

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee." Proverbs 22. 21.

A Word of Introduction.

THE object of Scripture is a work of God WITHIN, and then holy lips (Prov. 22. 18). The purpose is clear in the added verse, —a definite TRUST in the Lord, for we can never separate Him from His words. The "excellent things" are to lead us to certainty (Luke 1. 4), and thus to speak always with grace. The stress on a godly answer is seen in Colossians 4. 2, and 1 Peter 3. 15. Do we not feel that many of us fail in these characteristics, and would we not seek grace to honour the Lord therein? The aim of these pages is to lead to the right use of Holy Scripture, and of true prayerfulness, in the Holy Spirit, in order that the testimony of the lives of believers, our own included, may be brighter, and fuller to the glory of our glorious Lord.

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God's Election and Gospel Preaching.

A question regarding this is often earnestly asked by dear children of God, and exercise of heart is helpful, so long as saints are kept from (a) worry, (b) human decision, and (c) argumentativeness, and caused to be willing (i) to leave what God has **not** revealed and (ii) to worship rather than "speculate" or "infer."

Praise God, we read "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world," and also read "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Spiritual faith accepts "all Scripture."

One thought has been helpfully before me—If there were no election, could you go to any one and say, "You can be saved?" God either sees all that will be, or He does not. If the latter, His **prophecies** are inexplicable. These include

definite statements regarding times, mankind, and individuals. If the former (the only possibility, when we realize His absolute Deity and glory), nothing **can** happen to make Him untrue. Hence you cannot say to every individual, "You **can** be saved," if you refer to facts of **coming** "history." Possibly you answer, "But so far as our knowledge goes, he can be saved." Yes, and does election alter this? Not at all. Election never hinders a single one from coming to Christ: the gospel of grace declares, most definitely, that **any sinner coming as a sinner, is welcome**. Then election does not hinder true open hearted free gospel proclamation. If it is hindered, the hindrance would be God's eternal knowledge of everything. But if **that** hinders this holy activity, it would equally hinder every arrangement as to the future in daily life. Such a standpoint is impossible. May I add that, beloved children of God sometimes think that a **covenant redemption** hinders gospel proclamation, and that we must be able to include (mentally) "Christ died for those who will not be saved" in order to preach a free gospel? But the reverse is the reality. If He died for those who will not come to Him (i.e. who will not be saved), I would lovingly ask—

(a) Did He take the curse and judgment of their sins, and **yet they too** will bear this?

(b) Did God view their sins as taken away by Christ's precious blood when He knew they would not be removed?

(c) Was the Lord Jesus **Substitute**, and yet they will have **no** eternal benefit thereby?

(d) Did He die for those who will be His saved ones only in this **ineffectual** way? Then His death cannot be the **real** cause of the salvation of any! Many of these difficulties come, because of a hesitation to realize that God's thoughts and ways are **not** to be made parallel with man's. We cannot identify them with what a limited creature knows, nor compare them with our ideas of what **we** would do. The only right attitude is (a) Humble acceptance of **all** that God has said, and acknowledgement that He is ever **RIGHT**.

(b) Lowly recognition of our limitations, in wisdom, knowledge, inference and power.

(c) Godly and glad obedience to His Sovereign appointment in declaring a full and free gospel to **sinners**, as such, without adding or subtracting. We do not go forth to proclaim "Christ died for **you**" nor "Christ died for **the elect**," but "Christ died for the ungodly."

(d) Grateful worship as we realize the wondrous personal grace which we have received, in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

"He is mine" may soon become dangerous, but "I am His."—not as a mere expression, nor to contrast oneself with others, but as heartfelt joy in His rights,—is a blessed experience.

A BELIEVER'S FUNERAL.

DO not let there be the garb of mourning, though sorrow is mingled (Phil. 2. 27). The **loss** is not his, nor hers! Would you pull down the blinds? Rather remember Him Who is the Light, and that the gospel has already "brought life and immortality to light." Let all be simple: waste no money on outward display. The unregenerate may buy costly wreaths, but let us spend what we have on spreading the one gospel. The flowers are beautiful: give them to the living. Symbolically, they are but a **fading** reminder of resurrection. Go beyond the symbol. It is not appointed in this case. Enjoy your **risen** Lord. His perfect love casts out fear, and "through fear of death" you need no longer be subject to bondage. Sonship is yours, and you gather to "sow" the body, waiting for "a fuller display of the sonship, the redemption of the body."

The **bones** of a Joseph are precious. They are a claim yet to **walk** through the land of promise in resurrection—"the meek shall inherit the earth." "Sown" is the four times repeated word, in 1 Corinthians 15, not "buried." Abraham said, "My dead out of **my** sight," but not out of God's sight. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." We do not sow weeds, nor apply the word to that which grows of itself. Seed sown has a Possessor, and the Lord claims the body.*

And the harvest is always gloriously contrasted with the sowing. The weather has changed then, the cold is past, there is ever "the **joy** of harvest" and "he that soweth and he that reapeth" will rejoice together. The harvest is manifold indeed, compared with the tiny grain. In the time between all remains hidden, but not forgotten.

So is it with the body. Corruption shall not destroy all, for God claims the nucleus as His own. Value a saint's body: it is a pledge of the whole inheritance, spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5. 23): our **whole** needed the precious blood of Christ. He will not surrender what He values. And God shall give this "seed" a body as it pleases Him, "our house which is from heaven"—to "clothe upon" that which is preserved, sleeping in the dust of the earth. As the closed door of Eden was in front of a **pre-served** way, so "unto **dust** thou shalt return" has a reminder of a happy resurrection for the redeemed (Dan. 12. 2). There is no word of annihilation, no corruption-victory for that which Christ has purchased. **Part** of the material decays, as with the wheat, but there is that "nucleus" over which He watches, that nothing may be lost. Then do not sorrow as others, but let every death of a saint fix our eyes on the Coming of our Lord Jesus and make us more earnest to buy up the opportunities now, through His enabling power in "this body of humiliation," that love's service now may be His joy then, when we shall "bear the image of the Heavenly One," and be satisfied with His likeness (Ps. 17. 15)!

*Abraham sought a cave, the Lord appointed him a *field* with trees: Joseph had a sepulchre, the Holy Spirit emphasizes that "there was a garden."

"Upon this Rock I will build My church."

(Continued.)

How wondrous is God's wisdom even in the choice of a word. And what are the other names? Is not the church, a house, a building, a habitation of God? "I will build", said our beloved Lord. Here is a temple, not a factory: a temple, a dwelling place. God does not only visit, He dwells here. His "rest" in Genesis was interrupted, as it were, by sin. But here He has rest in the fruit of the work of His beloved Son—a wondrous rest. And a "temple" implies, that saints are to be a worshipping company. "In His temple doth every one speak of His glory" (Ps. 29. 9), and the glory is His, yea "every whit of it uttereth glory" for saints are **living** stones and praiseful (1 Pet. 2. 4, 5). Wherever God is, there must be worship, as Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 and 5 indicate. Ah, dear fellow believers, do these meditations appeal to our waiting and joyful hearts? Is it our **joy** to be called **out**, or do we still linger, wishing to be "something" in the **world** and to abide with the world (2 Cor. 6. 14-18. James 4. 4)? Rather let us rejoice to "be built" (Eph. 2. 20. Col. 2. 7), not movable—the truly "established church" not by human law, but by Divine grace. Are we not glad to worship? Are we the worshippers the Father "seeketh," in Spirit and in truth (John 4. 24)? This is God's great plan, defeating the works of the devil, reversing the effects of the fall, and bringing eternal glory to His Name in the display of His "manifold wisdom" (Eph. 3. 10). How different is all this from the human idea of a religious movement, with an outward profession, and occasional "performance of Divine worship". Spiritual worship is in the very warp and woof of this creation of God (Eph. 2. 10). If leprosy could be found in the very stones of a house, praise is found in the living stones of this sanctuary.

Nor can we forget that the first building, before Cain's city, and long before Babel, was a **bride** (Gen. 2. 22 marg.). And the church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5. 31, 32). To suggest "Husbands, love your wives," and yet to give as a type, Christ's love to one **not espoused** to Him, would hardly seem to fit that wondrous passage.

And, as we have seen, the church is Christ's **body** also, without which He would not have a "fulness" (Eph. 1. 22, 23), the fruit from Himself as the word may set forth (1 Cor. 10. 26). He would not be **complete** without His redeemed, whom He fills (Col. 2. 10, Isa. 53. 11). Thus we behold living union, constant relationship, dependence, diversity of appointed functions, healthy harmony, and the working out of His will in unwearied responsiveness to Himself, in the power of the indwelling Spirit. There must be one **Head** to a Body, there will be "one Spirit,"—else there would be a corpse, a carcase and confusion.

Praise God this will never be. A carcase is the unholy counterfeit (Luke 17. 27 with Matt. 24. 28).

We behold, therefore, in the Church, of which our Lord says "Mine", a precious dispensational manifestation of **His** work, in a heavenly people, with a heavenly hope, during the time when He is still "despised and rejected", with the prospect in view when He will "present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). This sets forth the present season in its right relation to the past ages, and to the saints then,—all alike to be included in the future complete unity of a soon coming day. And, likewise, it shows the path of "strangers and pilgrims" outside the world's politics, ways, warfare, amalgamations, unions, ambitions, aspirations, in the blessed privilege of living, "soberly, righteously, and godly, looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2. 13-14). Thus we reach the aspect of "**the kingdom of the heavens**", and its rule so strikingly set forth in Matthew 16. 19, and again shown in connection with a local church in Matthew 18. 15-18, which is to be a miniature of **the church**. And thus the subject of churches of God (and "churches of the saints", as they are instructively called), must come before our hearts, that we may fulfil His purpose. The reader will have observed the Lord's choice of the words "kingdom" and "heavens." They go far beyond the Jewish interpretation. It is NOT only the thought that "the heavens do **rule**", in God's control of all (Dan. 4. 25, 26), nor is it the coming intervention when "the God of **heaven** shall set up a kingdom" (Dan. 2. 44). There is a present heavenliness of disposition and attitude with godly **order**, as a kingdom implies. We think of exiled governments in war time, but **this** divine expression goes far beyond such a thought. We see God's saints in holy enjoyment of the words, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven", before that Day, when the Lord alone shall be exalted, arrives. We call to mind David at Hebron ("fellowship") with the faithful minority, ere he was established at Jerusalem. Hebron was the home of Abraham the pilgrim also (see Gen. 13. 18).

The Holy Spirit's emphasis on verse 19, immediately after Matthew 16. 18 shows this godly **order**, and the putting into practice of the will of the Lord. Three striking illustrations of this are at once remembered. (1) "Look that thou make after their pattern which was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25. 40). (2) "All this the Lord made me to understand in writing by the hand of the Lord upon me, all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28. 19). And, beyond all. (3) "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (John 5. 19).

(If the Lord will, to be concluded.)

Present Parallels with, and Fulfilments of, Future Blessings.

“**B**EHOLD the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” (Jer. 31. 31). But the Holy Spirit **twice** emphasizes that this blessing is enjoyed by many **now** (Heb. 8. 10-12. 10. 15-17). And He specially includes the words “After those days.” Hebrews 8. 13 gives us a key. The old covenant now remains in power for all not “in Christ Jesus,” but it is not in power for those **for whom Christ has met every claim**, and who are accepted in Him. He is revealed as the Obedient One, the One Who bore the appointed judgment, and the Antitype of the typical prophecies—combined.

Romans 15. 9-12 corroborates with regard to the present fulfilment of God’s far-reaching promises. But **where** is the fulfilment? We answer “In Christ, in heavenly places,” **where** we are blest (Eph. 1. 3). “The kingdom of the heavens” is now associated with the Rejected One sitting **above**, till His enemies be made His footstool (Ps. 110. 1). The future earthly fulfilment is not denied, nor ignored. **Jerusalem shall be a praise in the earth** (Isa. 62. 6, 7), and all Israel,—even their fulness as distinct from the fulness of **the Gentiles**,—shall be brought in (Rom. 11. 12, 25, 26).

But believers of all races are **already** in the new covenant, and rejoice in the blood of the new covenant (Matt. 26. 28). Jerusalem and Gerizim are awhile set aside (John 4. 21), but worship within the veil is not set aside. The sovereignty of this world has not yet been acclaimed as belonging to the Lord and His Messiah (Rev. 11. 15), but saints are already “in the **kingdom and patience** of Jesus” (Rev. 1. 9). The kingdom of the Son of His love is the Father’s delight (Col. 1. 13), and ours today.

These are not only vague parallels with the future, but fulfilments. “In thy Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” was Divinely intended to indicate the present time (Rom. 4. 4. 16-18). The “authority” of the Lord Jesus is thus being exercised in salvation (Matt. 28. 18. 19). And, in the **appointed** sphere of fulfilment innumerable millennial promises **are being** granted. This is not an accommodation of prophecy, but as the epistles show, God’s own meaning. The overlooking of this has caused a pendulum-swing, to doubt the coming millennial age. As soon as we grasp the twofold fulfilment, all becomes clearer. As Adam died the same day morally, and also within the thousand-years’ day physically, so the Lord Jesus was raised the third day, and exalted, in heavenly places, and His mystical body will be raised the last day (the “third” thousand years), when He shall be exalted **in the earth** (Psalm 46. 10, Isa. 33. 10). There shall be a city then, but is there not a city now (Heb. 12. 22)? There **shall** be an inheritance, but is not the Holy Spirit the Earnest of

the inheritance now (Eph. 1. 13, 13)? The realization of this is, I would submit, vital to

(a) God’s truthfulness.
(b) A right interpretation of Scripture, against which none can justly assert that we twist the words unfairly.

(c) The unity of the redeemed:—

(i) The saints of the present dispensation are not isolated from believing Abraham but are one “in Christ” (Ga. 3. 16, 26, 29).

(ii) Israel’s elect fulness will not be saved on national grounds in “that Day,” but as a company of those who are individually blessed in Christ Jesus, our one glorious Lord. The harmonizing of all truth, and the **converging** of all lines of prophecy, is of the deepest importance, if we would realize the fulness of truth, and the present and future accomplishment of the one covenant purpose of God.

“Because he was a Thief.”

John 12. 6.

These words are solemn and solemnizing, indicating how sins commence and how they spread like leaven and leprosy. We think of the other thieves or robbers mentioned in this gospel (10. 1, 8, 10, 18. 40), and realise the meaning of the words, “The love of money is a root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6. 10). We hear the warnings that brethren to be used of God must never be greedy of filthy lucre (1 Tim. 3. 3; Tit. 1. 7), and remember, too, how the trouble came with Achan’s coveting in Israel’s entry into the land of the promise, and how there was a striking similarity in the early church, the **parallel** book of Acts (5. 1-11). Well may the Holy Spirit say, “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.” Praise God for Peter’s testimony (Acts 3. 6), and Paul’s words, “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel” (Acts 20. 33).

But Judas was a thief, and “because he was a thief” he spoke against Mary, and against Mary’s love, and devotion. **Selfishness** leads to robbery. How contrasted is our beloved Lord, Who gave Himself for us (Gal. 2. 20, 2 Cor. 8. 9). O that we may beware of the beginnings of any sin, for one sin leads to another (Isa. 30. 1), and in the climax the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray the Lord for thirty pieces of silver (John 13. 2) and entered into him (John 13. 27), to bring him to remorse, suicide, and eternal doom.

Faith has a “Yes” for all God says and a “Thank you” for all God sends.

There is the practical expression of faith, and hope is its bright anticipation.

Faith has no “if” for God’s “shall’s,” and no “shall” for God’s “if’s.”

EVOLUTION—

(a) Anti-scripturally involves denial of Genesis 1-3, and of all revelation.

(b) Doctrinally undermines the Godhead and creative glory and intervention of God, and also the fall of man and the fact of sin, thereby setting aside redemption.

(c) Practically attacks the very standard and basis of morality,—justifying **force** as right, and opposing **grace** to the unfit.

(d) Experimentally cuts at the root of love and of reverence, and of a right recognition of the limitations of human knowledge, and, moreover, damages truthfulness and clear thinking.

(e) “Prophetically” sets aside the Coming of Christ, and the true meaning of the coming crisis, of millennial intervention and of God’s judgment on man’s lie.

(f) Scientifically is unfounded theory, or “science falsely so-called.”

A TYPE OF “CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”

Ephesians 5.32.

How blest the marriage union is

When setting forth this type!

The bridegroom loves, deep joy is his,

A fragrant fruit, and ripe.

The bride has too her great delights,—

Their interests are one!

Though years pass by, nought disunites,

The act is ne’er undone.

The husband loves as bridegroom still,

The wife as bride obeys:

’Tis love’s compulsion, love’s free will,

Sustained through changing days.

Outward compulsion is of “two”,—

When “one”, they have one mind:

This type should in our homes prove true,

With love **within** to bind.

And how this shows what saints should be,

And how the church should love,

From earth and vain affection free

Since drawn to Christ above!

Faith is not a dreamy mysticism, a vague credulity, a superstitious imagination, but a simple and reasonable acceptance of God’s declared and demonstrated truth.

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“Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
John 15. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

BLESSED, indeed, are the children of God. They have received a new and everlasting life: they are made members of Christ Himself. Their hope and prospect cannot be over-estimated. Such privileges are beyond human expression, or even conception. But do we not desire to “render again” (2 Chron. 32. 25), and to respond to Christ? Is it not a joy to us to bring joy to our Lord? Is it not our pleasure to please Him? Is not His will to become our will? Is there not music in the words, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments,” and “If a man love Me, he will keep My word” (John 14. 23)? These pages go forth with a desire that there may be a delight in obedience as well as a gratitude for grace received, and that sound doctrine and holy practice may be blessedly blended in the lives of the redeemed of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

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“If the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.”
1 Corinthians 15. 16, 17.

DO not usual interpretations weaken or make incomplete the argument of 1 Corinthians 15? If Christ be not raised, there would be the falsifying of **His word**, and that would invalidate all **His work**. Other deeply important thoughts are closely entwined. A leaflet entitled “Which the Man will do, and live in them” seeks to make this clearer. This is one of the most neglected portions of God’s truth today. The absence of resurrection would be the breaking down of God’s law or the denial of our Lord’s complete obedience (Ps. 40. 6-8). He

must "live" as the completely Justified One immediately He has borne wrath, though the date of the resurrection of the body is not given in Leviticus 18. 5. His flesh cannot see "corruption." (Acts 2. 24-29), and the types of Scripture (1 Cor. 15. 4) and His own prophecies gave the third day—permitting the body to rest the **one** "rest" day, and uniting two weeks, by the inclusion of a small portion of the 6th day of one and of the 1st day of the other,—His week of the law, and **our** week in resurrection union with Him by grace. Everything is so full, —and wonderful, to His glory in our lives.

If Christ were not raised there would be no evidence that He had really "done" what He came to do. If this failed we should be outside Him. For eternal life is not "in Adam," nor is it only a **sovereign** gift. It is in eternal union with the Last Adam, the obedient One, on resurrection ground. It is His life made ours. We stand "in Him." That is the glory of the gospel, meeting every claim of the holy law and revealing the inwardness of our response to Him, by the inflow of all strength and guidance from Himself the Head. We should still be in our sins if not viewed in the resurrection life to which He is entitled. Why? We were under Law's curse (Gal. 3. 13), a Perfect One could not bear the curse except as a Substitute, and a Perfect One must receive life, and so those for whom He is Substitute receive this life, and in no other way. An unraised Saviour would **bury** our hopes, and we should be rightly left in the death-waters of baptism. How sadly does every form of nominal "baptism" that ignores (a) **immersion** of (b) **believers** show the enemy's attempt to conceal this display of truth. The Holy Spirit unveils the reality of salvation "in Christ." Thanks be unto God, for a "living Hope" by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1. 3).

"The Revived Roman Empire." AN ENQUIRY.

THE fourth empire of Daniel 2 is the **only one** unnamed by the Holy Spirit. There is a purpose. That it emanated from Rome of old we readily acknowledge, and the Holy Spirit gives clear marks of identification, but Zechariah 5. 5-11 seems to explain why it is not **called Roman**. Rome was only a temporary centre, however long it remained so, and if it should again take this position. "Its own base" refers to Babylon and Satan begins in Genesis 10 and ends in Revelation 18 with the same city. "The times of the Gentiles" have the same commencement and conclusion. Thus there is a travesty of God's emphasis on Jerusalem. We cannot be too careful to avoid our own thoughts or those of others, that hinder openness of mind for all His gracious teaching.

Unassimilated food is undigested, and causes harm: so is it spiritually.

TIME.

"TIME" is a common word, but how little we understand the meaning, and how often have we failed to value this priceless gift to God's glory. Invisible, intangible, inaudible, but a reality! With ceaseless flow it reaches us, and all have an equal "income" of that which we have divided into 168 hours in the God-appointed week. Money can be hoarded, goods can be stored, but time cannot be kept for later use: it comes, it goes, wisely spent or mispent, employed to please God, or the reverse. While we are speaking, it is passing away. "Now" has ceased to be "now," even as we write the word, and that which is future becomes present, and then past, almost before we are aware. Here is a **trusteeship** of greatest importance for the believer, since everything is affected thereby. Philosophy may seek to explain its relativity, but the practical experience is vital in our Christian life. "Time" reminds us that we are in a sphere of **responsibility**, and that "today" we should hear God's voice, and seek to occupy till our Lord comes. "Redeeming the time" (Eph. 5. 16), is a message of spiritual value. The "time" becomes truly ours only when we gladly give energy, and banish listlessness, that there may be fruit for eternity.

The word preached did not profit Israel of old because it was not mixed with faith (Heb. 4. 2). How often has God laid stress on harmonious blending. Our food is normally complex: almost everything seems to be a compound. "Time" without life would be meaningless to us, and our "life" without what we signify by "time" and "space" would lack expression. Here is the open door for our heart, and all our members, to embrace the "now" of privilege, and of pleasing God.

"I have no time," says one. The statement is unwise. **We** all have the same amount of time. The objector means, "I have something else to do," and often there is a **choice** that excludes God's words and reduces prayer. It is not "Have I time?" but "How am I sanctifying this holy trust?"

God still gives us earthly time, and earthly life, with its varying experiences, each day with its rising and setting sun, and its fleeting twelve hours (John 11. 9). We may well ask, Has today been richer in love to Him than yesterday, or poorer? Have we by sloth made the moments **nought** in our active life, yea, by self-choosing made them even less than nothing?—Or have they produced fruit, unto the Lord?

If "yesterday" was a failure, let not sin, once **humbly confessed**, prevent today's victory. Deep repentance is right, but all remorse is wrong. We cannot have yesterday again, but God immediately gives us today and a new beginning.

Let the solemnizing thought that we cannot make up for any yesterday lead us to godly zeal "today," but let it not rob us of power by occupation of mind with our shortcomings. We cannot blot out sin but God does: And He can make "today" doubly fruitful, even though it has not double time. Sin over-

ruled is never excused. But herein we see God's victory, wherein grace much more abounds.

A man's earthly years are usually less than a hundred: even in Genesis 5 none reached a thousand,—the appointed "day of the Lord" when Christ shall reign. We would not spend our early strength to build up human success, and to settle down in our ceiled houses, and then offer fragmentary service of failing years to Him Who loveth us. Rather let us see the privilege of "present time" and the joy of immediate and constant devotedness, that every day may contain words to which God hearkens, prayers that are His delight, and a spiritual fullness, in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

1 PETER 4. 6.

Questions have always been asked on this verse, but is there not a simple key?

(1) The judgment is "according to men,"—hence in **this** life and not after (Luke 12. 4).

(2) Consequently those judged were **not** dead **when** the gospel was preached to them, **but when** the epistle was written (This explains 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20).

(3) Further, the gospel was preached "for this cause," i.e., stirring up their judgment by men. Evidently therefore, as men oppose the gospel, **these** received the good news, and thus were hated by men for Christ's sake (Matt. 24. 9).

(4) Apparently, then, these were martyrs, as many in Revelation 20. 4.

(5) This fits the other statement, "But **live** according to God in the spirit" (the opposite of "spirits in prison"). Here we have God's reversal of man's verdict (cf. Acts 13. 29, 30), but the Lord Jesus was raised, these continue living in the **spirit**, but **await** bodily resurrection.

(6) These who rejected them must give account (1 Pet. 4. 5: the word "for" links these verses).

(7) Hence judgment by men, begins at God's house, to test saints; but what will be the future judgment by God—the end (1 Pet. 4. 17)? The righteous are now saved "along a path of difficulty": where shall the sinner and ungodly appear **then** (verse 18)?

Hence the appropriate encouragement to bear suffering according to God's will, knowing that He will put all right (19, with ch. 2. 23, and 2 Thess. 1. 5, 6).

Does not this meet every difficulty, suit the context, and give to us a deeply important **practical** message.

Note how Peter followed, in love, but afar off, in fear: half-obedience only increases danger. He went into the high priest's "palace" (same word "fold," John 10. 1, 16, where Christ's sheep should hear His voice, Peter failed). He **WARMED HIMSELF** at the fire.

"Upon this Rock I will build My church."

(Concluded.)

Dependence is not weakness. It is true strength, and glory. The tabernacle and temple and Christ's perfect life were the manifestation of a Divine plan. So should a "church of God" ever be. There is no room for human theorizing and ingenuity. We are not called to be "abreast of the times", and to adopt the world's methods that we may obtain results. The church is not a commercial enterprise, it is a living harmony with God's own heavenly purpose, a replica of His pattern, in an unfriendly and fallen world. We must not add to Scripture, nor take from it. If our Lord has appointed a called **out** company we cannot welcome unconverted ones into such a fellowship. If **He** has arranged baptism we cannot omit or change it. If **He** has appointed the Lord's Supper, we have no authority to leave it out, nor to change its symbols and arrangements, and still to expect the agreement of those who would be loyal to all His will. Whatsoever **has been bound** in heaven, and that only, must we bind. And whatsoever **has been loosed**, and that only, must we loose. Nor should this be done perfunctorily, mechanically, and unwillingly. Love lovingly responds, otherwise we are sectarian, and fail to take the position of "a church of God" though the name be emphasized. By so doing we exclude disciples in fact though we invite them verbally. An added trust-deed, with a formal creed, even though intended to protect, is a human precaution.

We must trust God to preserve His work by living power within. If we do not have **this** inworking, all human substitutes will break down. Such a church of God only has a **claim** on those who would please Him. It should be only **one**, in realized co-working and discipline, in each city, although meeting in many "houses". If we have not this at present, let us be humble and prayerful, and in our "loneliness" meet **according to God's revealed will**, even if a small company. But let us not speak harshly of others, nor esteem ourselves because our eyes are opened, by grace, to see this part of the Lord's appointment. As soon as any steps in the path of faith become an organization, or a great movement with a history, there is the peril of assumption and of human exaltation, of our additions and traditions.

The path of humility is the only path of safety. God will revive His work, and gather His own. At present the sheep are scattered (John 10. 12), but we praise God they are still sheep when scattered, and for all their love to the Shepherd we praise. One of the greatest perils to day is the consciousness of seeing truth, a mistaken sense of superiority, with irritation and judging of motives, instead of praisefulness to God for His own preservation of a personal living contact with Christ and a living devotedness, even amid strange **accompaniments**, from which, for His sake, we long that we ourselves, and other saints, may be delivered.

"MAKE MENTION."

YE that make mention of the Lord "yes, it is a good thing to **show forth** His loving kindness in the morning. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," is a precious encouragement. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare." "I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy majesty." "Talk ye of all His wondrous works." "My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long." "To the end, that my glory may sing praise unto Thee and not be silent." A secret disciple is losing a great privilege (Rom. 10. 9). A dumb saint is missing a great opportunity. "He hath put a new song into my mouth." "We cannot but speak." "The Holy Spirit gave them utterance." "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."

"I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare."

John 17. 26.

THE wondrous work of the Lord Jesus to redeem us has been finished (John 17-4, 19-30), but His living intercession is blessedly "unfinished," because He lives to keep on (Heb. 7. 25), and He continues, moreover, to declare unto us the Name of "The Father" (Heb. 2. 12). In John 17 the object in view is love realised, and in Hebrews 2, praise. But love and praise are united; there is a wealth of meaning in this fact.

Have we thought of the fulness of the Name "Father?"

The name "God" is precious, but it does not tell of relationship. The Hebrew Name "Lord," printed in capitals in the old Testament, unveils His glory, and suggests the covenant of grace (Ex. 6. 3), but this is not joined with the word "our." God cannot be "our **Father**" without real **children**. Such a Name is inseparable from **our** richest blessing. The word cannot be employed unless there is living relation and dependence, and blood relationship of saints to "one another," all by the precious blood of Christ.

What a wonderful unveiling. Well may we enjoy "Like as a Father pitieth," and "The Father Himself loveth you," and henceforth seek grace to walk as beloved children, in a holy contrast with the world, which this Name is meant to impress upon loving hearts.

Theories of "universal fatherhood" are the enemy's attempt to get rid of our real intimacy, and of separation, and of the new birth. May we hold fast to **ALL** the Truth.

COLOSSIANS 1. 9-11.

The desires of the apostle, expressed in prayer, are wondrously comprehensive. The above heading suggests:

- (a) An **inner** life and an **outward** one;
- (b) Knowing and doing;
- (c) Holy **activity** and holy **passivity**;
- (d) An all-roundness and yet a felt need **for growth**;
- (e) A right attitude to the **Lord**, and to **men**.

DISUNITY THROUGH LITTLE THINGS.

THE enemy never sleeps (Matt. 13. 25) he seeks to use everything in **varied ways**. Is there a difference of interpretation among true saints! It may be "honest," and the need can be soon met by prayerful waiting on God together. Instead of this the enemy seeks to lead to

- (a) friction and irritation;
- (b) imputation of wrong motives;
- (c) speaking about "inferences" from the "mistake" (though not drawn), with a hint as to what it may involve, and linked with words of concern for the Lord's honour and that saints may not be misled; (spiritually) intended, yet increasing failure in all;
- (d) discouragement as to reviving, and despondency.

Let us beware of a harsh spirit, of a criticizing manner, of an irritated tone, of an annoyed feeling, of latent selfish pride, of anything that hinders Christian love, prayer, holy drawing together, self-judgment, Christlikeness. May He be glorified in our quiet subjection to Himself, and realization that **fellow believers** are really living co-members of one body. The unity that is contrasted with the re-union of Christendom, or fellowship with the world, has a beautiful vital power, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

"Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

Proverbs 1. 33.

God does not wish a worried saint,
With burdened brain, and sore complaint,
Why should we claim to-morrow's care?
Our Father loves; He welcomes prayer.

Abide and rest, and hear His voice,
He speaketh "peace," bids us "Rejoice,"
How can His purpose hindered be?
His own from fear He can set free.

"In quietness and confidence
Shall be your strength": a holy sense
Of His unchanging power and love
Befits affections set above.

The Lord is near—where'er you are!
His coming's near! Drive dread afar!
Why should we doubt when Him we know?
What rest and peace a saint should show!

Bear one another's burdens, but do not complain if others do not bear yours. Never use a command as a ground to grumble at another, but as a lever to stimulate yourself. The Lord is ever sufficient if fellow believers are not all you expect. Are you and I all **they** expect?

IN ADAM OR IN CHRIST?

WHERE are you? If you are in Adam, as a man of the world, however respectable you may be, your judgment is **future**. And it will be a solemnizing discovery to all who have thought themselves fairly good, and safe, because of their respectability or religion. But if you are truly "in Christ," you are no longer in the faulty brotherhood of man, but in a new creation, and your judgment is past. The day of judgment is not a future prospect for a sinner saved by grace: he stands righteous before the very throne of God. We cannot confuse the **two** positions. The Adamic side is perilous, the resurrection side is "in Christ," and life everlasting is a reality. Blessed be God for all who are thus delivered, and will never go back to the other side of resurrection.

The work of the Lord Jesus is gloriously complete. I cannot make the new creation in Him contingent on human striving, or regard eternal life as an uncertain and temporary possession. If I am "in Christ" it is because He really died for me, and I cannot undo substitution. Nor can I deny the mighty working of a new **life** within. If I walk as other Gentiles walk, and keep on sinning, I have never seen, nor known, the Lord (1 John 3. 6). The theory of a substitution which can become a dead letter, and of the risen life in Christ which can be brought under law and wrath again, will not harmonize with Scripture.

The thought of perfectionism, and then apostasy, which some have held, shows a twofold looking to **self**, and it disparages grace, and lowers the Divine standard. The theory of a real saint undoing the work of Christ contradicts 1 John 3. 9, and is a proud assumption that those who avoid this sin have something of their own, as the protection from falling under law's condemnation. Thus this conception actually involves pride, and robs our Lord Jesus of His glory as our covenant Saviour.

True humility owns His work for us and within us, with the blessedness of fruit for Him. The gospel of our salvation never lowers the standard of holiness by laying full stress on the glorious guarantees of sovereign grace. All parts of truth harmonize.

If we put stumbling blocks in the way of young believers and of others by our inconsistent living, or by an abrupt and criticizing manner, or if we dishonour the Name of Christ, and drive sinners away by indifference, sourness, or an appearance of contrast with the love and joy of the Lord, or if we divide saints by appointing arrangements which He has not appointed, even though we seem to increase success thereby, we sin against Christ.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you." 1 John 2 27.

A Word of Introduction.

THE context "Concerning them that seduce you" (verse 26) shows this does not mean that the Holy Spirit sets aside His own "gifts" (1 Cor. 12. 4, 8, 20. cf. Eph. 4. 10, 11). But it does mean that believers should have a sensitiveness to discern things that differ (Phil. 1. 10 marg.), and not be carried away with "every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4. 14). The Divine teaching (John 6. 45) is intended to cause a detecting of strangers (John 10 5, cf. Job 6. 30), and a holy instinctive dread of instruction that causeth to err (Prov. 19 27) often with "fair speeches" (Rom. 16. 18). Though a young believer may not be able to answer all, there should be a holy preservation because of communion with God. May this be our characteristic, a **LIVING** protection from the evil around.

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The Lord's Work and Ours.

"IT is more blessed (happy) to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35). These words apply in connexion with fellow saints, but they go far beyond this. In our privileges of approaching God, He is always the One Who **gives** most, and how happy He is in giving. "Grace," and "Joy" are from the same root in the Greek Testament.

But can we give Him anything? Not originally, for we were only guilty and condemned. But we have been redeemed and have received grace, that we may give, with the humility and yet delight of David—"All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee," "All this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thine holy Name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own" (1 Chron. 29. 14, 16). Hence though there is only a **negative** answer to the question, "Who hath first given to Him?" (Rom. 11. 35), yet "We love Him first" (1 John 4. 19), "What hast thou

which thou didst not receive?" humbles us (1 Cor. 4. 7) but "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name" (Ps. 29. 2) sets forth our great privilege.

Do we remember this as we should? In our conversation, our prayer, our meetings, are we all more occupied with ourselves and our blessing than with Himself, His joy, and His glory? When we meet, do we find the joy of worship?

It has been said that some lay stress on a **sermon** rather than adoration. The "liturgy" of Judaism and Romanism may well show how the absence of a "sermon" does not mean real adoration. Everything may become fossilized, or, rather, a parody of God's will. But we can usually find in wrong systems a counterfeit that sheds light on primitive truth, of which it is a saddening corruption.

We should not gather to hear a sermon, nor to render elaborate ritual, but should be gathered to praise **God** and to hear **His** voice. He is central. Those whom He uses are secondary, or rather His graciously fitted and filled instruments. When we worship, the "form" is not to be our aim, and a true worshipper is not occupied with himself, or with his worshipping, but with the One worshipped. The enemy ever seeks to divert us, to think of ourselves. In praise and adoration, the greatness is of the Lord. The beauty of a building, or of the singing, may gratify the flesh, but the humble heart pleases the Lord. Let us not measure a meeting by its "scaffolding," nor by our blessing, but from God's own standpoint, and with a realization of His glory. Is **He** pleased? What has there been for **Him**?

True love will not sink into the pitfalls which abound. Adoration will delight in the majesty of God, and He will then speak, and as He always gives beyond our giving, in this sense we shall say that **hearing His words** is more than our speaking to Him. Yet **the aim** and goal will never become our own joy. If we hear, this will be the awakening of praise, and our delight will thus be to be able to render to Him more, followed in turn by His fuller unveiling, that the worship may be still more blessed. Thus the constant expansion: 'tis the golden bell and the pomegranate, in wondrous alternation.

A word in this connexion as to other **service for Him** may not be inappropriate. It is a joy to tell of Christ to souls that need Him, and to exhort one another. But let us not be over-occupied with our labours, nor talk too much of them, even though rightly recording His good hand (Acts 14. 27). Let us rejoice, rather that our names are written in heaven. Christ's work for us in redemption, and in intercession, should be more prominent in our conversation, and prayer, than it has been. "Reports," even requests for prayer, may easily become pride, and also a narrowing to our own sphere, and a forgetfulness of "all saints." Let not fear of this make us unnatural, but let us have, in the Holy Spirit, an anticipation of the resurrection attitude.—"Lord, Thy pound hath gained ten pounds," and the holy balance that tells of grace with simple gratitude (Rom.

15. 18), and finds in all a call to worship, so that our requests and experiences are all fragrant with the appointed spices of the sanctuary. The burnt offering, the light of the lampstand and incense of the golden altar, **all ascended**, O that our gracious God might be glorified in all, and so is it still.

AUTHORITY.

ONE word often rendered "power" in the New Testament, seems to have a fuller meaning when translated "Authority" (as it is in Matt. 7. 29, 21. 23, 24, 27, Acts 26. 10, and 23 other passages). Luke 4. 36, and 9. 1* illustrate the two words together. **Both** were manifested in the Lord Jesus, but "authority" emphasizes the appointed sphere, and His work as the Perfect Servant, in the plan of grace and glory. Hence the rendering "Authority" in Matthew 9. 6, 8. 28. 18, would seem more forcible. Luke 4. 32, would thus go with Matthew 7. 29. In John 10. 18 too, this is emphasized, the "Commandment" is specially mentioned. In Acts 1. 7, "authority" has an important testimony against the scheming and boasting of men (e.g., Dan. 7. 25, contrast 2. 21 cf. 11. 14). The "authority" of Ephesians 2. 2, reminds us of Luke 4. 6, but we rejoice that this is but for a season, and we are even now delivered from "the authority of the darkness" Col. 1. 13),† and are in the kingdom of God's dear Son, Whose authority will so soon be manifested (Rev. 12. 10). In 2 Corinthians 10. 8, 13. 10, we see the responsibility and authority of God's servant Paul, strikingly contrasted with that which he had before (Acts 9. 14, 26. 10, 12. 18). It is blessed to look forward and upward, and to realize Revelation 22. 14, in the light of John 1. 12, and to know the victory of which Revelation 20. 6 speaks. And all is by the precious blood of Christ.

* In Luke 20. 20, "rule and authority."

† Note Acts 26. 18, Rev. 13. 2, 4, 5, 7, 12, 17. 12, 13, where this word is found.

MISUNDERSTANDING.

THE word denotes a "miss" or failure in understanding, but it has come to signify inferences from this, and clouded relationships thereby. Such is the fruit of the self life, the lack of harmony with God. Let the **history** of words humble and help each loving hearted believer. If I misunderstand what you say, and then misunderstand you, I am "inclined" to interpret future actions and words in the light (or "darkness") of this. Thus failure leads to failure. It is easy to "imagine," and then to connect things wrongly, and invent unthought of motives and even to **speak** of them as possible, and "others" may feel they **are** realities, and unwisely "pass on" instead of lovingly reproving me. Thus the fire spreads and instead of loving unity, as at the beginning, there is friction, with discord and a root of bitterness, and John 13. 34, 35 is entirely reversed. O that it may not be so in our experience!

"Mine Eyes Have Seen Thy Salvation."

SO could Simeon say (Luke 2. 30), and we read "All flesh shall see the **Salvation** of God" (Luke 3. 6). Why not "the Saviour"? We call to mind that our Lord Jesus not only **made** "the way" but **He is the Way** and the Truth and the Life" (John 14. 6), not only did He "make peace," but "**He is our Peace**" (Eph. 2. 14, 15). The words are intentional, inspired, perfect. When we do anything we may strive earnestly, but our whole being does not enter into it so fully as it **might**. And thus it is with "attributes." Every believer may, (and should), show godly wisdom and righteousness and holiness . . . But all is **relative**: with God all is **absolute**. The attribute is not only possessed by Him: **He is Light**. And thus the Lord Jesus not only wrought obedience but perfectly **loved in the obeying** and all His knowledge and wisdom and affections were "concentrated." There was no omission. How much this means! Thus we have an absolute salvation, and are not only attracted to His precious work, but to Himself.

The tendency of men is so easily in the **other** direction. That is to say, many make faith "mental," and others have an over-stress on the sentimental. Perfect balance and harmonizing must ever be emphasized, and here we see our falling short, and how **He never fails**. In like manner, all are not only looking for the Coming of Christ but for **Himself coming**, since He Himself enters into all His activities with a fulness that awakens and deepens that faith and peace and joy and praise of His redeemed.

Yes, there is nothing relative or incomplete in Him, but all attributes and activities are inseparable from His perfection! How different is the critic's view of Christ! Praise God we are worshippers, not critics.

"To pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean": "to teach when it is unclean and when it is clean."

(Lev. 13. 59, 14. 57).

TWO conditions are mentioned and the distinction was deeply important, affecting all relationship to God and men. We call to mind the words, "That ye may put difference between holy and unholy and between unclean and clean" (Lev. 10. 10), and then the solemn declaration, "They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed between the unclean and the clean" (Ezek. 22. 26).

The spiritual parallel speaks to you and me today (2 Cor. 6. 14-18). Do we discern? Do we know what is unclean before God? Or do we excuse sin? Are we, though a royal priesthood, ignorant as to what leprosy is? Are we lacking in discernment (Phil. 1. 10 margin)? Is there unrealized contagion, without holy alertness to detect? Are we linked with the world and unmindful of the contamination (Jas. 4. 4)? Is it possible that we, as believers, approve, and urge some things our Lord

has disapproved, calling some things holy, which are not holy? Has our eyesight become **less** keen (2 Pet. 1. 8), and our knowledge of God's will gone back (Heb. 5. 12)? Are there things we once knew but do not know now? If so, we fail to guide others aright. Instead of our lips keeping knowledge, we cause others to stumble (Mal. 2. 7, 8). How deeply important it is not to have **our own** opinions, and varying standards, each doing what is right in his own eyes (Jud. 21. 25), but that we may so **abide** in the Lord's presence and will, that sensitiveness is, as with a healthy palate, and a keen ear, diagnosing that which is God's will and that which is not; yes, the holy sensitiveness of 1 John 2. 27 is needed to-day. Is it ours in the Holy Spirit?

"Ye see with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand."

Galatians 6. 11, literally.

I have never been able to understand objections questioning this tender allusion to the apostle's strain of eyesight. It is, I think, confirmed by ch. 4. 15, "Ye would have plucked out your own **eyes**, and have given them to me." What would have been the advantage of such an action, **if** his need and infirmity were not in the eyes? And observe the context there mentions "infirmity in the flesh" (verse 13). And "with mine own hand," corroborates. Usually Paul seems to have dictated to an amanuensis (Rom. 16. 22). This of itself is suggestive. The normal "token" was his personal signature (2 Thess. 3. 17). How fitting that he should show his yearning of love toward the Galatians by personally writing (Gal. 4. 19) with the big characters which he could see!

It is somewhat remarkable, too, that Jacob's beholding of the Lord affected his thigh at the time, and gave a "reminder afterwards. May not Paul's blindness and the "scales" (Acts 9. 8, 18) have been remembered the more through his infirmity? The word "thorn," moreover, in 2 Corinthians 12. 7, may suggest the Hebrew expression "thorns in **your eyes**" (Jos. 23. 13). If we realize the harmony of all Scriptures, and the fittingness of all hints, how refreshingly we behold more of the devotedness of God's servant. What encouragement too there is for believers who have weak eyesight now, and other trials. The Lord can heal, or give grace sufficient (2 Cor. 12. 9) to **be**, to **do** much for Him, amid all the strain. Let us trust Him more fully!

Let us never misuse one grace against another, else we rob both. Importunity in prayer is not to be ruled out because we rightly leave all in God's will. Our confidence in Him, and resting in His wisdom, will not make us less intense, for our Lord Himself has appointed and encouraged a midnight importunity that prevails.

Recorded Words of John the Baptist.

NOTICE the clear view of the Person, Work and Glory of the Lord Jesus — a deep sense of sin and judgment — a true and affectionate humility.

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”

“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He That cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

“I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?”

“Art Thou He That should come, or do we look for another?”

“It is not lawful for thee to have her.”

“There cometh One Mightier than I after me, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose: I have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

“He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.”

“Exact no more than that which is appointed you.”

“Do violence to no man, neither accuse falsely; and be content with your rations.”

“This was He of Whom I spake, He That cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me.”

“I am not the Christ” (Art thou Elias?), “I am not.” (Art thou that prophet?), “No.”

“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.”

“I baptize with water: but there standeth One among you, Whom ye know not.”

“Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world: This is He of Whom I said, After me cometh a Man Which is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not; but that He should be manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and It abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He That sent me to baptize with water, the Same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the

Same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that This is the Son of God.”

“Behold the Lamb of God.”

“A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourself bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He That hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He That cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He That cometh from heaven is above all, and what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth, and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon Him.”

*The Holy Spirit has not indicated if the testimony of John the Baptist ends earlier, followed by the evangelist's witness, or not. Hence we are not able to decide.

An Outside Law, or Inward.

THE law outside, and the person **under** it, not spontaneously wishing the same, must manifest the ruin of man. **Self-**will is seen, and the commands are a repression,—that is all. The positive “Thou shalt love” is only fulfilled when the law and my will are united. Hence “the law worketh wrath” (Rom. 4. 15), and to be of the law is to be “under the curse” (Gal. 3. 13), because of the **person's lack of harmony**. The fault is not in law but in him. Law in its very nature, cannot justify anything but justice, nor **give** life to the dead (Gal. 3. 21) nor overlook, but only condemn sin.

I think of a motor broken down: it only goes when we push or drag it: there is no real response. And then I see the effect of a dynamic within: there is at once the manifestation of its owner's will.

When the law is written on the hearts (Jer. 31. 33), there is no longer repression but expression. The will of God becomes my will (John 7. 17). That is an enjoyed salvation, that is sanctification, that is the glory of heaven (Matt. 6. 10). My mind goes back to a conversation with a rabbi whom I often visited in Poland. When I asked him once concerning Jeremiah 31 and “the new covenant,” to impress Christ, and Christ's work upon him, he answered to this effect:—“I will tell you what it is: **now** the law is one thing, and the **heart** is another but a time **will** come when the two will be one, united.” I could but reply, Dear rabbi, that time has **already** come for

those who are in Messiah. Glory be to God!

What does this mean, dear reader, to you and me personally, today? Is the Lord so loved, and is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit thus realized, and is the new life so fully characteristic of us, that we delight in the will of the Father (Note the Lord Jesus in Ps. 40. 6-8), and rejoice in true harmony with Him? The test and measure of holiness can only be understood along the path of glad conformity with "that good, and acceptable will of God" (Rom. 12. 2). In Christ there was absoluteness, to us there should be constant **growth**.

WORSHIP.

Worship is not a ritual act,
Or outward form of speech;
For all is vain while "life" is lacked.
And ne'er to God can reach.

Worship is in the Spirit still,
With all-adoring praise:
It honours God, and loves His will,
Admiring all His ways.

Worship is when the heart can feel
The presence of the Lord;
Within as well the saint would kneel.
When God is thus adored.

Such worshippers God deigns to seek,
In Spirit and in truth:
Their heart to Him can humbly speak,
Their life has changeless youth.

Believers are not credulous: they have a real foundation for their faith: it is remarkable that those who criticize children of God (though they cannot **deny the possibility of revelation**, because they themselves lack universal knowledge), are so willing to be credulous as to baseless theories of evolution, and fantastic imagination for the "why" and "how" of different members of the body. Why these attempts to exclude a Designer? The **same** thing we see in **all** pantheism and polytheism and pleasure loving—the excluding of a **Personal God**. Why? **Self** would oust Him: and evil powers are working in self for themselves.

God does not leave us in a negative: He brought Israel **out** to bring them **in**: we are **buried** in baptism to be **raised**: separation from evil is never the goal, but we are led to holy fellowship with the Lord and those who seek to do His will.

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Ephesians 3. 17.

A Word of Introduction.

EVERY blessing is associated with a personal God, and a personal relationship to Him. This removes both pride and fear. The apostle's prayers show his heart, and what he himself experienced, for his desire for OTHERS was first his own joy. The privilege of a saint is a consciousness of the Lord's indwelling (Gal. 2. 20, cf. John 14. 23). Faith is beyond reasoning, and human reasoning unreasonably limits faith. Spiritual blessings can no more be explained naturally than cubes defined by two dimensions. The measure of our blessing is always joined to (a) a consciousness of Christ, (b) the heart, (c) faith. With a desire that the Spirit of God may use every page thus this magazine goes forth, commended to the prayer of praying saints (2 Cor. 1. 11).

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Meditations on Leviticus 23.

ON opening this chapter we see the extraordinary and glorious preparation for it. All the last four verses of ch. 22 emphasize "I am the Lord," and then the thought throughout the passage, is "The feast of **the Lord**," "a passover to **the Lord**," "before **the Lord**," "unto **the Lord**," "My feasts." O that we may exalt Him.

Inasmuch as nothing in nature is essential in itself, but God's appointment, even to the mode of **fruit** bearing for cereals and trees, and the season, we behold a striking threefold manifestation of God's sovereignty and glory. (a) Nature, and (b) the Scripture given hundreds of years ago, and (c) the outworking in history in the **passover** death of the Lord Jesus, and His resurrection,—**the very day** of the Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15. 23)—

harmonize perfectly in arrangement, detail, and order, showing that there is One Author of all three, and that the Scripture is a wondrous revelation from God. Each confirms and elucidates the other.

Moreover, we cannot but be impressed with a Divinely planned structure, in dates, numbers, and design of this chapter. "The Lord spake unto Moses" comes five times, and the first and last sections balance, each containing God's arrangements for a week, and a special day. The **centre** day of Israel's year (1st of 7th month) is, moreover, in the central section.

Furthermore, we find the seventh day (3), seven days (8), seven sevens (16), the seventh month most emphasized (24, 27, 34), and its seven days (34), leading on to the seventh year (ch. 25. 4), and seven sevens (ch. 25. 8), culminating in the fiftieth jubile year (25. 10), even as Pentecost is the jubile day (23. 16). We may remember, too, the seventy sevens of Daniel 9. 24. "Seven" suggests peace **after** a complete work, and God's cycle for Israel shows His completeness, and His gift of "peace" (Mic. 5. 5, Hag. 2. 9). Nor can we overlook that the "holy convocation" days in the year are marked in Leviticus 23 as seven?—Two in Passover, then Pentecost, the Day of the Blowing of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and two related to Tabernacles,—one of the latter being also an eighth day, beyond the dwelling in tents or tabernacles, balancing the day after the sabbath seen **TWICE** in the first half of Israel's year, and suggesting the climax of eight, and resurrection blessing continually in, and through, our Lord Jesus. This stress on the first day is unique, and needs to be brought to the notice of any misguided by seventh dayism.

The parallels and contrasts are evident. In the first half of the year we have small cereals, which in ripening become golden, being scorched and detached from the earth: in the latter half we have large and goodly trees, which in fruit bearing have nothing of this scorching or detachment, but rather the beautiful green of earth, and a deeper rooting. The first half suggests a pilgrim people, and is associated with the **first** day, and its holy convocations are never called "sabbaths." The second half indicates a nation at rest on the earth (Israel) freed from alarm ("booths"), and has an emphasis on "sabbaths," with the holy convocations expressly called by this name. Thus we have two dispensations—the present and millennial—as we shall presently see more fully, and meanwhile we note that the "first" days are dependent on Passover, without a **month** date, and The Day of Atonement and Tabernacles are associated with Passover from the "moon" reckoning, the two seven day feasts being at the full moon in God's wisdom. The building up of all on Passover reminds us of the foundational aspect of the precious blood of Christ and of the way in which the kingdom of God and "that Day" are before us in Luke 22. 16, and then the church and the Lord's supper in the present dispensation, with the

same starting point, in verses (a) 19 and (b) 20. Plainly the New Testament illustrates the Old, and we begin to see the **twofold** fulfilment of prophecy, and the completeness of the work of the Lord Jesus is ever our joy (John 11. 52), and the **two** fulnesses of Romans 11. 25, 26 (with 12). "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift." (2 Cor. 9. 15).

This leads us on to notice the fact that this chapter is a **prophecy**: we are told that our beloved Lord was raised "the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 4). To what does this refer? Must not Leviticus 23 be included, the clearest passage? Or rather the literal translation of Acts 2. 1 is "in the fulfilling (or rather "being fulfilled") of the Day of Pentecost." The Holy Spirit has much to "signify" or "make clear" by types (Heb. 9. 8). May we have ears to hear! We observe that the sabbath stands alone, and Leviticus 23. 4 begins the **annual** appointments, though in the **same** section of "the Lord spake unto Moses." Does it not remind us that He Who is our Passover (1 Cor. 5. 7) was the Perfect One Who alone fulfilled the law (Lev. 18. 5. No "if" in Hebrew)?

Do we not see Christ's personal life whereas all others are sinners? He kept the Father's will and fittingly died the afternoon of the sixth day (Ex. 20. 9) and was entitled to the sabbath rest. Then we behold Him as our Passover, as the One able to take our place, our death, our judgment. It is by Him that the year, and cycle, of blessing is brought to His redeemed. How dependent we are on Himself. Verily, Passover is the foundation in Leviticus 23. The blood of the Lord Jesus is the only ground of hope. We were, by nature, part of an Egyptian and condemned world. But we are brought out. And His death was followed by His resurrection. It was impossible that He should be "holden" (Acts 2. 24). He must be raised (Matt. 16. 21, Acts 17. 3). Hence the sheaf, or "omer" (cf. the same measure of the Hidden Manna, Ex. 16. 32), could not be presented before passover. But the day after the sabbath it is seen as ready. And the "waving" (Lev. 23. 11) denotes exaltation, and did He not speak of **ascending** the same day (John 20. 17)? So exactly is everything fulfilled. And it is in this connection the words "to be accepted for you," or, preferably, "for your acceptance," are deeply important. "For you" might suggest substitution: but this has been seen in the Passover. **Then** we have God's good pleasure in His welcomed people viewed in their risen Lord. Is it not wonderful? Appropriately at **once** we find the mention of a "sweet savour" or "savour of rest." God is satisfied with His redeemed,—beheld in Christ. And the mention of sacrifices, (only in connection with the "Omer" and Pentecost in this chapter), seems designed to bring out a striking difference. There is no sin offering here (although emphasized in verse 19, after the loaves of leavened bread). Our beloved Lord is seen in the Sheaf (John 12. 24), and He is the Sinless One, and, (we repeat), the **acceptance** of His own is in Him. In Him

they are one, and perfected for ever (Heb. 10. 14). How can we be grateful enough for such lovingkindness? And then the words of verse 14 remind us that all our ample provision is because God the Father is satisfied with the Lord Jesus. We can eat and rejoice before Him. God's enjoyment must ever be first. The Sheaf, as the Shewbread, is before Him first. And thus it is throughout.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

Will there be a "Partial Rapture"?

THERE will be a rapture,—the rapture. "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the dead in Christ raised) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4. 17). This does not suggest a privilege beforehand for some. The "we" indicates the unity of the saints throughout the dispensation, however long. How could Paul have identified himself with these if there were an earlier hope for some peculiarly faithful ones?

Why do believers speak of a previous firstfruits? Are not all saints a kind of firstfruits of His creatures (Jas. 1. 18), and does not the Pentecost type (Acts 2. 1) associate the privilege with the whole church now, receiving the new covenant blessings of Hebrews 8. 10-13 before Israel are brought into them? It is not, however, pride that brings some to expect an earlier stage of being caught up. Some of the lowliest saints have felt a drawing toward this. Yet where is real Scriptural evidence? It would seem to the writer to make a rupture of an appointed unity which depends upon sovereign grace and on the work of Christ alone (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52).

Position in an assembly, and in the kingdom, may be, and is, rightly linked with obedience, but the first resurrection and the rapture are not divided by the Holy Spirit. Those left in Daniel 12. 2 are left for "shame and everlasting contempt." "They that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23) would suggest no division. We would affectionately urge that Enoch, caught up hundreds of years before the flood, is not said by the Holy Spirit to typify a severance of the saints at Christ's coming. We need to beware lest we assume un-appointed types, do we not?

Two main arguments advanced are in Luke 21. 36 and Philippians 3. 11. But the first verse contrasts saints with earthdwellers (verse 35), comparable with those of Revelation 3. 10, 6. 10, 8. 13, 11. 10, etc. By gracious warning the Lord still draws His own to His will, as Matthew 5. 26, 29 shows. Those on whom the Day comes "unawares," or "as a thief," are viewed as united with hypocrites (Matt. 24. 50, 51)§ and are distinguished from children of God (1 Thess. 5. 4, 5). And the apostle's desire in Philippians 3. 11 gives a deep insight into his humility, and affords Scriptural witness against trusting to past confession of Christ and past experiences. "That I may

win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness" (verses 8, 9) could be easily misunderstood to suggest the loss of salvation, but all is actually in accord with the principle that assurance and joy are never divorced from the PRESENT walk with God. Compare too, "if that I may apprehend" (12),—yet complete the verse, "If by any means" denotes willingness to lose all rather than the joy of salvation: the same intensity is seen in the same word in Rom. 1. 10 (assurance in 15. 24), and 11. 14. Acts 27. 12 (the only other occurrence) strikingly contrasts human failure. We are not to cease praying because God has promised (Ezek. 36. 37), but the reverse. Nor are we to cease striving against evil because God is bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2. 10). He, Who designs the ends, appoints the means (1 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 4. 18, Acts 27. 24 with 31). The unready ones of Matthew 25 are not only addressed with the words "I know you not" (12 see 2 Tim. 2. 19), but are said by the Lord Jesus to have no oil "with themselves," even as the cast out branch of John 15 is not said to become fruitless, but to be all the time without fruit; and the one continuing in sin (1 John 3. 6) is shown never to have known the Lord. If we have a new life we shall hate sin for the Lord's sake. It is blessed to be withheld from drawing back unto perdition (Heb. 10. 39 with Luke 22. 32, Heb. 7. 25), but we would not draw back at all for we seek God's pleasure (Heb. 10. 38). The practical nature and present searching character of the truth is ever illustrated:—"Are there few that be saved"—"Strive." "When shall these things be?"—"Take heed." O that we may learn this, in the leading of the Holy Spirit along the path "into all the truth" (John 16. 13).

*May not the same aspect be implied by the context of Matthew 24. 40, 41, which, (despite the thought of many), we would associate with our Lord's coming for us (verse 42)?

§The faithful servant of verse 45 is viewed as continuing (46): "that evil servant" is distinguished. The word "that" can emphasize judgment (Matt. 26. 24) and its repetition gives the two classes (cf. "these," "these" in Dan. 12. 2).

Is such a life God's will for His own? Is it possible? There cannot be any doubt as to this. God is willing to make all grace abound. Our sufficiency is in Him. Did not Paul himself illustrate this? Is not his God our God and Father also? Is not this the testimony needed? Let children of God have spiritual discernment, let them honour the Lord in their daily walk, let them never be irritable, nor complain, let their joy and praise be constant,—and the world will see that there is more than a religion in Christ, more than a theory, more than a profession. This is what is needed. This is the testimony which glorifies God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray, pray, pray with such desires, such expectations for God's own work to day. Organization will never take the place of the Holy Spirit's in-working.

“His Wheat.” “The Chaff.”

Matthew 3. 12.

ALL truth is precious, and heart-searching. The name for the Lord's redeemed here encourages us. They are likened to acceptable food and, moreover, the fact that His own have life through His death, and are like to Him, becomes our realized joy, for is He not the Corn of Wheat (John 12. 24)? And the Divine possession (“His wheat”) is seen throughout (cf. Matt. 13. 30 with 37 and 41). Nor shall the least grain fall to the ground (a striking picture as to Israel's elect in Amos 9. 9, contrast 10).

The contrast between wheat and chaff is clear (cf. Jer. 23 28); and chaff is often linked with a driving away (Ps. 1. 4, 35. 5, Isa. 17. 13, 29. 5, Dan. 2. 35, Hos. 13. 3). Thus the two thoughts for the unsaved are (a) separation from God and (b) fire; and these are combined in 2 Thessalonians 1. 8, 9.

How blessed is the privilege of those gathered into His garner—for Himself. He will not lose them: He will bring them all into precious oneness. He does not have separate garners. All saints will be together in glory.

But the nearness of wheat and chaff now, during our time in this world, is also heart-searching. Unconverted ones may be in the meetings, and hear the word of God, and yet never be saved. They may be in the same family physically, and thus often at the same table. How important it is to know if we are really born from above, or not.

Nor can we forget another message. All “types” are incomplete, and have contrasts, yet we cannot but feel that since we have the flesh, as well as that which is born of the Spirit, there is in us individually that which will be driven away. But (a contrast with nature) we may experience God's fire of refining and cleansing now, as Isaiah 6 sets forth. The “dross” with precious metal illustrates parabolically how blessedly God “shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver” (Mal. 3. 3), and is He not lovingly willing thus to deal with His redeemed ones NOW? He is, and Acts 2 further shows this gracious operation. O that we may wish His work in ourselves and spiritually harmonize with it (2 Cor. 7. 1).

The English language lends itself to use of words beginning with RE's e.g., we have Regeneration, Repentance, Remission of Sins wondrously brought together in faith's experience. And is it not helpful to notice the link between Recognition of the Truth, its Realization, and the Receptiveness, Readiness and Responsiveness which characterize the healthy Christian life?

We often let the fire get hold and then try to put it out; we need grace for victory at the beginning of sin. Let us not be willing for thoughts that lead to evil words, but judge the first sprouting of the evil tree in the Name of, and with the victory of, the Lord Jesus, Who has bought us.

“Which God ordained before the ages unto Our Glory”:
Had they known, they would not have crucified “THE
LORD of THE GLORY”

1 Corinthians 2. 7, 8.

It was the Lord of Glory
Who died for sinners lost:
How wondrous is the story,
How precious was the cost!
None other wrought redemption,
Nor helped the work to do:
Complete is the exemption,—
And is He known to you?

Then joy in endless glory,
E'en now to faith unveiled:
And tell the welcome story,
Of one Who ne'er has failed!
Redemption! 'Tis for ever,
For aye removed the curse,
And none shall change or sever,
Who can God's will reverse?

Let love and praise be flowing,
A living, holy stream,
As more the saints are knowing
Their Lord Who would redeem:
“Much fruit” we would be bearing,
Himself to glorify;
Soon, soon, His glory sharing,—
His coming is so nigh.

CAN WE TRUST ONE ANOTHER?

MEN cannot trust men: the solemnity of oaths tries to make up for this but in vain. Nations do not trust nations: how can the aggregate be better than its constituents? Employers and employees, normally, lack confidence in each other. What about children of God? Could we trust others freely and fully with our inward feelings? Would we wish them to know all? Or would there be fear of misunderstanding, talkativeness, and even scandal? Love is the reverse of all these: but our love is not yet what it should be, though, thanks be to God, there is some love, and much love among saints. But without looking at the dark side of things, we may plead for heart-searching and more love, more worthiness of confidence, and more true homely “confidingness,” on our own part and that of our beloved brethren.

But there is One Whom we can safely trust, One in Whom we can completely confide. Though He already knows all, He lovingly welcomes us to let our requests be made known to Him (Phil. 4. 6). Let us take Him at His word; we shall never regret the intimacy, the reverent intimacy, to which He invites.

A STRONG CHARACTER.

OFTEN our mental summing up of one another lacks spiritual balance, and the love of God. O for grace to think and speak aright. Let us realize that temperaments are often two-fold, and complex, and with strange variations and opposites. But some of us may have normally a more determined character than others among us. What then? There is no room for boasting. But there are peculiar dangers calling for special prayer. The one who is very definite is inclined to act prematurely, to assert himself, or herself, to exercise an undue control and even to despise others. The enemy is ever on the watch to tempt. O that we may know and judge ourselves, and be victorious, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The absence of strength of character may obviate certain temptations, but we would not desire to be weak on this account. God's servant Paul was very determined, and the Lord still uses fixity and purpose of heart. The important thing is to realize our limitations, and the peril of our strong points, and the enemy's hidden attractions on the very line of our obedience. This is frequently his method. We more quickly detect a temptation **against** the path of our activity to please God. Hence Satan in subtilty would lead us to do what is right in a wrong way, or with a wrong impetuosity—before the time, or in a manner that compels and coerces others. We may be deceived to think that our zeal for the Lord is being manifested, whereas there is a veiled self-emphasis. We need grace to discern at all times through a closer walk with God.

A truly strong character should be strong against self. Only thus can there be fulness of blessing. It is noteworthy that those of a determined nature often make a very sad mistake in the midst of much devotedness. And the effect is the more serious, **because** their strength of will means that the train is going at full speed when the collision takes place. Moreover, their usual spiritual leadership (and the Lord appoints leading and rule Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24), gives them influence and the confidence of other saints who wish to please the Lord. How important that the strong character should be quiet and yielded to the Lord. We never have enough wisdom to decide wisely for ourselves, nor enough power to act aright ourselves. We need the Lord always.

"God does not want your education," was the objection of one who knew little. But neither does He want our **ignorance**. He desires us wholly as willing ones for His will—and whether we have education or ignorance it will be a hindrance, unless it is yielded with all we have (or have **not**) for His gracious cleansing, moulding and using as He pleases.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

John 15 14.

A Word of Introduction.

[Is it possible? Does the Lord Jesus say such words? He is so glorious. And yet! O the amazing condescension of grace to save—by dying. And the CONTINUED amazing condescension to His redeemed. He delights to have His own with Him, delights to hear their voice, delights to guide and encourage them, delights to be their All in all every day. He is not changed, nor is He changeable. In view of His matchless love are these pages sent forth. They are not only mental and grammatical "studies." The child of God needs food, the servants of the Lord need His guidance. We desire to be His means of passing on what we have received from Him, as the disciples the five loaves. We have nothing of our own to set before you, but we look for grace to receive His gift of as much as we need and not only the loan of three loaves. O that out of His fulness all may minister to the filling of His beloved ones, and their full response of praise.]

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Meditations on Leviticus 23.

(Concluded.)

Accordingly there is at once the counting, to reach Pentecost, the number 50 (the breadth of the Tabernacle Court), and so many numbers in the Tabernacle, suggesting "five":—God's law fulfilled, and grace reigning, and His gracious use of little things (cf. the five barley loaves, and the five stones, and the five words). Seven sabbaths are complete:—"peace" is emphasized. Then the day after the sabbath **must** be the first of the week. Jewish and other commentators have obscured this by wrongly asserting that the sabbath of verse 11 was the "holy convocation" of verse 7, which is never thus called. The weekly sabbath rather is before us, and then the day after

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this, with its witness against Seventh Dayism, and its positive emphasis on resurrection ground in Christ for the present dispensation. It is, indeed, remarkable that the two facts which so fully characterize our privileges now (the Resurrection and the Coming of the Holy Spirit), both occurred on the first day. The times and seasons are in Divine authority. God is never before the time, and never late.

Seven sabbaths are complete, and the Jubile Day follows. It tells of a "new meal offering," of "your habitations" and the number "two." Here is the key. "If two of you shall agree" (Matt. 18. 19). "Ye shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1. 8):—two is the number of fellowship and of witness (John 8. 17).

Now we see why the Holy Spirit came on the Lord Jesus as a Dove, and on His own as Tongues of Fire. He had nothing to be burnt, but they had, and have, the need as Isaiah (ch. 6). Leaven can be restrained by fire. In our **unity** with Christ there is perfectness in His perfection, but in our fellowship and witness how we need this corrective ministry of the Holy Spirit. Yet how graciously we read in this connection also of a savour of rest (verse 18), and of the exaltation, just as with the sheaf (verses 11 and 20), for we are made to sit together with Christ.

No further feast occurs in the cereal half of the new year. The care for the poor and the stranger reminds us that this is a pilgrim dispensation, and that there will be **needs**, and that the response to these should be love and thoughtfulness.

Next we reach the central section, and the central day. It is marked by the blowing of trumpets. We cannot but recollect Matthew 24. 31, 1 Corinthians 15. 51, 52, 1 Thessalonians 4. 16. Have we not here the Hope of the Church, and the bringing in of a new dispensation? From this point in the chapter we have no cereals with their light attachment to earth, and no scorching (of persecution), but the trees. And "sabbaths" also are emphasized. The Lord has purchased the field (the earth, Matt. 13. 44), and He will change all. The "tenth day" is the Day of Atonement" in the same month, Exodus 12. 3 comes to mind, and possibly Exodus 24. 16 with 19. 16, nor can we forget God's teaching by "ten" throughout (Fellowship). Those who were prepared for this dispensation had ten days of waiting (Acts 1. 3, 2. 1). So have we not the preparation of Israel typically, and their repentance (humbling of soul), and their realization of Christ's atonement in Leviticus 23. 27 (cf. Zech. 12. 10 and Isa. 53)? It is not that He offers Himself again. The sacrificial appointments of Leviticus 16 are not here detailed. Here is the application of His finished work. Passover is the way **out** from death unto life. Atonement is the way **in**: and acceptance and glory are before us. The destruction from the people of any who remain unhumiliated would speak of Jeremiah 50. 20 and Zephaniah 3. 12. It is only thus that the joy of the antitypical feast of Tabernacles can be reached (Isa. 61. 3, 4), and it shall

be reached. And this is the typical appointment linked with the millennial day (Zech. 14. 16, 17), and the only one that awaits fulfilment. Thus we behold the perfection of God's plan, and the accuracy of His words, written so long before the outworking.

How wondrously Passover speaks of Christ's death, the Sheaf of His resurrection, Pentecost of the coming of the Holy Spirit in fire, the Trumpets of the coming again of our Lord, the Day of Humiliation of Israel's repentance, and Tabernacles of His kingdom on the restored earth. Everything is in the right order, everything is foreseen. But is this not exactly what we should expect? The inspiration of Holy Scripture, let it be emphasized, is unmistakable. And how bright is the prospect for all redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. The glory of the fruit and the trees of majesty, (as the word indicates), in verses 39-40 must awaken our praise. The Lord Jesus **shall** see of the travail of His soul, Jerusalem **shall** be a praise in the earth, "He must reign."

Are we surprised at the climax "Ye shall **rejoice** before the Lord your God seven days," after the sorrow of but a few days earlier? It is all before **Him**. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. With the joy that He Himself has caused we expect and anticipate the blessedness, and our hearts would earnestly pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

COLOSSIANS 1. 9-12.

How important that we too should plead for these blessings on behalf of ourselves and one another. And how precious are the explanatory words. Not only understanding, but spiritual understanding, not only walking, but walking worthily of the Lord not only strength but "**all** might," and a glorious "according to," as elsewhere. And the word "**all**" is before us five times. Joy and thanksgiving are the climax.

"Filled with the knowledge of His will."

"In all wisdom."

"That ye might walk."

"Growing."

"Strengthened."

"All patience and long suffering."

"Joyfulness."

"Giving thanks."

Uncertainty and unreliability spoil everything. If my watch runs accurately for a thousand seconds or sometimes fifty thousand, and then stops, can I depend on it? May it not stop just at the time that would hinder my getting up or catching a train? How unsatisfactory is an unreliable believer: how blessed it is to have an absolutely dependable Saviour.

Man's Object, and GOD'S PURPOSE.

HOW often men seek after position, riches, reputation, success—and then? The body decays, death comes, they must relinquish all.

When any one is born from above his whole outlook on “life” is, and should be, changed, and the measure of experienced sanctification is glad harmony even in little things with God's appointment for His redeemed unitedly and ourselves personally. And what is that? In the Old Testament we read, “This people have I formed for Myself: they shall shew forth My praise” (Isa. 43. 21), and the message of the later Scriptures is the same, “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8. 29), “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1. 6). “They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3. 17). Compare: “A chosen generation . . . that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2. 9).

Hence we may ponder again the oft-read words, “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; in Him, in Whom also we were made an inheritance, being predestinated **according to the purpose** of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ” (Eph. 1. 9-12). And again, “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel . . . the unsearchable riches of Christ . . . according to the **eternal purpose which He purposed** in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3. 6-11). Here is God's wonderful object. Adam was created in the image of God, but sinned: our Beloved Lord, Who is the Image of the Invisible God (Col. 1. 15) became in the likeness of man (Phil. 2. 7), that we might put on “the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him That created him” (Col. 3. 10), namely this new creation of us, as believers, to be renewed inwardly now (2 Cor. 3. 18) and to learn Christ (Eph. 4. 20), and then to be transfigured, and bear the image of the Heavenly One with a glorified body in that Day (Phil. 3. 21, 1 Cor. 15. 49).

We can talk of truth without feeling it, and say well known words on our knees without praying them.

The Land of the Lord.

“THE house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord” (Isa. 14. 2). Thus runs the sure word of prophecy. We turn back to Leviticus 25. 23, “The land is Mine,” and other verses come to mind, “I will break the Assyrian in **My land**, and upon **My mountains** tread him underfoot.” “Because they have defiled **My land**.” “I have spoken . . . against all Idumea, which have appointed **My land** into their possession.” (Isa. 14. 25, Jer. 18. 16, Ezek. 36. 5). Yes, the “land which the Lord thy God careth for” (Deut. 11. 12) has never been changed, and it shall yet be “Beulah,” and “delightful” (Isa. 62. 4, Mal. 3. 12). God's purpose does not change (Isa. 46. 10, 13), and His gifts and calling are without variation of mind (Rom. 11. 29). Here is the foundation for faith, joy, prayer and praise. The fact that we have a heavenly calling now, and are strangers and pilgrims here does not make us lose sight of the promise that Abraham shall possess the land where he sojourned, on resurrection ground, and “the meek shall inherit the earth,” and, above all, our adorable Lord, cast out and rejected at Jerusalem, shall reign there before His ancients gloriously, and possess “the field” that He purchased (Matt. 13. 44). Here is the only key to the world's confused problem. Until Jerusalem has its appointed King (Ps. 2. 6) and is “a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62. 6, 7) it must be a “cup of trembling” and “a burdensome stone” (Zech. 12. 2, 3). The land belongs neither to Arab nor to Jew, in unbelief, but **to the Lord**. When the scattered nation turns to the Lord, “the land of the Lord” will become their own land (Isa. 14. 1, 2) and “many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day . . . and the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech. 2. 11, 12). All else must prove a failure, leading to the revealed crisis of man standing up against “the Prince of princes” (Dan. 8. 25), but He, “the King of kings and Lord of lords,” shall conquer (Rev. 17. 14). “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

“IF.”

IF I had no trials, I should trust far less. Even difficult weather leads to more determination: painful circumstances encourage more prayer: opposition awakens Christian love. Everything can be sanctified. We little know what is best for us, **our Father knows**. A world without pain would be far harsher and more unsympathetic. Often pain softens the sufferer and onlooker alike. In days of mechanization everything would soon become merely metallic, and all life would have a machinery of factory-like routine. “Children,” (taking up much time in their long helplessness), and “suffering” are alike used by God to put a brake on the world's mad rush to climax and suicide. And in this time of God's longsuffering He saves souls. The world

chafes at problems, but it would be a worse pandemonium otherwise. If I could have self's own way, I should become the bondman of my cravings. The closed door is a mercy, even as an illness may be a red light, to keep a lost soul from a fatal collision. Do not put up with problems, nor be resigned to difficulties, but **rejoice**, and **give thanks** in everything.

If all my hasty "prayers" were answered as I think, there would be a granted request, but leanness of soul (Ps. 106. 15). The seeming delay and refusal, are to teach me how to pray, and to realize communion must precede true prayer, that I may know the will of God, and my will may be encircled in His. That is spiritual victory.

Fear and Worry.

HOW great a share these have in the lives of many to-day.

Fear rules more than we realize. "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29. 25), and the results are countless. "What will so-and-so say?"—"What will that man, or that nation, do?"—"We must take risks, but prepare for eventualities." The standpoint of the natural heart is fear more predominantly than love, and a man expects something against him rather than love toward him, and this is often through a realization of one's own selfcentredness. A nation is not occupied with the thought that another nation is planning a surprise of love for it, and wondering how gratitude can best be manifested!

The human heart is steeped in suspicion, and this is natural if any know **not One in Whom** to trust with childlike confidence. But we have One Whose love, and wisdom, and knowledge are infinite, "therefore will not we fear." The blessedness of faith is real: the blessedness of relationship to our Father, that makes faith a living experience, is beyond expression.

Worry is incompatible with confidence in God (Phil. 4. 6, 7). It is an evidence of distrust. It says, (in language of attitude more forcible than all actual words) "There is a defeat somewhere: all is not in the control of One Whose love and tenderness are complete, Whose foreknowledge and providence are entwined with every attribute of discernment and power, to arrange all perfectly." In other words, worry is distrust and denial of our Father, the putting of self's fear before His promise, and a murmuring against Him. O that we may ever realize the blessed contrast with the baffled and ruffled world which is the birthright and portion of God's children, and which should affect our standpoint and our actions, yea, our nerves and our faces ("Health" is "salvation," Ps. 42. 11, 43. 5), that God in all things may be glorified by the **simple** and constant trust of His believing people (Rom. 8. 28, with Ps. 27. 1, Isa. 12. 2, 26. 3, 4).

The Sinner Spoils Everything— except Pure Grace.

"THROUGH one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5. 12). Hence the creation has been made subject to vanity, and the earth does not yet yield her increase, but has thorns and thistles, and weeds and wilderness.

"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7. 12), but the law "was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3), and "the law made **nothing** perfect" (Heb. 7. 19). It demanded, rightly, something from **man**, and man failed. Hence the "weakness and unprofitableness" (Heb. 7. 18), and "the weak and poor elements" (Gal. 4. 9). The fault is not in law, but in man. Every "compound," everything that combines man's **action** with a holy appointment, must break down.

What is the only hope? Is it not that which is **independent** of man's "goodness," being dependent only on God? And such is the pure grace of "the gospel of the grace of God." He tarrieth not for man, but, having loved us when we were dead, He quickened us, though we were deserving judgment. How blessed is **pure grace**. There can be no mixtures. Salvation is all of grace. Glory be to God. Our fears and our pride are **buried** together. The very gospel that humbles the sinner lifts him up as a saint. Grace **reigns** through righteousness, and enables holiness to the praise of the glory of His grace!

We cannot be too thankful. We cannot be too lowly. We cannot be too devoted. We ourselves are bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ. The eternal covenant reminds us of God's love and thought of us from eternity, and His love is the same to-day, and will be for ever. Here is a gospel which cannot be spoiled. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul. Yes, **Grace reigns** (Rom. 5. 21).

If a child of God testifies at a Tribunal that he can only recognize one absolute authority, let him also lovingly remember that the same principle applies in every detail of life,—even at home. The first danger is self. We do not belong to men, or to a land, we say, but to Christ—True. But the Holy Spirit's first emphasis is, "Ye are not **your own**." The most oppressive conscription is that of SELF,—myself, **your** self.

"You only believe, you do not know, faith has no proof," say the men of the world. But the Holy Spirit has answered such mistakes in advance. "Faith is the **substance**" not a shadow, the "evidence" or **proof**,"—the very word. Praise God for such definiteness and realities.

Spirituality is Christlikeness: unspirituality is world-likeness, and the expression of the "I" life.

What is Mentioned and Emphasized in the Burnt Offering

(Lev. 1).

1. An offering "unto the Lord" (the word chosen suggests a nearness, and this is seen again by the repetition of "bring," from the same root).
2. "A male without blemish."
3. "For his **acceptance**" ("of his own voluntary will" may be thus helpfully rendered)
4. Atonement is included.
5. The head, inwards, fat, and legs are all before us, telling of the glory, perfection and walk of the Lord Jesus.
6. Killing, and the blood are prominent.
7. The altar is the foundation.
8. The wood is in order.
9. The fire of approval is present. (The word is "burn" as incense" and then observe "a savour of rest")
10. All is for the Lord (cf. "a **whole** burnt offering" as one of the names).

How wondrous the view of the completeness and acceptability of our Lord and His work, and our acceptance in Him. And let us remember that "the burnt offering" (EVERYTHING for the Lord is FIRST in Leviticus. This is the Divinely right standpoint. May it be ours in heart, in meeting, in more meditation on Him, in daily life—always (Matt. 6. 33).

"We are His Workmanship."

Ephesians 2. 10.

Yes, God hath made us—His creation,
 "Not of ourselves" is our salvation:
 What love and praise should be o'erflowing,
 His life and light at all times showing.

"We are His poem"—all-harmonious,
 No sound of discord, all euphonious:
The life, one whole, should tell His glory,—
Of grace, not write, but be, the story.

This is His purpose! We united,
 Would with His wishes be delighted:
 Christ is our Life,—all we are giving
 Is through Himself within us living.

The quality of our work is no proof of the quality of service unto the Lord. His will is decisive: men's approval is vain. The Holy Spirit never leads to fleshly activity, though He is equally against fleshly sloth.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"That they all may be one"

John 17. 21.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is our privilege to rejoice in the Lord, His work and His words. He is Perfect, His work is complete and His words are absolute truth. His "will" must stand; His prayers were heard always. The glorious fulness of unity SHALL be, but its loving anticipation SHOULD be. The latter is our responsibility in devotedness to Him, and with this object, and His glory therein, these pages go forth. Just as religion fails among the unsaved so merely mental knowledge is vain among those who are truly born again. We need to "feel" more, and to show the fruit of a living love to our Lord, and a deep longing for His interests to be ours. John 17 shows what will bring Him joy. O that we may never be slack to seek this! The more concern there is for true unity among those who are one in Christ, and for the removal of barriers through error, tradition, carelessness, pride, misunderstanding and friction—in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit—the more we shall be like Christ, and delight His heart.

See T49/5:
 An answer to

ECCLESIASTES.

MANY of us have made mistakes by careless reading of Holy Scripture. How needful is prayerful meditation, and attention to every word. The Holy Spirit has given us all that we have received with a definite purpose (2 Tim. 3. 16). The inspiration is perfect. Some one may ask, "What about historical facts and genealogies that existed apart from any revelation?" and (b) "The record of the words of Satan, and of the wishes and reasonings of evil men?" The Scriptural answer is simple: God perfectly appointed (a) What should be included and what omitted, (b) The mode and wording of the record. Hence, though all is not "revelation," all is inspiration, and that verbal. The stress by the Lord Jesus, and by individual writers, on *single words*, and every "jot and tittle," demonstrates this. And the fact that the most searching illustration shows yet the more the perfect consistency confirms this testimony. Nor could we *depend* on a variable book.

We approach a little read book. It has two Divinely indicated titles :—

- (a) "The Words of the Preacher" (or "One calling an assembly"), and
- (b) "Vanity of Vanities."

— The first links with Proverbs, and there are many similarities; the second reminds of "the Song of Songs," but is an absolute antithesis. This is surely intentional. After the title-verse, with its fivefold vanity, contrasted with its five "blessednesses" of Genesis 12. 2, 3 and the five "alls" of grace in 2 Corinthians 9. 8, and the five negatives of preserving love in Hebrews 13. 5, the book begins with a **question**, and near the end of the first section is another, "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See this is new?" This makes clear the standpoint,—an enquiry. And observe some initial key words:—

- "Profit."
- "A man."
- "Labour."
- "Under the sun."

The repetition of the last expression 29 times, and of "profit" 10 times (sometimes rendered "excellency"), the recurrence of "labour(ed)" in 26 places, and the 49 references to "a man" must intensify this thought. The first question is not answered directly. The round of nature and the treadmill of history are brought before us, and the summing up has a threefold "not." "Man cannot utter: the eye is *not* satisfied with seeing *nor* the ear filled with hearing," and "There is *no* new thing under the sun." Well may the next section add "That which is crooked cannot be made straight" (verse 15). But hark, there is a sound! "The voice of him that crieth, In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places made plain" (Isa. 40. 3, 4). And yet again, "Wherefore do ye spend . . . your labour on that which satisfieth not? . . . Incline your ear and come unto Me . . . behold I have given Him" (Isa. 55. 3, 4). So the ear and eye are satisfied with One Who says "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28), "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3), not "under the sun." And the "newness" is here, by the blood of the **new** covenant for "if any man is in Christ, there is a **new** creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17). Here is the only resting place. And "He shall see of the labour of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53. 11) is a Divinely appointed allusion. So the book is to record the failure of man in his labour, and his enquiry, and his knowledge, and the need for revelation, yea, the need for Him in Whom there is Life and Light, the Greater than Solomon, our blessed Lord Jesus,

The second section confirms the interpretation regarding the purport and purpose of this book to which the prayerful reader is being led. The opening words are clear: "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom." Here is the ENQUIRY of a man ("given to the sons of men"). And what is the scope?—"Concerning all things that are done *under heaven*." In verse 16 we read "I communed with mine own heart" and (17) "I gave my heart," and in 2. 1, 3 "I said in mine heart," "I sought in mine heart." Here is the investigation,—"till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven." Everything is limited, and confined. How blessed the contrast of a heavenly revelation. Man ever fails: God's grace never fails. The book makes an appointed background for *the glory of Christ*, and our privileges in Him.*

As soon as this is realized we shall understand why it is that:—

- (1) We find in Ecclesiastes many questions, without answers.
- (2) We have many *culs-de-sac*. The investigation is recorded, and then its incompleteness and unsatisfying result put honestly before us.
- (3) We sense a feeling of disappointment and limitation and failure.
- (4) We discover two contrary currents—the philosophical and the practical—with varied contradictions implied.
- (5) We lack the definiteness of revelation, and a "Thus saith the Lord."
- (6) We notice wording which does NOT harmonize with that which God has unveiled elsewhere.
- (7) The attempt of some to build eschatological theories on this treatise condemns itself. The book is NOT a revelation of God, but an inspired record of human thinking. The "thinking" is set forth in Divinely chosen words, accurately chosen (*verbal* inspiration), but the "thinking" is full of man's inaccuracy, incompleteness and failure. God leads us by His perfect record of man's imperfection to see the need for the *opposite* wherever He has revealed *this*. Sometimes, even as *bodily* faculties act rightly in measure, the inference of the investigator is *truth* (e.g. 1. 18, 4. 13, 7. 9), but it is never dependable, and it is never a standard or plumb line. We are shut up to God's revelation.

As soon as this is grasped, all, or nearly all, passages become much clearer. In 2. 1 we have one pathway sought in life's maze, and it proves a blind alley. There is no "thoroughfare" till we come to Christ. Each river ends in a bog. Mirth does not *satisfy*, indulgence cannot meet the need

* A concordance to Ecclesiastes by itself or at least of the words coming often, would indicate the nature of the book most definitely.

(2. 3). In 2. 4 there is another attempt, described at great length. The repeated old English "me" signifying "for myself" is repeated again and again, five times in verses 4-6, and "my," six times in verse 10. Self-enjoyment of earth's joys unhindered is seen to disappoint. The man who says, "If only I had more money, and could do, and buy, *whatever* I would, how happy I should be," does not know the emptiness. "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (2. 11). This looks back to the first question (1. 3) and the words added to "vanity" ("vexation of spirit") are important (1). They occur *seven* times (1. 14, 2. 11, 17, 26, 4. 4, 6, 6. 9). Other translations have been suggested: "a striving after wind" (R.V.), "a feeding on wind" (R.V.M.), and the Holy Spirit's language includes all this.

How different is the blessedness when we have the work of God's Holy Spirit! "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3. 6) and our gracious God and Father "satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 107. 9), and brings us to Himself (Ex. 19. 4, Ps. 16. 11, 36. 9).

The references to "wisdom" are important:—"To search out by wisdom," "More wisdom," "Much experience of wisdom," "yet acquainting my heart with wisdom," "my wisdom remained with me," "I turned myself to behold wisdom" (1. 13, 16, 17, 18, 2. 3, 9. 12). The word comes 28 times altogether. Hence we have penetrating investigation by one peculiarly fitted for this, and yet he comes short. Hence the book is not the rambling of an ordinary man, it is deeply considered wisdom, and this accounts for the many profound and valuable statements, (e.g. 2. 13), but there is no uniformity, no criterion. Man fails at his best. The book is not ordinary "pessimism," nor are its aims at optimism merely casual: it is an attempt to reconcile the pursued and never-attained ideal with the actual, and shows a continual incongruity. We are shut up to *revelation* if we are to know aright,—we are shut out from all else to bring us to the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation, if our "days"* are no longer to be "vain life" (6. 12, 9. 9).

* Note 2. 3, 23, 5. 17, 18, 20, 6. 3, 12, 7. 15, 8. 15, 9. 9, 11. 9. The word is used 25 times.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

A sudden fuse, and the electricity fails. A sudden stroke, and a man is helpless, or it may be a sudden fit, or attack of lumbago or neuritis. It may be apoplexy with immediate death. How important to realize these facts and to be prepared! Some times pain is God's gracious danger signal, or the attack is moderated and modified. It only causes a weakening without an incapacitating. Yet God has His message in all, and we need grace to hear His voice and to see what He is teaching us.

"They were calling him Zacharias."

"He shall be called John."

"There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name."

Luke 1. 59-61.

"THEY were calling": this has a deep spiritual message. Many are ready to decide for us, and to lead along the line of human traditions. But if we have the word and God, if we have the touchstone of Holy Scripture, and the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit, we must say, "No." There was nothing wrong *in itself*, in the name "Zacharias," yet it was not the Lord's appointment. That is sufficient. How definite we should be to keep to all His will. The parents were of one mind—this is deeply important. They **would not** be talked out of obedience. The chosen name (meaning "grace of the Lord") was given, and illustrated through a life of devotedness, which contrasts another Nazarite from birth, namely with Samson. How one longs for a consistent testimony throughout.

"None of thy kindred" Such an argument is natural. It is parallel with the plea for usual arrangements and "traditions." "Do not be peculiar, do not go out of the usual rut"—is the thought. But the will of God is decisive, and there must be no compromise. Let us observe specially that the danger of giving way to relatives is specially found (a) with regard to the home, and (b) at special seasons—birth, marriage, death. How graciously has God granted us a hint and warning of spiritual helpfulness in this simple narrative.

Toning Down.

HAVE we realized that the words "easily" in 1 Corinthians 13. 5, and "soon" in Titus 1. 7 are rather human **comments** than a translation? The Holy Spirit has only employed **one word**—"Love is not **provoked**":—"not **easily** provoked" is a "natural" limitation, and may easily excuse sin. "Not angry" would be preferable to "not soon angry," for the latter almost implies that it is permissible to lose one's temper sometimes. No! The Holy Spirit enables spiritually and calls to victory **within** as well as **without**. Is not this our expectation as well as our desire?

We find the same NATURAL tendency to overlook failure in the emphasis with which some still read Romans 12. 18, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." But the true emphasis is that the lack of "peace" must always be on the other side, not "**in you**," never on **your part**. O for grace to claim God's strength to live to His glory in daily life and in all our relationships even with the froward.

Cf. Matthew 5. 22, "Without a cause" was **very possibly** a human marginal note, copied in later MSS.

The only place of a light strong enough to see what is wrong is God's presence. "**In Thy light** shall we see light."

Words Concerning John the Baptist.

"One crying in the wilderness."

"A prophet? Yea, I say unto you and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

"He bare witness unto the Truth. He was a burning and a shining lamp, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

"To Him the porter openeth."

"John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of This Man were true."

Matthew 3. 3, 11. 9-11, 21. 32, John 5. 33, 35, 10. 3, 41.

Observe the full-orbed view of Christ, His Deity and glory and His sacrificial death, His bringing in of the new dispensation and baptising saints into one body, His possession of the bride, and His coming in judgment. Notice, too, the consistent humility of John, and a holy hatred of sin, and the definite moral standard against all the forms of iniquity in home, business and "religious" life.

Matthew 3. 2, 3 (see Luke 3. 4-6), 7-12, 14, 11. 3, 14.4, Mark 1. 7, 8 (Luke 3. 16, 17, John 1. 27), Luke 3. 11, 13, 14, John 1. 15, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29-36, 3. 27-36.

"OUR FATHER."

Our **Father**, how can we proclaim
The glory of this chosen Name?
"Children of wrath" **Thy** children now,
Our hearts with reverent love would bow.
We call Thee "Father," and declare
The family blessings which we share,
Access is ours, and Thou dost own
Each child, as knowing Thee, and known.
The plenty of the home is free,
Unchangeable Thy love we see,
Our "brethren" are to us made near,
And all Thy will to us made dear.
Grace reigns beyond all natural thought,
And by Thyself our hearts are taught,
That love may lead to joy and peace,
Never grow less, and never cease.

Godliness is not limited to any day or arrangement: the ordinary things become holy to the saint: the actions concerning that which is material become spiritual: everything is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. How wondrous is this change of all things when we are changed (2 Cor. 5. 17).

The Reality of the New Creation.

"IF any one is in Christ, there is a new creation," and "he is a new creature." Thanks be unto God, for these realities. A shadow is not created, a mere dream is not created, and that which is created cannot be a mere shadow or dream.

Moreover, man is able to "make," but only God can create. The work is His, and we rejoice. The world and the flesh and the devil neither contribute to it, nor can they prevent it. The next thought is that such a glorious change calls for a glorious change in the life. The spiritual power of a life born of the Holy Spirit (John 3. 6) should be felt and seen. It is so wonderful to be a child of God. We have become so accustomed to theories and profession, to religion and ruts, to the conception of Christian lands, and Christian names, whereas God reveals a miracle-life for His own (Gal. 2. 20). A believer is not developed or improved from the natural Adamic-life. There is no evolution, there is that which is quite new. We would emphasize the word "creation," we would lay stress on the word "new." And the "Newness" of spirit and life, to which the Holy Spirit refers (Rom. 6. 4, 7. 6), remains: the new creation never becomes old, nor stale and worn out. Thanks be unto God, for His unspeakable Gift of His beloved Son, and the fruit in our life raised up with Him (Col 3.7).

HARSHNESS.

TRUTH without love is a real and constant peril. If it were not so, why has the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, emphasized the importance of the *truth in love*, and love in truth (Eph. 4. 15, 2 John 1. 3)?

The enemy ever tempts on the line of our strong points, and even our obedience—seeking to cause an excess, a disproportion, and exaggeration. This, in turn, provokes the opposite in a different temperament, and both seem unable to see their own failure, and may even add to it, in earnestness to enforce that which appears to them so wrongly omitted by the other. There is thus a further *lack* of perception, with a measure of zeal, but not according to knowledge. Harsh words against error, and a tendency to criticize too much, may hinder the very unity that not a few honestly *desire*. These things cause, moreover a reaction, "If that is your spirituality, I do not want it." And the *occupation* of the mind with that which is criticizable and criticized, produces an unconscious severity, and almost moroseness of spirit, a lack of balance and a failure to rejoice in the Lord. And harsh words are easier to those we love than to strangers. It is natural, through love to our dear ones, to be pained, and then quickly impatient, if *such* fail. And it is common to speak more unguardedly to those whom we *often* see. But as to all these things there should be the Lord's "victory" in all our lives.

CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE FORESHADOWED IN GENESIS 2. 21-24.

Wondrous, indeed, are the typical descriptions of the relations of Adam and his wife. We notice:—

- (a) "The Lord God **took** (21), cf. "I took your father Abraham."
- (b) "He **Built** He a woman" (22, marg.).
- (c) "He **brought** her" (caused to come, 22).
- (d) "Taken **out of** man" (23).
- (e) "A man shall **cleave** unto (or "in") his wife (24); note his cleaving, the binding love is Christ's (contrast 1 Kings 11. 2). But O that we may cleave.
- (f) "Become one" (24).

Nor must we overlook "an **help**"—meet for him ("as before him," 18 margin). So we rejoice we have been taken, and are being built up, and shall be presented, and enjoy glorious oneness. O that our hearts, cleaving in response, may ever please Him. Our life is from Him, and our name (23, marg.). Let us not be unmindful of that which is pictured by the "deep sleep" (21). He died for us. All our blessings are by His precious blood, on resurrection ground. Our all is of Him, and is His. Let it be rendered to Him with the joy of the Holy Spirit Who delights to glorify Him.

All Scripture is united, and the references of one book to another are manifold. For example, the commencement of John refers strikingly to Genesis. The following words will illustrate: God, Beginning, Life, Light, Were Made (Became) Darkness, a Man, The Spirit of God, Calling, Fig Tree. And many other thoughts are suggestive, e.g. the contrast between "created" and "was" in the first verse; the reference to "dominion" (lost), and "the King"; "the third day" in John 2. 1, and fruit, as in Genesis 1; a marriage; in each case a week is marked out: nor can we forget the coats of skin and the Lamb of God. How different the brothers in John 1. 41 from those in Genesis 4. How full and how precious and how searching is Holy Scripture.

When we realize how much time, money and strength we might have lost through permitted trying circumstances, how grateful we shall be to God for all. I might have lost by fire, by bombs, by invasion, by unforeseen accident in train, 'bus or street, by illness, by robbery, by losing something precious by a sudden mental lapse, by responsibilities for others in all such conditions. If God has preserved me from all these, it is not a matter of course, but a call to gratitude, and how definite is the call to render correspondingly to Him Who has granted me the retaining of that which I can render.

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