Christ and in heavenly places, believers are already fully accepted and complete, and, having received the earnest of the Spirit, possess ALREADY precious foretastes of that Day. One would incline to render "WITH A VIEW to that which we reached anticipatorily." Hence the reminder that believers are already being changed into their Lord's likeness **within** (2 Cor. 3. 18), but they long for this future **without.** They have been redeemed, and yet they wait for the redemption of the body. A prayerful realization of this twofoldness may, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, help in the Christian life. If such is the fruit, this brief study will indeed be precious to God's glory.

* Cf. Psalm 119. 147, 148.

Love and Meditation.

"His DELIGHT is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He MEDITATE day and night" (Psalm 1. 2).

PRECIOUS, indeed, are these words and we recognize how fully they were illustrated in the Lord Jesus. We call to mind Psalm 119. 97, "O how **love** I Thy law! it is my **meditation** all the day." Then we begin to see why we frequently lack meditation, and our hearts see the pathway of blessing is the pathway of loving the Lord and His words. Often we forget to meditate because we have not grown in love. But we have not come to the end of our precious theme. Verses 15 and 16 are together in the wondrous alphabetical psalm, that seems arranged by God for learning, "I will **meditate** in Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways: I will **delight** myself in Thy statutes." Are we surprised that the next sentence is, "I will not **forget** Thy Word"? And yet again, "My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments which I have **loved;** and I will **meditate** in Thy statutes" (48). And the one who says, "I meditate on Thee in the night watches" (Psalm 63. 6) is seen as one who thirsts for God and who realizes His loving kindness is better than life (verses 1 and 3). If only we had more love to our gracious God it would become impossible not to meditate. May this, by grace, be our experience, and our heart will rejoice, and will rejoice His heart of love, for "the Lord taketh pleasure in His people."

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

The Lord Jesus said:—

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Revelation 3. 18.

A Word of Introduction.

"THE GIFT of God is eternal life." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable GIFT." But let us never misuse grace, or its freeness. The Lord Jesus tenderly rebukes and chastens (Rev. 3. 19) His well-belcved people, and urges their willingness to BUY His precious Gold. What does this mean? Surely there are spiritual riches which are NOT a gift to all "in Christ Jesus," but conditioned on love's willingness to give up earthly things, for His Name's sake. And shall we draw back and esteem as dross what He calls gold, all the while clinging to what He regards as dross as if it were gold? Nay, let us go speedily to Him without the camp and find riches even in His reproach. ALL THAT IS OF CHRIST is worth untold wealth:—"That thou mayest be RICH."

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A Precious Refrain.

IN the epistle to the Romans the Holy Spirit, after having shown man's guilt, emphasizes again and again that salvation in its completeness is through the Lord Jesus Christ. And the reference to His work comes as a triumphant refrain at the end of each sub-division. The devotional and practical bearing of this is very helpful.

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We can hardly call 5. 1 the ending of a section, though it is the joyous inference from chapter 4. It seems to sum up and at the same time introduce the portion of the epistle arranged in this helpful way for the enjoyment of God's people. Blessedly true is the opening fact that we have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and soon we reach the climax of the section with the bright note of this refrain—"We joy (boast) in God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**" (5. 11). There is the tone of triumph which we have already seen. The work of the Lord Jesus gives a new view to life.

Next the "much more" verses reach their goal: it has the same happiness, grace is seen reigning through righteousness unto eternal life **"by Jesus Christ our Lord"** (5. 21). Apart from Him there is death, but in and through Him there is not only life but grace is royal. It is enthroned. Yet righteousness is not ousted. There is perfect harmony. How can it be possible? "Through Jesus Christ" is the answer, and blessed indeed are those who can say **"our** Lord."

The sixth chapter has a similar refrain. If there is to be victory over sin, it is through Him, and so the reckoning ourselves to be "alive unto God" is "through" or **"in Christ Jesus"** (11), until we reach the climax of verse 23, "the gift of God is eternal life **through (in) Christ Jesus our Lord."** The order of His names is important, hence we preserve this, even though our translators may have found more easy English rhythm in "through JESUS CHRIST our Lord." Possibly the name "Christ" is first to remind us that the Exalted One is our Saviour, 'tis on resurrection ground we know Him (Acts 2. 36).

Chapter 7 is not a dirge, though it does unveil a somewhat rare realization of the roots of sin. It is by no means defeat. The will, where the present tense is used, is unto the Lord very definitely, and there is delight in the law of God, but the apostle, unlike the One Who delighted **perfectly** (Ps. 40. 7, 8), saw what few see, the beginnings of self's activity, and would not excuse one of them. Yet could he rejoice not alone in the future glory, but in present grace, and the words ring out **"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."**

And thus we reach chapter 8, and the end of one part of the epistle. Here the aspect is the eternity of salvation. We have seen justification and sanctification with one constant refrain, and now we find it likewise in the joy that no separation from Him is permitted. No CREATURE "shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD." How could the CREATURE triumph? Grace reigns, and we see the channel of God's love in the finished work of our adorable Substitute—hence the added words, to kindle our love, "which is **in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (8. 39). O that we may praise Him with overflowing hearts, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Keeping Out of Debt.

HAS the Holy Spirit anything to say in Scripture concerning debts? Undoubtedly and, if we are God's children, shall we not have ears to hear? Temperament and circumstances of early upbringing affect many very deeply as to this subject: there are lands where almost everyone is in debt. But though believers should be patient and tender to those who have not received so many privileges as themselves, we are not to make our temperament, or theirs, authoritative. Love to the Lord and reverence for His words, must ever be first.

The word "debt" means more than a duty, it implies an overdue duty, or one which cannot be fulfilled at once. If you send me certain goods with an account, I am not in debt if I have wherewith to pay, and gladly remit at your request. The money is YOURS at my house. But if I have only half the needed money, and keep you waiting a week, I am in debt before God.*

We are conscious of one continual debt. The very passage which forbids material debts humblingly implies this: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. 13. 8).§ How much **more** we should love the brethren, because we should have much **more** love to their Lord and ours. In this connexion we enter into the prayer, "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6. 12), and long to please our Heavenly Father and obey Him **more and more.**

Debts have always existed, and apparently will remain. The rules for Israel were definite, for example in Deuteronomy 15. 2; 23. 19, 20; 24. 10-13. Nehemiah was deeply concerned as to the biting usury in his days (5. 7, 10; 10. 31), and the characteristics of godliness in Psalm 15. 5 and Ezekiel 18. 8 are impressive.

But is a believer warranted, in the light of Romans 13, in allowing a debt to-day? The fact that God deigned to bless the widow in 2 Kings 4. 1-7 affords no APPROVAL. Moreover, the ADVANTAGE of a temporary loan is no reason for it unless we can find the authority of the Lord.

Surely we feel that the prohibition of debt already seen is **definite,** and that to seek to get round it is to oppose the will of the Lord. If only children of God would take this standpoint, and in faith render unto Him freely (Mal. 3. 16), they would surely find His supply of "needs." Debts may be expected **if** we do not **give** readily unto Him. The believer

* Our Heavenly Father has graciously led us to see that in ordering paper, for example, for the many, many leaflets, we should not ask for it, unless we have the money available. A paper merchant will say, "I know you are trustworthy, pay me when you like": but that is not God's will, although we thank Him for the trustworthiness of His people.

§ Romans 1. 14; 8. 12; 15. 27 will provide a helpful subject.

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who unwisely says, "I cannot afford a tenth"—less than Israel's smallest amount—and who knows nothing of systematic giving, invites debt. And the believer who "will" have this or that, which other homes possess—possibly some decoration, or musical instrument tending to help AWAY from a pilgrim attitude in the present dispensation—may learn at last that the financial trials are because our Father promises to deal with "needs," not "personal fancies." Alas, how much might have been given to spread God's truth, if His people had rejoiced to remain outside the fashion. How few would **like** the blessing of Deuteronomy when the "raiment waxed not old." There was no room for a "change." Beloved friends, we are all more influenced by circumstances, and by "others" who are broader, than we realize.†

We have a unique holy "lending" to **enemies** in Luke 6. 35 as a witness, but it is without Scripture warrant when a believer lends to, or borrows from, another. Let us humbly go back to God's principles that we may glorify His Name.

I need hardly say that loving sympathy should be felt for those who are saved when in debt, and prayerful interest does not hastily judge such. But faith will bring such a victory, and godly care will be rewarded. If, however, a believer saved in debt is careless, and spends indulgently, he cannot expect the Lord's encouragement.

Moreover, there may be cases where a child of God in business, or through sickness is suddenly confronted with peculiar problems. Arm-chair criticism is not a mark of godliness. It may be our loving Heavenly Father has some lessons to teach **such**—ah more than "may be"—but are there not with **us,** even with us, sins against Him (2 Chron. 28. 10), and do not we also need His gracious humbling—for it is in love? Granted that the words of James 2. 15 refer to complete destitution, and that the tried believer on his part should feel called to sell goods rather than expectingly "ask" others (or decide what they ought to do), it is the privilege of each to ponder the Holy Spirit's words, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6. 2).‡

† A word in this connection as to the ever extending principle of the "hire system" may be permitted. A believer may be technically out of debt in obtaining furniture thus, but he will often find a heart-ache and uncertainty, if simply wishing to please the Lord.

‡ The privilege of love is often personal, but some dear children of God rightly feel the joy of acting together, and the danger of attracting a saved one in need to one individual, with a temptation to think, "Why does not 'B' help?" Hence it is a joy to record that some find delight in helping anonymously through a third brother. And we have found joy in a tiny fund "to help believers in temporary emergencies," from which money has been given, not as a loan, but only with the thought that if the Lord enables they may have the gladness of GIVING BACK FREELY later on, in order that the same fund may encourage others. And this gladness has been sought in various cases. But it is NO OBLIGATION.

Need it be said that "collective" debt is quite unscriptural? An assembly should never think of such a course. How often it has been brought about through unappointed buildings and display. Undoubtedly many will help men willingly as to such steps, but this does not make any action the will of the Lord? **That** is the fundamental question, and His redeemed people need have no hesitation as to the answer. His will, and not expediency, is the "pattern" which has been graciously shown them.

And thus we plead with those who desire to provide things honourable ("not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men"), and to take Him at His Word, and to trust Him to enable EXPENDITURE WITHIN INCOME. And if trials come, they are not by chance. Our Heavenly Father is willing to teach, and willing to step in, as for Abraham in Genesis 22, though it may be at the last moment. His people should be bowed before Him, for all pride, and feverish excitement will hinder hearing His voice. "In nothing be anxious." He is worthy of faith, and let the principle of love's prompt obedience suggested and urged by Proverbs 6. 3 be seen in the life of any to whom this message comes when in debt.

(It is a privilege to pray for any who have perplexities as to whether "this" is a debt, or "that" a fellowship with the world, and to help in private letters, as the Lord gives grace and strength).

Blessings, and Grace to Use Them.

THE Corinthians were in everything enriched in Christ (1 Cor. 1. 5), they came behind in no gift (7). But they came behind in the manifestation of grace, and of the graciousness of love. Supernatural gifts were not always connected with grace: this is seen in an extreme case regarding Balaam, and Judas (included in Matt. 10, 1), and in other cases more generally (1 Cor. 13. 2). And all is for our humbling and help. There is food for thought that the Lord Jesus does not deny the miracles in Matthew 7. 22. His silence has a meaning,—not that we may draw hurried inferences one way or the other, but that we may be bowed before God personally.

One is impressed by the fact that the Lord did not refuse Paul's prayer in 2 Corinthians 12. 9, but showed him the wisdom of not pressing it. And why? If we have our request, it may be leanness of soul (Ps. 106. 15). Rachel had her desire, and died. "He shall choose our inheritance for us" (Ps. 47. 4). His will is perfect. Let us rejoice therein.

The first thought in illness should not be, "How can I get better?" but "What is God's will?"—with thanksgiving. Hezekiah was deeply earnest, and there is much help in his attachment to the house of the Lord (Isa. 38. 20, 22). It

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reminds us of David's affection (1 Chron. 29. 3, Ps. 132. 5). But we are concerned because the next chapter in Isaiah contains the record of the ambassadors of **Babylon**, and nothing about the house of the Lord. Even His name is left out by Hezekiah:—"All that is in **mine** house have they seen" (Isa. 39. 4). And the Holy Spirit connects this with his recovery, and likewise in 2 Kings 20. 12. Moreover, 2 Chronicles 32 25 also alludes to the same failure, and tells us "his heart was lifted up." It is true the painful illness left him, but there was another leaving (2 Chron. 32. 31). It seems clear that the Holy Spirit refers to this in Paul's experience. The Lord Jesus said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." If he had lost the weakness, he would have experienced less of the Lord's strength, and he too would have been lifted up (2 Cor. 12. 7). The apostle, by inspiration, shows that the Lord's preservation from pride was not only by the gracious unfolding of His grace, and of the sinfulness of sin, and not only by the precious indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but through His use of this physical strain. Have we sometimes overlooked this? Knowledge, even spiritual knowledge, is not enough to keep us from grieving the Lord. Paul acknowledged that the inclination to pride was still a reality in his life. Pride was not eradicated: the flesh was crucified, not dead: the deeds of the body were being continually mortified, not said to be removed.

There is also a similarity between Hezekiah's boil, and Job's. But patience had, at last, a real work in Job (Jas. 1. 4, 5. 10, 11), and he did not complain or even pray for healing (though this may often be God's will if in the right "context"); in chapters 40. 3, 5, 42. 1-6, but he spoke of God the thing which was right (42. 7), and was humbled before Him. Then manifest blessing came, as to the body also on that occasion.

And this leads us back to Isaiah 38. Was there anything lacking in Hezekiah's prayer (2, 3)? In the inspired record, we have no reference to the will of God. There is a Divine purpose in this. We dare not say Hezekiah omitted it, but God has chosen the words for our edification. Let us not seek a blessing, even as health, for itself, but seek His will for Himself, and a **condition to use the blessing** aright to His glory.

It is important to realize that not only was there the failure as to Babylon during the fifteen years but that Manasseh was born and trained, who sinned grievously, and though in mercy, he humbled himself (2 Chron. 33. 23), his son did not walk in these latter ways, nor did the humbling prevent one of the most startling testimonies of Scripture in this connexion (2 Kings 24. 3). These words are often overlooked, and should be prayerfully read. Sin forgiven has a "howbeit."

And though Hezekiah was drawn back to the Lord, there in a deep meaning in the message of 2 Kings 20. 19, and in the brevity of the record of the fifteen years. Beloved friends, let us ever pray and ask **in** the will of the Lord, and for grace to use His gifts aright. The precious words of 3 John 2 are sometimes taken as if they signify prayer for health in any case, but there is the Holy Spirit's limitation "**as** thy soul prospereth," and do we not desire this? We wish just as much health and strength as we can use to God's glory. It has well been said that it is not easy to carry a **full** cup.

And thus as Josiah reached the age of Hezekiah when sick, and there was action without any record of asking God's will (2 Chron. 35. 20), His Divine Wisdom was manifested exactly **as with "the man of God" who prophesied Josiah's birth**, and the king's physical life also was cut short. Fifteen years were not added, and we call to mind the chastening in 1 Corinthians 11.—"And some sleep." **It is all in love** but very humbling. Let us not complain, but let us seek grace to use the blessings we have, and to ask, **within** God's will, for whatever "trusteeship" of health and knowledge, and influence, or whatever it may be, that we are prepared to use in the Spirit, to His glory and honour.

Joy Emphasized in Scripture, *e.g.*, The Beginning of the Gospel of Luke.

"Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth." 1. 14.
"Rejoice thou that art highly favoured." 1. 28 (lit.).
"As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." 1. 44.
"They rejoiced with her." 1. 58.
"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." 2. 10.
In the light of John 12. 12, with Zechariah 9. 9, we should add,—
"Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard." 1. 13.
"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God." 1. 30.

In Psalm 119 solemn contrasts are often before us. Verses that mention the proud and the wicked may be gathered together, and the various names for the unsaved. Moreover, they are likened to dross, and their heart to grease, and verse 118 seems to suggest a parallel with the trodden down mire of the street. It is a terrible thing to be unsaved. Yet how many are indifferent to their sad state.

Confession of sin is not to take the place of victory, nor the place of loving effort to undo the effect of that which has dishonoured the Lord's Name.

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"Command Ye Me."

MANY have looked at these words in Isaiah 45. 11 with surprise. Some, encouraged by God's exceeding great and precious promises, and conscious that faith is meant to be mighty, have hastily drawn the inference that we can command God. Some temperaments lean toward startling expressions, and in their emphasis on the **power** of a believer, are apt to become irreverent, and to **lack humility.** But others may have thought that they were honouring God by this attitude. It is blessed to realize that faith can remove mountains, and that the Lord said to Moses, "I have pardoned according to thy word" (Num. 14. 20), but there is **no** Scripture for wrestling with God,* nor do we command Him, but rather ask **according to His will.** We praise our Heavenly Father for the word of Joshua 10. 14, "The Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man," and He heareth us, in infinite condescension, but "commanding" would be vastly different.

Indeed, some of us would be afraid to pray if the decision were placed in our hands. Our joy is that if we ask bread our Father will not give us a stone, but if we, in error, ask a stone, He graciously disappoints our wish. Far from wishing to command, we rejoice to ask with the earnest proviso, "If it be Thy will."

Some have felt this as to Isaiah 45, but have suggested a dispensational aspect. But in **no** dispensation is God to be commanded. His glory shines throughout in commanding.

And the context is definite. **God** is the Maker (9). **Men** are but as clay. If we look to the heavens, He has commanded their host (12). We find a firm reproof of any self-exaltation. The problem is solved when we realize that the punctuation is in our translation, and that the Hebrew may read as a question.† "Is it of future things that they asked Me regarding **My** sons, and regarding the work of **My** hands are ye commanding Me?" Did others interfere as to those **belonging to God** with impunity? Never! Then will ye act as if ye were over the work of **His** hands? Hence the call to humility sounds forth with heart-searching power.

When Martha attempted to **command** the Lord Jesus, He showed her mistake. **"Bid her therefore"** was the utterance of one cumbered with self-chosen work for Christ: the "good part" was (and is) hearing His Word. May this be our experience.

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* A leaflet gladly sent.

† So in Mark 14. 41 "Do ye sleep on now, and take your rest?" It is enough.

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