

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"HE THAT HATH MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPETH THEM, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME: AND HE THAT LOVETH ME SHALL BE LOVED OF MY FATHER, AND I WILL LOVE HIM, AND WILL MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM." *John xiv. 21.*

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a pleasure to *know* that we have eternal life. But such knowledge calls for obedience. The right assurance and joy of Salvation are linked with following the Lord, and following should be *near*. Peter followed afar off. Hesitation grieves God's Holy Spirit. The aim which we have before us in these pages is the exaltation of God by the setting forth of His will, and the encouragement of His blood-bought people to *delight* in His ways, and to please Him. We feel our own need for more simple and hearty dependence on Him, for more spiritual "purpose" in life, and definiteness against evil. We realize the withering influences of the world around, and our weakness apart from spiritual food. Yes, it is to help toward robust godliness and whole-hearted devotion, linked with an intelligent grasp of the Truth, that this messenger goes forth. If you love and know the Lord Jesus, and if you value His commands, will you not seek His blessing on the humiliation of His people, and the enjoyment of 1 Cor. i. 9, 10, more fully?

Statements, Commands & Promises.

A VAST subject, if we were to take even a small portion of God's boundless supply for His people in His words of truth. But just now, though grateful for all of them, I would desire, the Lord enabling, to direct your minds, and my own, to the gracious and wondrous way in which He includes all His people in certain experiences which men, on the other hand, are ready to limit. Romans vi. will explain, with regard to statements, "Our old man is [was] crucified with Him," and again, "Being then made free

from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." In like manner, addressing all children of God, even the youngest, the apostle says elsewhere, "By grace are ye saved, through faith," and "Ye are dead (ye died, *lit* :) and your life is hid with Christ in God." These high privileges are not set forth as matters of attainment after a long life of godliness, or after a second crisis, but as the common birthright of those in Christ. Rightly emphasized, in the power of the Holy Spirit, this aspect of truth emphasizes godliness in its stress on praise and humility. There are *many* other verses which show what *growth* and spiritual running forward there should be. An older believer, retaining first love, and experiencing deepened communion, can do much which is *not* the privilege of one just quickened, nor should babes in Christ be "assertive," but, with respect to standing before God, all are *one* in Christ Jesus. How refreshing is this thought, and how definitely the Holy Spirit sets aside boasting throughout Scripture.

The commands and encouragements of Romans xii. 1, 2, will show forth another part of truth. "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (at once) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed (a continuance implied) to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The apostle does not say "If you have not done so," he suggests the need for every believer thus to act. So we have the command: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," "Put off all these."* No believer can say, "I have done all this." In the flesh we still have that which needs mortifying (Col. iii. 5), and we dare not assume that we are beyond the prayer of Luke xi. 4. If we walk in the light, we still have the statement that the blood of Jesus Christ continues to cleanse (1 John i. 7, present tense).

The promises of God are very precious to His people. Some are unconditional; some are conditional. Some are for all His people; others are for children of God called to special difficulties and responsibilities. Prayerful pondering of the context will always be blest. If we "have" and hold His promises aright, we shall cleanse ourselves (2 Cor. vii. 1); the loving gifts of God never excuse carelessness. His words are as water, whereby we wash away defilements contracted in our pilgrim walk. "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14) shows us a definite promise to all believers. So in 1 John iii. 2, we have a declaration to all who are born again, concerning their Lord, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." No uncertainty is suggested. God will bring many sons to glory. Not one verse can be found which implies an undoing of the work of grace (Phil. i. 6). How grateful His redeemed ones should ever be. Oh, for more praisefulness in daily life!

* Col. iii. 8. In English, "Ye also" seems to be a statement, a varied order of words might be more literal—"Put off, ye also."

"Remembering the Lord's Death."

THIS expression is commonly used, but I would suggest that it modifies the precious wording of the Holy Spirit, and thereby loses some of His teaching. The command of our gracious and glorious Lord is recorded thus:—"This do with a view to My remembrance" or "in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. xi. 24, 25). Then we read, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do *shew* the Lord's *death* till He come" (26). The remembrance is not of His death alone, but of Himself. This includes His death, that wondrous atoning death, for without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. But it goes further, it meditates on His Deity, and how He is now at the right hand of the Father. It realizes that because He lives His people live also. It ponders that wondrous walking upon the earth when He did ever those things which pleased the Father (see 1 John ii. 6). "Remembering the Lord" is a wondrous privilege (Jer. li. 50, Isa. lxiv. 5).

The separated bread and fruit of the vine, never united at the Lord's Supper, till partaken, set forth His *actual* death. There was no mere semblance. He *really* suffered for us death on the tree, becoming a Curse for us! What matchless love! Well may those who are blood-bought also "shew forth" His death, and, by the two symbols apart, this *is* shown very manifestly, but our "remembrance" must not be thus limited. Every word of the Holy Spirit is forcible (Job vi. 25).

But not only does the human alteration tend to obstruct the full emphasis upon a happy enjoyment of Christ's present glory, and our relation to Him, like to the wording "If the Lord tarry" (note Heb. x. 37) instead of "If the Lord will" (Jas. iv. 15), it may be used to set aside a *part* of the truth. There are some who speak of the *Father's* table, and forget the repeated stress on the name "*Lord*" in 1 Cor. xi., and the Divine instruction, that we can tell those who are "children" by their manifestly spiritual obedience. "Words" or "profession" are not sufficient. In like manner, some, emphasizing the expression "Remembering the Lord's death," seem to employ this against loving exactness as to His own "This do." "Ah," they suggest, "we do not need to be occupied with the symbols, or with unleavened bread, which you say pictures His spotless life, we gather to remember His death." This excuse for *changing* His plain and *definite* appointment, and this assumption that those who would lovingly urge it "must" be wrongly "occupied" therewith, *are not* helpful, *not* God-glorifying. And any *change* of language which hinders the thought that the Lord Jesus wishes us to meditate thankfully His life, as well as His death which completed it, can only weaken a true attitude of loving devotedness. 'Tis by "little" things that the simple love to Him is shown. May we be led therein, gladly and continually, by the Holy Spirit.

"A Word Fitly Spoken." Prov. xxv. 11.

HOW privileged are God's people. How wondrous are their many opportunities. How gracious are His provisions that they may now gladly take their responsibilities, in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Surely they should be filled with true thanksgiving! The Lord Jesus, their Saviour, Lord, and Example, had grace poured over His *lips* (Ps. xlv. 2): "never man spake" in like manner. But if we are His, *we* are commanded and encouraged to imitate Him. Hence the words, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. iv. 6). What a height of godliness is here set forth. But "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The question of Luke viii. 25 is deeply suggestive, "Where is your faith?" It is possible to *hide* faith, so that there is no opportunity for its growth! Let the words be repeated, with a present and personal application, "Where is YOUR faith?"

"A word fitly spoken" is, literally, "a word 'upon its wheels.'" This is suggestive to the heart. We remember the living creatures, and the stress on wheels in connexion with the *prompt* carrying out of the Lord's will. Moreover "upon *its* wheels" *i.e.* fitting with everything that belongs to it, and with the speaker's godly condition. Fair language and an unholy life will not agree. "How beautiful are the *feet*," not alone the lips, of those who preached as the Lord's sent ones (Rom. x. 15). Moreover, we call to mind the solemn history of the Egyptians, "The Lord looked . . . and troubled the host . . . and took off their chariot *wheels* that they drave them *heavily*." Have we not felt, even when speaking God's truth, that some words seem to go heavily. Why is this? May it not be that we are out of communion with the Lord, and without the glow of fellowship? And is it not well for all present to search their hearts, lest their lack of prayer—privately or manifestly—be a hindrance to any who are called to minister His precious doctrine?

The parallel is very beautiful, "Like oranges of gold in framework* of silver." I do not think there is much doubt that the Palestine apple is *not* meant by the word here used. The Holy Spirit speaks of a truly golden fruit, and to this day we connect Joppa, or Jaffa, with beautiful oranges. How suggestive that a word fitly spoken may be not only exquisite, but refreshing. It is a joy to give a word in season to him that is weary. Eph. iv. 29 implies how we can "build up the constitutions" of our brethren by godly words. "The lips of the righteous feed many" (Prov. x. 21). "The framework of silver" seems to allude to the leaves, and therefore to the orange as *growing*. That is to say, "words" are not acceptable when "borrowed" from others; they must be

* "Something at which one looks." There is a possible further thought, since this word may also imply a conception of the mind. Godly thoughts are honouring to God.

growing out from a godly *life*, and, moreover, *one* good word does *not* stand alone; an orange may be by itself on the table, but not *on the tree*; if we please God we shall have *many* oranges. Oh that we may seek to glorify Him by bringing forth much fruit. The leaves are not eaten, but they seem to denote the accompanying manner of a spiritual wording, or the attendant attitude which *invites* those in whom the Lord is working, to partake. How often we hinder by an unwise "mannerism." Are we prayerful about details? Do we ask the Lord to show us where we fail? How shall we speak henceforth? Shall we allow bitter and hasty words? Shall we have a harsh temper? Shall we be light and frivolous? Shall we show a tone of complaint? Shall we be willing to cause friction, and to sow discord? Oh that it may not be so, but that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our orange trees may have an abundance of fruit, and that others may be comforted and refreshed, although our sternness against sin (especially our own) is by no means diminished. So shall our gracious God be exalted, and we, His people, shall rejoice in His lovingkindnesses.

QUOTING from Scripture is well, but let there be earnest "assimilation" and spiritual appropriation. This is not borrowing. Further, the "orange" implies that right words cannot be merely "made up": we may manufacture a "sermon," but there is *unforced* power in the language which pleases God. "Unforced" yet trained by "feeding," not only the words, but feeding the whole life.

Since writing the above, my mind has again been directed to the many, many mentions of the mouth, the tongue, the lips, in the solemn and practical Book of Proverbs. We do well to lay these to heart, and I have also felt the force of the context in Prov. xxv. even though each jewel is complete in itself. In verses 9 and 10 we read "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour; and discover not a secret to another, lest he that heareth put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away." The natural tendency to talk of others, often unchecked through curiosity of the hearer, or unwillingness to put to shame, is one of the great hindrances to the fitly spoken words which, in the enabling and power of the Holy Spirit, will bring spiritual profit, and glorify our adorable Lord. May we, by grace, have discernment, purpose of heart, and victory in these matters.

"We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."

Heb. xiii. 18.

A GOOD conscience is a great privilege, and it is emphasized in Scripture (Acts xxiii. 1, xxiv. 16, 1 Tim. i. 5, 19, iii. 9, 2 Tim. i. 3, 1 Pet. ii. 9, iii. 16, 21). The apostle was deeply concerned regarding this, and he *was persuaded* he had this encouragement to

boldness in prayer (1 John iii. 21).^{*} If we see anything to be against God's will for His people in the present dispensation, we dare not please men, and make His appointments secondary. We would worship and serve Him only, and that which we cannot do unto His glory has no recognised place in our lives.

And it is important that circumstances should not be used to make us onesided in this matter, so that we are tender as to one command, and careless as to another. If we are born of the Holy Spirit we would be led by the Holy Spirit, and walk worthily of our gracious God *as to all things*. Our "obedience" should not be disproportionate. If we have a conscience belonging to God which keeps us outside worldly arrangements in one respect, have we not many other *limitations* through the same conscience? It is a privilege to "lose" in this world for conscience' sake, and we should be "willing" to put aside all, that we may live honestly, and beautifully (the literal thought) before our Heavenly Father. And the manifest goodness of the redeemed ought to be before men (Matt. v. 16). There should be a holy sincerity (2 Cor. i. 12, ii. 17), a continuance in the way of truth, that we may be above reproach—the reproaches we receive being those of Rom. xv. 3.

In connexion with such a standpoint and standard, the apostle invited prayer. He felt his weakness, he saw his need. He was a man of like passions as we are, but experienced grace stronger than nature. And so may we. Perhaps at his time of writing he felt problems *around* (Heb. xiii. 19), but he would not purchase an easier path by compromise. It is our privilege to walk with God, and to leave results with Him. Comforts are nothing, convenience is nothing, conscience before God is priceless. Unto Him we would live, our life is from Him, and our deliverance from wrath is surpassingly wondrous. How can we grieve our God?

"I am the Lord." Lev. xxii. 30-33.

THE emphasis of such precious words at the end of each of these verses is deeply important. We are apt to forget what holy stress there should be on the glory of God. In each case, moreover, "I" is necessarily emphatic. God exalts Himself, and rightly. The reason for obedience is, "the Lord"; the reason for praise is, "the Lord." Oh, how wondrous to know Himself; how glorious to be among His people. Those who are redeemed have a parallel with Israel; indeed the history of the nation affords a type of *our* blessings "in Christ Jesus." How can we dare to bring that which is unholy to Him? How can we be careless about disobedience? He is *the Lord*, in His eternity, and majesty, and covenant relationship to His people. If all the verses which

^{*} But if our heart condemns us, there is the wondrous remedy of the cleansing blood, that henceforth we may please Him, Whose Name we bear, more and more.

so end in Leviticus were gathered, how many and impressive would they be! And how suggestive are added words in various Scriptures: "I am the Lord *That healeth thee*" (Ex. xv. 26), "I am the Lord *your God*" (Lev. xix. 10), "I am the Lord *Which hallow you*." May it be ours, by grace, to enjoy the spiritual teaching found everywhere in Scripture, and to be kept from the neglect of the earlier portions, which were the only writings possessed by the earliest church; and which are so full of our precious Saviour, and His salvation, as we feel when our eyes are, in mercy, opened.

"Is it a time to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maid-servants?" 2 Kings v. 26.

THE words of Elisha need continual emphasis in these days. The present time is not one for settling down and self-seeking. The servant of God must be a contrast with the "profiteer." He has *freely* received the gospel, *freely* must he give it; glad to spend and to be spent for the Lord Who has done so much for him. A "comfortable" life, in the worldly sense of the word, must be "out of the question." The man of this age may think himself successful when he gains £1,000. The believer estimates his gains by his losses *for Christ*, and his laying-up of treasure *in heaven*. Rather would I say he is not occupied even with his losses for his Lord, but with the Lord Himself. At least, this is the attitude he desires.

Is it a time to receive garments, to dress fashionably, and to be always changing? Is it a time to receive oliveyards and vineyards, or to feed on the luxuries of this passing age? No! it is for us to be a contrast with those who were "slaying oxen and killing sheep" in Isaiah's time (Isa. xxii. 13), and their followers to-day. The things of earth we would hold very lightly. In the days of Lot men eat, drank, bought, sold, planted, builded (Luke xvii. 28), and God was forgotten. The iniquity of Sodom was pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness: these were the roots of evil, and the evil was soon very manifest. And though the solemn scenes of to-day somewhat check the *display* of the two earlier parts of Sodom's iniquity, there are plenteous evidences that the heart of man is not humbled, and that indulgence is as *real* in "natural" wishes. The flesh is *not* judged by a man till he is brought to Christ. He may hold back, and even hate *certain* sins, but the hatred of *sin as a whole* is not "natural." Oh, for grace to illustrate it more.

How spiritual a believer should be! It is his privilege to live as one who is *devoted* to the Lord. Elisha did not want Naaman's gifts, any more than Abraham wished the goods of the king of

Sodom! Why? To Abraham the Lord was "Possessor of heaven and earth," and "An Exceeding Great Reward," and, therefore, the attractions of this world were shorn of their power. As Elijah, he stood before God. God was to him a Reality. The attempt to make a man act as a Christian, if he knows not the reality of God, is utterly vain. You may make a "religionist," but you cannot "make" a happy and obedient believer. It is deeply important that we should know the impossibility of striking off the chains that bind, unless the heart is drawn to *Christ*. In a child of God the same principle applies. It is "irritating" to the wandering saved one to be asked if he will give up "this" or "that." But let Christ fill his vision and be his Object, and the puerile toys of worldly habits lose their charm. Do we not know this is so? But yet how we all follow "afar off." How we would desire a quickening, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that we may set our minds on things above, and live as those who are caused to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, looking for that Blessed Hope.

Jottings on "Weakness," and "Pride of Obedience"

(To which we are ALL prone).

I HAVE been somewhat impressed by the thought of a general command to saints, and a personal command to an individual, In the latter case, physical power was granted, *e.g.* Mark iii. 5. Acts xii. 7. But let me be very *careful* before saying, "I cannot go to the meeting."

MATT. ix. 13 and xii. 7 have come before me. Do not think that I wish to put the Lord's commands on any level like to those of the Pharisees. His words are always precious. But the reference in Hosea vi., with Isaiah i., may surely imply that a lack of *proportion* is sinful. The brazen serpent out of place becomes Nehushtan. Unless, as we have seen from *other Scriptures*, there is the Lord's permission of physical hindrance, Luke xi. 42 applies its two-fold message. Even seemingly least commandments must *not* be broken, but should we not have godly concern, lest in rightly urging obedience to a few acts any of us should make secondary the continual setting forth of "judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matt. xxiii. 23). This is one of the most dangerous effects of any attitude contrary to that suggested and impressed. Will brethren suffer this word of exhortation? I feel sure many will welcome it for His glory.

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"FOR OUR CONVERSATION (CITIZENSHIP) IS IN HEAVEN; FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Phil. iii. 20.

A Word of Introduction.

MEN'S hearts are often perplexed, yet they turn not unto the Lord. The believer has a solemn responsibility, and it includes a quiet trustfulness, amid personal and national and international troubles. "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Ps. cxv. 3). What if there seems a dire confusion? Shall we blame God? Nay, that would be blasphemous wickedness, and only an aggravation of trouble. We know very little. "Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? But the thunder of His power who can understand?" (Job xxvi. 14). To help believers to illustrate the position to which God has called them, is this magazine sent forth. That they may walk with Him in unworldly and unquestioning faith, being *led* by the Holy Spirit, and not merely yielding a dull obedience outwardly to the words of the Holy Spirit in Scripture:—this is our prayerful desire for ourselves and others alike. Oh that those who are truly born from above may be detached from the systems and attitudes of earth, and caused to enjoy and live in *the power* of the Lord Jesus (Phil. iii. 10).

"For whom Christ died." Rom. xiv. 15.

THESE words have often come before us all, but how little have we felt the fulness of their power. Christ died! What wondrous love. He died for *guilty* sinners, for utterly worthless ones. He died *intentionally* for individuals whom He foreknew (Gal. ii. 20); there was not merely a vague sufficiency in His precious work, but a definite and unfailing efficiency.* How

* Any other doctrine is a theory which would imply that not a single one might be saved.

precious to know that *all* given to Him were in *His mind*, and that He died as really for *each* believing "one" as if there were none others included in His vast love toward a vast multitude which no man can number! The *personal aspect* is very beautiful. Well may believers have quiet and restful confidence: and feel, as well as hear, the call to continued devotedness in the Holy Spirit. If He died for us, we are not our own. We are His. Glorious fact, with many godly responsibilities attached. Only in the power of God can we rightly seek to rightly fulfil them. But He Who has begun a good work will complete it, and redeemed ones can count upon Him for daily strength and for daily needs. How often we seem to think of a past salvation from sin's sphere of judgment, and a future salvation with its bright glory, but forget a present daily salvation from the chains and charms of that which is against God. "He shall save *His* people from their sins" is a very wonderful promise, and we remember the words, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14).

If we now turn to Romans xiv. we shall see one effect of a right realization of the death of Christ, which will greatly change our relationship to "one another." I think I must say "change," for we have all failed to realize and enjoy its fuller meaning. Verse 15 reads, "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat,* for whom Christ died." The Holy Spirit singles out meat (*i.e.* food of any nature, for such is the meaning of the word, and such used to be the meaning of "meat"), but the principle suggests that there are many other things of the same character. Do we love the "things," or do we love our brethren more? Is "self" the centre, together with the food, of whatever nature it be, which "self" craves, or is there a deeper love for those who are the Lord's people? Is Christ the Centre? "I *must* have *this*; I cannot do without *that*; I do not see why I should give 'it' up":—how often we say, or think, or act in accord with, such words, and forget that "the kingdom of God is *not* meat and drink" (17). We seem so easily impressed by our own natural wishes, and so closely bound by our own habits. Our gracious God will supply all our needs as we obediently look to Him, but He will not satisfy all our unnecessary longings and imagined wants. Why do we not love His people more, and therefore *gladly* give up much more for *them*, because they are *His*, and therefore because we give up for Him? The beautiful testimony of Acts iv. 32 speaks with living force: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither *said* any that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." This is not man-made socialism. There was no compulsion (Acts v. 4), except love's compulsion. The attitude,

* But can we destroy a saved one? Does not God preserve His own? Yes, but we are responsible for the *tendency* of our words and thoughts (20, Heb. vi, 6, and 1 John iii. 15, see also Acts xxvii. 31 with 24, Ezek. xiii. 22 marg.; and, with precious encouragement, Heb. xi. 17, Jas. v. 20).

"This thing is mine," would have forgotten—"This brother is mine." You are holding something that you value in a room, which, if you let it go, will break, but you see a danger indeed. Someone at the window has leaned out, and has partly fallen, and is only just holding on. Do you hesitate as to the "thing" or the "person"? Which shall be broken? Are spiritual dangers less real than physical? Oh, how easy it is for us to be self-occupied, but the words ring out—"For whom Christ died." He died, and will *you*, though owning Him, be indifferent to your brother? It is natural to say, "My brother ought not to wander," or "He should not be grieved." *This* is not your *first* concern. Will you take the *Lord's* standpoint, or will you, as far as you can, destroy a single one for whom Christ died? I know that the principle *seems* impossible for *daily* life. Earth's strain and stress would appear to prevent its realization, and the heart can easily become hardened (Heb. iii. 13), and the hard logical statement is made, "Well, then, I can do nothing; everything will cause some to stumble." But is this logical? We can, and should, do what the Lord has appointed. Our comforts, not our trusteeship, we are to hold lightly. The Lord has promised bread and water; He has deigned to prove His interest in many undoubted ways, and so the believing heart is drawn to long for this attitude—"I will just look to the Lord, and cheerfully put aside whatever hinders a brother; I cannot give up more than Christ gave up for me; I cannot give up anything which will approach to His giving up, but it is a privilege to follow *Him*." Hence the precious words, "He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). Priscilla and Aquila felt something of what this meant; of them the apostle says, "My helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks" (Rom. xvi. 3, 4). If Christ died for worthless ones, fully knowing every failure after salvation, how can we speak glibly of those whom He loved, and loves, *so much*? Is it "hard" to bear with some? Do their eccentricities go against our "grain," as it were? Then our *ingrained* habit *needs* some test, and with the trial there will be a spiritual advance, if we receive it lightly. How much has Christ borne for us? How patiently has He borne with us! I do *not* mean, "Compromise to please a brother": the will of the Lord must ever be first, and to put one command against another is to misunderstand both. I do *not* suggest, "Go against your conscience." "Conscience" is emphasized in 1 Cor. viii., and ever safeguarded. I do *not* imply, "*Pander* to natural peculiarities." Rom. xv. 2 witnesses against this. But the thought which I want to feel, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and which I would pass on, is simply this—"Christ died, and I long to love brethren with His love, and to put my own natural wishes and habits and opportunities and comforts in the background, that *all* may be done *in the Name* of the Lord Jesus, and thus with a comprehensive desire for the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

"Neither give place to the Devil."

Eph. iv. 27.

A WONDROUS word of holy commanding power. A *brief* verse, but a very definite message from God. It is so easy to give Satan "room" in our lives. Idleness offers him an opportunity, pride affords him a vantage ground, selfishness provides a base of operation, bitter anger gives him a lever. We little realize how easy it is to be led astray. The oft-forgotten message of Rom. vi. 13 is very solemn: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments (or weapons, margin) of unrighteousness unto sin." Such an exhortation implies a *danger*, a dread possibility. We must not misuse God's grace to be careless. Satan is going about as a roaring lion, but he is also transformed into an angel of light, and would deceive, if possible, the very elect. He has *many* devices, but *one* object. He sought to make Eve think *hardly* of God, and, alas, she took of the forbidden tree. He tried to cause Job to complain of the Lord; and his first temptation in the wilderness was obviously to suggest that Christ was unkindly left to hunger. But that wondrous and perfect Saviour did not yield, nor incline one moment to the insinuation. Harsh thoughts of God, and harsh thoughts of "one another" are Satan's delight. He longs to sow discord where the Lord has made unity, and to make unity where the Lord has separated.

This aspect of temptation is very definite in the passage now before us. The name "Devil" means "one who casts across," or "slanderer," and is so rendered in 1 Tim. iii. 11. It also occurs in the plural in 2 Tim. iii. 3, Titus ii. 3, that is to say in *each* of the last epistles, to indicate one of Satan's special methods in the last days, and implying that those who have been believers for a long while must still be on their guard lest they unwittingly lend themselves to this iniquity. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." It is so *easy* to talk, and to say things which dishonour God. Backbiting is one of the commonest causes of backsliding. The witness of Ps. ci. 5 shows how this sin loves the dark. We have all said different things of others which we would not have readily uttered in their presence, and for which there has been *no necessity*. One Hebrew term for this sin implies going about on the feet, and 1 Tim. v. 13 makes it clear that a delight in "wandering about" is very, very dangerous. I cannot but think that the margin of 1 Tim. v. 14 contains part of the Holy Spirit's meaning there. Doubtless, we all know what it is to be inclined to "complain." Murmuring was the devil's great weapon in the wilderness, and a spirit of fretfulness or pevishness among believers is one of the most fruitful sources of discontent. Gratitude to God, with a true view of our very light affliction, keeps the tongue quiet as to many things, and yet opens the lips more widely than ever—in praise. Do not think I am concerned about *others* only;

this loving exhortation is based upon Scripture, *and* upon personal experience of the dangers which surround. I feel a need, which is a *solemn* need, of increased victory over the sin of murmuring. Oh, let it be remembered, when about to speak, that it is so easy to talk, and to utter words which one regrets afterwards. 1 Cor. xiii. needs to be inscribed on the memory. The imputation of wrong motives, and the fretful explanation of that which causes *us* difficulty, may hinder united spiritual progress more than any are able to conceive. Undoubtedly, we have trials, and if only A had done "this," and B had done "that," our path might have been much more pleasant. But why should we grumble at A and B? * By the time the trouble reaches us, it is the Lord's appointment to draw us away from sin. We need chastening, we need purifying. We can always find a "reason" for "complaint" in a ruined world. We can always see mistakes in others, but how foolishly natural it is to tell yet others of these, rather than to live so faithfully that we may help those concerned to grow in grace. To speak to a third person is often cruel. A thought is before me with respect to Christian harmony. If I notice some defect among believers, or think I do, but have no *real* and fixed improvement, and do not ponder my share in it, why should I not cry unto God till I am sufficiently in communion with Him to help wisely in putting it right? At least, I need to beware lest I make the trouble worse by seeking to rectify it in my own way, or even by unduly dwelling on it. Have we not all known cures which are worse than the disease? You can remove the trouble of a poisoned finger by cutting off the hand, but is it wise? To change from one mistake to another is not to grow in grace. Let us carefully distinguish between sins and difficulties. Let us not complain of the latter, but bear them. Let us be clear before God that we do not excuse the former in *our own* experience, but let us avoid a sinful manner of attacking sin in others. To return to our first verse, oh, beloved friends, it is so "easy" in these impatient days to give place to the slanderer, and to do part of the devil's work. But we are bidden to present our members to **THE LORD** as instruments of righteousness. Happy privilege! Our tongues are to give thanks, and not be silent. We are to bring forth the *fruit* of our lips, so that complainers will feel ashamed in our presence, and those who are gloomy will realize what God can do. We are to manifest the power of love in speaking well of the Lord, and of His people, and in delighting to be silent when we suffer that which seems unkind, and to set forth a possible object behind their actions, against the tendency to imply a wrong motive, or to insinuate this without expressing it openly. So shall we *not* give place to the devil, but there will be scope in our life for glorifying God, and we shall be those who help toward the unity for which our Lord prayed.

* An earnest word may be added *against* "brooding over" these things even when the tongue is kept quiet.

"Disorderly."

"EVERY brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 6). "We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" (2 Thess. iii. 7). "There are some which walk among you disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 11). "Warn them that are disorderly" (1 Thess. v. 14 marg.). The above are the only occurrences of this word,—the only occurrences of the word which the *Holy Spirit* uses as verb, adjective, and adverb, to express His abhorrence of this action, character, and manner! There are many words from the same root without the negative "dis," e.g. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 48), "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40), "Every man in his own order" (1 Cor. xv. 23).^{*} The comprehensive Lexicon of Liddell and Scott seems helpful. Concerning the verb it says "of a soldier, to be undisciplined, disorderly," and concerning the adjective "out of order, esp. not in battle order . . . not in one's place in battle, hence taking no part in the war" ("tactics" is derived from the root). The believer has a conflict, and an assembly of believers has a real and intense spiritual warfare against Satan's might. The word does not occur in the Septuagint,† the Holy Spirit seems to have brought it into striking emphasis as a new term in this connexion, i.e. with regard to the precious unity of God's dear people. The thought goes further than a witness against insubordination, it sets forth not only the loving recognition of the loving pastoral care of any whom the Lord deigns to "give"‡ as shepherds and teachers, but also a fuller testimony against any habit of friction and independence which so easily mars the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord.

The unity of gathered believers is meant to be a delightful contrast with everything which exists among men, and that which tends to confusion is most serious (1 Cor. xiv. 33). God hates the sowing of discord among brethren (Prov. vi. 19). 1 Cor. x. 23 shows the true "expediency": the word there used denotes "a bringing together." Children of God privileged to break bread together are not meant to be apart in other things, or during the week, but to act together unitedly (1 Cor. x. 17). If one is deficient in tact and spiritual contact (these words are apparently linked with the root "orderly"), he will not help others, but will become a hinderer rather than a blessing. Yet how many "walk tactlessly"; they think for themselves and act for themselves, and do not want to feel they are "bound." But love *does* bind, and loves to be bound by closest ties. That which is a joy to some is a burden to

^{*} That 1 Cor. 15 is speaking of *believers* only, is clear from verses 42-44: "it is raised in incorruption . . . in glory, etc."

† It is found in Aquila's rendering of Deut. xxxii. 10, for "waste" of howling wilderness (according to Kirscher's Concordance).

‡ Eph. iv. 11. This word is very precious. Pastors and teachers cannot be man-made; any attempt will lead to the ruin of 2 Tim. iv. 3. Doubtless men of God need helping forward; in spiritual life every one needs growth, and training. But in this context the word "give" has an encouraging force which other terms would modify. See Jer. iii. 15 (xxiii. 4).

others, because of condition of heart. In like manner, heaven would be misery to those who know not God, and have no heart to praise and please Him. Let us pray fervently for a right standpoint as to everything.

The passages before us show that it is sadly possible for a brother to become "unruly" and "disorderly." Even an apostle would not tolerate his own personal eccentricity (2 Thess. iii. 7); the message of 1 Cor. x. 33 is very precious to all. It is so natural to be "selfish." But we must "give up" our own comforts for "one another." None of us can take a position *above* the Lord's appointments. We must avoid *words* of friction, and a manner which lacks harmony. An irritated believer is greatly dishonouring God. It is sinful to be "touchy." A grumbling spirit is not from God. It is easy to be "contrary," but this is *not* well pleasing unto the Lord, and to please Him is the true object of life. We do not like to feel we are "limited." "Freedom" is often slavery to self!

The common accompaniment of disorderliness are indicated in 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. Laziness is one of them. But what is the meaning of the term "busybodies"? It is literally "working around," and reminds of 1 Tim. v. 13; thus brethren and sisters alike are urged to prayerful separation from this sin. The first dictionary rendering is, "To take more pains than enough about a thing, hence to waste one's labour." But the further meaning by usage is "to meddle with other folk's affairs." And the stress on "quietness" in verse 12 implies another sad accompaniment—talkativeness. "Eat their own bread" is a solemn suggestion against indulgence, and against a natural desiring to go out to meals (see Jude 12), though the primary signification is clear (Eph. iv. 28).

How is an assembly to deal with such to God's own glory? 1 Thess. v. 14 is explicit; they must be firmly warned. Their minds need placing aright as the command makes clear; not that this wandering of mind can be excused as if only mental. Oh, beloved friends, let us speak to *ourselves* as well as to others (Rom. ii. 21); we all have the germs of these sins. Oh for deep heart-confession, and victory in the power of the Holy Spirit! And 2 Thess. iii. indicates the negative part of the attitude, the *responsibility* of all who love Christ Jesus our Lord. "Withdraw yourselves":—contract, draw in, "take in sail." Do not feel free with them. But if any say "Why?", they link themselves with the evil, and though with good intentions, help to deepen it. Such must be lovingly led toward godly repentance, else they too will increase the evil, harm those who are wandering, and hinder the enjoyment of the unity for which God prayed. Thus the apostle adds concerning the command of verse 6 as well as verse 12, "If any man obey (hear with subjection) not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (lit: 'turned IN'), yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (14, 15). To help a wandering child of God by natural encouragement amid his wandering, is cruel to him,

dangerous to oneself, unkind to gathered saints, and dishonouring to the Lord, however one may think, "I feel it is best, and mean it for the best." Individual judgment and independency in these things is usually a hindrance to the realization of the work of the Holy Spirit, and full of peril. "Suffer the word of exhortation"; it is, I trust, in affection. May we all know how easy it is to be out of the line of the Lord's gracious uniting will, and how easy it is to trust to our own hearts when we truly want to be "led" by the Holy Spirit, but miss the path and means by which He leads.

"I Dwell . . . To Revive." Isa. lvii. 15.

THE Majesty of God, and His tenderness, are brought together to awaken our praise. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds; He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Ps. cxlvii. 3, 4). "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might . . . To them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isa. xl. 26, 29). In like manner, the two views of God's glory in Isaiah lvii. 15 impress us, and, wondrously, His glory is His goodness and mercy (Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19), and He is exalted that He may have mercy (Isa. xxx. 18). The condescension of our gracious God is wondrous. When we think of His creative power as to the greatest star and the smallest animalcula, we pause in admiration, but when we ponder the greater marvel that He makes rebels into saints, yea, makes them members of His beloved Son, we may well break forth into singing and adoration.

Why does He dwell with the humble? Let the precious testimony of Scripture be known and enjoyed. It is that He may revive! He delights to revive His people, and rejoices in their joy. God does not wish His people to be depressed. Oh, that we may be filled with thanksgiving, and that we may know revival amid true humility! Contriteness is happy, when the Lord Himself revives.

"For thus saith the High and Lofty One, That inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. lvii. 15.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God." Jas. iv. 6, 7.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"THEN CAME THE WORD OF THE LORD UNTO JEREMIAH, SAYING, BEHOLD, I AM THE LORD, THE GOD OF ALL FLESH: IS THERE ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR ME?" Jer. xxxii. 26, 27.

Words of Introduction.

ENABLED by grace, and conscious that we are dependent on the Lord, we would again send forth this messenger of His love and truth, longing that many of His dear blood-bought people may rejoice in the simple path of pleasing Him. Our gracious God delights to be trusted, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. The world is in confusion, but there is no confusion with God. He delights to be trusted, and He is worthy of all trust. "Obedience" is a precious privilege, and God has a right to His children's devoted love. Oh, that we may "make haste and delay not," and that some may be brought to know His grace and power for the first time through these pages.

Praise.

How well it is to praise the Lord,
How well to glory in His Name;
Let hearts and voices now accord—
Himself our theme, His praise our aim.
How sinful 'tis to doubt the Lord,
When He for us hath all things done!
Since of eternal life assured,
Of murmuring we should now have none.
How thankful all redeemed should be
When they God's goodness contemplate.
Their awful doom most plainly see,
Had He not loved when they would hate.
The mercy of our Triune God
Awakens every chord of praise!
Chosen in grace, redeemed by blood,
We long to walk in all His ways.

"A Sweet Savour of Christ."

2 Cor. ii. 15.

THIS word only occurs in three verses in the later Scriptures. In Eph. v. 2 it sets forth the beautiful fragrance of the work of Christ for His people's redemption, and in 2 Cor. ii. 15 and Phil. iv. 18 their resulting acceptability in spiritual service. It is a term which reminds of a sacrifice, and only because of the Sacrifice are we welcomed. The merits of Christ make possible the worship and service of His redeemed! And more than "possible!" It is wondrous, indeed, that those who were, by nature, unholy and rebellious, have been brought into a *living* union with the Lord Jesus, and are so privileged that they can draw nigh as purged worshippers (Heb. x. 2, 22). In like manner we read of the *sacrifice* of "praise" in Heb. xiii. 15, because our praise is in, and led by, our adorable Lord (Heb. ii. 12), and based on His finished work. It is so painful to find in oneself, and see around, a forgetfulness of the high and heavenly calling, and a tendency to grasp the shadows of earth instead of a holy fulness of purpose to live with and unto Him in Whom we are so richly blessed. Surely our hearts should ever pray, "Wilt Thou not *revive* us again, that Thy people *may rejoice in Thee*?" (Ps. lxxxv. 6). We rob ourselves of many enjoyments because we hesitate as to complete devotedness.

In 2 Cor. ii. the word is joined with another which is rendered "savour" (14, 16, twice). This also is found in Eph. v. 2 and Phil. iv. 18, and repeats and emphasizes the thought of *fragrance*. The only other occurrence is in John xii. 3. The prayerful reader will observe a deep thought of costly and manifest love *unto the Lord*, and of that which is *precious before Him*. Ah, how we would keep this in view. Our preaching and our giving, (for the latter is *exalted* by these expressions in Phil. iv.), are not only for the profit of others, but *unto the Lord*. Worship is to *pervade* our life. We are to act as those who belong to the temple. Israel's gifts of old were thus accepted, and so are ours. Humanitarianism and kindness must not become our centres of meditation. The will of the Lord is our law, and the pleasing of the Lord is our delight. It is a joy to contemplate the Philippians giving, with love, to *Paul's* need, but he describes the action as (1) fruit, the expression of spiritual life, (2) something entered in the Lord's account with a view to recompense in that Day, even "treasure in heaven," and (3) "a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." This third aspect is *the climax*. The labour of love of believers is thus dignified. A true "gift" is not only "money," it is pleasant fruit, it is a good investment, and it involves an act of definite spiritual devotion. If a child of God fails to exercise his privileges, or loses awhile his appointed motives, how can he expect to have the joy of the Lord?

But there are also allusions, as we find frequently, to the *earlier Scriptures*. First, we think of Cain, who brought fruit, and *ignored*

sacrifice. How sad to see Adam, Eve, and Cain, all misusing earthly fruit. God, in wondrous wisdom, gave instructions to Israel, ever referring back to this solemn failure. The favoured nation were to bring fruit, but resting it upon a sacrifice. Ex. xxiii. 19 follows teaching as to salvation by blood. We also think of Lev. vii. And when we come nigh with spiritual fruit, we would remember Him in Whom we are made nigh. Oh, how great are our advantages, how exalted are our blessings! Let us magnify the Name of the Lord.

Further, the very words which come together in 2 Cor. ii. etc., are together in Lev. i. 9 (Sept:), "a savour of a sweet smell": the Hebrew also indicates a savour of rest—of rest because fixed on atonement. Nor is this passage exceptional. The same link is in Gen. viii. 21, Ex. xxix. 18, and in such passages as Num. xxviii. and xxix. The sad contrast is in Ezek. vi. 13. In other words, the "acceptability" aspect is continual—before the Lord—or in unholy opposition, before idols! How precious is our height of privilege; how awful is the depth of iniquity which can make a sweet savour to *demons*, for an idol itself is nothing and cannot smell (Ps. cxv. 6).

We would, indeed, feel grateful that our gracious God has associated this aspect of service with actions which are peculiarly "manward," *i.e.* preaching and giving. If *these* are unto the Lord, surely others, as prayer and praise, are very manifestly so. Yea, the people of God are *themselves* to be a sweet savour: 'tis not only that their godly works are to be thus glorifying God. *Their whole being* is to magnify Him. We remember Ps. ciii. 1 and Rom. xii. 1. "A sweet savour of Christ." If we are occupied with the words "A sweet savour," and forget HIM, we shall become proud, and the reverse of fragrant (Isa. lxxv. 5). Christ must be the Centre and Circumference of our devoted lives. With the apostle, we would seek grace to say, and to say truthfully, "*Christ liveth in me*," and, "To me to live is *Christ*" (Gal. ii. 20, Phil. i. 21).

"WICKEDNESS in the sight of the Lord Thy God, in transgressing His covenant" (Deut. xvii. 2). These words plainly emphasize the glorious holiness of God, and that all sin should be viewed from His standpoint. What is this in *His* sight? *That* is its real value, or real lack of value! We are so easily drawn aside to behold the things of earth. Again, Deut. xvii. 2 shows how *wicked* it is to transgress the covenant,—shows up sin that we may enjoy more fully the precious fact of our Lord's obedience unto death. There is no Scripture argument for toning down plain language about sin. It is an abomination, it is wickedness. But, thanks be unto God, there is no Scripture argument for toning down plain language as to the perfect merits of the Lord Jesus. He did ever those things which were pleasing in the Father's sight, and His people are accepted in Him.

Christ Gloriously Contrasted.

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| 1. Elect angels. Heb. i. 7. | God, the Son. Heb. i. 8. |
| 2. The first Adam. Heb. ii.,
1 Cor. xv. 45, Rom. v. 12. | The Last Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 45,
Rom. v. 15. |
| 3. Moses—servant. Heb. iii. 5. | Christ—Son. Heb. iii. 6.
(mark "all" too in Deut.
xviii. 16). |
| 4. Joshua. Heb. iv. 8 marg. | "Thy Salvation." Luke ii. 30,
see Matt. xi. 28-30. |
| 5. Aaron, offering for himself.
Heb. v. 4, 5; ix. 25 (note
vii. 28). | Christ, a Priest for ever, offer-
ing Himself. Heb. v. 6;
vii. 27; ix. 12, 26-28. |
| 6. "Bulls and goats": purify-
ing the flesh. Heb. ix. 13. | The blood of Christ purging
the conscience. Heb. ix. 14. |
| 7. "Every priest" standing.
Heb. x. 11. | Christ sitting down. Heb. x. 12. |
| 8. The way into the earthly
holiest with its veil. Heb.
ix. 8. | The New and Living Way.
Heb. x. 20. |
| 9. Men of faith. Heb. xi. | "The Author and Finisher of
faith." Heb. xii. 2. |
| 10. Abel, made righteous. Heb.
xii. 24. | "Jesus, the Mediator of the
New Covenant." Heb.
xii. 24. |
| 11. David. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, xxiv.
10; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. | Christ, without <i>one</i> sin. Ps. xl.
8; John xiv. 30. |
| 12. Solomon, the son who failed.
2 Sam. vii. 14. | Christ, the true Prince of Peace.
Isa. ix. 6. |

Many more "contrasts" might be brought forward, including those which are yet more definite, *e.g.* Antichrist, who comes in his own name (John v. 43), and types of Antichrist, such as Cain, Lamech, Nimrod, Absalom, Nebuchadnezzar. But it is well to see that the Lord Jesus is not only contrasted with evil men, but with godly men, for He stands forth in the glory of Deity, and the perfection of obedient Manhood. "Worthy is the Lamb That was slain." Oh, that He may be exalted among His blood-bought people!

How refreshing to know the reality of Christ Jesus our Lord, to experience His love and presence and power in some measure, and to have a prospect of ever-wondrous and immeasurably increased enjoyment. Why are we fearful, or anxious, or complaining, or worldly, if Christ is ours?

THE PRESENT.—"I will go and return to *My place*, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face; in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos. v. 15).

THE FUTURE.—For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of *His place*, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.

For Whose Sake?

THE LORD JESUS ever emphasized the power of, and the need for, a true motive. In Matt. xix. 29 we read, "For My Name's sake," and in Mark x. 29, "For My sake and the gospel's." How important to realize this principle in daily life. For Whose sake do we go through any strain or difficulty in the path of separation? For Whose sake do we declare, by life and lip, the precious gospel of grace? It is well to ask ourselves these questions.

If we love fellow creatures *because* of the gratification this affords us, may not *this* love be selfishness? If we love them for *their own* sake, and *cease with that*, may there not soon arise a spirit of complaining against the perfect providences and the righteous judgments of God? If we love them for His sake, will there not be a true interest *on their* behalf, and likewise a *right* gratification in our own experience? *

The glory of God is the only satisfying aim. The will of God is the only broad basis. Within these the believer should erect a house of gold, silver, costly stones and wood,—nor should the hay and stubble of Babel's bricks and Egypt's bricks be acknowledged. His object should be worship, through whatever He does, hence temple materials only are permissible.

The thoughts which probe are the thoughts which also encourage, in the further application of the Holy Spirit. The tiniest deeds, even to a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, are lit up with the realization "Unto the Lord." Nothing is drudgery if it is His appointment. The greatest things of earth are too small, and the smallest things of God are very great. If He accepts, let the world reject. If He rejects, the applause of all men cannot compensate. The believer becomes to many, a man possessed with one idea, but actually he is possessed by one Lord, and that which to those who know Him not, seems only "an idea," is the glorious Personal Centre of a spiritual life, even the Lord Himself (Col. ii. 6, iii. 17). The God of all grace Himself, and His exaltation must ever be emphasized. From the true standpoint the things of this age are but specks of dust, the things that are not seen are eternal. Happy, indeed, are those who are in Christ Jesus, and who live accordingly, finding His fulness, realised in the Holy Spirit's power, sufficient for *every* emergency and for the routine of daily life as well! Nothing is *dull* where Christ is: everything is worthless without Him.

* The flesh is subtle: if Satan cannot lead to pride he would lead to despondency, hence the natural inclination, when testing one's motives, to brand all as unholy, and to dishonour God by a false humility, which fails to separate the precious (which He has granted) from the vile. *Within* the sphere of pleasing God it is appointed to have a true love to the souls themselves, and a *true* delight pervading one's own heart. The Lord does not want His servants to be unhappy.

The Promise to Disobedience.

"YE shall be as gods," or rather as "God," was the positive promise of the serpent, and the negative is found in the preceding verse, "Ye shall surely die." Our minds travel to 2 Pet. ii. 19, where those who are servants of corruption promise others liberty. What a precious contrast we have in John viii. 36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Nor would we forget Jer. xxix. 11 in striking antithesis to xxiii. 17. It is a fearful thing to say to the ungodly that they shall have a restfulness, for Rev. xiv. 10, 11, is solemnly true. Let the words of Jeremiah ring out, "They say still unto them that despise Me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one who walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." Here we find the devil's positive and negative once more. Here we behold a definite encouragement to sin, even as in the self-encouragement of Deut. xxix. 19. Alas, every cemetery shows that such an attitude is not out of date. Man is still the same as in Jeremiah's day, and the tendency to believe the lie is always manifest (John viii. 44; 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

The promise to disobedience is deeply heart-searching. Our Father has given many promises to obedience, which are all "yea" and "amen" in Christ. Disobedience leads away from His promises. Satan's allurements are toward such a step. He hates obedience. His devotee will be the lawless one. Man refuses restraint. The words of Isa. liii. 6 indicate this attitude:—"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." Let us each be spiritually concerned in this matter. There are "pleasures of sin for a season," and many religious attractions in the broad way. Promises are held out to us, if we will compromise "a little," and deny the narrowness of rejection with our rejected Lord. Satan is disguised as an angel of *light*, and we are told that we shall "win" men if we "mix" with them. The pilgrim path of the heavenly calling is too narrow for many who bear the Name of Christ, and we are "encouraged" to believe there will be advantages if we are not so peculiar. "Let us do evil that good may come" is the world's maxim. "Nay," replies the lowly believer, enabled by the Holy Spirit to deny himself and the world alike, "though I could gain thousands of pounds and then devote it to the Lord's work, I would not thus dare to bring the price of a dog into His house" (Deut. xxiii. 18). "And further, though I could save my life thereby, a lie would be a sin." May I be kept faithful at *all* "costs,"—small in the light of Gal. ii. 20. No promises of "knowledge," no promises of "influence," can weigh against one word of God. Every attempt to minimize *His* wrath, every attempt to level a man with the Mighty God, must be judged as a snare of the wicked one, and part of His constant scheme against the Lord. Let us value the promises to obedience, the *Lord's* promises, and nothing else.

Sin and Its Dominion.

DOMINION is the delight of the natural man. Yet through sin he has lost and sold his true dominion (Gen. i. 26-28). Strangely he confuses slavery and authority. The *tyranny* of personal wishes and habits is well known to any who have tried to break them. The flesh is a cruel master, unless it is pampered.

The tendency of man *against* being ruled (Gen. xxxvii. 8, see Luke xix. 14, 27) stands out remarkably on this dark background. It may be seen in self-exaltation of various kinds, including usual socialism, which would share wealth and position, while it falters because unable to deal with the sharing of *mental* and energy powers. In other words normal socialism argues to drag down *others*; the Christian's attitude is to humble *himself*. With "socialism," fellowship is international; with the believer it is limited to the holy, but despised, nation of 1 Pet. ii. 9, which rightly seeks no world-rights till He shall come Whose right it is to reign.

When one is saved by grace, his whole position, object, and attitude are changed. He is no longer of the world, but crucified to it (Gal. vi. 14). His calling, hopes and possessions, are heavenly. He is brought to God's own standpoint, and sin is not hated proportionately to the trouble it brings, and overlooked if apparently advantageous, but hated in accord with its *nature*—against God. Hence of two evils the believer would choose *neither*. Sin is sin, and the child of God cannot persist in tolerating what his Father hates.

Thus the prayer of Ps. xix. 12, 13 finds heartfelt expression, "Who can understand (his) errors? Cleanse Thou me from *secret* faults. Keep back Thy servant also from *presumptuous* sins; *let them not have dominion over me*: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (margin "much transgression"). To a man who has been delivered from the bondage of sin, "one's own way" is a slavery to be dreaded. The "dominion" of selfish wishes is hateful indeed. Hence the similar prayer of Ps. cxix. 133, "Order my steps in Thy word; and *let not any iniquity have dominion over me*." Let us remember how definitely Romans vii., shows the vile character of sin, acting as a ruler, with a "law," and "warring" to bring us into captivity. But this is hated and resisted, and the words of Romans vi. 14 which are *prophetic* as well as containing the "shall" of command, are in increasing measure, to be realized, "*Sin shall not have dominion over you*." Thus we have prayer, precept and promise, in agreement. The preceding verse implies that this irksome dominion will seek to obtain a hold through this body of our humiliation, and thus through food, sleep, and indulgence of every kind. The *reason* why sin shall not have dominion is very beautifully set forth, "*For ye are not under the law, but under grace*." Now ch. vii. 1 says, "The law hath dominion over a man *as long as he liveth*." Hence the fact we are not "under law" shows we have died. But death by law introduces *either* to eternal judgment, *or* it is through the work of Another, even the Sacrifice for sinners, so that His merits and life are ours. Plainly the second is true of us, if we are

"under grace." Then our present life is not our original life, since by law we became dead (Gal. ii. 20), and law cannot *give life* to the dead (Gal. iii. 21). Therefore the fact we are delivered from law involves the precious thought that we are a *new creation with* new wishes. If this be so, how can we live as if there were no change? A daily experience of *sin's dominion loved* would show there was, in reality, no new life, and hence indicate that we were still under law. Thus this verse states a *fact*. It is *impossible* that sin should have dominion over the new life which is from above, and this well-founded *fact* is the groundwork for an earnest *exhortation*:—Live according to the new life, not according to the old. Do not take sides with that which has been condemned. Sin is not annihilated. *Crucifixion* is legal death not immediate death; indeed mortification as a present responsibility suggests the *presence* of sin. "Henceforth we should not *serve* sin" (Rom. vi. 6). We are to agree with God's legal reckoning (verse 11). Thus we read, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mental body, that ye should *obey* it in the desires thereof" (12). Sin exists, but let it not rule. Check the "desires" in the very bud, do not hear sin even as to these beginnings. Take God's standpoint. Mark the three words "serve," "reign," "obey," and seek grace to deny self in these things.

Thus the precious fact (to be fully realized in the future "sin shall not have dominion"), and the spiritual certainty for *every* real believer, (and *not only* for those who have passed some further crisis), namely, "Ye are . . . under grace":—these wondrous realities combine to emphasize the practical thought, "The *grace* of God . . hath appeared . . *teaching* us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (desires), we should live soberly, righteously, and godly" (Tit. ii. 11, 12). *In the power of the Spirit* we are to mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. viii. 13), and our victory is to be the use of *every* member of our physical frame, for the Lord (Rom. xii. 1). Satan tempts, as in Eden, through the physical. But the life, though one of conflict, should not be one of despondency. "The joy of the Lord" is our "strength" for further victory (Neh. viii. 10). We would not yield, even temporarily, to the flesh. We dare not be slaves of sin: but, the more we walk with God, every kind of failure, unnoticed before, *seems*, as it is, a slavery, and we are caused to cry out for grace and power. But the Lord will not falter, sin *shall not* have dominion, and it is our joy to anticipate blessings, because "Greater is He That is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4).

A Striking Contrast.

"Whither do these bear the ephah? . . To build it an house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established and set there upon her own base" (Zech. v. 11).

"Jerusalem shall be established again in her own place, even in Jerusalem" (Zech. xii. 6).

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"THE LORD GIVETH WISDOM: OUT OF HIS MOUTH COMETH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING." Prov. ii. 6.

"THOU HAST SHEWED GREAT MERCY . . . LET THY PROMISE . . . BE ESTABLISHED . . . GIVE ME NOW WISDOM." 2 Chron. i. 8-10; Jas. i. 5.

"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART; AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING." Prox. iii. 5.

Words of Introduction.

THE changing seasons (Gen. viii. 22) set forth the truth of the unchanging God (Mal. iii. 6). It is well to look beyond the temperature for our encouragement, beyond circumstances and feelings, for our joy. The things that are seen are variable, but if our life has been hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3), if we are, indeed, a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v. 17), we may well rejoice in the Lord alway (Phil. iv. 4). What if trials abound? Is not God Greater? What if the fig tree does not blossom? The Tree of Life does not fade. What if we have physical strain? The Lord liveth. What if temptations abound. God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able (1 Cor. x. 13). Happy are the people who are in such a case. They are lifted above their surroundings, and delivered from depression, and worldly self-seeking. Out from Christ's fulness they still receive. God is able to make grace abound. His mercies are new every morning, no good thing will He withhold. All things work together for good, and they can in everything give thanks. To encourage believers to this spiritual attitude in the power of the Holy Spirit are these pages sent forth.

"To keep himself unspotted from the world." Jas. i. 27.

ALL our actions should be spiritual if we are a *new* creation in Christ Jesus. We cannot bring ourselves down to the level of *earthly* philanthropy: it is so wondrous to do all in the Name of our exalted Lord. Nothing is trivial when so done, by grace. The thought of *spirituality in "religion"* is very clearly expressed by "before God and *the Father*:" only *children* of God can thus honour Him. Men use the word "religion" glibly, and from *their* standpoint, and naturally assume that such "religion" is a failure! But let it be the expression of an inner spiritual life, the *behaviour* which befits and springs from a real and vital relationship to God, and everything is different. Salvation and religion must *not* be confused: "Christianity" is not a religion, but it *contains* "pure religion," or, rather, let me remove the misused term "Christianity"—the doctrine of Christ involves an undefiled religion!

The *latter* words of the verse imply *negatively* the holy thought which is hereby before us. To do evil that good may come is a grievous sin: *we must not mix* with the world to do the Lord's work. Nor are the *latter* words the only witness as to this separation. "Pure" suggests it and "undefiled" has yet more evident witness. The same term is found in Heb. vii. 26, 1 Pet. i. 4. It is needful that we should first search ourselves that our religion may not be leavened and tainted by *our own flesh*. Let us *hate* the garment thus spotted. Talkativeness without godly *obedience* is vain (Jas. i. 22). Kindness to the poor with parading pride is vain. Pharisaism illustrated verse 26. A deceived heart may be pleased thereby but in the sight of God it is sinful. Have *we* a *defiled* religion?

If in mercy, we are enabled to be "separated" in our own inner experience, we may rightly, and discriminatingly, be separated from others. Pleading for philanthropy, at the expense of the *obedience* which the Holy Spirit mentions *first* in this very passage, is a caricature of God's will. And, further, He foreknew how many would be snared into fellowship with the world in this matter. Sometimes the iniquity is at once evident. A carnival is arranged for some charitable organization, or a theatrical and concert to "benefit" some hospital. Can the believer buy a ticket to the glory of God, even if he determines to be absent? The negative answer is plain, as we walk with God and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. "But we shall be misunderstood." 1 Cor. ii. 15 is clear. The Lord's call is not to compromise, but to *consistency*. If I plead separation when it suits me, but am a member of a trade union, or co-operative society, for *personal* advantage, I stand convicted. Let godliness be thorough, and let me have the joy of losing for Christ whenever His holy principles are involved.

With some, there may seem to be a "distinction" if only "a small amount" is affected. "You can give a little," especially if the action is not *definitely* connected with open iniquity as carnivalism. But where is *Scriptural* warrant for supporting the world's

societies,—which cannot but include much that must *pain* a believing heart? Do you say, "This passage shows that we must be kind." Thankfully agreed, but does it say a word about *joining with the unsaved* to show kindness? Does it not bring before us a philanthropy *apart* from such a society. Widows are before us, and we know from Acts vi., and 1 Tim. v. that the assembly took charge of such when they were "needy." Individual "visiting,"—care which may be entirely apart from financial help, and quite as *essential* when the "tribulation" (Jas. i. 27) is not financial—and *fellowship* with brethren (as in the monetary arrangements of Acts, to prevent irregularity and overlapping),—these things are appointed. "To visit" does not *necessarily* mean "to go and see them." I mention this because "individualism" and "love of company" are imperceptibly strong in some temperaments, and the chapter which deals most with this subject (1 Tim. v.) urges caution, and pure "unspotted" godliness in another way as well (verses 2, 11, 13). But if, in mercy, we realize this aspect too, and welcome the plain speaking of the Holy Spirit we shall be gracious. Believing wives too will be so grateful for preserved husbands, and children for preserved parents, and there will be a holy *love*, in the Holy Spirit, that the Lord may be exalted in true sympathy and thoughtfulness. Disregard of fellow-saints is cruel, and the wider principle of Gal. vi. 10 is precious. Nor would we forget Rom. xii. 20, 21. The child of God should be *more than* "philanthropic," he should do *all*, toward *all*, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and, emphasizing the soul as more than the body, should not forget that as the life is expressed by the body, so then are "those things which are needful to the body" (Jas. ii. 16), which may be used to the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31).

"Being" and "Becoming."

FURTHER INCIDENTAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS.*

ALL Scripture is inspired, true, and precious. In one sense nothing is "incidental." But it is well to notice that in addition to definite statements (e.g. Rom. ix. 5), there are many words which *imply* the Deity of Christ, and cannot be interpreted otherwise, without violence to the language used by the Holy Spirit. And sometimes, moreover, definite statements contain much more than the statement on the surface, if prayerfully pondered in *their context*. For example, John i. 1 by designedly omitting the article and yet putting the word "God" in a peculiarly emphatic position, suggests (a) that there is *more than one person in the Godhead*, and (b) that the Lord Jesus was not only by name, but essentially and

* A leaflet containing thoughts on Christ's emphasis of Himself, e.g. "I say unto you," and a magazine referring to His invariable acceptance of worship, will gladly be sent.

characteristically, God. Further, the context gives a *repeated* stress on two verbs—one “to be,” and the other “to become.” “In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* toward God, and the Word *was* God:” This One *was* in the beginning toward God:—All things through Him *became*:—There *became* a man sent forth from God:—And the Word *became* flesh (John i. 1-3, 6, 14). If this precious passage stood alone it would have a striking testimony, but when it is one among others, and part of a definitely organized witness through more than one servant of God, we feel how great is the stress which the Holy Spirit Himself lays upon the essential Deity of our adorable Lord Jesus. If the wording were only in diverse parts of the same epistle as Rom. i. 3 and ix. 5 (“Became of the seed of David,” “The One Who is over all”) it would be helpful, but how forcible when the very same passage is thus arranged. We turn to Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. The Lord Jesus is here said to have been the reverse of Satan: He did not esteem it something to be grasped at *to be* equal with God, but though originally in the form of God, He took a servant’s form, and having *become* in likeness of men, also *became* obedient unto death. In Col. i. 15 we read “Who *is* (the) Image of the Invisible God,” and in verse 17 “And He Himself *is* before all,” and again in 18 “He Himself *is* the Head of the body, the church, Who *is* (the) Beginning, (the) Firstborn out from dead ones, in order that He might *become*, among all, He Himself Pre-eminent.” Here the aspect is different, but the essential glory of the Lord is before us, and we see once more that these verbs are consistently used, with appointed instruction. In Heb. i. 3 it is written, “Who *being* (the) Brightness of the Glory,” and in verse 4, “*Becoming* by so much better than the angels.” Here it may be said that the “aspect” is quite different again, and that the “becoming” is in resurrection. *Undoubtedly*, but the underlying *unity* of very distinct passages only intensifies the stress upon the primary fact especially before us, viz.: a *Being* before a *Becoming*, and the essential Deity of Christ. He is always brought before us as One Who *was* in absolute majesty, before any of the “becomings” associated with the out-working of a covenant plan and salvation. This chapter contains several illustrations of the verb “to be,” and we would mention praisefully, verse 12, “But Thou *art* the Same.” In the light of the Hebrew Scriptures, this is a very clear assertion of unlimited Deity.

In addition to these precious witnesses, we have Christ’s own claims recorded by the Holy Spirit, and would ponder one in the days of His flesh, and another in His exaltation. John viii. 58 is irrefutable, “Before Abraham *became*, I am,” the English rendering “*I was*” is an error (this can easily be tested), and the word “*I*” is emphatic. The “Seed of Abraham” was before Abraham, the *Offspring* of David was also the *Root* of David (Rev. xxii. 16). There can be no alteration of such decisive words. We adore Him, and say with believing Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” In the Isle of Patmos, John saw His glory, and then He said, “*I*

am the First and the Last (see Isa. xlv. 6) and the Living One and I *became* dead.” Yes, He Who was essentially the glorious Living One, took a *body* of humiliation, in amazing love, that He might be able to bear our sins in His own *body* on the tree. How sinful, in the light of such a declaration, must appear every criticism against His absolute Deity, and how derogatory to His wonderful grace, in which His own are delivered from an eternal and deserved judgment. Every denial of the Deity of Christ is blasphemy. Oh that our hearts might, on the contrary, henceforth glorify Him, and *thus* shall we honour the Father also (John v. 23). It is sad to find some “professedly” glorifying the Father while they dare to set aside the Lord Jesus. It is sad to behold the very condescension of the Saviour of sinners turned by men into an argument against His real glory, by those who claim to find their eternal security in that condescending love. How subtle is the enemy of souls, and how we need grace to be kept from mere argument, and to live beyond the narrow boundaries of human understanding in the joyous worship which is linked with Divine revelation, applied to the heart by the convincing power of the Holy Spirit.

Leaflets circulated among Israel.* Deliverance from Egypt.

A FACT AND A PROPHECY.

WONDROUS mercy was given to Israel when God was *pleased* to deliver them after, it may have been, a hundred years of cruel bondage (Ex. iii. 9). God *meant* to deliver (Ex. iii. 8), His time had come, and all the “plans” and compromises of Pharaoh were vain. The ten plagues illustrated the solemn words, “I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments” (Ex. vi. 6). Listen to the Divine statement, “I will stretch out My hand, and smite Egypt with *all* My wonders” (Ex. iii. 20), and further, “Against *all* the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord” (Ex. xii. 12). God meant exactly what He said. He knew *when* He would lay low the pride of Egypt—“Yet will I bring *one* plague upon Pharaoh” (Ex. xi. 1). God was not defeated; and Israel were brought out the right day (Ex. xii. 41). The little ones and the cattle were not left behind. The love and might of God alike shine out. He remembered His covenant.

But if the deliverance of Israel was complete, the judgment on Egypt was likewise. “The chief of all their strength” were slain (Ps. cv. 36), and *all* the “host” that went into the sea was covered (Ex. xiv. 28): “there was not one of them left” (Ps. cvi. 11). This is true history, and God gave a memorial of it. *What* was the memorial?

Ah, every Jew can quickly answer; but let us ponder God’s own teaching thereby. I have referred above to God’s love and might, but these were seen in all the earlier plagues, yet there was no deliverance. The contrast in the tenth plague was that Israel

* The prayerful interest of God’s people valued. “The Feasts of the Jews” are so solemn without the Antitype, with the veil still upon their hearts.

were not only loved and separated in love, but danger was brought near to them. They were then delivered from an angel of death, who would have smitten *them* also, *unless* the Passover blood, the blood of a sacrifice, had been on the doors. *The blood made all the difference!*

Herein is a fact. Herein is a prophecy too. God meant to show us that we are all in a greater bondage than Egyptian, and in danger of His heavy judgment. He says, in the last prophecy of the Hebrew Scriptures, "I am the Lord, I *change not*" (Mal. iii. 6), and the principle of His love is always the same. 'Tis "*When I see the blood I will pass over you*" (Ex. xii. 13). But have you this joyous privilege of God's own eternal protection from *His own* smiting? He did not encourage the Israelites to think carelessly that as they had been saved from loss of cattle and *earthly* trouble, because of His mercy, so it would be again. When *death* and His wrath were in view, His love worked on certain definite lines, and His love would *not* save without the *appointed* sacrifice He provided in love. All the Passover lambs tell of the Lamb of God, of Whom Isa. liii. speaks so tenderly and precious. Are you sheltered from the wrath of God in Him? Or are you "trusting" to God's love *apart from God's provision*, apart from *God's promise*? *To act thus is to put aside His word.* The Passover-prophesied Messiah died at Passover time itself, for unworthy sinners,—yet loved by God, in amazing mercy. Such unworthy ones are *we*, but "now in Messiah Jesus" we, who once were far off, are made nigh "in the blood of Messiah." How can we keep back from praising God?

How Did the Passover Save?

THAT the Passover lamb was Israel's *one* hope is clear. God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. xii. 13). But **why** was this?

First, we may answer, "It was God's own appointment." If we knew no more, this would be a satisfactory reply. God has a right to do whatever He pleases, and He need not explain Himself (Job xxvi. 14).

But, secondly, God vouchsafed to make known His ways unto Moses (Ps. ciii. 7), and is it not likely that the books of Scripture will show *why* and *how* the Passover lamb delivered? The message of Ex. xii. 30 is clear "Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for **there was not a house where there was not one dead.**" In other words, the lamb died **instead of the son.** Exodus xiii. confirms this, for it quickly adds "every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem" (13). *Man is classed with unclean animals.* All the context of this passage concerns the Passover. Again, in verse 15 we read "**All the firstborn of My children I redeem.**"

Why then did the lamb deliver? The lamb died **instead.** And thus we see that the firstborn of Israel **needed redemption**, and so do we,—or we must die in our sins.

The history of the *first Israelite born* exactly confirms this. In the land of Moriah, "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering **in the stead of his son**" (Gen. xxii. 13).

Further, the righteousness of God demands this. The law has a right to enforce death: hence the lamb died to save the favoured people. And their whole history illustrates the *same* way of escape. In Lev. xvii.—after the record of the Day of Atonement itself,—we read, "It is **the blood** that maketh an atonement" (11). And there is *another word* as well as Passover in Ex. xii., which shows we have the right interpretation, and it is this very word "blood:" "**The blood shall be to you for a token**" (13). Nothing else could be the *token*: the life is in the blood, and the life was poured out, *else there was no token.* Hence we see that the *central* emphasis as to the Passover, and the Day of Atonement, was the blood of the sacrifice. Now we can say **how the lamb saved.** Earthly death was then the penalty: the lamb took this instead!

But as a sinner I am in danger of a greater and more-than-bodily penalty. **Have I any "Instead" to save me?** Why did Abraham say "In the mount of the Lord it (or He) shall be seen!" Surely his words were prophetic (God calls him a prophet in another passage):—and if we have not a Passover to bear *wrath* as well as physical death, earthly preservation is vain. We need One to *feel the wrath of God*, for this is what we deserve, and no animal can do this, but **Messiah has done it**, and, in exalting His finished work, we honour the law, and behold, with thanksgiving,

THE REASON FOR THE PASSOVER.

The Relationship of Thoughts and Words in Christian Experience.

OUR words express our hearts (Matt. xii. 34, 35, *cf.* Jas. iii. 14 in a context concerning the *tongue*) except when there is a temporary veiling through hypocrisy,—from which may the Lord graciously preserve us! It is impossible to hide completely what we *are*: some can conceal themselves more fully than others, but even then the Lord looketh on the heart, and cannot be deceived. Hence "thoughts" are given forth from the lips: the mouth is not merely mechanical, and we must not excuse sins as if they were only of the body, and as if we "cannot help them." Our *thoughts* lead to our *words*: therefore the importance of godly thinking (Mal. iii. 16). Phil. iv. 8 is never out of date. May we be spiritually stirred to-day.

It is not hypocrisy, but spirituality to judge and keep back, for the Lord's sake, thoughts which are hated (see Ps. lxxiii. 15). If we cherish them in our minds, and merely hold back for the sake

of reputation, the aspect is *quite* different. But to check our lips, and to pray that there may be a watch before our mouth (Ps. cxli. 3), and that the bridling of Ps. xxxix. 1 may be experienced, is surely well pleasing. Bitter thoughts lead to bitter words. Deal with the root, and deal with the fruit *together*, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us forget the things that are behind.

The suggestion is before me that as our thoughts are clothed in words, so our words *impress* and give the aspect to our thoughts. If I spiritually keep down idle words, God will often graciously use this attitude to remove idle thoughts. But if I grant free course to words which dishonour Him, the thoughts which gave rise to them will be deepened in their impression and enlarged. That which I sow in meditation I reap in wording, and thence obtain further seed of the *same character*. If we talk unkindly it will become a habit to think unkindly. And so, if we think unspiritually, it will become natural to speak unspiritually. The actions are related: the one produces the other: we cannot isolate one part of our experience. Let us beware of our thoughts. Let us beware of our words. Let us think and speak in the Holy Spirit.

"The iron gate . . . which opened to them of his own accord."

"AS PETER KNOCKED AT THE DOOR OF THE GATE, A DAMSEL CAME TO HEARKEN . . . SHE OPENED NOT THE GATE . . . PETER CONTINUED KNOCKING. Acts xii. 13-16.

THE *reality* of Scripture narratives is beautiful, and heart-searching. It is important that we should not discourage the faith of a young believer as Rhoda. How sad to rise from prayer and say, "Thou art mad," yet how easy to pass quickly from spiritual words to unspiritual. But though we are encouraged by Rhoda's joy, we mourn the fact that Satan tries to misuse precious feelings: "She opened not the gate *for gladness*." In opposed, and yet in like, manner, the disciples failed in Gethsemane, for when Christ was come to them, He found them sleeping *for sorrow*. Joy and sorrow can be used by Satan: he seeks to take advantage of everything. But just now we would ponder:—

The *contrast* between the iron gate and the little house door.

God works wondrous miracles, yea, He "only doeth wondrous things." The iron gate is "as nothing" to Him (see in another context, Isa. xl. 17). "Who art thou, O *great* mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain" (Zech. iv. 7). Why do we not trust our God more? He is able to do *all* things (Job xlii. 1, 2), and willing to do much more, but He delights to honour faith, and will not encourage unbelief. Have you any "mountains" which seem unsurmountable? Nothing is marvellous in God's eyes (Zech. viii. 6).

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"THOU IN THY MANIFOLD MERCIES FORSOOKEST THEM NOT IN THE WILDERNESS." Neh. ix. 19.

"THE LORD WILL PERFECT THAT WHICH CONCERNETH ME: THY MERCY, O LORD, ENDURETH FOR EVER; FORSAKE NOT THE WORKS OF THINE OWN HANDS." Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

Words of Introduction and Encouragement.

IT is a wondrous thing to be *in* Christ Jesus and to call God "Father" *truthfully*, and by the grace of God we have this relationship, and therefore *some responsibility* for Him. Hence it is a joy to see His good hand in enabling. But though we praise Him for *refreshing letters*, which tell of blessing received through the publications, we want to see and set forth *more* of His will and to have *more* power in spiritual witness, and to rejoice regarding the growth in grace of *many more*. God has not failed, God will not fail: He is the Living God, *our God*. The "times" are ever dark. Before the war, men were hardened against God. Pleasure, business, and all manner of things were exalted: He was forgotten: and many, bearing His Name, reflected more of the spirit of the age than of Christ (see 2 Cor. iii. 18). Nor are men softened now. But every circumstance calls *God's people* to humility, that in the Holy Spirit, as befitteth saints, they may live like His blood-bought ones *ought* to live. The Lord's pilgrims should be quite *unworldly* in life; and as truth is one, they should be *of one mind*. Any other idea is the excusing of sin. "Federation" is not spiritual unity. Only as we keep on coming (1 Pet. ii. 4) to Christ individually, and deny self, can we rightly meet "one another."

"Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour" (Zech. viii. 17, cf vii. 10). "Charity. . . thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5).*

PART I.

General Thoughts.

We need to be deeply exercised as to all the truth. It is a precious thing to know the wondrous fact that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4), and to enter into the message of loving power, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). The believer rejoices, and rightly rejoices, in "the Hope of Glory," and is warranted to delight in the confidence of 2 Cor. v. 1 and 1 John v. 14. But only while we walk with God, bearing Christ's yoke, and living as strangers in the earth, can we find "rest" (Matt. xi. 29), and look for the city that hath the foundations, and embrace the exceeding great promises seen afar off (Heb. xi. 13). Carelessness in daily walk mars both spiritual enjoyment and spiritual witness. We dare not turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. The Holy Spirit will not encourage presumption. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live" (Rom. viii. 13). I have been impressed with the words "faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 9) and "just Lot" (2 Pet. ii. 7). The Lord delivered Lot in *mercy*, and he was quite safe, but did *not* come to him personally, did *not* speak with him thus, nor did He give promises to Lot, as He granted them to Abraham.

The Mind.

Among the many subtle sins whereby Satan secures a lack in the spiritual life, many are sins of the *mind*. Only One could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." But the redeemed are encouraged to have Him as their Example, and the danger to which we allude seems brought before us by the definite encouragement to love the Lord with the mind (Matt. xxii. 37). Hence the stress upon the commands of Rom. xii. 3, 16, and the solemn message of 2 Cor. x. 5, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." Nor would we forget Phil. iv. 6, 7, with Isa. xxvi. 3, 4, or the contrast of Eph. iv. 23, with iv. 17, with its humbling reference to Eph. ii. 3.

Hos. vii. 9.

But though sins of a *proud* self-consciousness and of a worrying mind are deadly, they are not the only things which grieve God's Holy Spirit therein. Rather let me say, these iniquities are *parts*

* If not reading the whole, PLEASE READ PART II. SOON,

of a condition which produces many other developments, and among them the thoughts of evil respecting another which dishonour God, and often lead to *words* of evil, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and it is easier to be *led* astray than we realise. The gradual character of wandering from God intensifies the danger. We backslide imperceptibly, and being dulled in the *same* proportion, we often seem to ourselves far less marked by wandering than we really are. If we could see the sin of a week's departure at once, or see next week's failure (the Lord grant the reverse), from the spiritual standpoint of present reviving, we should be very surprised. But we see it as we become levelled to it, and are like to men in a closed room who do not realise, unless their hearts are sensitive, that the atmosphere is becoming more and more tainted. But let another come in from the fresh air, and he *feels* the change keenly. His senses are exercised.

Plain Words on Rancour and Backbiting.

There is no reason for calling sins by pleasant names. We should avoid all lying. Bitter feelings are very sad, but are they not, sometimes at least, encouraged among those who profess the Name of the Lord? Past unkindness is still remembered and an old grudge is harboured and nursed, and it affects the whole spiritual life. Hence spring forth words of backbiting. The "elementary" principles of the book of Proverbs are not out of date. "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour, and discover not a secret to another" (Prov. xxv. 9). The Lord speaks sternly against "a backbiting tongue" (Prov. xxv. 23). If you cannot speak well of a brother, it is usually well to keep silent. "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. v. 15). "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (Jas. iii. 14). "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (Jas. iv. 11). "Grudge not one against another, brethren" (Jas. v. 9). Such messages are *still* needed. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. ii. 1, 2):—This implies that we lose appetite for the Word, and fail to grow, whenever we use the tongue wrongly. Desire God's words, meditate therein, and they *will* be uttered instead of evil words, is the thought of verse 2. The Lord is gracious, how can you be ungracious?—is among the suggestions of verse 3. May we take it to heart in the power of the Holy Spirit.

PART II.

"Evil Surmisings."

These words are definite. Talkativeness and argumentativeness and standing up for one's rights, all lead to "evil *undercurrents* of thought": we may translate, "suspicions." For the most part your

tongue is controlled, it may be, but—ah, here is a deeply solemn further thought, you *IMPUTE EVIL MOTIVES* to others, though not mentioning their names. If the lengthy preface prepares us all to be humbled before God for this sin, it will not be read in vain. Be afraid of *IMPUTING MOTIVES*, I beseech you, for you cannot see the heart, and you only surmise. "*Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come*, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. iv. 5). "I know he meant to avoid me," you say to yourself, "it is just like his attitude before." How do you know? "But I have such strong reasons for believing so." Have you not stronger reasons for *doubting yourself*? And if he did mean to avoid you, how do you know the "motive" underneath? "Oh! it is his pride." How can you be sure, or say so, even to yourself? "Everybody else says it." That is no argument. Keep very still *the tongue of the heart*, it often talks wickedly and utters deadly things (Ps. x. 6, xiv. 1). When God's servant Paul refrained from going to Corinth to spare the believers (2 Cor. i. 23) some accused him of lightness (17): when he avoided being a burden, he was called crafty (2 Cor. xii. 15, 16). Remember that, even as ungodliness may look godly, things which are right may be explained wrongly (John vii. 24). Charity "*imputeth*" no evil, for *that* is the word, referring to the words and reasonings of the heart. It is strange how a little thing will sometimes awaken a fiery temper. Do we not need to pray the prayer of Ps. cxli. 3 and to seek for the soft answer of Prov. xv. 1? If you can impute a good motive, do so hopefully. If you cannot, avoid thinking of the matter in such a way that you *tend* toward "*imagining evil*." "Whatsoever things are true, &c., *impute* these things" (Phil. iv. 8). Why should you be occupied with another's possible failures? Even in Rev. ii. and iii. the Lord, Whose eyes, as a flame of fire, can see motives, does nothing to encourage us in such judgment, but everything to help us to point out the causes for our praise in a brother's life. *One of the most startling verses in Scripture is 1 Cor. i. 4.* Rom. xiv. 6, 7 are clear: if you recognise one as a "brother" you are "bound to give thanks" for HIM, and to acknowledge that his wish is "unto the Lord," even when he does that which is a sign of spiritual "weakness," *unless God has given you evidence otherwise*. Warn believers against wrong motives: show how naturally they are introduced: *judge your own motives*, but beware of assuming that you see those of another. *Give him more than the benefit of the doubt, if you have recognised him as one indwelt by the Spirit of God*. Oh the wandering, and sins, and heart-aching too, which spring from the imputation of motives.*

Perhaps you feel "This standard is too high." Is it the Lord's standard? Find me the Scripture for one who is *not* inspired to deal with motives in any other way. Surely a *wish* to lower the

* A right attitude in these things will make some who have wrong motives ASHAMED! But none of the above helps and hints are to be misused to call a wrong action good, because a child of God does it (Isa. v. 20). Weep over sin!

standard is not yours. Then will you not trust God for the love which does not impute evil? *Everything else withers your own life*. If you feed on this carrion you will not be healthy spiritually. Moreover, even if you "say nothing," your manner will *speak*, and you will lead others to impute, and furthermore, you will feel awkwardly, and, as a result, A will speak of B and B of C, and you will indirectly help backbiting. "The beginning of strife" has many solemn parallels: it leads on to an uncontrollable torrent. "Leave off" at the outset—*before commencing*, as it were. If we impute wrong motives we often *cause* them. Suspicions generate the very sins they "imagine," and "imaginary" things become real, and more transient failures become sadly permanent. If the Lord brings to a happy peacefulness in this matter, one will find growth in tender and encouraging thoughts, victory over a bad temper, increasing deliverance from talkativeness about others, and many blessings, graciously caused by the inworking of the Holy Spirit. If there is a denial of this godly attitude, one is apt to become morose and irritable, or despondent in these very dark days, and, not only so, it is difficult for those who have imputed motives, (and yet who want to hide them because of Christian love), to be truthful when asked concerning others. Their "manner" will harm, though they wish otherwise. Love to the Lord, and love to His people are wondrous twin privileges: may we enjoy them more and more, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

The Apostle, High Priest Faithful, He Who builded the house, God, Son (contrasted with servant),—by such names is Christ set forth in Heb. iii. 1-6. Well may the apostle say, "Consider Him." How is it we do not value Him much more?

What is Fame?—The dying praises
Of a dying crowd around!
Yet it dazzles, and amazes,
But should saints therewith be crowned?
What is Wealth?—A shadow, fading,
Earthly gold is not for aye,
Shall its chains, our peace invading,
Draw our hearts from Christ away?
What are all men's vain attractions?
Shall we choose the things of earth?
Nay, we would, in all our actions,
Show our Saviour, and His worth.

Faith has a wondrous telescope which God has given (Heb. xi. 13), but unbelief turns it round the *other* way, and proudly uses a man-made microscope for trials.

"My Son" in Proverbs.

1. A message to Solomon's son, showing his personal interest.
 2. An emphasis on the need for care among young people.
 3. A setting forth of the preciousness of God's people.
 4. *Spiritual commands to those in God's family.* Heb. xii. 5 implies this.
 - i. 8. Hear the instruction of thy father.
 10. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.
 15. Walk not thou in the way with them.
 - ii. 1-5. If thou wilt receive My words—then thou shalt understand.
 - iii. 1. Forget not My law.
 11. Despise not the chastening of the Lord.
 21. Let them not depart from thine eyes (wisdom, understanding, &c.)
 - iv. 10. Hear and receive My sayings.
 20. Attend to My words.
 - v. 1. Attend unto My wisdom.
 - vi. 1, 3. If thou be surety. . . . do this now and deliver thyself.
 - xix. 27. Cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err.
 - xxiii. 15. If thine heart be wise.
 19. Hear now and be wise.
 26. Give Me thine heart.
 - xxiv. 13. Eat thou honey (see 14, the knowledge of wisdom Ps. xix. 10).
 21. Fear thou the Lord—and the king.
 - xxvii. 11. Be wise and make my heart glad.
- [Many of the passages also contain *another* linked command, sometimes more fully explaining the *power* of the first. How precious to obey!]

"I am sought of them that asked not."

HOW wonderful is this statement—may we not say, this promise?—in Isa. lxi. 1. It is a marvellous fact that God, in His grace, causes the "unlikely" to believe. Is the word "unlikely" strong enough? By nature we were all, and altogether, lost and condemned, and it is impossible that a corrupt sinner should enter God's presence. Everything connected with salvation would have remained an "impossibility," but for the definite and sovereign grace of God. We came because drawn; we sought since sought; we loved since loved, and no flesh can glory in His presence.

This aspect of salvation not only attacks all boasting and self-righteousness. It encourages living faith when we realize that dry bones are around us, and that all are away from God. We go forth to speak to others of Christ, and there seems an invincible deafness and deadness. There is, if we forget the might of God. But the real invincibility is His love to lay hold of the lost, and to lead them to His Beloved Son, Whose precious blood was *not* poured out in vain.

"How long shall I see the standard and hear the voice of the trumpet?"

(Jer. iv. 21).

THE prophet was deeply concerned. Around him there was real confusion. The question "How long?" seems to be always intense. Ps. xiii. 1, 2, Matt. xvii. 17, Rev. vi. 10. But there is no complaining of God. "As for God, His way is perfect," and His people would humbly abide in His will. He welcomes earnestness, but not impatience.

The condition of *things* around was because of unholy conditions in the experiences of Israel. The privileged nation had forgotten God. The next verse shows their lack of understanding. Departure from Him *must* bring trouble.

Is it not possible that amid "wars and rumours of wars," at the end as well as near the beginning of this sad and sinful age, we should take the message of Jer. iv. very definitely to heart? May not the unspirituality of believers bring much confusion? Is it not sadly true that the nations of Christendom, favoured with an open Bible, and, in many ways, have turned from God, and indulged in pleasure and commerce and everything to gratify themselves? Is it not marvellous that so many troubles have been held back so long? Do not blame a God of forbearance, but be humbled before Him!

One word further. Natural and national repentance as in Jonah iii, would only bring temporal and temporary results. They would be beneficial, but we individually need salvation or we shall be lost for ever!

God must be known not only as Creator and Righteous Judge, but as our Heavenly Father, if we are to be blessed indeed. This is only possible in the Lord Jesus. He is the *ONE WAY* unto the FATHER (John xiv. 6). And so to sinners, as sinners, without confidence in ourselves or in them, we would gladly preach "Jesus Christ and Him crucified!"

Why should I not take God at *His* word? No *reason* can be brought against this, but all else is both unreasonable and treasonable. Everything can be brought against unbelief, and yet it is so "easy" to glide into this sin, and have unbelief as a *grain* of mustard seed that grows larger. How credulous is unbelief. This was strikingly brought before me after an open-air meeting. A man was attacking the declaration of God's gospel, and brought forward one whom he had met, who, professing to have been blest through certain ministry many years previously, was now in an asylum, in despair, because of sin. I asked him how he *knew* the facts concerning previous blessing were true. The reply was to the effect, "I heard it from his own lips." I have since thought how exactly this illustrates the credulity of man:—ready belief of one who was *acknowledged* to be mad used as an argument against believing God! The world is mad. Madness is in the heart. (Eccl. ix. 3).

"Ah," say some, "we will only believe what we can see with our eyes." How unwise is such a statement. Can you see physical life? Can you see a *sound*? "But," replies the one forgetful of God, "we have other senses." Precisely so, and faith is even more than a sense. Again, "How do you know Australia exists if you have not been there?" "We have been told." In other words, you accept *credible* testimony. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath witnessed of His Son." But to return to the use of the "eye." Can your eye see what is in front of it? Can you behold microbes in water? Is not your sight *very* limited? Moreover, can you *trust* your eye as to everything which you *think* you see? Have you not heard of the traveller's *mirage*? Further with astigmatism, one may see four crescents of the moon, distinct, even amid the haze, but *are* there four? This last thought has helped me as to "reconciling" parts of truth: believers are sometimes troubled by the way in which they see separate things in Scripture which do not seem to "fit together": spiritual astigmatism exists, and so, accordingly, there is a lack of definiteness, yet the fault is *not* in the truth, but in the one beholding it. Oh for grace to believe God beyond or, if need be, *against* appearances. He has proved Himself worthy of all trust, and this cannot be said of self!

"To What Purpose is This Waste?" "A Good Work upon Me"

(Matt. xxvi. 8, 10).

MANY, alas, take the standpoint of Judas (John xii. 4), or, at least, are influenced by it, as some on this occasion (Mark xiv. 4), though they were "disciples" (Matt. xxvi. 8). How sad it seems—Indignation at devotion to Christ. Beware of sin dressed up as godliness, or as philanthropy. The Lord Jesus rightly emphasized *Himself*. The Humble One was *God*, all the while He walked this earth: when He emptied Himself of glory (Phil. ii. 7), He remained gloriously "Himself!" This is the key to His holy stress upon Himself: there is none other solution. All who fail to own His Deity have a dark problem.

Beloved friends, are we *glad* to do everything *for and unto Christ*? "Giving" to the poor *instead of* to Him is a great mistake. *ALL* our "giving" must be wrapped up in *His* will, and unto Him, or it is a failure. I am thankful the Lord Jesus did not at once unmask Judas. If He had, we should see a witness against hypocrisy, but some would have said, "If Judas had rightly meant the use of the three hundred pence for the poor, the Lord's words would have been different." But in wondrous wisdom He shewed that the "poor" and "physical needs" must not be unduly brought forward. Christ must be First!

Believers' Meeting Rooms:—61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E. 7. 48a, The Broadway, Walham Green, S.W. 6. "Rosemond," Bede Burn Road, Jarrow-on-Tyne.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

THE LORD JESUS SAID:—"I HAVE GIVEN THEM
THY WORD; AND THE WORLD HATH HATED
THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD
EVEN AS I AM NOT OF THE WORLD." John xvii. 14.

Words of Introduction and Encouragement.

IT is a precious thing to have senses *exercised* to discern both good and evil (Heb. v. 14), and to be *exercised* by all the chastening trouble which a loving Heavenly Father permits (Heb. xii. 11). In order that God may be glorified, in the spiritual growth and heart-exercise of His blood-bought people, is this little messenger sent forth. We cannot display a series of great names, nor boast of great dignity before men. We desire to be Christ's disciples (John xv. 8), and to be known as such (John xiii. 35). Our honour is to honour Him, and to encourage His own sheep in the following of Himself. If you are a child of God, accepted in the Beloved and accepting the Scriptures, will you not rejoice in the incentives to godly living, in the power of the Holy Spirit, affectionately set before you? And will you not acknowledge the Lord's prayer in John xvii for the manifest unity of His disciples, and hate every sin which divides believers from Christ, and from one another, in doctrine and practice? The incompleteness of past movements—the iniquity of "federationism" and "reunion"—incompleteness, and the possible failure of present loving efforts are in no way an argument against *trusting God for revival*, revival among His people, revival that exalts His Name, and seeks to obey *all His Will*, denying whatever denies His words of truth and loving authority.

The Love of God.

THE natural heart cannot perceive that which is infinitely beyond it. You may talk to man of politics and pleasures, and he responds. You may converse with him about human affections, and he realizes it. But the perception of the love of God is spiritual. It is true that God has been pleased to give earthly pictures of that which is beyond pictures. The types and parables, and, indeed, the very texture of Scripture, in its language regarding the eyes and ears of the Lord, would imply this, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Often he misuses these very expressions to complain of Scripture, or in some way degrade it. Such is man!

Who can grasp, measure, or fathom the love of God? If we are believing, we may meditate thereon. We would think first of His love to the Son of His love (Col. i. 13), and then wonder anew at His love in giving Him up, and *that* for the guilty and worthless, and hell-deserving. "God so LOVED that He gave" (John iii. 16). The more we enter into the intense delight with which the Father beheld Him and which the Father had in our glorious Saviour, the more we feel ourselves unable to comprehend the reason for His choice of us. And there is *no reason outside Himself*. Every other reason would be worse than inadequate. But this love, which surpasses our thoughts, also encourages our gratitude, and assures our hearts. He will not forsake the works of His own hands, who are made His own children at such a tremendous cost. And the love of God is not only to a complete company, as one whole (John vi. 38, 39); it is personal. "The Son of God Who loved ME and gave Himself for ME" illustrates this. He was God, and His love was as the love of the Father. All are before the Father individually. Names are distinct in the Book of Life. We may well contemplate John xvii. 23, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." The world does not know this at present. The manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19), accepted in the Only Begotten Son is future. With David we may sit before the Lord, and say, "Who am I, O Lord God?" While we ponder this aspect of *personal* love it is well to add John xiv. 23, as to a present love of communion and friendship: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Is this true? It is. The promises of Christ are realities. And yet we often act as if they were not, and treat lightly a daily privilege beyond all that earth can offer or even conceive. Oh how sad is our comparative indifference to His love. Oh that we may value, in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the precious message of 2 Cor. xiii. 14. *We love* because He first loved (1 John iv. 19). Let our love to Him and His people, and His will, grow exceedingly, and so shall we enjoy Rom. v. 5. "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Which is given unto us."

The Same Word.

OFTENTIMES the Holy Spirit repeats one word, and yet translators employ two or three. But is not this a hindrance, unless the idiom of a language would prevent understanding otherwise? The emphasis which God Himself gives in this, and every way is very precious. A beautiful example is the five-fold "all" of 2 Cor. ix. 8, a deep encouragement to the redeemed. 1 John v. may illustrate, "beareth witness," "witness," "testified," and "record" (6-11) are the same word. So the *very same root* is found in "ask," "petitions" and also "desired" (15). The one "begotten" of verse 1, is the one "born" in 18, indeed the latter verse has itself the two renderings (*cf.* also 4). And if we go beyond the chapter the "confidence" of 14 is the "boldness" of iv. 17 (see Eph. iii. 12): in that passage "boldness" is this wondrously encouraging term; "confidence" is another, from the root of "faith." Nor would we forget "victory" and "overcometh" in 1 John v. 4, 5, and the usual difficulty—"faith" (4) and "believe" (10, 13). But these problems, while they should lead many dear children of God to value a little knowledge of the original Scriptures, and also fellowship in study, rather than individual assertiveness, are not meant to cause disappointment. The chapter chosen is a specially sad example of varied renderings, but even here we see how definitely God has prevented many more obstacles, for He has overruled to give us so much of *His* teaching in the use of *similar* words. 'Tis the *emphasis*, and the link of verse with verse, rather than the application to our hearts of His truth, which is lost. A spiritually-minded man with an English translation can learn infinitely more than a dead, or even a cold-hearted, "scholar." The great need is communion with God. The Holy Spirit is living. Hence though this subject is humbling to remind us how *men* always obscure what is of *God*, it is also refreshing, in that, with a call to *reverence* for His perfect love, and His perfect language, and His perfection in everything, we behold His gracious *overruling* for the profit of His people. Regarding "imperfections" how often has He said, as it were, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." We would give *thanks* unto His Name. The word which was used to suggest these thoughts only comes twice. In Luke i. 28 we read, "Hail thou that art *highly favoured*," and in Eph. i. 6 "Wherein He hath *made us accepted* in the Beloved." The margin, as so frequently, helps us much in Luke i. Mary *was graced*, she had no glory in herself. Hence she rightly said in this connexion, "God my Saviour" (47). *All* believers are likewise "graced": they have a wondrous privilege which cannot be over estimated. That the Holy Spirit in Eph. i. alludes to this is, I would suggest, made more evident by the use there of both descriptions found here, for the words "Who hath blessed us" in iii. are a precious echo of "Blessed art thou" (42). The importance of this can be seen when we turn to the erroneous rendering "Hail, full of grace," the background for the expression "Hail, Mary, full of grace," reminding us of the term "The Blessed Virgin

Mary" which seems equally borrowed from this passage. But Scripture does not approve of *any* such titles, except for Christ. He is "*the Lord Jesus*," but "Saint," "Reverend," and "Pastor," are *all* out of place as *titles* ;* and, moreover, *all* believers are "full of grace" and "blessed," even as *all* believers are saints. But the *subtle* sin implied is that Mary has a fulness of grace *to bestow*. This is quite contrary to God's testimony. Only *One* can be thus exalted (John i. 14, 17). The verb here is *in the passive* ; Mary has *been* graced : *her need* has been met : 'tis not that she can meet our need ! She is not grace-bestowing, but grace receiving. Surely the language of the Holy Spirit refreshes every child of God, as he sees therein a perfect precision, a suitability to personal, spiritual necessities, and a Divine forewarning against the evil teaching which ever abounds to the honouring of some created ones instead of the Creator. The appointed glory of Christ is *ever* an emphasis on His revealed Deity, and thus believers rejoice in their Triune God !

Some Solemn Warnings.

"**F**ILL ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matt. xxiii. 32). The thought is solemn : if they *would* go their own way, they should be allowed this, and their hypocritical language, amid such sinfulness, was not wanted. Let them take off the mask, and not tread God's courts. He did not require anything at their hands (Isa. i. 12). We think of Ezek. xx. 39 "As for you, O house of Israel, . . . Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto Me : but pollute ye My holy Name no more with your gifts and with your idols." "Ephraim is joined to idols : let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17). He Who said to Israel "Neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee" hates mixtures. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." In this connexion we observe the solemn warning of Rev. iii. 15, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert *cold or hot*." To try and unite the love of God and the love of the world is a grave mistake ; to attempt to join the standpoint of the Lord and of this age is a vain error. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" If we would experience the precious promise "I will receive you," we must "come out from among" all idols (2 Cor. vi. 14-18), and serve the Lord *only*.

Another solemn warning is found in John xiii. 27, "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas had deliberately chosen to set aside Christ. *No longer* was there any space for repentance (Rev. ii. 21). When God gives a man up to his own will and way, it is a heavy judgment. The broken plans and crossed purposes of our lives often sparkle with jewels of mercy, and the trials against which believers naturally chafe are the tokens of their Father's love.

* Two leaflets on this subject will gladly be sent.

God has Never Made a Mistake.*

Dear Jewish Friends,

We are so thankful to God for *all* His goodness to us. He has enabled many to say with the prophet "Behold, God is my salvation" (Isa. xii. 2), and therefore with joy would we "draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. xii. 3). But we do want more of Israel to share *this* salvation, and *this* joy ; and when we see your feasts come round, there is a desire in our hearts to bring His love very definitely before you. We cannot "make" you believe that love, nor change your hearts, nor give you the gift of God, but we can be His messengers, and would earnestly remind you—

God has Never Made a Mistake.

"Oh," you may reply, "That is well known to every Jew." But stay a moment. Do you really act as if you believed it? Why, for instance, do you count the Feast of Tabernacles first in the year? God has given a prophetic order, and *He* placed it *after* Passover, which pictured the death of *His* Lamb, even Messiah ! And *He* put *the Feast of Weeks* in between. Of what is *this* feast suggestive? It looks to Palestine, and the *wheat* harvest, and thus, coming at another time in another land, it tells us God has not altered His warning in Lev. xxvi. Israel are still *SCATTERED* because of *SIN* ! But not only so, Pentecost may remind of *THE GIVING OF THE LAW*, and there is no mistake in these solemn commands of God. He said what He meant. He does *not* speak of judgment upon sinners in vain. But have *you* kept the law? Not one of us can rightly say, "I have." And God makes no mistake in the carrying out of His holy threatenings. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord." (Jer xxiii. 24). Oh *why* do you excuse disobedience to His law, and claim self-righteousness? Further, God appointed Pentecost as a prophecy of a time when He would not deal with the Jews *as a nation*, for Pentecost *alone* passes by Sabbath, and has *no Sabbath*, and yet the *Sabbath* is an everlasting covenant between *God and Israel*. Exodus xxxi. is quite clear as to this. When God again blesses Israel as Ezek. xl.-xlviii. shows, the *Feast of Weeks* will be, apparently, left out. Why? Because it will have been fulfilled in connection with the *present* dispensation. Israel must be blest in connexion with *a temple*. But to-day you have no accepted "house of prayer for all nations" at the place which God chose. You *cannot* ask the Gentiles to illustrate Zech. viii. 20-23. You have missed *your way*. Hos. iii. 4 is being fulfilled. You have *not yet* turned to the Lord (Hos. iii. 5). Hence your *present* religion during the two days of Hos. vi. 2 (see Ps. xc. 4), is not God's appointment at all. Your next blessing is *via* weeping (Hos. vi. 1). God is now waiting (Hos. v. 15). When you weep, you will behold a rejected Messiah as your Hope (Zech. xii. 10), and own that God made no mistake. During the time of Lo-ammi (Hos. i.

* A leaflet circulated, by grace, among Israel at THEIR "Feast of Pentecost."

9), God is graciously fulfilling the type of Pentecost, and saving out from all nations apart from Judaism, apart from a Sabbath, but not apart from the precious blood of Messiah! Thus Pentecost is dated from Passover, and all our salvation depends on the precious, spotless LAMB OF GOD! Everything of Scripture fits in wondrous harmony. *God has never made a mistake*, and never will. Why then do you not desire God's one salvation? Can you not see *something is wrong* with you? Will you not humbly seek the Lord *while He may be found*? Oh that it may be so with some who read these lines, and who are GRIEVED for Israel's ruin.

Yours earnestly in the exceeding grace of God, and resting on the Lord our Righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6),
Some who, though Gentiles by Birth, *are Christians by a new Birth*, and who pray for Israel and for the Peace of Jerusalem (Isa. lxii. 6, 7).

"In all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect" (Ex. xxiii. 13).

"**BE** on your guard" is a suggestive rendering, and the Greek translation prepares for 1 John v. 21. Children of God still need this encouragement, exhortation and warning. It is not for us to pick out certain words of God, and yet to despise others. ALL His messages are precious, and we should prayerfully and loyally rejoice "in all things." But let us be clear that we are following what He has said, and not what we have imagined. The theories and doctrines of men may be dressed up religiously, and at first appear to be the will of God, but He gives grace to distinguish the precious from the vile.

It is important to remember the need for being on guard. Satan is subtle. Sin is cleverly introduced. Be on your guard against the wiles of the devil. There are many temptations around, and they have one object, ever to lead us away from Christ. "Be on your guard," young Christians! "Be on your guard," ye who are "old disciples." "Be on your guard" to-day; "be on your guard," if spared to-morrow. "Be on your guard" at meetings as well as at work, in home as well as in the street. Only as we walk with God, and in His light see light, being led by the Holy Spirit, to approve His revealed will, only as we thus walk, can we truly "be circumspect," and please Him Whom our soul loveth. "What has He said?" should be the joyful and continuous thought of a devoted life.

"They set their abominations in the house which is called by My Name to defile it" (Jer. xxxii. 34). God is very definite against the misuse of that which is *His*. If we are *His* people, let us be earnest to present our bodies a living sacrifice. If the worthy Name of Christ is called upon us, we should be exercised in heart

not to dishonour that Name. How grievous it is to see that which claims to belong to Him—whether a building or an organization—marked by abominations against Him. How real is the force of Isa. lxvi. 4:—"They did evil *before Mine eyes*, and chose that in which I delighted not." Therefore God would set His eyes on them for evil and not for good, or, in another sense, we may put it thus:—He said, "Cast them *out of My sight*, and let them go forth" (Jer. xv. 1). Thus He had *no* respect to Cain and his offering. But the Lord had respect to Abel, and *so* in the *very* chapter which says "They did evil before Mine eyes," we also read, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and TREMBLETH AT MY WORD" (Isa. lxvi. 2).

Our Father, we adore Thy Name
And worship by Thy grace;
Thy loving kindness we proclaim,
Which man can ne'er erase.

In vain the boasting of man's pride,
In vain man's hatred proves,
Each one who is in Christ relied,
Knows grace that ne'er removes.

Eternal is Thy changeless love,
Eternal is Thy might,
Eternal praise shall sound above,
For ever our delight.

Redeemed by blood, and quickened now,
Thy Name we glorify,
Before Thyself would humbly bow,
To Thee in grace made nigh.

Soon, soon our Lord these eyes shall see,
'And faith be changed to sight:
Then shall we joy eternally
Made Thine by sovereign right.

The Power of the Opening Prayer.

MAY we not venture to characterize the prayer which especially mentions all in authority thus, since the Holy Spirit says "first of all" in 1 Tim. ii. 1? 'Tis not a mere form, but designed to be an illustration of obedient love.

Surely such a supplication is meant to encourage the Lord's people. They realize (a) All men are in His mighty hand (Prov. xxi. 1): (b) The grace which reached them when dead in sins can reach others, equally "in need." Moreover, it sets forth the *love* they feel and the absence of *all* wrath (1 Tim. ii. 8), even when, as frequently among early Christians, there were *intense* sufferings caused by those in authority. Apparently, too, the Holy Spirit separates disciple-like believers from such a position, and from all earth's glories now. The prayer implies such are *not* to seek *themselves* to be in authority. Hence it includes (a) a confession of a pilgrim's patience and trustful "remaining *under*" (Rev. xiii. 10): (b) a deep hope for the Coming of Christ (Rev. xxii 20).

If ungodly ones come into a meeting should not such a prayer be a witness to them that believers are (a) recognising God's providence in government; (b) the *opposite* of agitators and revolutionaries; (c) exercising a real influence as to the land wherever

God has placed them! The appointed sphere is powerful. A Christian's supplication is better than his vote: the one is commanded, the second is a setting aside of the heavenly calling. How often children of God make trouble because they are afraid to be unlike the world. Israel wished to be as the other nations: they thought this would be glorious, it was their great loss.

If this prayer were realized more, in the power of the Holy Spirit, would there not be more blessing when believers are gathered together, and would not their separated and humble position be simply set forth as they quietly and happily wait for their Lord from heaven? 1 Thess i. 10 shows the life-attitude of those who are "in Christ Jesus" whenever they enjoy their spiritual privileges and blessings (Eph. i. 3).

Every word in Scripture has an emphasis, therefore we may not be able to give much of the emphasis in *one* reading. Sometimes it is well to read twice with a stress different words, e.g., Prov. xxii. 20, 21, "Have not I *written* to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee *know*." A witness against tradition. Again "Have not I written to *thee* excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make *thee* know." Yet further "Have not I written to the excellent things in counsels and *knowledge*, that I might *make* thee *know*."

If we view our sins in the light of Christ's finished work, we are truly humbled. But if we view them otherwise we may be overwhelmed beyond measure. Do we not need to pray for grace to see them in the light of that precious atonement? To ask for a sense of sin apart from this is to deny the privilege of no more conscience of sins (Heb. x. 1, 2), and to seek a pain which we cannot bear. Oh how the death of Christ awakens lowliness and gratitude. How can we persist in the sins which brought our gracious Lord to such an awful death?

There is, alas, another aspect which is deeply solemn, because possible to a believer awhile, though we would not argue or even think, *how* far he can go and still be "preserved" by unchanging love. God does not lead us to such inquisitiveness. It is sadly possible for a believer to look at others' sins and to view his sins in this connexion, and to become self-satisfied in measure. Oh the God-dishonouring pride which links. How amazing that a ransomed rebel can be even for five minutes careless about any abominable theory which God hates. Let us dread the standpoint of self and of the world when we behold sin!

Believers' Meeting Rooms:—61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E. 7; 43a, The Broadway, Walham Green, S.W. 6. Also "Rosemond," Bede Burn Road, Jarrow-on-Tyne.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"IT IS OF THE LORD'S MERCIES THAT WE ARE NOT CONSUMED, BECAUSE HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT. THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS. THE LORD IS MY PORTION, SAITH MY SOUL; THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM. THE LORD IS GOOD UNTO THEM THAT WAIT FOR HIM, TO THE SOUL THAT SEEKETH HIM." Lam. iii. 22-25.

Words of Introduction.

ENABLED by God's grace, we would again invite His people to contemplate His so great love, and to be concerned that they may not dishonour Him. Are we not thankful to learn more of the Lord, and His will? Men of this age have *their* objects. Our first our one object is to please God! But we cannot please God by "our own way." He has revealed *His* way in Scripture. "As for God, *His* way is perfect." Do not our hearts enter into the prayer of Ps. cxliii. 10? How precious to be acquainted with *His* purposes, and *His* standpoint! How great a privilege we have to delight in *His* way, and to know that He delights in our way (Ps. xxxvii. 23). May this be our joy, and may we set aside our opinions, and confess these as sins, and receive His instruction with His strong hand (Isa. viii. 11, see xli. 10). The Lord's words are *among His people* (Isa. viii. 16), and He will not disappoint them. He deigns to guide the meek in judgment, and we should ask in faith (Jas. i. 6). He is Faithful!

The "Place" of Worship.

"The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father."

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."—John iv. 21, 23.

WE all naturally read into Scripture much that is not there, and also fail to see much which God has graciously placed there for our blessing and edification. Many times some may have noticed the striking contrast between Isa. lxi. 1, 2 and Luke iv. 19. Luke iv. 21 gives the key: "The day of vengeance of our God" was then, and is still future, and the comforting of all that mourn, with the appointed gift unto them that mourn in Zion, belong to that Day (cf. Zech. xii. 10-14).^{*} Likewise the difference between John v. 25 and 28 has been pointed out. May we not infer that, even though the periods be not the same, there is equally a distinction between John iv. 21, and 23? When, therefore, is worship in spirit and in truth appointed, and approved? Always! How refreshing is this thought, that God does not limit such worship to the present dispensation, but shows it will be possible, and actual, at Jerusalem and when Jerusalem is a praise in the earth, and the worship of Ps. xcix. 5, 9 shall be owned, i.e. when "the Lord reigneth" at Mount Zion before His ancients, gloriously! But verse 21 has an implied limitation. Christ omits "and now is" and speaks of worship in a way involving a contrast with the circumstances at the time of utterance. The temple was still His Father's house (note Matt. xxi. 13 with xxiii. 38), and verse 22 suggests this. But an hour would come in which at Jerusalem worship would be impossible!

Possibly some of us have thought, "not at Jerusalem only" and felt the joy that comes from a heart-realization of the grace of God which makes a place holy by His presence, so beautifully set forth by Stephen in his reply to the charge of Acts vi. 14. But have we authority to add the word "only"? Others of us may have felt that when Matt. xxiv. 16 is fulfilled, and Jerusalem experiences the climax-agony of the latter part of Rev. xi. 2, this prophecy shall be fulfilled. But surely the passage goes further, although we acknowledge that "the hour of the testing" (Rev. iii. 10) contains this very word "hour." That Judaism and the Gentile attempt to blend a humanly modified Judaism with its heathenism (which was the religion associated with the mountain Gerizim†) will then be set aside is true. But is not this God's own testimony throughout

^{*} In Isa. lxi. 2, the comma and the semi-colons should be transferred as in John xvii. 12. The punctuation is human.

[†] 2 Kings xvii. 41 (note earlier verses) seems to have been illustrated in the days of Constantine, and is seen, not only by such unappointed observances as Christmas, but in the whole fabric of Christendom which cannot blend Christ's laws for a separate people with earthly glories, and therefore has adopted a modified Judaism.

the dispensation? And is not God said to set aside the court before the forty-two months of Rev. xi. 2? Is not Rev. xi. 1 His further "key" to help us that we may understand the precious words of the Lord Jesus?

We think of that wondrous event, when the Lord of Glory died for sinners. He suffered on this earth, even as the Sacrifice was made in the court. But He rose and entered into heaven itself, pictured by the closed-in tabernacle,—including the holiest of all (Heb. ix. 24). The "temple" of Rev. xi. 1 is parallel, and the altar of incense, the only one mentioned in Revelation, was there. Even the place of its first mention, unlike the other vessels which are before us in Ex. xxv. is suggestive. Ex. xxx. follows Ex. xxix., when we have the priest and the sacrifice. All sacrifice was forbidden on the altar of incense (Ex. xxx. 9). Christ having died on earth, dieth no more. Hence there is a wondrous force in Rev. xi. 1: the temple typifies heaven, the court shows the earth. All earthly worship is shut out. If we would worship acceptably, it must be on resurrection ground, in Christ Jesus, and as those who have the boldness of Heb. x. 19, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and who have the access of Eph. ii. 18 (observe the temple-context 19-22, "with the saints": the very same word is used for the holiest of all).^{*}

The negative aspect is solemn, in that God refuses all "earthly" worship to-day.† Of this,—we shall learn more later. But the positive aspect should be our realization first, and deeply in the heart. The personal application of truth, or rather a readiness for the Holy Spirit's application of truth to each of us personally, is a very precious preparation for spiritual welfare. If we are actually made nigh in the blood of Christ, we are encouraged to exercise the rights and prerogatives belonging to the holy and royal priesthood of 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. It is well to notice the way in which the Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasize this, for many have, alas, placed them in contrast with Ephesians. The height of blessing which believers have, is very real, and therefore they must not degrade themselves by unappointed earthly "ceremonial," nor lower their heavenly calling to include "public worship" with the world. The rent veil in the tabernacle involved nothing to those who were in the court, and simply occupied therewith: it involved everything to the privileged priestly family, and so is it spiritually. We cannot worship God at Jerusalem. We cannot worship God in London! Though physically in London, we must spiritually come boldly to the Throne of Grace, if we would please Him. The words of John iv. 24 have as definite a "must" as iii. 3, 7. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). That which is called

^{*} It will be seen that this stress on the place of Christ's death refutes Romanism's "Repetition," or shows how that system belongs, by its own confession, to the rejected court, and earthly pretensions.

[†] A leaflet will be gladly sent, entitled, "Are Believers Now Described as in the Courts of the Lord?"

circumcision has become the concision, and the true circumcision "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). The believer must be taken away from earthliness and worldliness if he would realize worship. It is in this respect that we fail. To know ourselves in Christ, to behold with the eye of faith the throne in the Sanctuary, to ponder God's wondrous exaltation,* to feel a removal from distracting influences physically around, and an anticipation of the glory of Rev. vii. 9-12:—how rarely do we experience, as we should, this transforming heavenliness of atmosphere! We must be translated in mind (Col. iii. 1, 2). We must endure as seeing Him Who is invisible, and must look at the things not seen. When believers gather, they need grace to judge all lateness, gazing about, lack of reverence, and such seeming details, which disturb and hinder the contemplation of the glory of the Lord. 2 Cor. iii. 18 must be our joy if we would worship aright. If we try to worship God in London, or wherever it may be, we spoil the true meditation and worship. The practical outcome of this is very real. The letter to the Hebrews shows believers inside the sanctuary and *outside the camp*—the two extremes: they are not in the court! The religious worship which casts them out has itself been *cast out* (Rev. xi. 2). Children of God are encouraged to remember that as partakers of the high and heavenly calling (Heb. iii. 1), they have *come* unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the Living God (Heb. xii. 22) and that on earth they are rejected. A world is crucified to them, and they to the world[†] (Gal. vi. 14). They are no more of this world than their Lord was when He uttered the beautiful words of John xvii. 16. Hence they are encouraged to deny all wordliness. They cannot rightly identify themselves with the societies, systems, or standpoints of this age. How can they ignore their relation to their risen Lord? How can they attach themselves to the worship of "Freemasonry," which puts aside the distinction? How can they have fellowship in a merely national religion? Howbeit they pray that the repentance of a Nineveh, though in a *totally different* sphere than spiritual repentance, (which is a gift, Acts v. 31), may be much more evident. The *separating* power of truth, affecting all our devotion and daily life, is very dear in this connection. Oh for grace to illustrate it, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

A right perception of this will cause more *definiteness* in worship. Heaven is full of *praise* (Rev. iv. and v.); but we are apt to become so full of *petitions* that we do not rise above them. Confession of sin—very needful as a preparation—may be intruded, at the wrong moment, to hinder the growing realization of all that *God is* and all that *He has done*. Worship is not "What shall I get?" but "What shall I render unto the Lord?" It is not what I was, it is not what I am, but what *He is*. There is no waste of time in *true* worship: oh how we fall short! Lack of proportion actually re-

* See the surroundings of His majestic throne in Dan. vii. 10, Heb. xii. 22, Rev. iv. and v.: note Isa. vi.

duces our power in petition, because if we only think of our needs, we become very selfish.

The unity of all saints is grasped more as we enter into the words "neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem." The prospect of Christ's return becomes more real. Murmuring is ruled out. Many, indeed, are the accompaniments of a true standpoint.

Again would I plead for the "separation" which this implies. Not only from Romanism, but from a worldly nonconformity which is conformed to this age. Ornate buildings are more than out of place, when the words sound out "nor yet at Jerusalem." The earthly structure is of the smallest importance, and *any* religious identification with the unsaved, any link with those who definitely set aside this heavenly aspect of worship, is *Babylonianism*, and bold, or unconscious disregard of Christ's own revealed will! The temple of God has no agreement with things seen (2 Cor. vi. 16). If I worship *with* those who cannot mount higher than their natural position, with those who are of the earth,—if "natural" and religious arrangements of this age are part of worship, the high and heavenly calling is, in large measure, set aside, however much in other things it may be claimed. A heavenly view of worship is a Divine death-blow to man-made ritual, to earthly brotherhoods, to all sectarianism. God has judged all of these, and He lifts His people up above the ruin of earth, that He may give them true delight, in the power of the Holy Spirit, even when, physically and circumstantially, they are surrounded by that which would, if by itself, cause anxiety. The whole view of life is changed, as a heavenly relationship is known and felt. Here is true rest! Oh how infinitely precious is the precious blood of Christ!

Unconscious Selfishness.

IT is easier to make a mistake, and to dishonour God's Name in *little* things than we often realize (Eccl. x. 1, Song. ii. 15). So many dear children of God almost unconsciously mar so much of their witness; and pain, and obstruct those whom they really love in the Lord. It is a privilege not only to lay down one's life for another, but also to do "little things," and to abstain from doing "little things," for his spiritual welfare and encouragement. If only we could see our own failures in detail as clearly as we can see those of others, and be kept from the sin of excusing them, we should be much more useful spiritually. A magazine of Bible exposition is not on that account to be impractical. "How to please God in 'odd' moments" is a subject for meditation: our commoner actions, as eating and drinking, should be to the glory of God. How many young Christians would have been helped forward if older believers had told them of the ill effects of certain habits and tendencies. Some, alas, are unwilling for this, and do not like to be reproved! But surely it is better to receive rebuke

now than to lose at the Judgment Seat of Christ, because of unfaithfulness. When the Lord Jesus refused Pharisaism and its mistaken ceremonialism, He said of tithing "mint, anise and cummin," "These things ought ye to have done," and then added, "And not to leave the other undone." "Let brotherly love continue"; "By love serve one another." How much "unconscious selfishness" could be removed if these commands were brought before our gracious God, and we then asked Him to show us where we fail. A believer takes a seat in a gathering which is in the way of others coming afterwards from business that evening, there is no intention of causing trouble, any more than on the part of many of us who have unnecessarily stood in a train-doorway, but others are hindered. Another believer comes late to a meeting: I do not mean through daily toil,* but through habit, and the principle of leaving everything till the last moment: and the devotions of "others" during the first important five minutes are quite interrupted. We are not always so careful to prevent disturbing "others," even by a cough, as we are to notice anyone else who thus disturbs. A request is made for some "detail" of arrangement to be carried out: there is a delay, and those having charge of the Lord's work receive an extra tiny trial when their mind needs to be free. We thoughtlessly overlook some one near us who is, alas, without a Bible. We allow children to distract the attention of those around: 'tis unkind to the little ones as well: the parent who is *inconsistent* and irregular at home, and so gives the child the upper hand, and then permits even looking round, etc., at the Bible Study, is sowing seeds of evil. But the selfishness is often quite unconscious. "A" is an earnest brother, but he speaks a little too long in the open air, thereby undoing part of the work. "B" wants to please God, but, without consciousness of it, prays lengthily at a little gathering after open-air service, so that "C," who has to rise very early loses a train, and "D" is rather concerned on behalf of "C," and his concentration of mind on the prayer is not helped. All these "details" are real, and there are many more. We all know some in others. Again let me urge that we should definitely ask God to show us such failures in *our own* hearts and lives. He will not refuse, but let us be earnest in the Holy Spirit, to give up, and not to excuse.

How often these "tiny things" are aggravated by *repetition*, so that we receive a reputation for some special mistake, and then it is half-feared before it takes place, and our usefulness is largely lost in advance, or perhaps there becomes in another the inclination to speak of our defects to a third person. *We are partly the cause of this sin!* It is very difficult *not* to refer impatiently to the *naturally* irritating eccentricities which repeatedly spoil the precious ointment, and could be so easily altered if we waited on God. How often, too, one defect is added to another. The brother (or sister) who comes in late seeks to avoid advertising it, and goes to his (or her)

* Long hours that hinder spiritual prosperity, and overtime that encroaches on the Lord's rights, must not be sought for gain, or approved through fear.

seat during prayer, disturbing some still more, and teaching the children to be irreverent. Another who manifests a measure of "obstinacy on small points" defends this when reproved, or, at least, looks more ready to smile than to weep, and the whole tone of an assembly is lowered. The hatred of sin which should exist, and be emphasized in the power of the Holy Spirit, is diminished. Beloved friends, these things ought not so to be. Shall we not seek and expect God's gracious reviving even now? Let it be emphasized even now that the might of the Holy Spirit is *very real*. Little things may help "one another" and bring Him glory. Oh that we may henceforth have enough love not to be "thoughtless" of these details, but to live, and walk, with an increasing consciousness of the Lord's will.

"But it shall not be so among you."

Matt. xx. 26.

"But ye shall not be so." Luke xxii. 26.

THE Kingdom of God is not now manifested. The Lord's people have *in themselves* received the kingdom (Luke xviii. 17), and they are in the kingdom and *patience* (Rev. i. 9), but the glory is future. Hence, as a separated people, and as God's "strangers and pilgrims," amid this world where their Lord was crucified, they are to live, even in daily life, quite differently from those who know Him not. And the *arrangements* of His family are altogether distinct from those of the unsaved. Just as the royal priesthood is marked off from that of Aaron, and its sacrifices are spiritual, so the holy nation is, in every way, unlike the nations of this earth (1 Pet. ii. 9). Its principles include such startling statements as "Blessed are they that *mourn*"—the word "blessed" signifying "happy"—and "Blessed are the *meek*." In other words, the laws of the Lord are, throughout, "unpractical," except for those who simply trust Him, and who are willing not to "get on" in this poor, sinful, delusive age. The believer is no more *of the world* than Christ was (John xvii. 16).

But the verses which are before us just now emphasize the attitude of believers to "one another." It is not enough that there should be spiritual separation from *worldly* success; holy unity *among* saints should be seen in connexion with the Lord's beautiful laws. The backbiting of men, and their attempts to get the better of each other, should find no place at all among saints. The writer recollects a historian speaking of certain ancient diplomacy as "a tissue of lies." We know moreover, how much untruthfulness is found "behind" commercial life. Planning, plotting, working underneath the surface—these things are common. *Love alone is to be acknowledged in believers*. The party spirit, moreover, is utterly condemned. Christ is to be exalted: selfish wishes are to be laid low. The man of this age naturally wants to "get on" for

"himself," and he will naturally feel "resentment" against those in his way, and sometimes schemes against them. But the attitude of a believer is to be contrasted. There are to be no opposed competitors in an assembly of God (1 Cor. xii. 28). The prosperity of one in Christian service is to be the joy of *all*. Love is to be *felt* as well as *preached*. We are members *one of another*. How heart-searching is this. As one knows that there exists among the men of this age, even among those in great exaltation, a scarcely-veiled enmity, with continual verbal attacks and counter-attacks, and a seeming bitterness oft displaying itself, how refreshing it is to turn to the words of Scripture, and to pray that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we may illustrate the command, "It shall not be so among you." If pride, and self-seeking, and love of position are *denied*, how many evils will be excluded, and how much room there will be for *spiritual growth*.

Turning Round Words of Truth against Truth.

"Ye, My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men" (Ezek. xxxiv. 31). I have seen this perverted into a universalistic statement to the effect that "men are the flock of God's pasture."

"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3). Have we not found a grievous misuse of this to lower prophecy, and to suggest "whatever is to edification is to be regarded as prophecy in some measure"? But the verse no more asserts this than it asserts that two roads which lead to the same house are the same road.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12), but persecution does not prove we are living in a godly way. Suffering must be for Christ's sake and the Gospel's (Mark viii. 35), not through self's angularities.

The Lord gave some to be "pastors and teachers." The word "pastor" means "shepherd," and seems to controvert the sad idea that every one is to be led individually by the Lord apart from the joints and bands (Col. ii. 19). In 1 Pet. v. 2 we have a similar thought: "feeding" is associated with *oversight*. Any attempt to remove this is independency, though it may be dressed up as spirituality, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13 may help in the same direction. 'Tis no special privilege to be a sheep without the Lord's work through shepherds, yet many would seem to seek this, and deny the means of His appointment.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"THE MEEK WILL HE GUIDE IN JUDGMENT;
AND THE MEEK WILL HE TEACH HIS WAY. ALL
THE PATHS OF THE LORD ARE MERCY AND
TRUTH UNTO SUCH AS KEEP HIS COVENANT
AND HIS TESTIMONIES." Ps. xxv. 9, 10.

Words of Introduction.

EACH time we are privileged to send forth a messenger, containing some of the truth of God, we would thank Him and feel our responsibility. But for His loving care we should be unable to do this labour of love. Daily strength is from Him, as well as the wish to please Him. It is a solemn thing to grasp something of His will, for whereas on the one hand we read, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John xiii. 17), on the other hand, the Scripture is plain, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is **sin**" (James iv. 17). And in which of these two classes are we found? The question should not be lightly set aside. Most of those who read these lines claim to be in Christ Jesus, to be a new creation, to have experienced a wonderful deliverance from the wrath of God;—oh, what a call to permanent godliness is wrapped up in such a blessing! May our hearts **respond** to the great love freely bestowed on us.

Be Afraid of Yourself.

THE Holy Spirit often shows how real is our danger from *within*. Persecution is *not* the greatest problem. The world's alluring, yet lying, attractions are *not* the most real difficulty. We have *in us* that which would suggest and encourage a comfortable yielding to such invitations: only *One* could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath **NOTHING IN ME**." But we dare not, and do not, *recognise* the flesh: "They that are Christ's

crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires" (Gal. v. 24). That which is crucified is *not* enthroned, and is not at liberty. But crucifixion is *not* death, it is a *legal* death, and a step to *actual* death. Therefore, "*Reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord: let not sin reign." That is to say, With legal reckoning let there be *practical living*. "*Mortify*, therefore, your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5). How? Rom. viii. 13 answers. Oh, that our daily experience may be answerable to it.

Particularly have we need to beware of the devices of Satan, and the subtlety of sin, as to seemingly "little things," and as to those which are done in the course of service unto the Lord. To be self-satisfied as to preaching, and to be proud of humility, are sad possibilities. Thus, as to "giving" and "giving-up," we need to be very prayerful and careful. The reproof words of Matt. xix. 27 come to mind. 1 Cor. xiii. 3 is definite, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], *it profiteth me nothing*." The Lord looks at the condition of *heart*, and its motive, its *continued* motive—for Satan seeks to interrupt in the midst of spiritual wishes.

Matthew vi. 1 is very precious, but this chapter (as the 5th, with its stress on "I say unto you," in such a verse as the 22nd), cuts more deeply than we at first realize. When the Lord was asked as to the Way, He *also* spoke regarding Himself as the Truth and the Life. When He warned against parade before men, He added a witness against *parade before self*. "*But* when thou doest alms, let not THY left hand know what THY right hand doeth." Be afraid of the "glory" of *men*, and remember to include yourself among men. Self is the nearest flatterer or grumbler. We often comfort ourselves with that self-contentedness which is Satan's attempt to undo the blessedness of inward reproof and outward rejection. Perhaps "giving" is our privilege in a certain connexion, and the Lord means us to be happy in so doing (Acts xx. 35), but there is no room for self-congratulation (1 Chron. xxix. 14, 16). 'Tis not merely, "Do not let others know." *Their* knowledge may be less damaging than *self's meditation*. Alas, it is possible to be additionally proud because we keep back the fact from others. And our *method* of doing this may be "so ingenious," and thus a basis for self-exaltation.

It is important to emphasize this, because so easy to break the Lord's will *while* imagining it is being kept. A brother helps another—the underlying motive is good, but sometimes arrangements (except to meet an *emergency* need of food) are *better* through a gathering of saints (Acts iv. 35, vi. 1, xi. 30). *Independency* is a snare. Strangely, it can also open the way to a *decrease* of giving, when the intention is far otherwise. The result, too, of the kind help may be an overlapping, and the brother, or sister, who is helped, may be tempted to think, "A helped me, B did not," when B gave more, but in "unknown" fellowship *with* others. Hence,

wrong thoughts may be encouraged, unexpectedly, and contrary to true desires. "Let not THY left hand know" is the Lord's message, implying *two* natures in the believer, and setting forth the privilege of a *right-hand* devotedness and "purposefulness" in every action. Beware of THYSELF. "THY left hand" is a peril; the flesh in a saved one will seek to pervert that which is the Lord's own appointed service. Our Father only should be before us. 'Tis not enough to refuse the satisfaction of other men, and their praise, *self* is subtle. Romans xii. 8 has a similar message, "He that giveth with [in] simplicity," *i.e.* with the opposite of duplicity, with a holy singleness of aim, seeking the glory of God, *and nothing else*, in all. Let us all be concerned in this matter; let us all be devoted *unto the Lord*. Oh, that the message may sound out with power as to everything, "Let not THY left hand know." Do not take the flesh "into your confidence,"—subdue it. The Lord's own stress is on denying (or saying "no" to) *oneself*. Beware of your own left hand! May we all have grace so to live, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some Remarkable Contrasts.

ALL truth is precious, but how precious the truth becomes in our experience, whenever, in the might of the Holy Spirit, some portion thereof grasps us and lays hold of us, and we rejoice in the reality of God's great love and power. We may have read a verse a hundred times, and then suddenly it may reach us with living might as never before. Oh, that our condition of heart may be such that God may be glorified in a constant readiness for this blessing. As the electric current may find that which is not sensitive to it, and there may be no light and no energy, so is it with regard to truth. God's beautiful words are unheard by the dead sinner, unless there is the command of quickening power (John v. 24). But this is not strange; the strange fact is that believers, by unhealthy departure from the presence of the Lord, and by worldliness, may put that which is *non-conductive* between themselves and His messages of wondrous love, and thereby fail to enjoy their wondrous application. If we walked with God we should find His truth ever fresh, and forceful, and fruitful.

It is my desire to "feel" and be the means, in God's hands, of helping others to feel, the reality of the constant contrast between the unsaved one and the believer. Concerning the former, we must say that God speaks of *not* remembering him (Ps. lxxxviii. 5), yet ever remembering his sins (Hos. vii. 2). But regarding His redeemed people, it is written, "God remembered Noah," "God remembered Abraham," "Lord, remember David," yet as to their transgressions, He has said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). What a precious contrast! In which of these verses are we found? 'Tis the same thought as the transferred "not" of 1 John v. 12. Oh, how deeply solemn *not* to be in Christ Jesus, but how wondrous to be *in Him*!

Hezekiah could enjoy the thought of his sins being cast *behind God's back* (Isa. xxxviii. 17), and this is still the privilege of God's people, whereas they themselves are brought into His presence with its fulness of joy (Ps. xvi. 11). On the other hand, the words of Ps. xc. 8 are true of all outside Christ, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance," and such shall be punished with everlasting destruction *from* the presence of the Lord. And we might long continue this meditation. Those who know not the Lord are to be blotted out from under heaven (Deut. xxix. 20), but those who are His redeemed will not have their names blotted out, for He has blotted out as a cloud their transgressions, and as a thick cloud their sins (Isa. xlii. 22). Their sins have been drowned in the depths of the sea, because of One Who went under all God's waves and billows, and therefore they will stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God (Rev. xv. 2). How contrasted are the two futures: where the Lord is, His people will sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb; but outside the city, instead of music, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Again would our hearts say (and oh, that some reader may realize the thought for the first time), "How deeply solemn *not* to be in Christ Jesus, but how wondrous to be in Him!"

Brief Reasons for Not Keeping the Seventh Day.*

"To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. viii. 20, see 16).

"Under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21).

1. The authority of the Lord is needed for everything (Lev. x. 1), and He has particularly worded commands as to the Seventh Day, so as to *limit* their application to certain people (Ex. xx. 2, 8-11).

2. In accord with this, *no* precept can be found in the Scriptures for this observance by those who are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. iii. 1). If, for example, Matt. v.-vii. and the epistles are searched through, the appointed omission will be noticed (Col. ii. 16 the only mention in epistles).

3. It is wrong to take part of *one* precept, and to overlook or reject the *other* parts linked by God Himself therewith, *e.g.* (a) Ex. xx. 10 assumes that those receiving this appointment should not be "strangers," but possessors of "gates" (*i.e.* cities) and looking on others as strangers ("thy"). But believers now should not be so (Heb. xiii. 14). (b) Ex. xxxi. 15 shows a *death* penalty for breaking God's Sabbath statute: assemblies of God have no such physical judgments now.

* Further "helps" will be sent, including typewritten addresses, for a fortnight, to any exercised before God.

4. This principle (3) applies, beyond *one* precept, to the law in general. It is a grave mistake to pick out a portion of God's law through Moses, and obey it *on that account*, while rejecting other equally definite commands of the same law. If we keep the Seventh Day, why not expect a human priesthood and animal sacrifices? Observe that the *weekly* Sabbath is as much identified with the feasts of the Lord, and holy convocations for Israel, as *passover*, &c. (Lev. xxiii. 1-8).

5. The Sabbath was not given to be an isolated law, but as a *covenant* (Ex. xxxi. 16), and within the tables of the covenant: if we put ourselves under the covenant of works, without Divine authority, we deny the doctrine of grace (Gal. v. 4), and contradict the whole testimony of Christ.

6. Accordingly the only verse in the Epistles, which names the Sabbath, forbids believers to keep it, showing that (a) they will be allowing men to bring them to *judgment* if they thus act, just as much as if they now observe the days and sacrifice of the feasts and new moon.* (b) Sabbaths, distinguished from *other* feast days, are, in general, a *shadow*. (c) The appointments of God for another dispensation may be made "the commandments and doctrines of men" now (22).

7. Romans xiv. could hardly have been written, if the seventh day Sabbath were then in force.†

8. Every attempt to make a new Sabbath with regulations distinct from those of the earlier Scriptures is a human device and a blending of law and gospel. A *change* of Sabbath from 7th to 1st day, and a *change* of Sabbath-laws while retaining Sabbath are alike against God's appointment. The first day is not called *a Sabbath*.

9. The arguments given by many for keeping the seventh day rest on insufficient basis, *e.g.*,

(a) "Christ kept it." True, He had the ten commandments as the ark preserved the law, but He was also circumcised, yet this is no basis for circumcision (Gal. v. 1-4).

(b) "Christ did not come to destroy the law" (Matt. v. 17). Let the whole verse be noticed: He came to "fill" or "fulfil." *Has He done so?* If He has, I cannot add to this work, I cannot take up *part* of His *finished* work. Hence the keeping of Sabbath *because* appointed in the law of Moses is a *denial* that He has fulfilled the law, a *denial* of His completeness and

* Ponder "Let no man judge" with "let no man beguile" (18), cf. 8. Shall we allow men to be the cause of our loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ? This interpretation is contextual, but *any* weaker interpretation of "judge" would prohibit the authority of the Sabbath now, and only make it "permissible," a theory quite unfitting context, but even this would overturn seventh-dayism.

† The basis for, and characteristic of, "the Lord's Day" may be pondered on some other occasion. It does *not* belong to the world, nor has it a penal code for infringement, *e.g.* as to lighting a fire. The thankful believer, however, *without bias*, will not find any argument from "liberty" to indulge himself, or, for instance, to use vehicles now on the first day of the week.

truthfulness. Rightly understood, this verse shows that the believer has no position, and receives no command, *except in Christ*, and HE has never appointed or even suggested the Sabbath to His blood-bought people to-day.

(c) "The apostles retained the Sabbath." They took the opportunity of *preaching the gospel then*, just as we should, under similar circumstances, among Israel, &c., but there is no recorded evidence that they did and refrained from any actions according to the Mosaic law on that day with God's authority. Notice (i) the last record of resting "according to the commandment" in Luke xxiii. 56, (ii) the *passing by* of the Sabbath before the specially emphasized gatherings of John xx. 19, of Acts ii., and of Acts xx. 7. This silent leaving out in Acts is most remarkable. Is there not a reason?—2 Tim. iii. 16.

(d) We are told "Constantine introduced another day, and present reception is on the authority of the 'Church' of Rome." This is an unhistorical confusion. Constantine mixed the Lord's Day with the heathen "Sunday," and approved the world's keeping of the first day, which does not belong to the world. He *stole* a treasure of believers, and emphasized a misnaming: but Satan has sought to bring other parts of truth into disrepute, by giving them to the world and renaming them (e.g. the Lord's Supper). Romanism urged a *changed Sabbath*, but God has never changed it, He has put Sabbath in abeyance, and introduced something else. If the undispensational sins of some are to be an argument for our departure from God's word in *another* direction, we assume that evil must be answered by evil. The fact that erroneous systems wrongly apply the Lord's Day is no reason why we should, without authority from God, keep the Seventh Day.

(e) Rev. xii. 17 is brought forward. But to say this must mean certain commands, and yet to *leave out* others is unscriptural. 1 John iii. 22, 23, iv. 21, v. 2, 3 may help. Surely the only spiritual interpretation would be, "Whatever commands the Lord has shown to be His appointment at the time, and to the persons mentioned." Any other interpretation is a *verbal* victory over those who forget that God has a right to make different arrangements on various occasions. To limit Him from this is sin. If I do what He has commanded *someone else*, I am stealing, and *this* is not obedience.

10. The prophecies of Sabbath observance are linked with Israel's earthly blessing, Isa. lvi. 2-6 (7), lviii. 13 (12-14), lxvi. 23, Ezek. xlv. 17, and imply conditions which God would *not* fulfil now, e.g. Isa. lvi. 7.

11. Conformably with this, the passages which anticipate the present dispensation, and the type of Pentecost, alike leave out the Seventh Day.

12. The prophecy of Matt. xxiv. 20 assumes the *willingness* of believers to flee on the Sabbath (contrast Ex. xvi. 29), and thus *rather* suggests that the Seventh Day does not belong to the people

of God in the present dispensation. The *opposition* is from "outside," as with the winter: *that* shows weather-hindrance, the "Sabbath" in Palestine, at the time prophesied, would involve hindrance from other persons.

To sum up:—I do not keep the Sabbath, for

(a) There is *no* command of God to children of God now thus to do, and the action would, therefore, be WILL-worship and "after the commandments and doctrines of MEN" (Col. ii. 22, 23).

(b) There is a clear Divine prohibition against keeping it, unless I wish to lose at the solemn judgment seat of Christ.

These principles—negative and positive—are authoritative, if Christ is simply owned as the one Lord. "Types" must not be misused, but they confirm, and, in like manner, the precious *spiritual teaching* contained in the Sabbath helps us to see the reason for the Lord's arrangement. The observance of the Seventh Day would imply acceptance in the flesh, with the *background* of "doing" (Ex. xx. 9): the Lord's stress on the *First Day* implies resurrection and *heavenly union** with Christ, as a basis for "work": salvation first, then labour: we might almost say—Live, and thou shall do this. Herein is an exclusion of boasting, a call to praise, and a holy encouragement *against* careless disobedience. And so, whereas the Sabbath would now suggest a law working wrath, the First Day implies a new life with resulting loyalty to Christ, in view of the testing of saints in that Day. It gives a new reason for new-creation "works," and witnesses against a misuse of grace.

Since, therefore, the keeping of the Seventh Day is *neither* obligatory *nor* permissive, we would earnestly *call upon* the children of God not to be misled by men in this solemn matter. Repetition of loving admonition is not grievous. *Accompanying* delusions and doctrinal sins are sadly manifest in *much* seventh-dayism, and would make every "disciple" peculiarly cautious, but if there were no other error entwined, the fact that the Seventh Day is not part of the law of Christ (now appointed), but forbidden by the Holy Spirit, would be quite sufficient. One word of God is sufficient!

"WRESTLING" as to prayer, is not with God, but against spiritual wickedness (Eph. vi. 12). Jacob's power was not when he wrestled, but when he was weakened, and wept and made supplication (Hos. xii. 4). The conflict with evil powers is very real (Col. iv. 12, marg.), but we need grace not to be occupied with this, so that we rather look to the struggle than to the joy of approaching our God. If we are thinking of our strife against Satan's forces, so that we ignore the privilege of the quiet communion which God appoints, "self" has been made a centre, and sin has intruded itself, while we have been warring against it in another direction.

* The ascension took place the *same* day ("I am ascending," John xx. 17).

"Advice."

DO not ask advice if you have made up your mind first. It is rude thus to treat a fellow-believer. But how peculiarly dangerous to go to God with a mind already made up! There is too much independency to-day; independency is pride, selfishness, lack of love—indeed, it is one expression of many forms of sins, and may be linked with a kindness and affection. It is a fly of death to spoil ointment; a parasitic growth to dwarf God's trees of righteousness. A child of God comes to you for advice on *one* thing: on something else he does not think of *any* advice. But his waywardness on the second point hinders altogether as to the first. You cannot easily guide him, because what he ought to do on the one point is prevented by his other actions. Yet it is difficult to speak on the matter on which he is so determined, without "offending" him. But if you do not give him advice on the other point on which he wants it, he will regard you as unkind or indifferent, and may avoid asking you for spiritual help afterwards, and this will mean a further loss of influence—spiritual influence—which is a precious trust. Hence we must add two thoughts. Not only is it well for a child of God to *request* advice, rather than wait till it is given, (for this will help to deal with pride), but, in general, it is right to ask, together with advice on any spiritual subject, loving guidance as to related circumstances, and general growth in grace. How precious when we can, without irritating, advise a *person*, and not merely deal with one *thing*.

"Advice" is as difficult to give, spiritually, as to take. Unless you are walking with God, you may mislead. Pride, too, will come in, unless there is spirituality, for the natural man has a natural joy in arranging *other* people's affairs. Further, it is so easy to "speak" at length, instead of saying, "I must seek to the Lord concerning this." Why should we be more ashamed of not knowing before special prayer, than of guessing without prayer?

Some temperaments seem always "undecided." They want to act on your faith, and perhaps will blame you for the failure which follows this attitude. It is a good thing to help communion with God, not to speak of this action as an isolated "something." The right thing done in the wrong way will not be glorifying God throughout. Borrowed faith hesitates. Strikingly, those who are "weak" and "easily led" are often "obstinate" on many points. They will trust you implicitly as to certain details, but be fixed on some other deed, which neutralizes all.

What a need we have for conformity to the mind of God, for communion with Him, for walking in the Holy Spirit, for delight in His will, for spiritual firmness of character, for all-round godliness, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, when we have pleased the Lord most, we feel our unworthiness, and would confess our sin, ever thankful for the precious blood.

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"WE ALL... WERE BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH, EVEN AS OTHERS. BUT GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS, HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST."—Eph. ii. 3-5.

Words of Introduction.

THE utter sinfulness of man is a solemn background for the display of absolute grace. When, in mercy, we see something of mercy, how can we withhold obedience, gratitude, and worship? A knowledge of facts is not sufficient: we would desire a knowledge of a Person, and that wondrous Person the Lord of Glory, Who bore the sins of undeserving ones that they might wear His robe, and share His glory. Truth in right proportion is a great power, or (shall we rather say?) truth applied by the Holy Spirit! Some urge "deeds" not "creeds," as though believing a lie did not matter. Others make an apparent acceptance of "orthodoxy" a basis of gathering, but the Holy Spirit has shown a stress on that which is deeper, discipleship (Matt. xxviii. 19, Acts ix. 26). Indeed all truth is practical (John viii. 32, read with 34 and then with 36: Christ is the Truth: we think of His emphasis, "Me and My words"). In like manner, obedience is a key to Scripture and leads to true knowledge (Prov. i. 7, John vii. 17). Real godliness, and a dread of dishonouring the Lord will prevent many, many misunderstandings and perversions of His will. Why is it we learn so slowly? Is it because we are not teachable? Is it not because we understand much truth as a book-student of a foreign language? If we are put among those

speaking it, we feel out of place.* Oh that there may be a clear perception of God's purpose, and God's doctrine, and God's appointments!

Some Aspects of Blessing and Responsibility set forth by Names Given by God unto His People.

MANY are the gracious and wondrous and solemnizing descriptions which God gives of Himself. We know how the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh said "I am the Door of the sheep," "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life," "I am the True Vine," and other similarly precious words, and why? To reveal, by such pictorial language, the fulness of His love to His own, and the way in which our enjoyment of physical mercies would suggest that which is far more important. If the body needs nourishment, the believer needs spiritual food that the new creation may be manifest, and Christ is, indeed, the Bread of Life, a continual supply for those who are blood-bought.

And many are the names given to the redeemed. For example, they are called "saints" (Rom. i. 7). Nor is this beginning to an epistle unusual (1 Cor. i. 2, 2 Cor. i. 1, Eph. i. 1, Phil. i. 1, Col. i. 2). The word is *exactly* the same as that rendered "holy" (see e.g. Eph. i. 4), and in 1 Cor. i. 2 one of its precious aspects is more fully seen, "to them that are sanctified," i.e. who have been sanctified, and set apart, and thus brought into the place of purged worshippers. Yes, the word "saint" reminds us of the tabernacle, and also emphasizes the precious, present work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, in some passages, Eph. i. 18, Col. i. 12, we could render "in the most holy place;" e.g. "fellow citizens of the most holy place" (Eph. ii. 19). The gold-covered boards of the tabernacle pictured those who, resting on Christ's redemptive work (the silver sockets), are standing up, and bound together by bars of wondrous love and wisdom, that He may be exalted. The worship of God is far more important than we realize, and the privileges which we have toward Him are often, yea always, undervalued (cf. Ezek. xlv. 15, 16). It will be observed that this word is divinely used in the plural in this context,† to set forth the uniting of believers,‡

* This parallel is deeply important. A native, brought up in an educated sphere, is grammatical "naturally"; a book scholar thinks out his grammar, and then expresses himself awkwardly. Some dear children of God learn the will of God, in measure, as natives; others as it were, from a dictionary. Natives, however, often fail to see the beauty of their language, and sometimes, by moving in a wrong sphere, crystallize some serious mistakes. They copy others. This also may be applied. Can we not combine the two methods in our spiritual experience? Let us never forget the Bible is more than an encyclopædia (Jer. xv. 16), and also that we should seek appointed Christian fellowship, nought else.

† Phil. iv. 21 links with "every": individual responsibility to be "saintly" is seen.

‡ Contrast the sad "canonizing" of men by men: a caste of "saints" as of "priests" (so different from 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9), and observe the sinful, unappointed use of a title "saint."

and the hindrances which result from man-employed "individuality." Fellowship is very precious: oh that we may enjoy this more, for the Lord's sake. The whole life should be "as becometh saints" (Eph. v. 3), and thus will there be praise unto our God, and an anticipation of "that day."

But is there not some further instruction in the omission of this name in Timothy and Titus, except in 1 Tim. v. 10? I am thankful for this precious "except." Saints are still saints, but *relative* emphasis is God-glorifying, and in days of evident weakness we are encouraged to lay stress on certain words, which rather remind of the hindrances to manifest unity by urging *personal* obedience. Thus will the Lord's will be more loved and followed. How solemn it is to be His!

We would next approach the word "brethren." This brings out the "family," rather than the tabernacle or temple. It is delightful to see how many composite unities are caused to contribute to the unveiling of the privileges associated with the Lord's people. So we read of the "body" and the "bride." The word "brethren" is often singular, e.g., "Sosthenes the brother," "Timothy the brother." Yet the plural is very common, indeed it is the usual mode of address. We do not find such expressions as "saints" thus set in front of us. The Lord Jesus said "My friends," but the apostles usually put the exhortation thus: "Brethren," or "My brethren."* It is a wondrous privilege to know something of what this means, "for both He That sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11). The aspect of the family emphasizes the new birth, an unchangeable relationship, nearness to the Father, *humble* obedience, and love to "one another." All grumbling is out of place.

The name "Christian" is rare. In Acts xi. 26 it is evidently given by God ("called," same word as Heb. xi. 8), but from Acts xxvi. 28 and 1 Pet. iv. 16 we see how quickly men used His term in contempt. It was graciously appropriate that believers in a Gentile town, and among whom were many Gentiles as to the flesh, should thus be described first. Human wisdom would have suggested Jerusalem before Antioch.

It is sad to find that Satan, who has perverted the very breaking of bread which indicated unity, (to shut out those who cannot alter Christ's "this" respecting unleavened symbols), has also turned the names above mentioned to a sectarian usage, and even the simple term "disciples." But is this surprising? The very Name of Christ was thus misapplied in Corinth (1 Cor. i. 12). We cannot on this account cease to speak of Him. Nor can we omit the names of those who are in Christ Jesus, though we should be prayerfully concerned lest we misuse them. It is refreshing, however, to find that the word "believers" has not been so far diverted from its appointed force. Its frequency is in the Epistles which deal with weakness, though its use in connection with individual

* 1 John ii. 1, 18, &c., should be noticed: also the word "beloved."

faithfulness is found earlier, and we would not overlook Acts x. 45, xvi. 1, 15, 2 Cor. vi. 15. The expression "the faithful" has evidently been caused hereby. The references in 1 Thess. iii. 11, iv. 3, 10, 12, v. 16, vi. 2, 2 Tim. ii. 2, Tit. i. 6 will help. In some of these verses it seems to emphasize the two thoughts (1) believing :—active, (2) trustworthy, *i.e.* believed, faithful,—passive. The usage in Persia for "privy councillor" is suggestive: it represents the Hebrew *neeman*, from *amen* (Ps. ci. 6). Has not God marked out that His children should be concerned as to the link of faith and obedience, and that, in days when privileges have been misused, and names of dignity perverted to excuse carelessness, they should be devotedly concerned to show that by their *fruits* the trees of God's planting are known! Bare profession is vain. It is a wondrous blessing to be "realities," because Christ is a reality to us.

Thus we have sought to show something of the mercy of God, and of His encouragements, set forth in the very names which He has employed. It is for us to rejoice in these, and to seek to use them in godly proportion and with godly thoughtfulness. I do not mean we should be confined to the words above, when there are others, and many indeed, in Scripture. We have only in passing referred to "children of God," nor have we written on "chosen," or "elect" (Col. iii. 12), "called" (1 Cor. i. 24), "saved" (1 Cor. i. 18, Acts ii. 47, 2 Cor. ii. 15), and "Christ's" (Gal. iii. 29). Romans xvi. employs some of the terms already pondered, and others, very beautifully. ALL are precious and powerful, because God has uttered them, and a verse like 1 Pet. ii. 9 has a depth and fulness which invites our prayerful attention. Oh that, in the Holy Spirit, we may seek to use knowledge aright (Prov. xv. 2) and thus to honour our gracious Heavenly Father.

A Plea for Christian Stamina.

IT is so enjoyable to have a fresh opportunity for "service." The door has opened, and happily the work has started. But there is not the immediate success one desires, and after a few weeks "the regularity of disappointing details" would seem to weary. It is in such a case that godly stamina is needed. Doubtless much work is undertaken which is not the Lord's work, though the "intention" is His glory. Alas, we frequently choose and arrange for ourselves, and God is dishonoured thereby. If only we waited for His counsel, we should perceive, and do, His holy will. But even when the work is His, we cannot assume that, on this account, we shall naturally press forward. Satan will seek to weary us, and there will be a hesitating, a drooping, a giving way. And the very fact that the labour belongs to the Lord makes yet more evident how serious this is.

But we would not limit our thoughts to activity before the unsaved. We take in hand (or, shall I not say, in heart?), a little definite Bible study and learning. We desire to read through all

the book which our Father has graciously given, and, possibly, to learn one of the gospels. After three months, "other things" make a great effort to enter, and the physical problems which we encounter in this body of humiliation are made an argument for slowing down. How many things we have started, and then put aside. But has God been well pleased, and have our Christian characters been helped thereby? Oh that we may be exercised before the Lord.

There is the same danger with respect to prayer. Enthusiasm wanes: zeal is slackened: we need Christian perseverance: we should press toward the mark. Fleshly zeal may vary considerably, but the path of the Lord's people should be shining more and more unto the perfect day. May this be our privilege, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus will our gracious God be exalted, and our "characters" be built up to be really useful to others for Christ's sake.

"Into Repentance."

IN six distinct passages the Holy Spirit uses the word "into" *before* repentance :—Matt. iii. 11; Luke v. 32; Rom. ii. 4; 2 Cor. vii. 9; Heb. vi. 6; 2 Pet. iii. 9. In Romans we have the direction of the merciful and long continued forbearance of God. Yet man is still not "knowing" and so resents this leading. Hence the gracious and mighty "drawing" of John vi. 44, and the "compelling" of Luke xiv. 23, shine out. Happy are those who know such omnipotent love. Luke v. 32 tells of a calling "into repentance," and baptism (which was a living act of those who set forth death and resurrection in type), was likewise "into repentance," and thus a stepping stone to spiritual fruit (Matt. iii. 8). 2 Cor. vii. 9, and 2 Pet. iii. 9 make another pair, and encourage *believers* to a godly repentance from all that grieves their gracious God. Heb. vi. 6 shows the impossibility of renewing "into repentance" those who remain in a *state* of sin. Contrasted with this aspect of *continuance* in sin, we should notice Rom. vi. 1, and 1 John ii. 1, "If any one have sinned, we have an Advocate" (lit.).

It is interesting, and *solemnizing beyond merely natural interest*, to see the "into's" following the word "repentance." In Acts xi. 18 we have "into life," a precious enjoyment perpetually; in Acts xx. 21, "into God," *i.e.* with a view to God, and resting in Him and His love; in 2 Cor. vii. 10 "into salvation," and in 2 Tim. ii. 25 "into a fixed knowledge," for how much of our ignorance is directly connected with a lack of humility and spiritual repentance. Excused sin means much failure. Oh for victory in the power of the Holy Spirit, and a fuller sense of cleansing by the blood of Christ.

[This subject suggests a parallel study: "Into forgiveness," or "remission," and this expression occurs 4 times. Baptism and the Lord's supper are shown as wondrous symbols with a view to this enjoyment which is secured by that atonement which they symbolise, Mark i. 4, Luke iii. 3, Acts ii. 38, Matt. xxvi. 28. The word "forgiveness" comes only six times without the word "sins" immediately following, and in these passages also we find the same thought. What a wondrous stress on God's free grace and the complete removal of sins, *as far as the east is from the west*].

"I will ordain a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place."—1 Chron. xvii. 9.

GOD'S grace shines clearly throughout Scripture. His dealings with Israel occupy a large portion, and again and again remind us that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy (for they were the fewest of all people, and *often* provoked Him), and that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," without any change (Rom. xi. 29). Such thoughts are very precious when, conscious of our unworthiness, and hating our sin, we look to Him for eternal preservation amid all the evil surroundings of this present age. He will *not* forsake the work of His own hands!

Yes, the people whom God loved (Mal. i. 2), the land on which His eyes were (Deut. xi. 12), the place that He chose (Deut. xvi. 6) to be His "city" (2 Chron. vi. 34)—these are continually before us in the precious Scriptures (note Isa. xlix. 16), and so the encouraging message to David in 2 Sam. vii. and 1 Chron. xvii. may ever bring heart-comfort to those who are in Christ Jesus. There are many beautiful *parallels* for a heavenly people, who know the exceeding preciousness of this promise "I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2), and who, like the pilgrim-patriarchs, "seek a country—a better, that is an heavenly" (Heb. xi. 14-16) and who look for "the city which hath the foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10).

But even now God is graciously arranging for us, and we want His arranging—we have no right or spiritual desire to choose for ourselves, and every wrong and unspiritual wish should be prayerfully checked. "He shall choose our inheritance for us." And He ordains "places" now (1 Tim. ii. 8, *et.*), and approves of a wondrous planting (1 Cor. iii. 6-9), that His people may have true spiritual rest and bring forth fruit unto His glory (John xv. 16). Alas, Israel was an empty vine (Hos. x. 1), but this is no reason why we should be. "Placing" and "planting": how delightful are these thoughts! Are we *where* God has approvingly placed us? Are our assembly arrangements in holy accord with His revealed will? Can we say that we have sought unhesitatingly to know His mind? As we look forward to the time when the words of this verse will come true for re-instated Israel, let us not forget to cry unto God that we, even to-day, may experience His gracious undertaking and controlling.

The *order* in Scripture is always inspired. "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes" (Ps. cxix. 135), *cf.* "Me and My Words." As we know the Lord, we can appreciate His Will. How precious to learn His statutes when *first* brought into the light of His countenance. No *dulness* is there. See Ps. xxxvi. 9.

"While I live I will praise the Lord."

Ps. cxlvi. 2.

"Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee." Ps. cxix. 175.

"The dead praise not the Lord." Ps. cxv. 17.

"The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." Isa. xxxviii. 19.

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." Ps. cl. 6.

THESE precious words bring before us the privilege which the psalmist realized of using up the moments for God. Present life on this earth is so quickly passing away. Doubtless, the lack of knowledge as to "life and incorruption" (2 Tim. i. 10) in the dispensation before Christ came, is set forth by some of the language, though one of the most remarkable evidences of inspiration is the way in which saints with limited knowledge were consistently kept from contradicting subsequently revealed portions of truth. And surely the words were meant by the Holy Spirit to go further than the stress on daily intensity, and to bring before us that those who are dead in sins *cannot* please God (Rom. viii. 8) or render acceptable praise. But if we are alive from the dead, if our souls have been brought out of prison (Isa. xlii. 7, Ps. cxlii. 7), it must surely be our delight to praise Him Who has delivered us, with the living powers which He has graciously given. Yes, dear friends, if we are children of God we have the opportunity, and enabling, and precious responsibility to praise Him at all times. As we shall never perish we can joyfully enter into the wondrous words, "We will bless the Lord from this time forth, and for evermore" (Ps. cxv. 18).

"Salvation is of the Lord." When Jonah triumphantly said these words of confidence, the Lord applied His gracious blessing wondrously. The prepared fish was *subject* to Him, and He spake unto it. (There is a measure of definite contrast with Jonah, who, when the Lord first spoke to him, fled. Even a fish can humble us!) Have we realized that "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord" (Ps. iii. 8), and are we willing to trust Him beyond, and, if need be, against circumstances and appearances? Why should we not?

Shut In With God.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father, Which is in secret, and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."—Matt. vi. 6.

Shut in with God, from anxious care set free,
The door is closed, no mortal eye can see,
No one can hear but God, Who dwells on high,
He knows our heart, and hears our humble cry.
Shut in with God, within the secret place,
Where we can meet, and speak to Him by grace,
We wait on Him, for God Himself is there,
To hear—and answer—earnest, fervent prayer.
Shut in with God, Who, through His Word, will speak
To sinners saved by grace, though frail and weak :
There by the Blood, which speaks of sins forgiven,
Shut in with God, a foretaste this of heaven.
The world outside, with all its rush and din,
Cannot disturb while thus with God shut in !
With Him may we delight oft-times to be,
That we His Word may daily clearer see,
That we may find, as there we humbly plead,
Mercy and grace to help in time of need.
Shut in with God, that He may work and mould,
That we may there His majesty behold,
His glory see, and, trembling, stand in awe,
While we draw near, and Him alone adore.
Shut in with God, what holy joy is this,
To be alone with Him is heavenly bliss !—
To feel His touch, His gracious voice to hear—
Our hearts rejoice with trembling awe and fear.
Shut in with God, may we thus often be,
That we may hear His voice, His working see,
And be refreshed as we before Him wait,
Our glorious Lord adore, so high and great.
Shut in with God, for other saints to pray,
For Israel now in darkness, far away,
For Gentiles in their sins, so hard and dead,
And for the Coming of our Lord and Head.
Shut in with God, that for the children too
We now should pray, that God, for them would do
His mighty work of saving them by grace,
That they may now be saved, and run faith's race.
Shut in with God, His precepts to obey,
And be rewarded in that Coming Day,
When Christ shall for His ransomed ones appear !—
May we, by grace, meet Him, with joy stand near.
Shut in with God, to listen to His voice,
That in His Presence we may now rejoice.
As sinners saved, through Christ's own precious blood,
May we henceforth be oft shut in with God.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"SHEW THE HOUSE . . . THAT THEY MAY BE ASHAMED . . . AND IF THEY BE ASHAMED, SHEW THEM THE FORM OF THE HOUSE . . . AND WRITE IT IN THEIR SIGHT THAT THEY MAY KEEP THE WHOLE FORM THEREOF, . . . THIS IS THE LAW OF THE HOUSE; UPON THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, THE WHOLE LIMIT THEREOF ROUND ABOUT SHALL BE MOST HOLY. BEHOLD, THIS IS THE LAW OF THE HOUSE."—Ezek. xliii. 10-12.

Words of Introduction.

"EVERY Word of God is pure," and it is well to compare Scripture with Scripture. His wondrous arrangements for Israel's future temple (cf. Zech. vi. 13) reveal much of His glorious character and will for His people. God always emphasizes a house (1 Pet. ii. 5), and the word "holy" is ever prominent where the Lord is. It is so important to keep, humbly and spiritually, to His exact arrangements in His house (cf. 1 Tim. iii. 15). Human ideas must be set aside, His will must never be set aside. The word rendered "stewardship," in Luke xvi. 2-4, is translated "dispensation" in 1 Cor. ix. 17, Eph. i. 10, iii. 2, Col. i. 25, and is composed of two parts—"house" and "law" (cf. Ezek. xliii. 12). In Eph. ii. 19—iii. 2, the Holy Spirit uses seven distinct words from the root "house," and lays stress on the godly fellowship of redeemed ones in godly harmony and order. The law of Christ is emphasized in Gal. vi. 2. To help believers in the knowledge of His will, and in devoted obedience, is this messenger of truth sent forth, thankfully and humbly and expectantly, that He may be glorified.

The Absolute Accuracy of Scripture Illustrated by Little Things.

THOSE who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and enjoyed the privilege of feeding upon His words of truth, are not surprised at tokens of wondrous control throughout the Book which our Heavenly Father has deigned to give to His children. Frequently a difficulty "seems" to arise, and then *closer* prayerful study shows that this is only a test for faith, and that a fulness of blessing is wrapped up within. From John xx. 19, 24, 26, we learn that Thomas did not see his risen Lord till a week after. How then can we account for Luke xxiv. 33? Matt. xxviii. 16 is evidently later, but Mark xvi. 14 apparently refers to the same first visit to the gathered disciples on the Lord's Day evening. Shall we infer that the term "eleven" is used *vaguely* as a description? English parallels may be found, as we speak of four "Ridings" or "Thirthings" in Yorkshire, and many "quarters" in a city. But the Holy Spirit is wise and accurate beyond ordinary speaking. Words "of earth" are employed, but "purified seven times," and there is no dross. A little prayerful pondering of Gen. xii. 8 with xxviii. 19 will clear away part of the problem. We rightly speak of persons and places by the names or titles afterwards given to them. Thus Noah preached to those who were spirits in prison *at the time when Peter wrote*. If we carefully read all Scriptures we shall be held back from much confusion. For example, Acts vii. 16 does not declare that Jacob was buried in Shechem. He and his twelve sons died, and "they (the sons) were carried over into Sychem." Again, Matt. xxviii. 17 does not demand the thought that the eleven doubted again. The "some" were a further portion of the company, possibly of the "above five hundred brethren." This thought is a definite help to us. Let us emphasize Luke xxiv. 33, "And them that were with them."* Others were present as well as the apostles: was it not likely that one who could be described according to Acts i. 22 was there? If so, Matthias, who was "numbered with the eleven apostles," might well be included in the counting with them, in anticipation of this arrangement. But observe the accuracy of the Holy Spirit. We do not read, "the eleven apostles." Nor is this description added in Acts ii. 14. Hence, though "numbered" with them, he was not one of the "twelve apostles of the Lamb"† of whom Rev. xxi. 14 speaks. The contrast between the wording of Acts i. 26 and ii. 14 is *very* remarkable. And it is important to see that Matthias is not included in Matt. xxviii. 16, because the command was not given to him. Surely the omissions of Scripture bear witness to its heavenly authorship, and awaken the praise of

* This is important in view of verse 34. Mark xvi. 14, and Luke xxiv. 41, seem to shew the unbelief of most of the especially privileged disciples. "Others" bore the witness that the Lord was risen indeed. This is humiliating, but humbly recorded to God's glory.

† A leaflet entitled "The Other Apostle" will be gladly sent.

those who are a new creation in Christ Jesus; praise which, in the Holy Spirit's power, may well humble us, and make us ashamed of our slowness to learn, and our unwillingness to "rest" in the Lord amid difficulties, whether they be doctrinal or practical.

Worry.

ONE word of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to lay low all human ideas. The sanction of great names is vain, if God has spoken otherwise. And to His people He has prohibited "worry" as definitely as "stealing." "Be anxious for nothing" is a Divine command, and we should lovingly obey.

Moreover, our loving Heavenly Father has been pleased to enforce His words by wondrous reasons: He is living, He is near, and unbelief is both unwise and rebellious. God is worthy of all trust, and self is unworthy of any trust. *Why* should we worry? Isaiah li. 12, 13, exposes the foolishness of doubting God. The growth and effects of worry are very serious. Through anxious care we are hindered from meditation on the Lord; nothing stands in the way of quiet contemplation of His glory, and His will, so definitely as "worry." Again, it obscures our view of the precious merits of the Lord Jesus, and we undervalue His finished work,—undervaluing, at the same time, the present power of the Holy Spirit.

Again, almost *every* detail of daily life is quite hindered by "worry." Do we eat and drink to God's glory? This is our privilege! Worry takes hold of the mind, and hinders the very digestion of our simple food, so that we are unfitted for many other things unto the Lord. By worry we become late, and then yet more excited, and the resultant tendency is impatience. Worry dishonours the Name of the Lord in manifold effects.

Hence, our physical and mental and spiritual powers, which we should present unto Him, are all weakened, and our influence for Him is lost. It may be that we flatter ourselves our "circumstances are very trying," and we draw "inferences" from the carelessness of another who professes faith in the Lord, and the difficulties into which he runs. *But the sins of another do not excuse or modify our sins.* Worry cruelly robs us of blessing, and makes a barrier where God has broken down the middle wall of partition. Shall we dare to tolerate this form of sin? Faith is beautifully "restful," but it is *not* slothful: it *works* by love; to faith God is all in all. To worry and anxiety, God is second, and thus set aside, and His Name is dishonoured. Be afraid of the *beginnings* of worry. This *contagious* disease spreads. How real is the need for godly firmness, that we may not *yield* to changeable feelings, but, enabled by the Holy Spirit, to our unchanging Lord.

A Powerful Hindrance or a Powerful Help to Spiritual Prayer.

Part 1.—Thoughts on Condition and Attitude.

GOD looketh at the heart. But it would be wrong for us to use this fact as any excuse for outward failure, or bodily dilatoriness. *Would not the heart be wrong that could so act?* 1 Cor. vi. 20 is decisive. Moreover, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water": observe the twofold purification (Heb. x. 22, cf. 2 Cor. vii. 1). Further, if a child of God should dare to say, "The love of the Lord is more important than obedience to the Lord," would he not ignore the fact that *true love is seen in obedience*? Adam's lack of love to God, and unbalanced love for Eve, brought utter confusion. *The eating of the fruit was only "apparently" small, it was an indication of the state of heart.* Disobedience now may be wilful or unwitting, or partly confused and half-conscious. *But sins of ignorance merit death:* "though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. v. 17). Precious indeed are the absolute merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We all find a need for *grace* (if so be we have been brought to Him), that our prayer may be intense. The Lord Jesus said, "If ye have faith *and doubt not*" (Matt. xxi. 21), and the word used implies a drawing apart: there must be a holy contrast with a divided soul (Jas. i. 6-8). Again, we read how He illustrated intensity—"Being in a conflict He prayed more earnestly" (Luke xxii. 44). It is well to imitate Him. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers" (Col. iv. 12, note margin, cf. i. 29, ii. 1). "Take unto you *the whole armour* of God . . . praying *always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and *watching* thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 13, 18). The word "watching" denotes *sleeplessness* and "perseverance," intensity of *might toward* our gracious God (see use of verb in Rom. xii. 12, xv. 6, Col. iv. 2). The Divinely appointed *weapons* are a powerful help, for without them Satan will weaken our prayerfulness, and quite hinder us in our spiritual activities before God. The object of the devil is to cut off our communication with God: hence his evil spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12). Every lack of godliness (Eph. vi. 14), of alacrity (15), of faith (16), of right application of the words of truth (17), must be a powerful hindrance. We have a remarkable illustration in Neh. vi. 9: "They all made us *afraid*, saying, Their hands shall be weakened" (observe, too, the solemn witness of verses 17 and 18). Nehemiah would not yield (13).

1 Tim. ii. 8 solemnly confirms this thought: it shows that *holy hands* will be honoured by the Lord. The "lifting-up" betokens intensity, but unless there is the background of holiness, earnest "zeal" is vain. Moreover, the verse suggests that even one

"thought" of wrath may hinder the whole prayer. "Unkindness" is thus set aside, *but not only so*, we must fear an undispensational departure from absolute GRACE. "Grace" has been manifested to us, and "grace" would we ever manifest. We are *not* executors of the Lord's vengeance: He *will* repay. If any believer does, or has, or feels "wrath," he is hindering his own prayers, and those of his brethren too. This wondrous message seems the more remarkable because *Moses*, in contrast, lifted up hands in connexion with appointed wrath on sinful Amalek, and the Holy Spirit would prevent our misuse of Ex. xvii. Our parallel with that chapter is seen in Eph. vi. 10-13. Our wrestling is against spiritual wickedness. The Scripture adds, in 1 Tim. ii. 8, "Without doubting." Again, we have the Lord's witness already *felt*, I hope, in our hearts, against that unbelief which *robs* us of so much in prayer. God cannot *honour* unbelief. He is ready to bestow: faith must be ready to receive. If we open our mouths *wide*, He will not fail to fill. In a sad mistake we often persist: we wonder why the Lord does not bless in a *certain* way, and all the while we have no heart-preparation to receive His blessing. We are largely "filled" with "other things" (Mark iv. 19). Oh for a *readiness* toward Him.

And now, returning to our first paragraph, we realize that the lack of *bodily* reverence may be Satan's instrument to "hinder." We have pondered 1 Tim. ii. 8 with respect to holiness. May it not be that we shall be kept on the alert by God's working *through* the physical uplifting of the hands? The *form* without the reality is vain; but the reality, omitting the "form," may be weakened if God has appointed the bodily action. So is it with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which have a true value to an obedient disciple, though one who is not a disciple should be warned away from a counterfeit, and a wandering believer should be reminded of the danger of eating and drinking judgment to himself. The principle of Matt. xxiii. 23 is throughout all dispensations: we are not to leave out the Lord's appointments which *sometimes* "seem" as trivial. True reverence does not dare to criticize Him.

Obtainable, with Part II. (on are markedly overlooked aspect of the prayerfulness of believing sisters), as a leaflet. Readers are earnestly asked to write for copies, and ponder a most solemn subject, if made willing to obey the Lord at all costs.

Pictures of Christ.

IT is a common mistake to obtain professed representations of the Lord of glory, and we would earnestly protest against it. The following thoughts may be helpful to God's dear people:—

1. We do not know His exact form in the days of His flesh, and guessing is *untruthful*.
2. Such passages as Isa. lii. 14, liii. 2, evidently set forth something beyond the attempt of a human artist (who himself may be an unsaved man, and thus be *doubly* unfit).
3. Children (and others) draw their inferences from the assumed likeness, and may be seriously misled.

4. Does not the tendency to disobey 2 Cor. v. 16 receive an impetus by this speculating? Do we not need to emphasize a spiritual relation to, and knowledge of, Him?

5. God the Holy Spirit has afforded many "types" of the Lord Jesus,—they are the true pictures,—but nothing in Scripture encourages any other representation. Heathen statuary of persons and pictorial art find no parallel there, and the contrast with such arrangements for the present dispensation are very evident.

6. The danger of semi-worshipping pictures and images is more real than we conceive, and we have no warrant to put temptation in the way of others. (Note with fourth suggestion above, and remember the precious words, "We walk by faith, not by sight").

7. The related encouragement to other forms of "art," and worldly settling down with a worldly house and decorated walls, like to those of unsaved homes, is not a small matter.

Will not children of God, realizing the need for godly care, avoid pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ henceforth? And may a word be added as to care regarding the sad inclusion of these in our Bibles, as well as the addition of "Teachers' Helps," which sometimes contain sinful and deadly "hindrances," since attacking God's own hand in Scripture!

YOMA.*

How much we hear as to "The DAY of Atonement," but, may I ask, "What about the Atonement itself?" Strangely, the Talmud section is named "THE DAY," and the very word "atonement" seems dropped. Is it possible that some are trusting to "THE DAY," and expecting "THE DAY" will cover their sins? But does Scripture warrant this? On the contrary, the word "Day" is left out of Lev. xvi. till after the full arrangements, and even the date is not mentioned till the end (verse 29). The important lesson seems to be, "Have you a DAY of Atonement or a WAY of Atonement?" Verse 3 is definite. "Thus shall Aaron come": the way of atonement is emphasized. The word "blood" is mentioned nine times—three occurrences in one verse. Do we not read sixteen times of "making an atonement" (Heb.), and is not the word "mercy-seat," seven times, from the same Hebrew root? Moreover, we read of the "sin offering," and of killing, but the word

*"YOMA," meaning "The Day," is the Aramaic title of Talmudic Section. These two meditations, circulated prayerfully among Israel at the time of their great fast, may deepen loving interest of some readers, and also awaken more praise for the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

"DAY" is only once. This striking contrast is very precious. Do not trust to a "Day." You need a "Way." God's way of Atonement is by the Blood of Another, and there is still a Way into His presence by the Sacrifice which He has provided. That Sacrifice is the spotless Person of Whom Isaiah liii. speaks, the Holy Messiah of God, and in Him we rejoice, of Him we speak!

THE MERCY SEAT.

HAVE you a heavenly mercy seat? Do you know the meaning of the term? It is from the same word as "Atonement," and signifies "a covering." The mercy seat was a *golden* slab upon the ark, and the blood of an *accepted* sacrifice was sprinkled upon it. Twice Israel were face to face with the ten commandments of the covenant. On the first occasion, Moses showed, in solemn type, that they had broken God's law, and *the people were plagued for their sin*. There was DEATH. When the ark of the Lord was brought back from the Philistines: "He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, *because they had looked into the ark of the Lord*" (1 Sam. vi. 19). These are the two instances. It is a *great* mistake to say that the rewritten tables of stone were given to Israel in Exodus xxxiv. *They were put in the ark to KEEP them: Israel did not see them*. To face the law is to face death! The mercy seat, called, as we have seen, "the place of atonement," or "that which is linked with atonement," was the *necessary* covering! Have you an atonement *between* you and God's HOLY LAW? *The absence of the mercy seat is Israel's ruin*. Your "Synagogue-ark" has *no* mercy seat! God waits still in mercy, but if *your heart is doing before Him* what your hand does, when you bring the scroll out of the ark to look upon it, your heart is facing His covenant, *without a mercy seat*. This is deadly pride! To face the law is to face death! The sin of the men of Beth-shemesh is yours. But the mercy seat, which you have left out, pictures God's own Messiah. In Him *alone* is there safety! Oh that some who read these lines might, with us, be brought to KNOW HIM!

"And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." Jos. ix. 14.

"They waited not for His counsel."
Ps. cvi. 13.

"If they had stood in My counsel."
Jer. xxiii. 22.

"His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor." Isa. ix. 6.

IT is not an "accident" that verses seem to come with power to the heart, and to awaken a response. God applies His own truth. It is in this that the leading of the Holy Spirit is especially manifested. So with these verses this morning. How wondrous that God should design to give us counsel, and thus enable us to know and do *His* will. Why are we so impatient, so hasty, so unwilling to defer our actions till we know His mind and purpose? It is so easy to say, with Saul, "Withdraw Thine hand," and so "natural" to think we know. But how unwise is such an attitude. Often, indeed, we manifestly lose time by our undue speed, and must undo and put right where we have acted on our own initiative. But *the time* the Lord gave us is gone for ever, and its opportunities are passed for ever, and frequently we find a "howbeit" to forgiven sin. A few words of sinful impatience, and we may, like Moses, lose an object on which, for God's glory, our heart has been set for years. As, in the physical sphere, a moment's wound may incapacitate for life, so in the spiritual, a moment's failure may bring long-felt results. Why not *wait* for God's counsel? Why not be still that He may mould, direct and control? We are not in charge of arrangements: we are "only" the Lord's *servants*. A precious "only"; our humility is our honour; our dependence on Him is our dignity; our privilege of being instructed is our exaltation. Let us ask God about everything (Phil. iv. 6). Let us, therefore, be *in a condition* to ask Him, and to know His answer; for if we are out of harmony with His will we may mistake some other voice for His, and think we are following Him when we are following Satan's flattery of our own inclinations. Let us realize that God will instruct (Ps. xxxii. 8), but 'tis the meek He will guide in judgment, and the meek He will teach His way (Ps. xxv. 9). Let us be in a condition and expect this, and bring everything to Him, and refrain from half making-up our minds *first*. So will our life be blessed and spiritual; so shall we exalt His Name, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and instead of merely "imagining" we know best, or assuming that we are led by the Holy Spirit, we shall have a quiet communion, and a simple, definite, trustful, obedient life in harmony with His realized word.

Believers' Meeting Rooms:—61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E. 7. 43a, The Broadway, Walham Green, S.W. 6. "Rosemond," Bede Burn Road, Jarrow-on-Tyne.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us" Isa. 63. 7.

A Word of Introduction.

MAY repeated thoughts still have a spiritual forcefulness! The hurrying on of time is always before us. Oh to use each moment for the LORD. These pages are sent forth, issue by issue, with gratitude to GOD, and with a desire that He may use to help His blood-bought people in the fuller knowledge of Himself. It is a privilege to be "in CHRIST JESUS," and if we are His, we should delight to make known His will, first delighting ourselves to be in that precious environment. The natural man does not understand this. He receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD (1 Cor. 2. 14), but His children should welcome His guidance, even when it alters their actions, their position, and their outward comforts. If any one is "in CHRIST there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17). It is because of this we are enabled to send forth these pages. The standpoint of the LORD JESUS we would humbly set forth, as evidenced in His unpopular, but precious commands, that He may be exalted, as we watch and pray for His coming (Rev. 22. 20).

Christ's OBJECT Set Forth in John 4. 34.

THE LORD JESUS gladly illustrated love to the lost amid physical weariness (John 4. 6). It is so easy to be impatient when tired. But He was sinless in action, word, desire and thought. Thus He was able to take our guilt, and in Him we have a spotless righteousness, yea, we are become the righteousness of GOD. "We"

i.e. all who have passed out of death into life, because the Living One died, bearing their judgment,—all who are "a new creation" in CHRIST JESUS,—but none others! There is no brotherhood of believers and the world. He showed such grace in His utterances (Ps. 45. 2). When He rebuked His disciples, He did not wrongly complain. When He answered questions, He included further instruction. How precious are *all* His words about food, in John 4.

The disciples' interest in Him is refreshing, but they needed fuller knowledge of His character (verse 32). They were not able to understand many things. Their question was "one to another" *cf.* 16. 17-19). And He gave the beautiful reply, "My meat is *that I may do the will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work.*" The usual rendering misses part of the force. How many quote John 17. 3 as if it said "This is Life eternal TO know Thee." But life is granted *with a view* to spiritual knowledge. If we believe, it is because we have been begotten (1 John 5. 1). If we love, it is because GOD has first loved. If we know, it is because we have received life. Boasting is shut out. His PURPOSE OF LOVE stands out.

So is it here. Undoubtedly spiritual activities are food. And we do well to remember this, But another thought is involved. The LORD JESUS emphasizes A PURPOSE, A PLAN, AN OBJECT. His aim in life was the FATHER'S will. He was ever about, or rather in, His FATHER'S business. He did ever those things that pleased the FATHER. Mark the precious testimony of Matt. 3. 17 and 17. 5.

So the words here contain the thought:—"Food is not for merely earthly needs, it is right to partake thereof, that one may use the strength unto GOD." Thus the passage reminds of Zech. 7. 6, where italics should be omitted. "When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat and drink?" In other words, you did a physical action, there was nothing more, no spiritual object. And we recollect the precious command of 1 Cor. 10. 31, addressed to the people of the LORD, who would imitate Him as 11. 1 quickly shews:—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD." Ah, beloved friends, we need to learn this lesson in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

"Paul admonished, and said unto them, *Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage.*"

"Paul . . said, *Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss*" Acts 27. 9, 10, 21.

THE shipwreck of Acts 27 is remarkably brought before us by the HOLY SPIRIT. A true narrative, it emphasizes what GOD'S servant passed through. Secondly, it affords a wondrous picture of salvation in and with CHRIST. All *with* Paul were given him (24),

and we think of all *with* Noah in the ark (Gen. 7. 23). In each case we have a numbered people, and it is wondrous to see the way in which GOD secures His promise of 24, although there is the danger of 21, by the action of 32. Thus He keeps His people each day from the eternal judgment into which they would slide. The grace which began the work, guarantees the end, and provides the means. We praise GOD!

But the passage is now impressed upon me with a further thought. Ten righteous men would have been GOD'S reason for sparing Sodom. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," but "the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard" (Eccl. 9. 16). The one to whom GOD looks (Isa. 66. 2) is the very one overlooked by the world. Men are wise in their own conceits. It was "natural" for the centurion to believe the master and owner of his ship more than Paul (Acts 27. 11). But the neglect of the warning was costly. So is it to-day. Confidence in "man" and in human methods may seem reasonable. It may appear clever to boast, and humiliating to own ignorance and sin. But GOD-forgetfulness is a great murderer. Those who are trusting in their way (Hos. 10. 13) are the peril in this and all lands. If only there was a hearkening to GOD'S servants—and oh that they might give no uncertain sound—how wondrous would the consequences be. GOD speaks! "The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and (the man of) *wisdom* shall see Thy Name: hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it" (Mic. 6. 9). Yet GOD is forgotten by the majority. "Their ears are dull of hearing" (Matt. 13. 15), "their eyes they have closed" (Acts 28. 27). This is very solemn. The neglect of GOD is most dangerous. The despising of His people, who look at things from His standpoint, is full of damage. Alas, many do not like to be told this. They resent the very idea, and speak against the humble children of GOD, regarding them as worthless, whereas they, dear to Him, are more important than we can realize (Isa. 43. 3, 4). Oh how great is His love, how deep is His interest in His blood-bought people. Blessings are granted for His people's sake (Gen. 30. 27, 39. 2, 3), and while they keep their true heavenly position, and attitude, they are a benefit beyond measure! Their words of plain warning, and their earnest reminders of GOD, and His rights, cannot be ignored without the gravest danger! Oh that some would give ear, and give glory to GOD before He cause a darkness which may be felt (Jer. 13. 15, 16). He waits in forbearance: His longsuffering calls to repentance (Rom. 2: 4).

"As FREE, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the *servants* of GOD" (1 Pet. 2. 16). The twofold position is very precious: "free" yet "bound." Free from wrath. Gladly bound by the LORD'S will. May this be our experience more and more. The new nature approves of nothing else, the old nature resists and must be mortified continually.

God and Impossibilities.

PRECIOUS indeed, is the realization of the mighty power of GOD. "With GOD nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1. 37). We remember the words of the LORD JESUS, "With men this is impossible; but with GOD all things are possible." Confidence in the all-sufficiency of our glorious GOD is deeply important, and nothing can take its place. I do not mean that we should delight in this with regard to spiritual blessings alone, or with respect to the distant future. But even now, and as to the common events of daily life, GOD is Omnipotent. It is wrong for a child of GOD to take the world's standpoint in *anything*. Sometimes a believer says, "*I cannot* do this or that," when the gracious inworking of GOD would gloriously enable (Phil. 4. 13). We are sometimes so occupied with our weakness that we forget the LORD'S might. It is well to be humble, but can we call the unbelief of GOD'S victory beyond our strengthlessness "humility"; or feel we are pleasing Him when we doubt His power to deal with our lack of power? Our sins were not greater than CHRIST'S atonement! Our weakness is not mightier than His strength! The Living GOD is the Answer to all our fears and complaints. It is sad to hear those who profess to *trust* in CHRIST speaking of an illness as though it must take its course, and so forth. Cannot the LORD raise up in a day—and even in a moment? If we speak unbelievably, according to our unbelief we shall fail. GOD is worthy of all confidence: GOD is equal to every need: GOD is glorious beyond all realization. "Trust in Him at all times." "According to your faith" is a heart-searching, as well as encouraging, message.

We recollect how Moses was reproved when he pleaded, "O my LORD, I am not eloquent." "The LORD said unto him, *Who* hath made man's mouth?" It is our privilege to believe *GOD* against appearances, probabilities, and circumstances. "I am not," and "I cannot," are negatives which bring self to the front. We should avoid occupation with the thought of what we *ARE* not, and meditate on what the LORD *IS*. Yes, beloved friends, "He that cometh to GOD must believe that *HE IS*" (Heb. 11. 6). Why do we hesitate to expect miracles in tiny things? Why do we limit our gracious Heavenly FATHER? "Oh," some may reply, "the age of miracles is past." GOD is the Same, and though He may sometimes withhold the supernatural gifts which betokened the early unity of saints, though striking miracles, *before the world*, may be kept back, in *perfect* wisdom, we may be sure of this, that our glorious GOD will prove His power to deal with impossibilities of various kinds in our physical and mental powers, in our arrangements of time, in our use of money and so forth—and more and more, as He is trusted. The HOLY SPIRIT never leads to unbelief.

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Trials are not to make us worry or weary, but rather to make us wary, that He Who permits them may be exalted.

"Themselves." 2 Cor. 10. 12.

ARE you occupied with yourself, and with other people? Both "habits" are dangerous, very dangerous and so unwise. If you are a child of GOD, you have a high calling, a heavenly privilege, —you can behold your LORD with the eye of faith.

Must we not be concerned at the spiritual loss through wrong self-occupation? One man looks at himself till he is too disappointed to trust, and despondency seems to grasp him awhile. Another looks at himself till he thinks well of himself, and so talks of himself, and what he has done! It is remarkable that **PRIDE AND DESPONDENCY ARE THE SAME SIN**; they are alike self-occupation.

"Examine yourselves" is a command of the HOLY SPIRIT. I do not mean to oppose this at all. "Look every man also on the things of others" is another precious precept. We should provoke one another to love and good works. "Your zeal hath provoked very many" is a refreshing statement. But this attitude wraps up everything in "looking off unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of the faith," and we can endure "as seeing Him Who is Invisible." Such a condition of soul is quite different from self-occupation. If I see my failures in such a way that I remember the precious blood and my LORD'S constant intercession, it is well. And if I see any encouragements in personal Christian life that I may give GOD all the glory in more happy realization of His power, it is well. But self-occupation which denies this is not humility. To be afraid to trust GOD is *another form of trusting self*. The more I consider my weakness apart from His strength, and my sin apart from atonement, the more I prove unfaithful. Lack of proportion is wrong. *It is proud to be despondent*: the LORD'S work is mightier than sin!

If, dear child of GOD, you have been occupied with yourself so as to think yourself too bad for Him, or, on the other hand, much better than others, **JUDGE THIS SIN, AND LOOK TO HIM AND SEEK TO SEE EVERYTHING IN HIS LIGHT.**

Motive, and Motive Power, "Unto the Lord."

WANTED, a motive. Without a motive in life, man becomes aimless, and worse than worthless. But how important that the motive should not be wrong. A sinful object will drag along the way to destruction. The only satisfying, and satisfactory aim is *to please GOD*. Enoch had this testimony, and we desire the same. Oh for a deeper spiritual concern, that such desires may be increasingly realized.

At the present time one sees on all sides the power of a purpose. Concerned for national security, myriads have laid aside, and compelled one another to lay aside, arrangements which they would have thought absolutely necessary three years ago. Whence then do children of GOD hold back from devoted love and giving up unto their LORD, Who gave up everything for them? Oh that there may be more spiritual energy, in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT,

Heb. 11. 14 and Heb. 13. 14.

THE heavenly calling draws away from much that men of this age hold dear. CHRIST has changed the whole aspect of our life. It is precious to be seeking *not* the things which the Gentiles seek, but to be definitely seeking the Kingdom of GOD (Matt. 6 32, 33). This attitude of intense earnestness includes the seeking of *a country* and of *a city*. The believer is not delivered from earthly hopes and brought to a hopelessness. His life is not emptied of human aspirations, and left a vacuum. He is rich beyond measure. He has a prospect beyond parallel. Far from being homeless, he has the only abiding home. Though a stranger now, he alone is receiving an unshaken Kingdom. With Abraham he looks for the city that hath the foundations (Heb. 11. 10). In other words, there is a *true* definiteness in his character, and he spiritually *SEEKS the country and city* of which the HOLY SPIRIT witnesses so definitely, in the epistle to the Hebrews. The object of this witness is clear. Some were becoming discontented. They were outside the glories of Judaism, and what did they possess? Visibly to the human eye very little, but to faith more than "very much." "All things are yours" said the apostle to the Corinthians. The child of GOD can afford to lose and suffer in this world.

"Seeking in John's Gospel.

Observe man's evil seeking, 5. 18; 7. 1, 25; 8. 37, 40; 10. 39; 11. 8. Notice what CHRIST did not seek:—

(a) His own will as something isolated from the will of the FATHER
(b) His own glory 7. 18, 8. 50. [5. 30.

Ponder a seeking for CHRIST, without true love:—

6. 24, 26; 11. 56; 18. 4, 7, 8. How contrasted are 1. 38 and 20. 15. Consider seeking and not finding:—7. 34, 36; 8. 21; 13. 33.

"Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart" Ps. 119. 2,

Faith.

"WHAT is faith"—says one. And another scornfully utters the words, "You believe, you do not know." GOD has answered the first question in Heb. 11. 1. And the second shows lamentable and perilous ignorance, We *think* as to possibilities, but we should limit belief in the full sense of the word to absolutely *trustworthy* evidence. Our eyes are sometimes unsafe guides; remember the traveller's mirage! Our ears are not always acute: they misunderstand words well known. Our minds are strangely uncertain. A heart that accepts GOD'S testimony is vastly different. We believe *because* we know His truthfulness. We believe *because* He, Who is NOT a man that He should lie, has spoken. We believe and therefore we speak. Our faith rests on a Person beyond all persons of earth, upon words reliable above, and against, all words of men. Faith is fixed on GOD and His truth, and it is the only reasonable attitude in a world of uncertainty and sin.

Hymns for Believers.

We will wait upon the Lord,
We will trust His changeless Word,
On His promises will rest,
We shall be for ever blest.

Vain the pride which doubts His love,
Right the faith which looks above,
God is living, we can trust,
He is gracious, true, and just.

We would glorify His Name,
We would now His love proclaim,
Saved by blood, we hence would be
Those who own Him thankfully.

Oh for more abounding praise,
And obedience in His ways,
For reviving would we cry,
And upon Himself rely.

Once far from God, and under wrath,
We chose the way of ill,
But in His love He led us forth,
We own His sovereign will.

Now near to God, and under grace,
We choose the way marked out,
And long to see our Saviour's face,
Nor would we ever doubt.

How great the change, through precious blood,
How glorious is God's plan—
The glory must be all to God
And none thereof to man.

Praise, praise our God ye saved ones,
praise,
For wondrous is His love,
Delight in all His works and ways,
Set all your hopes above.

We would rejoice in wondrous grace,
For grace-saved ones should sing,
Soon to behold their Saviour's face
When He shall glory bring.

Who can proclaim the love He showed,
How He for sinners died?—
Sinners to whom He nothing owed,
Yet for them crucified!

Free grace abounds and we would
praise,
Would praise with joy indeed,
And now our Ebenezer raise,
From sin's dark judgment freed.

The Holy Spirit ever guides
To praisefulness of heart,
A praisefulness which e'er abides,
And never will depart.

O for more gratitude to God
Until we are on high,
Since ransomed by Christ's precious blood,
And brought completely nigh.

O for devotion while on earth
That, living for our Lord,
We may set forth our heavenly birth,
And He shall be adored.

We gather in our Lord's own Name,
His Words our law, His joy our aim,
'Tis by His love we love to be
Gathered with saints, and praisefully.

We gather, for His table here,
Knowing that His return is near,
Each week our hope on Him is set,
He will not, nor would we forget.

We gather worshipping by grace,
Nothing shall e'er His love efface,
He loved and loves and ne'er will
cease:—

O that our love may now increase.

We gather thus, of Him to think,
Of Him to tell, self will to sink:
United, that we may reveal
The gratitude His people feel.

Resting on our precious Saviour,
We would now His goodness tell:
Who can estimate His favour?—
For He doeth all things well!
He hath rescued us from danger,
He hath covered all our sin,
He is now our life's Arranger,
Heaven by Him we enter in.

Oh what wondrous love abounding!—
For we all had merits none,
Praise should be mid all resounding,
For the work which He hath done:
We would tell of all His Kingdom,
Of His precious blood would tell,
Mourning all our sin and blindness
That we chose the way to hell.

Christ is all our Hope and Glory,
Christ is now our All in all,
Happy people! Wondrous story
Of deliverance from the fall:
Unto Him our praise we render,
Owning Him, in Him we rest,
Fearing sin, with hearts yet tender,
Since we are completely blest.

An Underlying Testimony to the Deity of Christ.*

Somewhat recently the writer, in ministering GOD'S precious truth, was privileged to notice the emphatic "I's" of John's gospel, or rather some of them, for over 150 are found ‡. The first ten concern John the Baptist, and in every one, he, though such a devoted servant of the LORD, (should we not say, because he was such?), disparages himself (1. 20, "not"; 23, "a voice," contrast the Word; 25 see Matt. 3. 11;—27, "not"; 30, testimony to CHRIST; 31 twice; 33 "not," 34, witness, 3. 28 "not.") Then we have the first usage by the LORD Himself. It is in conversation with the woman of Samaria: "the water that I shall give him" (4. 14), and, a little later, I that speak unto thee am He" (4. 26). The next two examples have the *same* force (4. 32, 38), surely it will not be in vain to us.

After this we have one illustration of the vanity of man, "While I am coming, another steppeth down before me" (5. 7). It is well to feel this background for *sovereign* grace.

Our hearts should be deeply impressed. "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11. 11). His humility was part of his greatness. But CHRIST Himself was meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11. 29), yea He humbled Himself beyond measure (Phil. 2. 7). Can any one dare to say that a created being would have spoken as He spoke, *in entire contrast with John*, and yet be lowly indeed? Grant His Deity, everything is clear: reject His Deity, all is confused §.

We have not finished the study of John's gospel. Yet more definite assertions follow. How many times we have the emphatic "I am" e.g. "I am, fear not" (6. 20 lit.); "I am the Bread of Life" (35), "I am the Bread Which came down from heaven" (41), "I am the Bread of life" (48), "I am the Living Bread" (51). This is the testimony of one remarkable chapter. Nor can we forget such expressions as "I am the Door," "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (10. 9, 14, 6, 11-25). *In every case*, the "I" is emphatic. Would a created being speak thus? John 8. 53 shines out, where CHRIST is seen as infinitely greater even than Abraham, "Before Abraham became, I am." And it is not merely "I was," but "I am." To explain away such words is to dishonour Him grievously.

* You are welcome to a leaflet containing "An Incidental Illustration of the Deity of the Lord Jesus," also one entitled "The Deity of CHRIST," and Vol. 14, No. 1 of "The Student of Scripture" with a brief meditation on "The Attitude of the Lord Jesus regarding worship." Also to the above and further notes, all reprinted from an earlier issue by the grace of God.

‡ *κἀγω* included. I refer to the nominative *only*. Every word is undoubtedly, emphatic, since from GOD, and *repetition* of a *γ* grammatical case is peculiarly emphatic, but it is helpful for believing students of Scripture to know that the Greek language does not insert the pronoun at all when in the nominative, (i.e. the subject of the sentence), except for special stress. Hence there is no uncertainty as to the reason, whenever the HOLY SPIRIT uses this.

§ A like contrast, in connexion with another meek servant Moses (Num. 12. 3) is suggested by Heb. 3. 5, 6.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"WATCH THEREFORE: FOR YE KNOW NOT WHAT HOUR YOUR LORD DOTTH COME."—Matt. xxiv. 42.

"TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN, WHOM HE RAISED FROM THE DEAD, EVEN JESUS, WHICH DELIVERED US FROM THE WRATH TO COME."—1 Thess. i. 10.

Words of Introduction.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and we are grateful for the opportunity when writing of His goodness.

But we do desire that all our lives may show the same **attitude**. Thanksgiving must not be a bare action or an impulse; it should be a characteristic, an atmosphere. How precious it is to bless the Lord at all times. Changed circumstances may give further doors of service, and may remove certain trials. But our Father is always worthy of all praise, and we would, indeed, honour Him. To encourage believers in **ENTHUSIASM FOR THEIR LORD** on the simple lines of His controlling will, in the gracious inworking of the Holy Spirit, are these pages prayerfully sent forth.

The Believer INSIDE or OUTSIDE Politics!

Which is the Will of God?

AT all times God's principles **WIDELY** apply, but special circumstances are used to *emphasize* them upon our hearts. May grace be granted to each *believer* who reads these lines to value *the will of God* much more definitely. May I, at the outset, suggest that we individually ask ourselves if we *are* really believers, *i.e.* if we have been *born* again (John iii. 3), and caused to become

personally a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v. 17, Eph. ii. 10)! It is only for such that this is written. The man of the world, however "respectable" and "honourable" in his sphere, has quite a different centre, relationship, aspiration and object. At its best, this age is evil (Gal. i. 4). Secondly, with tender concern, but with all plainness, may a further question be put? Are you *willing*, by grace, for the *will* of God, as revealed in Scripture, at all costs? If He has appointed a position of enthusiastic effort to reconstruct *this age*, are you prepared to work beyond measure, as to time and strength, in political and social effort? If, however, He has ordained a coming out from the world, and a *crucified* relation to it, are you ready to put aside even a vote, to bear taunts and misunderstandings, *simply for His sake*? Only as we are *longing* to know and do HIS WILL, can we expect guidance, and illustrate true relationship to Him (Matt. vii. 21, xii. 50; John vii. 17; 1 John ii. 17; Heb. x. 36, xiii. 21—a most precious subject, see Heb. x. 7. 9). The following points are worthy of prayerful consideration:—

1.—It is plain that *Christ took no part in politics* (note also Luke xii. 13, 14), and we dare not forget the holy principle of walking *as He walked* (1 John ii. 6), though, if He has *anywhere* appointed to *us* any share, in certain other circumstances, we would loyally respond, however strange it might seem. Yet His aloofness is deeply solemn (John xvii. 14, 16), and would make us very cautious as to any "suggestion" of acting differently.

2.—Far from emphasizing that the times would alter, morally and spiritually, after His death, and His people be more "incorporated" with others, we find a startling reverse testimony. *The judgment of this world then took place* (John xii. 31),* and we are, through that cross, *crucified to the world* (Gal. vi. 14). Evidently there is some *marked* difference between those who are in Christ Jesus, who are partakers of the *heavenly* calling (Heb. iii. 1), and all others, however honest, kind, and religious.

3.—Moreover, He has positively emphasized something *quite distinct* from a kingdom *of this world* (John xviii. 36), even a "kingdom of the *heavens*" (again and again in Matthew, e.g. chap. xiii.), and thus we see an entire contrast with the usual theory that the kingdom of God is meant to be permeating society, and clothing itself with the reformed arrangements of men.† Once more let us remember that believers are not of the world AS Christ was not of the world (John i. 4, 5, 10, with Phil. ii. 15, preciously illustrates).

4.—Since we are in a *law* to Christ (1 Cor. ix. 21), and conscious of the *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 2), it is our privilege to obey His appointments, and in the Divinely given epistles, while we find the believer's humble and loyal relation and *subjection* to authority in Romans xiii. (for example), *any* share in governing is expressly left out. Indeed, our unshaken kingdom is

* A brief leaflet on these subjects will be gladly sent.

† The Lord *knew* this would be the *professed* kingdom of heaven, hence in Matthew xiii., alluding to the woman and ephah (the same as three measures) in Zech. v., He shews a sad *leavening*. Leaven is an *invariable* type of evil in Scripture. For use of language as to *profession*, &c., compare "the *holy city*" in Rev. xi. 2, and "*just persons*" in Luke xv. 7.

to come (Heb. xii. 28, 29); to *vote* is to exercise the principle of ruling, AGAINST THE LORD'S WILL (1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 12). To take a *part* NOW is to deny, in principle, *the whole* THEN.

5.—Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20, 21), and, in accord with this, we are bidden to go forth to Him *without* the camp, bearing *His reproach*, for *here* we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Heb. xiii. 13, 14). The "atmosphere" and attitude of Scripture appointments for saints in the present dispensation cannot contradict the words "*as strangers and pilgrims*" (1 Peter ii. 11). If I assume I have a continuing city here, and that I can take even a small part in governing, I am ignoring what He has said.

6.—To vote is *not* to "remain under," as the word "suffer" denotes (2 Tim. ii. 15), *i.e.* it is to *endanger* the promised reward of reigning with Christ, and, if deliberate, it is, in measure, to approach the sin of Esau, "who for one morsel of meat (*i.e.* for something attractive 'now') sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 16).

7.—To share in politics is: (a) to identify oneself with many ungodly ones in a partnership of voting (2 Cor. vi. 14-18); (b) to ask another to represent me though I *cannot* approve of all his principles, and (c) to make *myself* either a *sharer* in disapproved actions before the Day of the Lord, or one in *opposition* to the parliamentary party in power which is providentially ordained of God. Nor can the *methods* of "party" politics or of "coalition" suggest any approximation to the meekness, gentleness, frankness, and yet uncompromising firmness against all evil, which are to characterise the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how privileged are His people; how fixed should their attitude be.

8. All the arguments usually advanced for fellowship in voting fail to set aside the authority of one word of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, they contradict the whole aspect of the present dispensation. If God is neither converting nor reforming the world, but gathering out of it a people for the Name of the Lord Jesus, the suggestions "You ought to help to put things straight," "You are neglecting opportunities of uplifting humanity," "You should take your part in improving conditions," really imply that a believer should leave a higher and resultful work as to the eternal salvation and blessedness of those brought to believe, and attempt the impossible. To compromise *one iota* for useful worldly ends is, moreover, to do evil that good may come, and the child of God dare not take this attitude (Rom. iii. 8).

9.—We have already thought of the difficulty of a "party" attitude. Is it *not* impossible in the line of God's will? No "party" represents the rights of the Lord Jesus; no party has the one object which a believer should bring into daily life (1 Cor. x. 31). If Christ's kingdom were of this world, the *characteristics* of the Day of the Lord would be necessary (John xviii. 36, Isa. ii. 16-22, Rev. xix. 11-15), and it would be impossible to obey such Scriptures as 2 Tim. ii. 24.

10.—The distinct arrangements for Israel in a day when God marked out one earthly people and land, with temple and earthly display, confirm, by contrast, the position of those who have died

with Christ and who are risen with Him (Col. ii. 20, iii. 1), to be occupied with Him, and the things which are above, and engaged in *all* else from this standpoint. The occupation is not only for *one* day of the week, or in some *actions*: believers are heavenly *persons* (1 Cor. xv. 48).

Finally, do not be "entangled" (2 Tim. ii. 4) nor affected by "enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. ii. 4), which would lead you to confuse appointed earthly duties with unappointed. If men say, "Why do you eat and drink earthly things if you are heavenly?"—reply that the Lord appointed this. Thus with ordinary labour for an earthly master, and so forth. The words of the Lord are clear, if we are humble. The *meek* will He guide in judgment (Ps. xxv. 9). Are you quite willing for *His* guidance, beloved friend? Keep to His words and you will see that we have the **NEGATIVE ABSENCE** of authority for *any* earthly share in politics, and dread to do that which is not commanded, either in principle or in precept (Lev. x. 1), and also have the **POSITIVE EMPHASIS** of a position and attitude with which, if we thoroughly carry out, earthly politics are quite incompatible. Yet our gracious God has not robbed us of a privilege, but granted a higher one, whereby we are enfranchised (John viii. 36) to do more real service than a thousand votes. Let us not be occupied with our *negative* separation, but take our spiritual privilege of praying for the long favoured land where God has placed us. He Who said that He would spare a city for ten righteous ones is the mighty God to bring blessings upon others to-day for His people's sake. Do not let us "*talk about*" our heavenly calling as if that were all, but let us (very, very humbly) *exercise it*, as a family of priests (1 Pet. ii. 5), to pray for those who do not know the way into the holiest by the blood of our precious Saviour and Lord (Heb. x. 19-22, Eph. ii. 13, John xiv. 6, with 1 Tim. ii. 1). Thus shall we take our responsibility, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and bring glory unto the Name of the Lord.

Further literature on this subject will be readily sent, and correspondence with those who are exercised before God thankfully undertaken. Also particulars of special meetings (if the Lord will) for believers, in different parts, as to this subject, early in December. Percy W. Heward, 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E. 7.

Depression and Despondency.

IT is a precious fact that the Scriptures are *full of rejoicing*. The book of Psalms begins with happiness, and likewise the address on the mount. And the commands of the Lord are clear, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice," "Rejoice evermore," and so forth. Any pleading for despondency is out of harmony with the whole character of God's great mercy, so wonderfully *revealed* in the present dispensation.

The world is flippant, but God's words to Israel might well be applied.—"Rejoice not." An unsaved soul has *no right to joy*.

Nor is it reasonable to be glad in view of eternal judgment. 'Tis only when sins are blotted out, and one is consciously in God's power, that there can be true and spiritual happiness.

Depression is not only foreign to the whole attitude, set before a believer, it is distinctly forbidden in such commands as "Be careful (anxious) for nothing" (Phil. iv. 6). The *fact* that fearful hearts exist, and that the Lord deals tenderly with them (Isa. xxxv. 4), in no way justifies such a condition. We are bidden to be very gracious toward one weak in the faith, but like Abraham, one ought to be strong in faith, giving glory to God (Rom. xiv. 4-20). Despondency is a sin against the revealed will of the Lord, and, *thanks be unto God, there is a remedy for this mighty disease, a mightier remedy*.

But, before we ponder this, let us remember that depression *dishonours* God. It gives a false view of His love, and suggests that He is unkind. Satan delights to give this idea (Gen. iii. 1). The thought of chafing against "narrowness" and restrictions, is from the devil. Christ definitely rejected such an attitude when the tempter implied that He was kept without necessary food (Matt. iv. 3, 4). Depression misrepresents our *loving* Lord, and for His sake we should be concerned to know the *salvation of our face*, of which Ps. xlii. 11, with xliii. 5, (literally) speaks.

Nor is despondency *any advantage*. Quite distinct from the godly sorrow (2 Cor. vii. 9, see marg.) which works repentance, it unfits for service, and thus perpetuates sins. The joy of the Lord is our strength to do His will henceforth (Neh. viii. 10). Depression is through *lack of proportion*. Ps. xlii. 5, 6 would hint this:—(a) "Why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God"; (b) "My soul is cast down *within me*: therefore will I remember Thee." The contrast is very definite: sin is occupied with "*me*," spirituality with *Him*. Even as fear, this sin is begotten of forgetfulness of the Lord (Isa. li. 12, 13). If we see our sins *more than* our Saviour: if we regard our weakness as greater than His might—we *are proud*. There should be a very deep sense of failure, *provided there is a yet deeper sense of the sufficiency of the blood of Christ*, and of His risen life and intercession and power. Depression springs from self-occupation. We dare not go *out of* the second part of Romans vii. into Romans viii., but we must *not* have Romans vii. *without* Romans viii.

What then is the cure? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). There is no authority for excusing the sin: it must not be regarded as a sign of "humility," or a temperamental necessity. *Depression is a sin*, the manifestation of the sin of looking to the winds and waves instead of to the Lord (Matt. xiv. 30). When the sin is confessed, God is faithful to His word. Despondency, acknowledged as evil, must be dealt with firmly. "Ah," says one, "I feel my weakness *even in owning it*." God does not say that the confession of sin must be made in certain words, and with certain elegance of manner. He does not look at the rhetoric of prayer. "But," you add, "my feelings are not deep enough."

Beloved friends, you are not asked to analyse your feelings in a way that makes feelings meritorious. Your feelings are never deep enough! Do you not own your sin, or are you so proud that you think you *ought* to have depression, and that your failures are invincible against the Lord's power? Do you confess your sin, and your ignorance of the extent of the sin, and *confess the merits of Christ are greater*? If so, confess it at once. "Ah," you reply, "I have done that, but 'felt' no better." Still occupied with your failures? *God is true*. You did not receive encouragement before, but the fault was yours: if you doubt His power to deal with your case, you blame Him. Possibly you answer, "I am not able now to confess aright!" Do you confess this *further inability*? If so, it is well. But otherwise you are clinging to your inability, and exalting it above the Lord's ability. Nothing beyond nothingness is needed before God in such a case. "But I cannot get rid of feeling my failure." Is not such feeling of your failure itself a failure to own *Him*? Then confess *this too* as sin. Confess your lack of confession, do not make it a reason against confession. Only *via* confession to God do you deal with the pride that dares to lift up your own unworthiness against His worthiness. God is able *or not* able; *which* is it? The ruin is not His, but yours! You are not asked to trust *yourself* even to confess sin: acknowledge your ignorance as to the whole. He will not fail. Exaltation of unbelief is harmful. But you are still troubled, "I cannot help clinging to my unbelief." *Do you confess even this as sin*? I am not suggesting victory *before* you confess: you are anticipating the deliverance from depression in *your own strength* first, that you may be able to confess the sin of depression after being delivered from it. In other words, you are looking to self for the *first* success. Own the sin that mars your confession, and that mars your very owning of it. In your utter sin and weakness, are the Lord's forgiveness and strength to be made manifest!

"Means" of blessing are not to be honoured instead of, apart from, or beyond, the One Who blesses! But when the Lord delivers you, surely your heart will feel how serious is the sin of neglecting the nourishment of His Word, and *Scriptural* fellowship, and then feeling a dulness. If you omit spiritual food, you must expect spiritual trouble! You will be downcast, if you *isolate yourself* from assembling according to God's mind. It may be you think the alternative is to mix up with things which grieve God. I do not mean this. God may cause you to move to the neighbourhood of a gathering after His Own loving will. Do not isolate yourself. Self is the cause of much depression. Christ is the Cause of joy, and He delights to be in the midst of His gathered people.

A Twofold Thought.

IN Gen. vi. 12 we read "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." The Holy Spirit leaves us to ponder two thoughts:—
(a) God's appointed way was corrupted; (b) man's way and

character and attitude are seen as utterly evil: not only was evil done in some actions, but the whole tenor of life was against God. Thus that seeming indefiniteness increases the emphasis, and shows us how sins are related, and how man's whole demeanour is evil when God's authority is set aside. The precious *contrast* is most refreshing.

Nor is this Scripture alone in its *two-fold* force. Concerning the man who pleases God we read in Psalm xxxvii. 23, "He delighteth in HIS way." Does this signify that such an one rejoices in God's way, or that God Himself is actually pleased to delight in the godly characteristic and way of His faithful people? Our hearts are thankful for the two-fold aspect. The delight is surely mutual: who can fathom all this means?

May not 1 John iii. 3 illustrate?—"Every man that hath this hope *in Him* purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The primary thought, which rightly impresses many at once, is—"This hope in (or on) Him," *i.e.* on the Lord of glory. It is blessed to know that our hope is *fixed*. It is not a bare and baseless dream. Ah, beloved friends, if we are among the called of Jesus Christ, our hope will not break down. It maketh not ashamed: it *shall* be fulfilled. Let us trust our gracious God. But is the other interpretation to be entirely forgotten? Shall we not *bear aloft* this hope "upon" ourselves, as a topmost decoration (Prov. i. 9) of grace? We remember the words "and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8). Is not the helmet "upon" those who wear it? Does not the saint in going forth to spiritual warfare need this? And does he not feel when he puts this upon his lip, and makes manifest how he is looking for the Lord, that there must be a corresponding purity? Truth is sanctifying, when rightly realized: it is not barely mental.

There are many examples of this twofold aspect in connexion with the word "spirit." It is "in" God's Holy Spirit we pray and worship, but it is also in spirit, an attitude contrasted with mere formality, and indeed with every form of merely "natural" worship. "The first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23) would suggest *His* gracious work, but it also impresses the thought of that which is born of the Spirit, the first-fruits consisting of the Spirit, a pledge of our future glory,—body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. v. 23). And Gal. v. 25 emphasizes the same precious twofoldness, to stimulate our hearts and lives unto God's glory. Thus we would seek grace to be in a condition to enjoy, feel and apply the twofoldness, and "manifoldness" of the precious and definite words of the Living God. 'Tis not that we would read something into Scripture, but would read out from it what He in His fulness of love and wisdom has placed there.*

* Rev. xvii. 9, 10 shows clearly the principle of twofoldness: likewise the way in which the Holy Spirit Himself says that *history* has also a typical wondrousness of instruction (Gal. iv. 24), graciously and suitably arranged (and overruled, as in the case of Jonah) by One Who has all power.

“ Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.”

John v. 46.

THIS wondrous statement of the Lord Jesus shows that we may EXPECT to find “the things concerning Himself” at once in the volume (or unrolling) of the Divine book (Luke xxiv. 27, Ps. xl. 7). The gospels are not the only part of Scripture FULL OF HIM. He is the Great and Glorious Subject of prophecy and type. The Father has delighted to honour Him, and to reveal all salvation and blessing as in Him. Hence we would delight to see His glories throughout, and to behold prophecies of Him in the books of Moses, as the Seed, the Salvation, Shiloh, the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star, the Sceptre (Gen. iii. 15, xlix. 10, 18, 24, Num. xxiv. 17)—to instance a few names which by a similar initial letter may remain happily in the mind—nor would we forget the unveiling of Himself as THE Man of Deut. viii. 3 (Matt. iv. 4), the Prophet of Deut. xviii. Indeed, Scripture is full of Him. And so He is seen in the types of the coats of skin, the ark, the ram, the passover, the smitten rock, the brazen serpent, the covered uncontaminated vessel, and the sacrifices innumerable! Very definitely are His own words illustrated. Moses wrote of Him!

But we may go further SATAN'S ATTACK ON THE PENTATEUCH IS AN ATTACK ON CHRIST. The undermining of confidence as to the beginning of Scripture—I will not say of “faith,” for SPIRITUAL FAITH abides—is a rebellion against the glory of the Lord Jesus. Higher criticism, in its varied forms, is the devil's ministry. Love the whole truth, and beware of the beginnings of sin.

And we see how untenable is the position of Israel. Can we be surprised at the putting away of the authority of Scripture among this long privileged people? Rejecting Christ, also, they logically reject Moses. Honied words are NOT truthful. For a child of God to stand on the same platform as a Jew, and to suggest there is a recognition of the same God, is neither truth nor love! It is a cruel manifestation of a lack of solemnity as to the issues involved. It is a blinding or casting of dust in the eyes. Every Jew stands convicted as an unbeliever—and love warns, it dare not compromise.

How refreshing to turn from this thought to the POSITIVE aspect once again. Let us seek, by grace, to REALISE the Lord Jesus more, as we view Him prefigured so precious. Let us study, and emphasize the studying of, the books which God gave through Moses, that we may rightly join the personal knowledge of a personal Lord with the true and deep enjoyment of the written words of truth. The Holy Spirit, Who glorifies Christ, is the same Holy Spirit Who has written Scripture, and Who has quickened and enlivens still, God's beloved people. We cannot, and would not, separate the Living Word from the inspired testimony concerning Him. That testimony points to Him: He pointed to that. Shall we not heed His living message of power to-day?