

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"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. 57. 15.

A Word of Introduction.

HOW precious is God's love. How wondrously He condescends. Grace is a reality. We need to be exercised as to His stress on the background life. Publicity is not THE test, nor the chief one. "Revival" is not a matter merely of meetings. Isaiah 57. 15 speaks of A CONTINUOUS REVIVING. As soon as we begin to DEPEND on CRISES, and sudden emotions, on human methods and large meetings, there is something wrong. We are not to WAIT FOR "a revival mission." God is, so graciously and tenderly, the Reviver of His people to-day, even in the workshop and kitchen, and the life that pleases Him is not by JERKS,—but Enoch WALKED with God. In 1 Cor. 13 love is NOT seen in the display of verses 1-3, BUT in the humble unassertiveness, and graciousness of verses 4-7. LITTLE THINGS in the Holy Spirit are needed fruit, and blood-bought ones should thus show the new creation.

"LIKE UNTO LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK." Matt. 13. 33.

THE Holy Spirit does not use symbols indifferently and haphazardly, nor dare we separate earlier and later Scriptures. How often did the Lord Jesus refer to the Hebrew words of truth. His testimony to Scripture is invariable, and answers every critic—even as to Mosaic authorship, Messianic psalms, the historical character of Jonah, and the prophetic authority of

Daniel. He *thrice* emphasized the very book which critics have profanely regarded as a forgery, when He met their prince in the wilderness. Thus, too, in Matt. 13. 33 we have striking allusions to Zech. 5.*

Moreover, in view of Romanism's attitude as to *Mary*†, (which she would have rejected), and in view of the self-sought position of a woman in such systems as Theosophy, Christian Science, and Seventh Dayism, there is much food for thought here.

God at the outset gave to the woman an honoured position of fellowship and dependence (Gen. 2. 23, 1 Cor. 11. 3, 1 Tim. 2. 13).§ When believing women take this position, they are truly exalted (Matt. 26. 6-13, Luke 10. 38-42), but any *usurping* of authority is actually disgrace (Isa. 3. 12), and we should not glory in our shame.

The *principle* of 1 Tim. 2. 12 applies to Christ and the Church. We remember, moreover, the relationship of the typical sun and moon, "the lesser light." The contrast of Manoah's wife in Judg. 13. 6, 10 with Eve, who acted independently, and assertively, (mark the ominous words, "Unto her husband *with her*" in Gen. 3. 6), cannot be easily overestimated.¶ The unhindered prayers and harmony of 1 Pet. 3. 7, with the *true* relationship of verses 5 and 6, must help any who simply want to please God.

But as in the *fourth* letter of Rev. 2 "that woman Jezebel" asserted herself, (cf. exactly the type in 1 Kings 21. 7, 8), so in the *fourth* parable of Matthew 13, *the woman takes the leaven*. She is in authority. Parables often describe according to *profession*, as the *foolish virgins*, the *ninety-nine sheep*, the *elder son*, the *wicked servant*. And thus we have the professing "kingdom of the heavens" like unto leaven. A solemn departure. A new kingdom inaugurated by a woman—evidently the harlot of Rev. 17. 'Tis *usurping Christ's position*. He sows, but she takes a *parasite* plant. And He is to be in the midst (Heb. 2. 12), but she substitutes herself (Zech. 5. 7). The ephah is the counterfeit of the ark of the Lord—within we find wickedness, instead of the types of Christ: upon it, a weight of lead, *not* the pure gold of God's mercy-seat-throne: accompanying it,

* Leaflet on related subjects gladly sent.

† Leaflets: "Hail Thou That Art Highly Favoured," and "Christ or Mary," on application.

§ A very striking thought is wrapped up in God's reference to Eve and to animals. They were not helps,—meet for him. One admires an animal's faithfulness, but the "petting" of a dog may become almost idolatry, and a denial of God's arrangement. Moreover, if a believing wife draws her husband from more devotedness to the Lord, and wishes a little more of the world, how serious is this sin. She is *not* to leave him to go "alone" (Gen. 2. 10) in the Lord's path. Nothing but conscience before God can allow of denial of this principle.

¶ See, too, the *distinct mode* of answer of Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke 1. 60, 63, though they fully agreed. Their godliness thus shines out.

the *women* with stork's wings, not the cherubim*; and its *house* in Babylon, *not* Jerusalem. *The woman substitutes herself*. Romanism boldly says, "The church": God says, "Wickedness" (Zech. 5. 8), "the mystery of lawlessness" (*ἀνομία* is feminine 2 Thess. 2. 7).

Everything becomes clearer in the light of the preparatory parable. The mustard seed, *whenever* (*ὅταν*, class description) it is fully *grown*, tends to leap over the boundary between herb and tree ("after its kind" Gen. 1. 12), and is thus a blemish in nature, even as thorns, *appointed* to remind of the curse. The kingdom Christ planted has leapt over a Divinely fixed boundary, and changed itself to a *world*-kingdom—the birds of the air show this, in the light of Ezek. 31. 6, Dan. 4. 14. A glance at Rev. 17. 2 shows the *two* aspects of the two parables together.

Remarkably, even in the memorial of the Lord's Supper, Christendom has *either* made the "mass," or *altered* the Lord's simple "This do" of unleavened symbols. In other words, where Christ *gave*, and said, "Take, eat," the *woman* has dared to "*give*" something else, and thus the giving and *eating* of Gen. 3. 6 are unconsciously paralleled.†

Hence the change in the mustard *tree* leads up to the woman's *new* kingdom, hidden at first, corrupting the fine flour of *truth*, yet not attacking all *at once*. Ah, beloved friends, if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, let us emphasize Himself in the midst, and *dread* the leaven, *dread* any usurping of *His* rights.

CRISIS OR CONTINUANCE? THOUGHTS ON DISPROPORTION.

GOD'S precious use of *various* means of blessing we cheerfully and thankfully own. The principle of Heb. 1. 1 ever applies. He has "sundry times and divers manners," and we read of the "variegated" grace of God. But we need to be careful lest we become onesided. Thanks be unto Him for the *crisis* of a new birth. That cannot be a growth. But, *after* that, the spiritual life should not depend on "crisis" any more than the physical. This *looking for "something unusual"* becomes unhealthy. Emotion is "worked up," and hundreds of opportunities are lost, *while* waiting for "*something great*." A large meeting takes the place of personal communion with God. "Revival" becomes linked with special efforts instead of with *daily experience* of the Lord. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One . . . I

* God describes angels as *men*: art depicts them as *women*, and shows its origin and relation to Babylon.

† We repeat, "Quite unwittingly by many," and the Lord accepts their golden love, though mixed, alas, with the dross of tradition which He hates. Further leaflets gladly sent.

dwell 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. 57. 15). *That is daily revival.* There is nothing dramatic about it, but how precious, beyond words.

Is there not a danger in craving for "power" as to great works, while the privilege of *growth*, and of doing *all* things in the Name of the Lord Jesus, is almost forgotten? The stress on *crises* overshadows the Holy Spirit's stress on "growth."

Undoubtedly if we have wandered, there *is* a need for a crisis. We must be brought back to the place where we were at the first (Gen. 13. 4), and we *all* require such blessing; but we should not build on these experiences as normal, and make godly continuance secondary. There is nothing to be said against holy crises, but much to be said against occupation with *seeking them beforehand*, and virtually putting off revival till a special event is reached. The delay excuses sin. The *non-expectation* of reviving amid the trivial round of daily life is *the sad result*. Idolatry is the worship of that which is *seen*, and the tendency to be swayed by outward appearances, and large meetings, may hinder *a life for God*.

Remember, beloved friends, how much of the earthly walk of the Lord of Glory was evidently in the background. The details were all lovely before the Father. His public ministry from the time when He was about 30 years of age, as to the flesh, was the short part,—far shorter. Is not this a lesson for us?

We are often *affected* by surroundings, and mass movements are then easy. But, let it be repeated, we need reviving in the workshop, the home and the kitchen. "He wakeneth *morning by morning*" (Isa. 50. 4). This is, as it were, an anointing with fresh oil. Daily the manna was granted: yesterday's manna bred worms and stank: to-morrow's could not be obtained in advance. "Daily shall He be praised."

When the disciples asked, "Lord, *add* to us faith," as if it were a mass weight given on special occasions, He spoke of a seed of faith and *growth*. Not a *crisis-addition*, but a continual growth, is to be emphasized. The one who depends on crises will naturally look to some man or men, and will drift into an "up and down" life. As one who takes *stimulants* and looks to these instead of *food*, such a believer will lack spiritual regularity. *We need food*. The parallel just mentioned is of deep importance. God delights to use ordinary things: Naaman wanted a display, but the Lord used that which was not dramatic. And the Lord was not in wind or earthquake or fire, but in the still small voice of 1 Kings 17. 12. He draws us to see the holiness of tiny duties unto Him. The same principle affects "crises." If we have gone down to Egypt, we *must* be brought back remarkably. *Gradual return from backsliding* is not to be encouraged, but the regarding of crises as *normal* undoes the message of 2 Pet. 3. 18, and almost makes children of God *anticipate* a departure

from which they will be startlingly awakened. May He graciously bring us to the balance of truth, that He may be exalted.

Let us notice too, with sorrow, the wrong position which many apparently believing women take, and seek to bring before them their true dignity, in direct and glad contrast with the theories of the twentieth century, *as well as* its demoralizing fashions. 1 Cor. 11 sends forth its precious message and shows a path in which the Lord will protect His people from evil angels (1 Cor. 11. 10), who are seeking to corrupt. Our true glory is to honour the will of our Lord, and the Holy Spirit does not lead otherwise. Often have God's dear people sorrowed over the "leavening." Let them not forget the added reference to Eve's sin and Jezebel's method, "*which a woman took.*" The *initiative* belongs to the Lord Jesus. It is for His people to follow *His* will, and to delight in the simplicity of love. The present tendency of children to aim at authority (Isa. 3. 4, 12) is another sign of the times. And, in home and Christian gathering alike, we need a holy contrast and a holy protest, if, redeemed by the blood of Christ, we own none other lordship, but thankfully obey, and look for Him Whose Name alone we bear.

GOD'S TESTIMONY, OR FEELINGS.

"I VERILY thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26. 9). Such words show plainly, and *painfully*, how impossible it is to depend on the feelings of an unregenerate man. 'Tis not a question of sinning *wilfully* and daringly against conviction. The words "I ought" are amazing. The theory that man always knows right and wrong, and that conscience is the voice of God, and infallible, is Divinely judged. We rejoice to own God's *frequent* warnings within, but over-statement involves a denial of man's *fallen* condition. Let there be *two* witnesses in this matter from the *one* Scripture. The Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever killeth you will *think that he doeth God service*" (John 16. 2). And the foolish virgins in Matt. 25. 11, 12 are *surprised* that they are unknown. Myriads *think* they are saved, and they are *not* (Luke 13. 25-27).

After salvation, the believer is wondrously privileged. He has a new life that he may walk in newness of life, and the Holy Spirit Himself indwells. But He does not force Himself upon us. He does not "drag" but "lead" (Rom. 8. 14), and, if this is not sought, He does not depart, but He is grieved (Eph. 4. 30). The grieving of the Spirit of God by the misuse of human feelings is deeply solemn.

And the believer may err seriously even as to *feelings which seem right*. The Spirit of God blows on the *goodliness* of the

flesh (Isa. 40. 6-8). Thus the flesh *has* goodness: it is *not* always ugly. And Satan is transformed into an angel of *light* (2 Cor. 11. 14, 15). So in Matt 16. 22, Peter showed apparent kindness (margin), but the Lord Jesus unmasked Satan's *working in the feelings* (23, cf. Luke 22. 49, 50). The natural things of "man" (Matt. 16. 23) are Satan's opportunity. In like manner, many to-day are urged to spare themselves, and take certain unnecessary and unapproved "comforts" (observe the *order* of words in Ex. 18. 23 God *second*: we must seek God first).

David, prompted by earnest feelings, wished to build a house for God, and Nathan, moved by similar feelings, urged this (2 Sam. 7. 2, 3). The Lord made clear that *His will* alone was decisive (2 Sam. 7. 4, 5). We must wait for His counsel (Psalm 106. 13). Hence 'tis not a question of evil surmisings and "ugly" feelings alone, but of those which seem most encouraging. How *natural* for the healed leper of Mark 1. 44, 45, and the once blind men of Matt. 9. 30, 31 to make known the Lord's mighty works. But natural and reasonable feelings are allowed no authority: "As for God, His way is perfect."

The hurried action of Acts 1. 15 ("stood up in the midst": contrast, "Sit," Luke 24. 49 lit :) is *not* recorded as an evidence of self consciously exalted. The wish was good, but *feelings* must ever be subject to the Lord's mind and will. It is here that children of God need most care. "Wrong wishes" are quickly detected, but when the desire is God's glory, it is so *easy* to do His work in our way and time. The result may be that an *Uzza touches* the ark, which is being brought up *wrongly*, amid *many* desires to please God, on a *new* cart. We dare not say that the many "new carts" of modern missions are *all and always intentionally* evil. Thanks be unto God for all *love* to Him: He *only* can separate dross from gold. We do not speak of those who attack the Scriptures and so forth, but of many who seem earnestly thinking they serve their Lord. Yet *His revealed will* must guide our path, if we are to glorify Him aright—nothing else.

If we, as it were, bring spices on the resurrection morning, we waste our Lord's money. "Reverent" feelings may erect grand buildings, but they are dispensationally *out of date*. The feelings do not make the will of God to change, nor do they make up for the departure from *His* plan.

We cannot suggest that those who agreed with the complaint of Judas had his motives (Matt. 26. 8), they were "carried away" as Barnabas. Nor is there any evidence that Martha was unlovingly serving. She evidently acted by feelings, and wished to please the Lord in her way. So was it with Paul in Acts 21. 4 (see verse 13). And apparently many have gone, unsent, to parts of Christian work with earnest feelings all the while. The devices of Satan already unveiled in Matt. 16. are again before us in 2 Cor. 2. 11. The swing of the pendulum from carelessness to severity is marked (verse 10). So subtle is Satan. Much

intentional holiness has been urged in language that denies, for instance, Romans 7, much devotion *amid* errors as to baptism and the Lord's Supper, and much looking for Christ's return *together with* grievous misinterpretation of prophecy.

Hence the *humble* believer must be very gracious, and beware of sweeping assertions. Personally responsible for all truth he is brought to see, he must not partake in anything against his Lord's will. This is *true* love to his brethren, that there may be mutual stirring up, in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ. But whenever *motives* are judged, is it not evil? We little know our own danger of being misled by earnest feelings. *They* are precious whenever subject to God's words, but deadly if placed in control. The Lord alone has that right, and *His words* are given for our sure guidance. The Holy Spirit applies these words, and harnesses the godly feelings of the redeemed to them. It is this unconscious pride, linked with independence, which must be judged, in order that we may please the Lord as He hath appointed. Unconscious pride, that our own feelings are right, is none the less pride.

"THE CURSE OF SICKNESS."

THUS a dear young man, evidently desiring to emphasize God's true power to heal, described sickness, when in conversation with me. As many beloved children of God seem misled in this matter, a few thoughts may help to His glory. And let there be no hasty decision, only prayerful willingness for *God's will*.

We cannot overlook the fact that many who bear Christ's precious Name, and who are disappointed by the worldly barrenness of Christendom, look for something else, and movements connected prominently with "healing" seem, at first, to meet their felt need. They may be willing to own the gross egotism of *some* of the literature, characterizing a "revival" by a man's name, but they find contrasts, and physical results, and are thus encouraged, feeling they have a parallel with God's work of old. Frequently a hurried, unkind, and off-hand generalizing of the *whole* work, by those who oppose, only leads to more disappointment with the spirit and manner of such, and thus a more open heart for the movement attacked. We little know how easily *one* harsh and unjust word may drive many from the Lord's will.

It is important to realize what the Holy Spirit has definitely said, and what He has *not said*, but what we *think* He has implied. In other words, we must not put *our* inferences on a level with God's statements. We may be in error. For example, "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." But if we infer from this that it is *wrong* for a believer to die, because it is wrong for him to sin, we mistake God's teaching. And if it is not wrong for believers to die, why *must* it be wrong for them to be ill? Observe that the Holy Spirit *ever* blames for

sin, and shows confession to God on this account, but *never* blames for illness in the same general way, nor urges *confession of the sin of sickness*.

But it may be said, "No, yet in James 5 a believer is to confess the sin which has led to the illness." For the present we will not pause over the word "if." The Lord's lesson is clear in 1 Cor. 11. 30. Yet this is a *definite point of contrast* with the theory that health alone can glorify God. The illness is not sin, *but linked with chastisement for sin*. The objection that God can use other means is beside the mark. We know He *can*, but acknowledge humbly whatever He *does*. It is for Him to choose. The further objection that illness is not sanctifying is equally beside the mark. Chastisement of any and every kind is *not sanctifying in itself*: 'tis when we are "exercised thereby" (Heb. 12. 11). If illness is because of sin, is it permitted to God's people *in love, or not*? If in love, it is *not a curse*. But it may be said, "We should own the sin, and at once lose the illness." Never would the writer say one word against the precious first injunction. We long that not only beloved readers, but we ourselves also, may be quicker to confess our sins, and to see a Father's hand in *all* circumstances. Every shortcoming should grieve us (1 Chron. 4. 10). But does the dear friend, who objects, imply that a time will come in *this* life when we shall not need refining, when there will be no dross to need fire? The Holy Spirit teaches otherwise in 1 Pet. 1. 7 and Heb. 12. 7, and the Lord Jesus bids all His disciples to confess sin. It is here that one serious pitfall lies: the standard of *holiness* is lowered.*

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

* Let our godliest moments be more godly, yet we fall short of Christ.

"If the Lord Will":—

Meetings for Believing men at **2, Minorles, Aldgate, E.C.**, every **Tues. at 6. 30** (preceded by opportunities for prayerful conversation, Greek and Hebrew, to the glory of God). During December and January it seems God's will to leave various subjects, and in view of the solemn trend of the times, to seek to know more of the eight parables of Matt. 13. The Lord Jesus has laid special stress on the understanding of these things (Mark 4. 11). Matt. 13. 35 should be noticed prayerfully. We hope to ponder this month:—

The One Pearl, Purchased at Great Cost.

The Drag Net, and the Solemn Severance.

The Scribe Taught for the Kingdom of the Heavens.

A Question Evening may be possible. We do desire that our Father may be honoured in the bringing together of more exercised men, who long to be men of God, and whose business is in, or near, this great city. Surely there must be many such who would value this intercourse, and humiliation before Him. Further particulars gladly given. It is a joy also to know that exercised children of God at a distance are pondering these subjects to His glory, in a path of separation, and willingness **EVEN TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.**

Meeting Room, 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E. 7.
Telephone, Maryland 2196.

Vol. xxiv. No. 2.

Feb: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4. 30.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the grace of God we would again send forth these pages. Truth does not amuse, but thereby He encourages His people. And this is our desire, that He may be glorified. How definite is the contrast between an ear for truth and itching ears (2 Tim. 4. 3).

Our Heavenly Father has been pleased to reveal something of His great and eternal love. But who can tell ALL that this means? The **INDWELLING** of the Holy Spirit is wondrous. May there be more consciousness of dependence. The Holy Spirit leads: He does not drag. We are not COMPELLED to be obedient and spiritual. It is possible, and sadly possible, to grieve the Holy Spirit. We are not told that He will then cease to indwell. But how painful to think, "I have grieved the Spirit of God." That we alike may have a **TENDER CONSCIENCE** as to this are these pages humbly sent forth. May many a redeemed one be helped thereby to know and please his Lord more. So will He be glorified, as we look for "That Blessed Hope." To talk of the Coming of the Lord without love's obedience is, indeed, disappointing. Oh that we may be revived to-day, and every day (Isa. 57. 15).

"THE CURSE OF SICKNESS."

(Continued from last Issue).

Moreover, the error seems to suggest "So much failure, so much illness." But Psalm 73 reminds us that God is not always using *proportion* in this life. Herein is a test of faith, and very important it is. Some believers have a "needs be" for *extra trials*, because they desire their faith's testing to bring Him more

glory in that Day (1 Pet. 1. 6, 7). Thus a Job and a Paul experienced particular visitations of Satan, in their flesh, and Timothy, uniquely unselfish (Phil. 2. 20), had "often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5. 23), whereas many miracles of healing seem linked with the *unsaved* or those *unknown, not with God's faithful servants*. They fill up afflictions in their flesh, they spend and are spent, death worketh in them. Such words are momentous.

And, observe, that these passages fully acknowledge *Satan's* hand in physical trouble. An extreme case is 1 Cor. 5. 5; but Paul was the reverse of "that wicked person," yet to prevent pride, *because of its seed within*, the messenger of Satan was permitted. And Satan apparently has "might" connected with death (Heb. 2. 14*): hence a possible explanation of his opposition when thwarted, it would seem, as to corrupting the body of Moses (Jude 9). The woman of Luke 13. 16, bound by Satan, was not exceptional. The Lord Jesus went about healing "all that were oppressed of the devil."†

Nor is there a refusal to Paul in 2 Cor. 12 as to Moses in Deut. 3. What if he *could* have asked, and, it may be, have received his request (Ps. 106. 15)? In any case, he *chose*, by grace, to glory, and "take pleasure, in infirmities." *These could not have been sinful*.

'Tis the same as with persecution. The Lord may use a Nero, but 'tis *the Lord Who uses*, and with Whom we are concerned. His people see *His* hand, and praise Him. And persecution may be at once a reward for faithfulness in measure, and a chastening to purify from some failures. To deny God's power in using the wrath of men to praise Him is to limit Him. A Nebuchadnezzar must be *His* servant, and an Assyrian become the rod of *His* anger. The humble believer, therefore, is able to say, "I know that God can heal at once, or otherwise: my *aim* is neither to get well, nor to remain ill, but to thank Him, and learn His will, and desire, as soon as He has used the trial, to be free. *I dare not depend on usual methods and men*, nor run blindly after drugs (2 Chron. 16. 12). The illness is a reminder that I am still in this tabernacle, and groan,§ and that the redemption of the body is future. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"—and, meanwhile, may I hear the rod, and become more like to Him Whose Name I bear."

Yes, "the redemption of the body" is *future*. Any beloved friends who claim healing now are quite right when they say that deliverance from all illness *is* in the atonement, but they hardly have the Holy Spirit's warrant for adding, "The application should be now!"|| This would virtually *deny* "this body of our

* Note, too, Rev. 9. 1-5.

† Cf. Matt. 4. 23: all without distinction, not all without exception.

§ Not "complain": true humbling implied.

|| The quotation from Isaiah 53. in Matt. 8. 17 does not use the sacrificial word (as Heb. 9. 28, see too John 1. 29), nor refer to the death of the Lord Jesus in Isa. 53. 11, but primarily His wondrous life of strain. He *felt*; as Mark 5. 30 graphically shows: this is often overlooked.

humiliation." Indeed, the writer was told that we ought to have a perfect body. Thus taught not God's servant Paul. I am aware responsible teachers would deny this thought of perfection, but the inference seems logical, and dangerous,—even on the line of 2 Tim. 2. 18, albeit unconsciously. Never would we doubt, nor undervalue, the Lord's gracious enabling to the body. When believers act just like the world for healing, there is something wrong. But willingness to suffer is not unimportant. It may be said, "Willingness for the effects of the fall, and for the attacks of Satan?" The reply is, "Yes." Not willingness for the *actions* that are sinful results of the fall, but willingness to bear. Any who teach otherwise forget that we are limited in every way through the fall. Not only is the animal world changed, and the vegetable world without its full fruitfulness, but our minds are weakened. Shall we complain? The Holy Spirit uses tenses with perfect accuracy in Romans 7 and 8, and the body is *now* indwelt by the Spirit, but 'tis "*shall* quicken," or *make alive*, your mortal bodies. *When* the quickening takes place, the body is no longer mortal. 2 Cor. 4. 11, 12 would link with Rom. 8. 10, to show the present condition.

Surely this weakness of the body of humiliation (Phil. 3. 20), is not a curse. It would seem that some of God's most searching chastisements are by the body. The live coal on the lips may suggest much.

But the point is raised that God's own Name is "The Lord That healeth thee." It is observable, at the outset, that this Name is associated with Israel, and their earthly blessings as in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28. We are apt to overlook the healing of soul-diseases (Ps. 103. 3) and the present *spiritual* parallels with Israel's earthly possessions (Mark 10. 30). Yet we may go further. We do not deny the Lord's power to heal; praise be unto Him. But the unconscious pride which determines that health is a right, soon exalts oneself, and despises others, who may be glorifying God in the fires. There are many things we cannot judge before the time when the Lord comes. It is well to be spiritually sensitive, but to speak little that commends ourselves is often wise. And now, as to the "going further" just mentioned, God speaks in Ex. 15. 26 of special diseases on the Egyptians (cf. Deut. 7. 15). It may be that many have generalized. The Holy Spirit uses *various* words for the sicknesses Christ healed, and it is observable that *νοσος* (*nosos* "sickness") is not in the epistles, nor *μαλακία*,* but *ἀσθενεία* (*astheneia*, "infirmity") is emphasized. From this root we have instructive statements in 2 Cor. 11. 30, 12. 5, 9, 10, Gal. 4. 13, Phil. 2. 26, 27, 1 Tim. 5. 23, 2 Tim. 4. 20, Jas. 5. 14, 15. May it be that the Holy Spirit instructs us as to our Father's usual mode of chastening, and that we may expect He will *often* preserve from certain organic diseases, and grant infirmity, the weakness of our

* Only in Matt. 4. 23, 9. 35, 10. 1.

failing body?*" Is it not possible that He will often preserve from epidemics, and illustrate Psalm 91. 6, as His people pray? The definite use of boils, leprosy, and other forms of disease suggests that God's *sovereignty* has many lessons. We offer this suggestion, though longing that no believers may look down on a beloved brother who appears to be unhealed of an organic disease. When God grants hints, we must *not* assert laws without exceptions.

Many point to apparently real cases of healing as unanswerable arguments. *For the present*, we are willing to acknowledge they may *all* be real. Beloved friends may have all they desire in this matter, *yet something more is needed*. We are not reduced to questioning the genuineness of the mighty works. The Holy Spirit has shown miracles in *two* contexts. *The test is not miracle but truth*. "Wonders" will be connected with "the lie" (2 Thess. 2. 9). God *can* limit, as with Pharaoh's magicians, but it is not for us to say *where* He will limit. It is remarkable that prophecies of the *last days* do not refer to *such* miracles among God's people, though they plentifully make clear a reviving. But miracles, real miracles, sufficiently skilful to aim at seducing the *elect* (Matt. 24. 24) *are* prophesied. Nor can all *easily* detect Satan's methods. The demons said, "The Holy One of God," and an evil spirit was the first to cry out *orthodoxly* concerning "*the way of salvation*" in Europe (Acts 16. 17). Nor does Satan refuse deceitful acceptance of *much* of truth. He proposed a *compromise* to Christ in the wilderness. Unconsciously believers too may say attractive words (Matt. 16. 22), when Satan is working under the surface (23). Hence we must not test by miracle, but by the truth.

Nor is it *surprising* that Satan should heal. Christian Science and other forms of demonism are *not all trickery*. If the devil has much power in oppressing the body, he can *remove* the oppression. And the heathen temples to a god of healing are remarkable, as well as the *serpent*-symbol anciently linked with medicine. We need to be on our guard.

And so, beloved-fellow believers, do not confuse the sinful results of the fall, and God's loving chastisements. Do not generalize, and say that because sicknesses have been sent in a curse, therefore all are the same. Even ordinary things have a *new* purpose to a child of God. The natural man receives food in providence, the believer from a Father's hand. If there is famine, it does not come on an Elijah with the same meaning as it bears to Israel. Let us keep to Scriptural expressions, and as we find *nothing* to imply the confession of illness as evil, and *no* indication of a partly glorified body now, let us rejoice in our Father's loving use of everything, to bring Himself glory in our devoted lives. May this be our joy, as we look forward for our Lord's Coming, and seek to walk in the Spirit.

* A wide term, however, as Luke 5. 15, 13. 11, John 5. 5 may show.

THE FUTURE KINGDOM, And Its Two Parts Revealed in Scripture.

REVERENCE for every word of the Holy Spirit befits a believer. Our beloved Lord spoke, with wondrous love to Nicodemus, yet seemed to refuse the title of *Teacher*, unless *His Deity also were recognized*. Thus He emphasized the need for a birth *from above*, in order to know Him That is True (1 John 5. 20). This surprised the rabbi of Israel, and he asked, "How can a man be born again when he is old?" The Lord's reply took up the very term, and this (often overlooked) seems a primary thought in the change from "see" to "enter" (John 3. 3, 5). Yet, as the words "create" and "make" are not the same in Genesis 1, surely there must be a *fulness* of teaching here. It is true the Lord does *not* say that a man may see *without* entering, and one dreads any *addition* to His language. To form positives from negatives, and negatives from positives, will not glorify God. A misuse of Mark 16. 16 in this connexion comes to mind, and a current misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 14. 3, as if all speaking to edification were "prophecy." But it is evident the Lord would make His people *thoughtful*, and concerned, by such wording. If this had been the inference in Mark 16. 16, to *prevent carelessness as to His will in baptism*, it would have been well. Moreover the very Gospel before us shows a distinction between *seeing* and *entering* (John 20. 5). It is possible to see afar off, though *that* may be a rebuke with *terror* (Isa. 33. 17, 18*), and judgment in John 3 is rather worded as *not to see at all* (verse 36). And it seems clear, that, as by the woman and the three-measures' ephah, the Lord Jesus in Matt. 13. 33 *refers to the earlier Scriptures* (Zech. 5), so is it often. This thought is strengthened, because "water and the Spirit" are before us *together* in Gen. 1. 2, and typically, in Gen. 8. 1, (wind), Ex. 14. 21-31 Ps. 18. 15, 16 ("breath," note also "from above," as John 3. 3). These passages seem to suggest that "birth" here is God's deliverance "out of" the water of *wrath*, with the *quickenings of the Holy Spirit* (Ezek. 37. 9), without which a change of *place*, from the sphere of judgment, would be incomplete:—cf. "There was no breath in them" (Ezek. 37. 8). If this stress on the earlier Scriptures be acknowledged, may not the Lord's allusion in John 3. 5 include Deut. 3. 27,† and similar passages? How solemn it is to be disobedient. How blessed it is to be obedient, by grace.

And now a very remarkable illustration of Scripture comes before us. Our heart has been affected by the unveiling that though all "children" are "heirs of God," they are not said to be "joint-heirs with Christ" unless they "suffer with Him."§ To

* See Num. 24. 17. † Num. 20. 24 contains the same verb in the Greek.

§ A leaflet on Rom. 8. 17 gladly sent.

"reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 17) must not be confused with the reigning together of 2 Tim. 2. 12. Thus there are *two* parts of the Kingdom. It would seem impossible to the writer to give full value to the words of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52, 1 Thess. 4. 13-18, if *some* dear children of God will not be caught up. The second death is linked with *Hades* after the millennium (Rev. 20. 14), and Hades is now viewed as a *prison* (Rev. 1. 18), nor are saved ones said to go to Hades when they fall asleep now. They are, it would seem, in heaven,* and "under the altar," (of incense, in the antitypical Holy Place). Surely there are no unready ones among those who have put off *this* tabernacle, *wherein* we groan. There is no suggestion that they *still* grieve, by sin. And *living* saints are to be brought to repentance, and made ready ere Christ comes (Matt. 25. 10). *For this the Lord waits* (2 Pet. 3. 9, longsuffering toward *believers*). Hence "to them that look for Him" does not shut out any persons, but shuts out the *unappointed* time, and spurs on the Lord's redeemed, to *become ready* and encourage others (Rev. 19. 7).† Thus we shall find room for the fulfilment of the Scripture words as to those "called least *in* the Kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. 5. 19), quite distinguished from any *outside* (20); and room for the vessels to dishonour, albeit "*in*" the *future* great house of that Day (2 Tim. 2. 20‡), and (may it not be ?), for any shamed away *in* the Lord's presence (1 John 2. 28, the preposition is important, Luke 14. 9 illustrates). This is deeply solemn. "So shall we ever be *with* the Lord" is precious, but this is not all. 1 Thess. 5. 10 implies that those who do *not* "watch"§ now fully, will *live* with Him, if redeemed. Only the flesh will take "advantage" of such grace. Surely none who *love* Him will wish to ask how far they can stretch the tether, and leave Him Who yearns over them. Such an attitude would suggest no real *knowledge of Himself* at all. But the promise of 1 Thess. 5. 10 is *not* reigning on the earth. The meek shall *inherit* and the righteous be recompensed in the *earth* (Prov. 11. 31 Matt. 5. 5) in accord with practical righteousness and works (Rev. 22. 12). Hence the stress on *cities* in Luke 19 and on the *land* for Abraham,|| on honour in Palestine for David, and on thrones among Israel for those who continued with Christ in His temptations amidst the same nation (Luke 22. 28-30). There is an exactness of love in the manner of reward.

To return to Moses. He was not allowed to enter "the good land that was *beyond Jordan*" (Deut. 3. 25). And this has been taken to illustrate entire exclusion from the kingdom. But is

* "Every" in Eph. 3. 5 would not alter this. Note Phil. 1. 23.

† See a leaflet "Two Portions of Truth United."

‡ The *greatness* accounts for the gold and therefore is good: quite contrasted with Christendom now.

§ Present tense—continuance.

|| 'Tis not only "thy Seed," but "unto thee and to thy Seed."

it so? * Apart from the fact that we must not use types as proofs, unless the Holy Spirit shows them to be such, it is often overlooked that Moses was then in part of the land promised in covenant love (Gen. 15. 18), part of the Kingdom, *yet to be possessed* (Ps. 72. 8, Isa. 11. 14). Doubtless, it is suggestive that in the type of resurrection, on the transfiguration mount, he appeared in *glory*, to show how the Lord can grant rewards in that day for the heart-broken *confession* of failure, even though we are chastened sorely now. But the Holy Spirit does not tell us *where* the transfiguration mount was, that we may rather be humbled to realize the nature of exclusion even in that Day. Not from all, but yet from *part*. Not from the inheritance of "the many," but from the spoil for the "strong" (Isa. 53. 12, lit:). The Lord will not be *unrighteous* in giving *beyond* and contrary to works. There must be a real manifestation of real loss, and we need to feel this.† The Lord's perfect love to Moses is clear, but He did not excuse or go back from His Word.§

It would seem, therefore, to the writer that the Lord Jesus *refers* to the exclusion from one part of the Kingdom, by *His* changed word in John 3, in accord with the other Scriptures noticed. Hence he submits the suggestion to beloved ones in Christ, for our true humbling. Not that we can change the words, and say that any are born from above, who are not born *out of* the water of wrath. But it would seem that our beloved Lord shows that a deeper sense of wrath, and thus of grace (Luke 7. 47) is the background for faithful service which will involve the waters of tribulation (Ps. 18. 16, 17 includes these), and thus be to His *joy* (Matt. 25. 21, 23, 1 Pet. 1. 7). May this, indeed, be blessed in our heart-experience, while we seek to walk, as pilgrims and strangers, in the Spirit, looking for that blessed Hope.

The Lord's Supper and An Assembly.

THE writer has been impressed, against natural inclination, by seeing that the Holy Spirit links the breaking of bread in 1 Corinthians with a *gathering* of saints, and not with the dear scattered ones in all Achaia. There is *no* suggestion in the

* He is distinguished from those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness (Heb. 3. 17). "*The land of Moab*" is God's description: part of the district appointed or Israel, yet not *then* given to them (Deut. 34. 5, 6). The language in verse 4 is important. The part into which he did not enter was the land of sojourning and pilgrim strain (Heb. 11. 9). Moab was the other portion, not linked with their earthly trials or Israel's warfare.

† The English word "suffer" (physical pain) is not in the original of 1 Cor. 3. 15, but the solemnity to a perfected saint, viewing all from God's standpoint will be far more than we can understand now. Heart-concern not to suffer loss should fill our hearts, out of love to the Lord.

§ Surely Deut. 3. 27, as Rev. 2 and 3, is meant to be an anticipation of the Judgment Seat of Christ, which, as our Father's chastisement now, we must not "make light" (Heb. 12. 5).

Epistle that these broke bread "in every place." We dare not add to His words. There *is only one* breaking of the bread contemplated in 1 Corinthians. *Afterwards* there became a church quite near at Cenchraea, and this is refreshing (Rom. 16. 1). But the Lord makes clear in Matthew 18 that 2 or 3 cannot be called an assembly, or act as such. Nor is there anything in His arrangements for the Lord's supper after Pentecost to hint anything contrasted. At first this seems a trial; and it should *remain*, as an *exercise of heart*. But it may also become a *spur* to earnest prayer for the Lord's increase, AND a godly corrective of the tendency to want to push forward *one* part of the Lord's will, and omit other parts,—a tendency which leads into still further disproportion and failure.

Moreover, do we not see His loving wisdom in this matter? What a strain would have been put on 2 or 3 believers to *welcome or refuse* any claiming to be "disciples." One realizes the Holy Spirit *could* give to all such a supernatural discernment, but God has not thus promised such gifts, and any who know the precious, but difficult, experiences, linked with following the Lord, must be grateful for the caution, and mutual help before the Lord, which *His* gracious arrangement encouraged and still encourages. If believers are willing for all His will, and, like Abraham, take steps in simple obedience, the Lord will raise up assemblies, and teachers too, after His own heart. But we dare not boast of a false gift, or hurry proudly. The sad hesitancy of some in remaining amid organized error, and of others with natural self-confidence, should make God's beloved people who are exercised, very lowly, that they may not dishonour *His* Name. Wondrous trusteeship—*His* Name.

* Leaflets gladly sent.

"If the Lord Will":—

By the grace of God we would still earnestly invite young men, and older ones, in the City, who are able to reach Minorities as near to 6. 30 as possible, to gatherings unto His glory (John Pearce Restaurant, 2, Minorities, 2nd floor, side entrance). Our desire is that He may be exalted in the praise and drawing together of His redeemed people (Ps 50. 23, John 14. 15). Further particulars gladly given, also of Greek and Hebrew helps before (or after) the meeting. Suggested subjects during FEBRUARY:—

2nd. Thoughts Suggested by the Present Discontent.

9th. The Work of Satan, as Revealed in Scripture.

16th. Question Evening

(E.g. One dear friend has enquired *re* Wine in John 2).

23rd. Ecclesiastes, with Contrasts.

Further Literature on Prophetic Subjects, and on the precious teaching of Tit. 2. 13, gladly sent to any concerned. Enquiries as to Typewritten Notes also welcome to God's glory.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

Vol. xxiv. No. 3.

Mar: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."
(Eph. 6. 6, 7).

A Word of Introduction.

BY the grace of God we would encourage His blood-bought people in the path of HIS WILL. It is a wondrous thing to be REDEEMED. We must not use the word glibly. Those "IN Christ Jesus" are called to please Him. Their HEARTS are to be devoted. Service must not become a drudgery. The characteristic of the sacrifices of old was "BEFORE the Lord" and "UNTO the Lord," and this should be the mark of His people now. It is a privilege to be WITH HIM, even if this means rejection. The joy of the Lord Jesus was the Father's will (Ps. 40. 6-8), and His people are privileged to "follow His steps." Hence these pages are NOT to amuse, NOR to work up a human organization, but SIMPLY to urge the privilege and responsibility of redeemed ones to encourage one another TO WELCOME HIS WILL, and to have HIS WILL AS THEIRS ALSO. THIS is walking with God: THIS is walking in the Spirit. Everything else, however expressive in words, is NOT the love that pleases Him Who gave HIMSELF for altogether unworthy sinners.

HOW SHALL WE VIEW SUFFERING LOSS, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THAT DAY?

"WE know not what we shall be": thanks be unto God, the verse does not end there (1 John 3. 2). We have a blessed prospect. Surely saved ones should rejoice. "Like

Him." Wondrous. "See Him." All by grace. It is a privilege even now to begin to look at much from God's standpoint. But if, by grace, we thus do, we *still* need a *chastening* because of sin that *dwelleth* in us, in order that our realization of His standpoint may become more complete. When, however, we reach the glory we shall be perfected, and it will be ours to love with an unhindered love. Marvellous prospect, *in His love*. Hence we shall *hate sin* intensely, at the very moment when we *rejoice* to see the burning up of works, even our own, which have in any way displeased our Lord. Such rejoicing to-day would, and must, have many ACCOMPANIMENTS of *sorrow*, of a kind specially appertaining to our *present* need of chastening. It is *this* change in the future which illustrates how the knowledge of God's wrath will not mar eternal blessedness with Him. It *would* affect this overflowing of delight *to-day*, causing tears of a character which we cannot connect with the glory.

Hence the believer's position, when delivered from this body, (in which he groans, because he does not fully please his Lord), will be one of peculiar privileges, which will alter much. That the *resurrection* standpoint is changed, Luke 20. 36 shows. The believer now may feel burdened awhile when he thinks, though leaving all in God's hands, of the number whom he hardly expects to see again. And this thought would be overwhelming apart from a confidence in God's *perfect* sovereignty.* Undoubtedly such an experience may be used now, by the work of the Holy Spirit, to stir up to spiritual intensity for those still alive. But *such* an experience will not be needed when all laziness will be past. So is it as to all. We need to be careful now lest Satan substitute remorse for repentance, or, by a swing of the pendulum, introduce carelessness because the sin is so graciously forgiven, (contrast Paul's attitude even as to sins of unconverted days, 1 Cor. 15. 9, 1 Tim. 1. 13). The suggestion, misinterpreting Matt. 25, that any raised *believer*, with a body of glory, and *without* the law of sin and death in his members, will have not one good word to say of his Lord, is strangely without foundation. It quite ignores the Lord's teaching as to false professors in the 99 sheep of Luke 15, called *just* persons, and the "wicked and slothful servant" of Matt. 25. 26. In fact it leaves *no room* for professing Christians. We shall *then* know as we were known, and be for ever *with* the Lord. The losses at the Judgment Seat of Christ *will* be serious (1 Cor. 3. 15), but if, even now, when prayerfully humble, we would *rather* have *our* works burned up than our Lord dishonoured, shall we be less spiritual then? Is the glory less heavenlike than the present, and will the deliverance be followed by outbursts of temper, and liability to temptation? The difference is, that holy horror at sin now, must bring certain feelings which we cannot transplant to glory,

* See a leaflet "Election and Regeneration."

because they will not be *needed*, when there will be *nothing* in us against which to maintain a godly warfare. It is *this* which helps to explain, and is explained by, the references to our gracious God unhindered in His wondrous glory, and *yet* His intense feeling as recorded in Gen. 6. 6. Thus our hearts are blessed by entwined "difficulties," and, brought to feel how we see through a glass darkly, our hearts again enter into the inspired words, "We know not what we shall be," while they would cry fervently, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

A Fuller Sense of Holiness.

MANY of God's children do not *take time* to understand *His* words, *nor* are they sufficiently careful about rightly representing "one another." Hasty conclusions and inferences dishonour the Lord. Before me is a pamphlet, with marks of sincerity, which speaks as if sinlessness were attained, yet the writer all the while seems to misunderstand that which he attacks, in a way which would *trouble the heart* of many who make far lower claims. Indeed, they would be humbled because of *their sin*, and yet he honestly seems to think they excuse sin. In a striking little introduction, moreover, he says, "My pamphlet . . . was published in 1898 in a very crude state—many mistakes." The frankness seems genuine: we praise God for this: the heart, it may be, beats true: but a real sense of sin would say, "Herein is a humble confession of sin, in a booklet that claims its absence." We thank God for the confession, and, indeed, many on *their knees* own His truth. "Arguments" often spoil the heart, and becloud the true condition. No lowly believer would say, "My booklet had no mistakes: it could not have been improved." But *that* is sinlessness. The fact is, beloved friends, many still think that those who Scripturally own their shortcomings plead for overt acts of sin, as a hasty temper, and so forth. They imagine that we feel a child of God *must* still sink thus. *Far otherwise*. What is meant is that even our holiest moments fall short of Christ's perfection, and we depend ever on One Who ever lives to intercede for us. Let it ever be emphasized that Romans 7 does not mean a continual falling, *as many think*, but a realization that, before God, the smallest failure *is* a falling, a real captivity. Paul said "Dross," where many imagine they have nothing but gold. One grain of alloy is *captivity*.

Still it is fitting that we should ask ourselves if our *character* has lacked manifest victory, and thus partly led to this sad misunderstanding. Or have we spoken unguardedly and excusingly, and so helped any misconception? We should ever search *our ways*, and, with more confession of sin, seek *more* triumph, in the Holy Spirit.

* A leaflet "God Repented" gladly sent.

THE TESTIMONY OF DEMONS RECORDED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

"And demons also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And He rebuking suffered them not to speak : for they knew that He was Christ." Luke 4. 41.

"I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

Mark 1. 24.

"And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." Mark 3. 11.

"Jesus, Son of the Most High God." Mark 5. 7.

cf. Matt. 8. 29, Luke 8. 28.

"These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the Way of Salvation." Acts 16. 17.

"And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Acts 19. 15.

Observe also the confession that Christ had *power* to appoint judgment :—destruction and tormenting are parallel (Matt. 8. 29, Luke 4. 34). Further, they were unable to enter the swine without His permission, and they *acknowledged* this. "Before an *appointed time*" in Matt. 8. 29 seems a reference to His future glory. "What have we to do with Thee?" sets forth His contrasted holiness. Yes, "the demons *BELIEVE* and tremble" (Jas. 2. 19).

It appears well, beloved friends, to emphasize these things, for many suggest that miracles, and the confession of Christ prove a work of God. It is clear that the first recorded public testimony in Europe was *demoniacal*. And yet there was a stress on "the way of salvation."

The method of the evil one to advertise God's truth is noteworthy, *both* in connexion with Christ and the apostle. But on *both* occasions it was refused, definitely refused. The demons were willing to say, "Thou art the Son of God." Would not this have impressed many? Would not this have spread the truth? Would not this have seemed a work of God? But Christ was not deceived : He is the Truth. And the apostle, indwelt by the Spirit of the Truth, was on his guard. Oh that we may be more and more thus guarded in these days. The glory of God is linked with spiritual discernment.

It is wonderful to be "*in Christ*"; how devoted His people should be. Redemption is a call to holiness, and without holiness how can we show there is a work of grace at all? Fruit does not make salvation, but proves it.

"Unto Them That are Exercised Thereby"

Heb. 12. 11.

THERE is a deep need to-day that we should know what the Holy Spirit means by being "*exercised*." And not only should we know what is *meant*, but pass along the holy experience. It has been pointed out that there is no virtue in affliction of *itself*. There is no sanctification in suffering of *itself*. If there is to be the *leading* of the Holy Spirit, there must be *also* those who are *being led*. The very word implies a twofoldness. Is it not so with trials? *We need to be exercised : thus* only is there "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," beloved friends, to God's glory.

We are *not* "*exercised*" when we despise or make light of the chastening of the Lord (Heb. 12. 5). If we, in any way, approach the attitude of Isa. 9. 10 there is *no exercise*. On the other hand, if we faint when rebuked, and sink under the load, filled with natural remorse, there is *no spiritual exercise*. Heb. 12. 5 emphasizes this also. For what is *exercise*? Rather, what is *being exercised*? The word denotes a stripping. It occurs in 1 Tim. 4. 7, and Heb. 5. 14,* and thus has a twofold thought—stripping, AND godly activity. The English term "*Gymnastics*," is from this root. How blessed it would be if children of God emphasized *such* gymnastics, instead of imitating the world, in their promotion of human methods to gain adherents. This stripping implies the same thought as 1 Peter 1. 7. We have so much dross (observe also Rev. 3. 18). Let us remember, too, that there may be the melting, and *yet*, after all, the evil not be taken away (cf. the thought in Jer. 6. 29). We may go *back* after the illness, to the same failure, and return to engrossing care for business—after the loss. Trials are not enough. We would not escape *them*, but we would learn our Father's loving lessons, that there may not be merely the *melting*, but the removal of that which is thereby marked out, and able to be removed.

And the thought of holy gymnastics provides the contrast with "*fainting*." We must *not only* lie on our face (Josh. 7. 10). There must be holy *activity*. Oh that it may be so.

The tense, moreover, implies an effect. "To those who *have been exercised thereby*." Patience must have its perfect *work*. Of *what* have we been stripped? *What* have we seen we must gladly give up? The Holy Spirit's stress on laying aside *every weight* comes helpfully in this connexion (Heb. 12. 1). Our Father speaks by all. May our hearts learn the gracious lesson without delay.

Spirituality is not a matter of emotion, but of growing likeness to Christ.

* A solemn contrast in 2 Pet. 2. 14.

The Doom of Earth's Civilization.

"In One Hour is Thy Judgment Come."

"In One Hour So Great Riches is Come to Nought."

"In One Hour is She Made Desolate."

Rev. 18. 10, 17, 19.

A SOLEMN view of the end of this dispensation is set forth in various *parallel* chapters of Revelation, and elsewhere. The unveiling of the last "hour" is a key to many Scripture difficulties.* *Men* are looking for a super-man, and *he will be Antichrist*. And then a brief spell of "prosperity" will be followed by the majestic laying low of earth's vain glories, for the cities of the nations will fall (Rev. 16. 19), and "the Lord of hosts" will "stain the pride of all glory" (Isa. 23. 9). The ephah of Zechariah 5 illustrates *commerce*, and the *merchant-princes* of Isaiah 23. 8 are remarkably before us. This language suggests the *normal tendency* of the last days. The words, "Her *costliness*" ring out in Rev. 18. 19, and we praise God for the contrasted *preciousness* of 1 Pet. 2. 7, and for the city which hath the foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God (Heb. 11. 10). *He will not fail. He does not fail.*

The glories of *men* in general, as the glories of past empires, will *suddenly* be cast down and the Lord *alone* shall be exalted "in that Day." Do not these thoughts, applied by the Holy Spirit, draw our hearts from the *commercial spirit* of this age? The aim of a believer is *not* to get on, but to get understanding (Prov. 4. 7, Jer. 9. 23, 24), and to know Christ (Phil. 3. 10). He does not wish to gain a "position" for his children, thus to expose them more to the snares and attractions of Babylonianism. Many a parent weeps over a worldly family, *after* educating them for that very world, from which he claims to be separated, and aiming at spheres of special temptation, on their going out into that world. We reap what we sow. The whirlpool of "getting on," and of being *like* the world, engulfs many. Are we *afraid* to be separate? Does the blood of Christ mean separation, or not?

"The man of God" is, as 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17 makes plain, the man who is in accord with the Scriptures. How solemn the reminder of 1 Kings 13, where one was "disobedient unto the Word of the Lord" (26). How important to HEAR His voice.

* Leaflets on "The Hour" are still available for earnest *individual* believers, though we have not in hand quantities for distribution.

TWO PORTIONS OF TRUTH UNITED.

- (1). "We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed* in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52).
- (2). "*Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time*" (Heb. 9. 28).
"They that were *ready* went in with Him to the marriage" (Matt. 25. 10).

SOME dear children of God have rightly asserted that all believers on earth when Christ returns shall be caught up to meet Him. Others have rightly emphasized the passages which speak of true preparation first (Rev. 19. 7). But each thought only seems to attack the other. Both ARE in accord with the Lord's plan and in full harmony. There is a danger in the suggestion that if any are "in Christ" they are NOW necessarily looking for Him. The substratum of truth in this expression does not prevent the feeling that such an interpretation is hardly honest to Scripture, robbing it of much practical force. The reproving preciousness of truth must never be forgotten.

There can be no difficulty as to those who have "fallen asleep." Free from the failures that marred earthly life, and conscious, in Paradise, of "that Blessed Hope," they are waiting for Christ's glory to be manifested, whatever they once were.* But there is a real difficulty as to living believers. What is the Scriptural solution?—Is it not a reviving from the Lord, which will make all believers wise and ready,—as Matt. 25 shows? 2 Pet. 3. 9 with its emphatic "usward," or "youward," expressly shows that our beloved Lord is waiting for this revival. Hence the two aspects of truth coincide, and the inferences are indeed helpful. But what are these inferences? The joyous longing of the Lord's people toward Him, and their prayerful expectation of His working, among His own, are increased. Practical godliness is thereby helped, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, a wondrous "intervening event" is implied, which does not hinder true watching, but is itself hindered by the theory that there will be no united revival of saved ones, and that we must not aim beyond individual preparedness. This error seems such an attack on "That Blessed Hope," although quite unintentionally. The often "vexed question" as to the "tribulation," which is not wrath,† but in which saints will be graciously separated from those who merely profess Christ, appears to be solved hereby, to God's glory, and there is nothing to hinder the simple acceptance of the Holy Spirit's word "First" in Rev. 20. 4, 5.

* Their *condition* is readiness (Rev. 6. 11, 14. 13); but *reward*, and *loss* are for deeds previously done in the *EODY* (2 Cor. 5. 10): hence there is perfect righteousness.

† Further Literature on this, and other Scriptural Subjects, (e.g. The Tribulation Distinguished from the Wrath of God, also The Holy Spirit's Guidance in the Epistles as to the Immediate Future), gladly sent.

"We have also more in David than ye."

2 Sam. 19. 43.

"We have no part in David."

2 Sam. 20. 1.

WHO would have thought these to be adjoining verses? Yet so it is. The chapter break veils an important sidelight on the changeableness of the human heart. And so is it still. The man who flatters you to-day will turn against you to-morrow. If young men who feel called to preach God's gospel realized this more, it would be well. Let them never attend to the flatterer, and the *unconscious* flatterer is to be included. As the rocky-ground hearer is enthusiastic, and yet, when tribulation arises, is *immediately* caused to stumble, so is it in many an experience. The Lord Jesus did not misinterpret enthusiasm (Luke 9. 43, 44). He knew how much zeal was superficial. When there is the expressiveness, as with Israel in 2 Sam. 19, there is oftentimes the quick sequence, "So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri" (2 Sam. 20. 2). Children often illustrate this. They are enthusiastic for a while. Parents need to check this tendency: it will grow. Happy are those who have stability, and purpose of heart in the ways of the Lord (Acts 1. 23). Of these we have a type in 2 Sam. 20. "The men of Judah clave unto their king from Jordan even to Jerusalem."

"Therefore will I divide for Him among the many: and with strong ones shall He divide a spoil" (Isa. 53. 12).

What does this mean, beloved readers? Does it not mean what it says? Is there not a twofold dividing, one by God the Father, and the other by the Lord Jesus? Is not the former alone linked with "the many" whose sins He bare, (as the same verse indicates), and the latter limited to those who are *strong*? Cf. Dan. 1. 32. There is *no mention* of a "spoil" in the first dividing. *Every Word of God is purified.* "If children then heirs, heirs of God." There is no doubt as to this. Then the *next* word is *not* "and," it is "but." "BUT *joint heirs with Christ*, IF so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Thanks be unto God for these realities. Let His redeemed ones seek to live as those who long to reign with their still-rejected Lord (2 Tim. 2. 12, Rev. 3. 21). The reproach of Christ is not changed. The welcome of Heb. 13. 13, 14 is not abrogated.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minories (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 4.

April: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"If any one will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7. 17.

"The meek will He teach His way." Ps. 25. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the continually enabling grace of God we would send forth these pages. If any receive blessing, the glory is His. If any are not blest, the fault, is ours or theirs. He never makes a mistake. We long that the pages may have His wheat, and not our chaff. His gold, and not our dross: His mind (1 Cor. 2. 16), and not our opinions. The truth is one whole, and precious. We dare not speak glibly of doctrines: the plural is ALWAYS used for evil. God's doctrine is one. Our desire is that Christ may be exalted. 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6 reminds us, in the light of John 16. 14, that this is the object of the Holy Spirit. The "cheapening" of the gospel may suit man's ears, the humanizing of Christ, by speaking of Him familiarly may be popular, but THE GLORY OF CHRIST shines out in Scripture. There is the majesty of the gospel of the grace of God.

The Disciples' Prayer.

**"Forgive us our debts, as we also
forgive our debtors."**

Matt. 6. 12.

MANY beloved children of God unwittingly confuse parts of His truth. Is it not possible that we all oftentimes repeat the words of others, instead of humbly waiting more on God? Undoubtedly those accepted in the Lord Jesus *have been forgiven* (1 John 2. 12), and the simple reason is "His Name's sake." "There is no condemnation to them that are *in Christ*

Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1). And many have, therefore, assumed that the words of Matt. 6. 12 cannot apply to saints of the present dispensation. On similar grounds, some have taken away Rev. 7. 14 from His redeemed now, unmindful of the fact that this is the *first view* (in Rev.) of the Lord's people *personally* in heaven.* But our "preconceived notions" must not question God's words. Is it not possible that many have overlooked that their interpretation would undermine the foundation of *grace* altogether, for if words are used here which would suit others, but are too legalistic for us, are there *two ways of salvation*? If ANY are forgiven because of works, *grace* is made void. This is a dangerous inference, beloved friends.

Most of the difficulty has arisen because of an assumption that the *only gospel* which mentions the *church*, and "the kingdom of the heavens" (preparing for the wording of Eph. 1. 3), is *Jewish*. And so the words "our Father" are unwisely overlooked. 'Tis *our Father's* forgiveness. But *that is not* the legal forgiveness we have received. If it were, there would be a ground for the universal fatherhood of God, since it would assume that Christ took *wrath* to give us our Father's forgiveness. But surely the forgiveness of *the family* was no more substitutionarily borne than the *chastisement of the family*. Christ did not bear *our Father's* chastisement for us. This would be *our loss*.

And, further, those who have raised honest objections would surely not wish to suggest that while they regard iniquity in their heart, the Lord will hear them (Ps. 66. 18). In other words, they themselves acknowledge, in accord with true holiness, that the forgiveness of THE HOME is *as we forgive*. Nor would it be a godly home otherwise. The principle of Matt. 18. 34, 35 applies. There is not the slightest hint there of the giving back of the first forgiven debt (verses 24 and 32). *Another* form of the word is used, i.e., *exactly as in verse 30*. And the Father's chastening is linked with real pain. An extreme case is seen in 1 Cor. 5. 5. Hence the Lord Jesus wondrously draws His people to loving forgiveness of others whenever they pray. 'Tis the same in Mark 11. 25, and we have the emphasis repeated in Luke 11. 4. This loving urgency is for our true welfare. We often rob ourselves and dishonour Him by a wrong attitude, unjudged, in prayer. More love is needed, and not only then, but before and *always*. Love is *never* bitter, nor bad-tempered. "Till he should pay back all that is *being owed*," PRESENT tense. His brother's real debt to him, *wrongly treated*, has involved him in a *similar debt* before the Father, because he has been unmerciful. And there must be righteousness in the home. "Tormenters" to the unsaved can only bring wrath, because there is no gold, but *fiery* troubles

* The fact that "one of the elders" could speak to John (Rev. 7. 13) seems to show clearly *they* are real individuals, i.e. heavenly beings so named.

* A leaflet gladly sent.

for *saints* are to bring out His gold *in pain*. Hence Matthew 6. 12 reminds us that we have debtors. Others *do* sin against us. They are unkind, and selfish, and so forth. But we must *not* feel any unkindness. *We are not to act as judges*. If we were the Lord's executive thus, we should punish, but, in *this* matter, we are bidden to treat them *as we wish to be treated, in the family*. A great contrast with legal authority: thus befitting to the *present* dispensation. The Lord appointed of old that the *Judge* should exact an eye for an eye,* but we are to have no such function. Thus this is *not* Judaism. *Real* "debtors" are to be forgiven, in the Spirit.

And *our sins are* "debts." Grace never excuses. There are "*dues*" in the home. This word is from the root "to owe." Many alas, dislike "ought" in the *family* of God, but a *godly* family delights in His "ought," and *love* transforms the view of it, or rather takes God's view of it, and finds "ought" a blessing and a privilege. "*Bondage*" is when the child is out of harmony with the Father.

The Individuality of the Gospel.

IF I am among the called of Jesus Christ, I am not to view myself merely as an unknown unit in a mighty throng. "The Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*." There was joy in heaven when *one* sinner repented, and I was brought to know my priceless Saviour. And now, God has not merely put me with a large number, to show indefinite love. A Mephibosheth is called to sit at the King's table, nor is he only "as" one of the King's sons. The privilege of Enoch is not a privilege denied to me. Enoch *personally* walked with God. And others, as well as Paul, may say, "*My God*." "We will come unto *him*, and make our abode with *him*" has a rich individual note. Not the note of personal pride. Not the note that *forgets* others. When there is *this* vain thought, *He* reminds of the footsteps of the *flock*. The *bride* is not individual, the *assembly* is not individual. 'Tis not *only*, "when *thou* prayest," but also, "when *ye* pray." If we love Him, we must love one another, and Eph. 5. 25 is as true as Gal. 2. 20. Many dangers beset us if we omit one part of Scripture for another. Disproportion is sin. But the individual love of God is precious, and there should be the response of personal affection in its true intimacy. Reverent nearness is to be cultivated. God is *not* the FAR AWAY UNKNOWN ONE, of Confucianism, nor the ALL-PERVADING IMPERSONAL SOURCE, of Hinduism, nor the one who has *not* the name "Father" among the ninety nine names given Him in Mohammedanism. He is really the Father of His people, and His ears are open to their cry. And He desires us to act in consciousness of His personal interest. As soon as the attributes of God, and His works, become

the centre of thought, rather than *all* in relation to *Himself*, and as soon as the Holy Spirit is almost unconsciously regarded more as an influence than an indwelling Person, we have begun to lose the freshness of communion and power. The Lord has emphasized the personal note in Matt. 28. 20, and again in Rev. 22. 20, as the height of His people's joy.

The Misuse of God's Election.

TRUTH can ever be misused (cf. Jude 4). This is no evidence against truth, but it is a precious call to godly care and Scriptural handling. The Romanist plea that justification by faith leads to licentiousness finds a parallel with some objections glibly raised against other parts of truth. **Blame the flesh that misuses truth, but not the truth.** While we confess that history hardly suggests even so-called Protestant countries have been more licentious than nominal "Catholic" lands, we would be ever on our guard as believers, in Christ, delivered in mercy from lip-profession. Thus, for our heart's joy, as well as that the enemies of the Lord may not blaspheme, we would dread every misuse of His love. So is it with election. History does not indicate that those who have emphasized this, (and it is emphasized in Scripture too),* have been the most careless as to holiness or gospel proclamation, but we would ever "keep ourselves in the love of God,"† and keep ourselves from idols, conscious that His love does not make us irresponsible, but rather responsive. The sovereignty of grace is mighty to attract toward holiness; the life that has been given, in sovereignty to a dead sinner,‡ is a life in harmony with God's will. That which is born of the Spirit cannot be against the Spirit. Inasmuch as Satan frequently tempts along the lines of truth and obedience, in order to gain entrance unobserved, where truth is held, let us be prayerfully concerned never to use election against other parts of God's will for ourselves. It is so much more natural to see others' mistake, but is this wise? Love has never flourished without humility, and nearness to the Lord in experience involves the reverse of pride. Repentance is a holy need, and privilege,—a privilege rich with blessing.

First, election is evidently misused if ever it is made to disparage the discipline of chastisement. A man once said to me, "I know I am a child of God, but a disobedient one," or words to that effect. He spoke of "grace," but the Holy Spirit shows that, if there is life, there must be fruit (cf. Tit. 2. 11 with 12). The parallel of the Sower and John 15† are definite. A "careless backslider" is usually a misnomer. But we, too, need to hear the words "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (Heb. 12. 5).

* Birth from above (regeneration) is one of the strongest proofs of election, and when any FULLY acknowledge Eph. 2. 3, 4 much of God's teaching become clear at once.

† Leaflet on application.

Do not make little of His pain-causing love. If we are not ashamed, we are worldlike (Jer. 8. 10). God's teaching is promised to those who are ashamed (Ezek. 43. 11).

Secondly, and this is linked, election is not to make us glib in TALKING OF THE FLESH, when we have sinned. These paragraphs are not addressed to unsaved professors, but the writer would desire to say, with fervency, again and again, that many are not really saved at all, if the perfect words of Christ in Matt. 13. 18. 23, and John 10. 27 stand. "Talkativeness" is often a mark of an unsaved soul: the flesh loves "comfortable" doctrine, and stalks about in pride. Oh for humility and repentance, in our own lives. Let us never, never, NEVER use election to argue lightly that the unchanged flesh in us does the sin, and that we cannot help it. Sin must be judged and hated. Romans 7 is deeply searching. If we know electing grace we should live a life of victory in the Spirit.

Thirdly, election is not to blunt the sound of truth as to THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST (2 Cor. 3. 15). Reaping corruption is a reality (Gal. 6. 8). To be "called least" is a reality (Matt. 5. 19). The apostle served "with fear and trembling." This does not drive out the love of Christ, but witnesses against self-love. It is so easy to forget the many conditional promises. "If we suffer, we shall also reign together (2 Tim. 2. 12). Rom. 8. 17 does not promise joint heirship with Christ to every believer.* The Judgment Seat of Christ is a fact to affect our daily walk (Jas. 2. 12). If it were not strict, it would not be just.

Fourthly, the sovereignty of God in grace is not to be misused against godly activity. If one says, "The Lord will save," and does not give time and money to reach the unsaved (Rom. 10. 14) is it not evil? If one says, "The Lord's hand is not shortened," and omits fervent prayer (Rom. 10. 1), is it not evil? If one comforts himself, after losing opportunities for witness, and for "a word in season," that God will not omit His work, is it not evil? As the sovereignty of God, in blessing amid the most unlikely surroundings, (Phil. 1. 18 illustrates), does not warrant our identification, so is it in this matter. The revealed will of God, not His sovereignty, is our rule of life. He can save apart from us, but as our beloved Lord had "need" of an ass delivered from judgment (Ex. 13. 13 is hinted), so has He need of us, and election never puts aside godly obedience, and enthusiasm on the line of His appointment (Matt. 28. 18-20). If I rejoice in His sovereignty to save, I would own the same sovereignty to command. Thanks be unto Him for the balance of truth.

Unsaved sinners may misuse election. Some may vainly argue, "If I am to be saved, I shall be": a sinful frivolity, and unmindful of the degrees of wrath in hell. Others may infer depression,

* See "Conditional or Unconditional."

but election actually invites the heart-broken. These misrepresentations remind us that election is Scripturally preached to saved ones, and to cavillers. The general testimony of the gospel is Christ's work for sinners as such.

Finally, election is not to be pressed with **ONESIDEDNESS**. We are not to forget, for example, prophetic and assembly teaching, nor are we to be "proud" that we see God's free grace,—a miserable caricature, beloved friends, of truly seeing it. Nor are we to "look down" on those in error. It may be, that with greater privileges, we err more in many other ways, and the Judgment Seat of Christ will have many surprises. Oh for earnest self-examination and searching of our ways even now, that, led of the Spirit, we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3. 18.

THE "Anon with Joy Receiveth It."

THESE words, concerning the rocky-ground hearer, are remarkable. The Lord Jesus describes sudden joy in receiving the Word, and shows it is not any evidence at all of good ground. This ground is contrasted with that which bears fruit: it is bad. From Christ's standpoint many emotional conversions are the opposite of a work of God. Here is a key to much of to-day's so-called backsliding. Many have never been really saved.

Nor should believers seek for emotionalism. Naaman expected a dramatic event. God is not bound, but His work is deep and humbling, not theatrical.

The added thought impresses. The ground is not only bad, it is particularly **hard**. But surely emotion is the reverse of hardness? Not always. When a soul hears of Calvary, and says, "I accept Christ, how happy I am to be saved," there is often a cruel selfishness. Has the Son of God suffered intense agony for you, and will you be occupied with your joy of freedom? Where is repentance that means joy in heaven? Where is broken-heartedness? Plainly Christ has diagnosed the case with His own perfect accuracy. "A joyous conversion" without any breaking down indicates hardness. A callous soul is emotionally occupied with its own comfort: but the Lord healeth the broken in heart,* and saves them for His own glory. Oh that some readers may be thus saved even now. Oh that they may behold the love of Christ on Calvary, and weep in heart, over their sins that were His so great burden and agony! Such sorrow, with repentance, reveals the work of GOD.

* We dare not decide how much heart-anguish there should be. Nor can we forget the different sin-offerings, and the poverty-stricken offerer; picturing one with a "poor" realization of Christ. But unless there is deep sorrow for sin, and concern for Christ's glory in salvation, one may well doubt if there is God's work at all.

The Forbearance and Grace of God Distinguished.

"Despisest thou the Riches of His Goodness and Forbearance and Longsuffering?"

"By Grace are ye Saved"

Rom. 2. 4, Eph. 2. 8.

GOD is wonderful, beyond man's understanding. The heavens show His glory (Ps. 19. 1). Every day makes known His might. And not only His might. He is merciful and patient. His tender mercies are over all His works, and He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing (Ps. 145. 9, 16; 104. 27, 28). The animals seek their food from Him (Ps. 104. 21), even though they are lion-like in their strength. The self-sufficient ravens, as well as the doves, depend on Him (Ps. 147. 9, Luke 12. 24). The sun is His Sun (Matt. 5. 45). The sea is His Sea (Ps. 95. 5). The beasts are His beasts (Ps. 50. 10). He calls all the stars by name (Isa. 40. 26). Thus we see that which men have often called God's providence,—His "providing" for His creatures. And as men have sinned against Him, and still live in sin, His bountiful care is a display of His patience. God is Good, and He waits, He endures (Rom. 9. 22), His judgments are still held back. This is the forbearance of God (cf. 1 Pet. 3. 20).

If men really felt this, they would wonder at the longsuffering He shows. They should be ashamed of their misuse of it, for they go on frowardly in the way of their heart (Isa. 57. 17). Solomon wrote thus, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8. 11). And Psalm 50. 21 says, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence."

But there is something beyond forbearance. So many dear children of God have confused this enduring of the vessels of wrath (Rom. 9. 22) with His active sovereign mercy (Rom. 9. 23)* Grace reigns (Rom. 5. 21), and it is by grace we are saved not only spared (Eph. 2. 8).† No one was ever saved by forbearance, through a man's attitude toward God and His clemency will much affect position, and degree of punishment, appointed at God's judgment throne. Romans 2 is very clear as to this. Longsuffering and grace are alike attributes of God (Ex. 34. 6), but the former waits (1 Pet. 3. 20), the latter reveals His might to-day: the

* Contrast "fitted" and "He had afore prepared": also "endured" is not in 23, and a special word is used to emphasize "power," and its future manifestation is before us in 22. Forbearance does NOT remove wrath.

† Observe Rom. 3. 25. Sins were passed over (marg.), or PUT ASIDE, in God's forbearance, when there were TYPICAL sacrifices, but they are PUT AWAY, in omnipotent grace, (for those brought to believe), by the sacrifice of Christ.

former is rather passive, and bears with a man; the latter is, as we have seen, active, and is brought to bear on a man.

In 1 Tim. 1. 16 we see how Christ showed all longsuffering in the case of Paul when a Pharisee, but the apostle emphasizes mercy as to his salvation (verses 13, 16), and the words ring out "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant" (14). "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15. 10). So is it with other saved souls. The longsuffering of God waits, until when it pleases God to reveal His Son (Gal. 1. 16). Grace tarries not for man (Mic. 5. 7). Thus God quickens the dead in sins, and His claiming might is seen (John 6. 39, 45). Longsuffering never quickens: it awaits response. Well may our hearts say, in the Holy Spirit,—"Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift" (2 Cor. 9. 15), and rejoice "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted (graced us) in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 6).

He "Gave Them Leave."

Mark 5. 13.

AN open door is not always a blessing. There is a tremendous danger in self's choice. The demons received their request, and there was soon a choking of the swine in the sea. The troubled sea is linked with their torment too: evil spirits wish for "dry places" (Matt. 12. 43). Did they not ask to their doom? "He said unto them, Go," are the ominous words of Matt. 8. 32. Oh, dear friend, if you love the Lord, be not like legion, but let Him choose your inheritance, and humbly ask in the line and limits of His will. He knows what is best. In the context it is remarkable that we also have the sad request of the majority in that district, and it was granted—"They began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts." The Lord Jesus went away. But the rejected wish belongs to the one delivered man, who "prayed Him that he might be with Him" (Mark 5. 18). But the Lord Himself was leaving, and He gave the man the high honour of home service. Do not complain of a closed door. Do not be merely resigned to it. "In everything give thanks." The Lord has something better than we anticipate, for faith and obedience in the Spirit. If He closes Asia and Bithynia, He knows all about Macedonia (Acts 16. 6, 7, 10) yes, He knows what He will do. Concerning Israel of old it is written, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps. 106. 15). Would you have this soul-leanness? Nay. Then thank Him for disappointments and for the closed doors. His will is better: His will is ever best.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorie (Tues. 6. 39), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 5.

May, 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."
1 Thess. 4. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Holy Spirit moved holy men TO WRITE the Scriptures. And thus we have them in our hands, and before our eyes. And He is willing to apply them still (Rev. 2. 7). Truth is living when He speaks to the living heart. And there is a practical power in the Scriptures. God means His words for every day life. Hence such a verse as the one above. And in the light of Lev. 19. 17 should not believers be more concerned for "one another," till we all come into the unity of the faith? The disregard of differences is lack of love. The overlooking of the sin of human opinions, and of proud exaltation of our own ideas, is lack of love. We all need to be bowed before God, that, instead of "agreeing to differ," we may experience His gracious work, and be drawn to His will and one another. Shall we say "Impossible," and ignore the Holy Spirit's POWER to-day? Shall we desire PERSONAL growth in grace and discernment, and not expect the same collectively? Shall past failure BIND us, or the words of our Lord attract us? His coming is near. His Judgment Seat is real. "And love remembers that He said," Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5. 19). And all to HIS joy (Matt. 25. 21, 23).

SALVATION, and "GOOD MEN OF THIS WORLD."

HERE is a man of kindly disposition and "good moral character," as most say. What does he lack? There is a most serious lack, unless he has been born from above. He lacks the only *good motive* for a right action, and a wrong motive vitiates the whole. The sin of putting fellow creatures in the foreground, and God in the background, and of making untrue God's testimony as to our sinfulness, is a *real sin*. And love to a fellow-man is *not* truly love if it is unmindful of his eternity. Yet we do not ignore the goodness of the flesh (Isa. 40. 6). It is *not* ugly. It may bring a *lengthening* of tranquillity (Dan. 4. 27), and there are degrees of punishment in hell, *according to works*.* But it is solemn to be in hell at all. *Degrees* of punishment reveal God's justice, but the *least* degree is a *weight*,—and all punishment is eternal. The "goodliness" of man, though useful in this world, is too temporary, AND without a true foundation. It is as "the flower of grass." To-day it is, to-morrow it is cast into the *fire*. Nor does it prepare a soul for the *salvation of God*: on the contrary, the Spirit of God blows on it, when He is leading a soul to Christ: sinners must be heart-broken over their "*best*" (Isa. 40. 7).

Salvation is *not* an evolution, nor based on evolution, but a *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17). Man's "worthiest" before man, and his "*best*" in the sphere of *providence*, are nothing in the sphere of *law*. How vain is the idea that some religious characteristics make acceptance of Christ easier. There are no "likely cases" among those dead in sins: nor can we assume "impossible" cases, (Matt 19. 26). Let us exalt *the God of all grace*, beloved friends. "It is the Spirit That quickeneth." But it may be said, "Here are two men, one with an attractive character who feels unable mentally to acknowledge God's gospel, and another with a continually bad temper, or with a selfish craving for money, yet he owns Christ, and has eternal blessing: is it *fair*?" The difficulty stated thus is deeply important: we dare not ignore it. *Lowering of the standard of holiness is a wicked thing*. We should expect *much* from a real child of God. But there are two fallacies in the objection, both momentous:—

(1) The *human* centre is exalted, and sin against a fellow man is emphasized, but sin against God, making Him to be a liar, is *condoned*. To argue that the man is only mentally opposed is to deny the whole witness of God against the heart, and as to the *genesis* and *inter-relation* of sins.

(2) The unsupported theory is upheld that faith is a mental act, and that the man who says, "I am saved" *is saved*. Scripture

* See a booklet "More Tolerable." Exercised children of God are ever welcome to write for literature on subjects before them.

knows nothing of this doctrine of salvation. Many who are regarded as God's children are *not* His at all (Rom. 8. 9). Though we confess that the Lord knoweth them that are His, *discipleship* is the manifest proof, and by *fruits* are we to know the Lord's people (Matt. 7. 20). The *fruitless* ground in Matt. 13 is not good: the lowest return is thirtyfold. This should make the self righteous to become anxious, but the troubled, sensitive believer should *not* fill his heart with fears. Rather should he flee to his mighty Saviour, and, knowing the power of prayer, humbly claim grace, to show more fully that undeserved grace which he has received (Heb. 4. 16).

Hence, if these fallacies are removed, the position is altogether different. The Judge of all the earth *will* do right, and will take into account every condition and circumstance. But all who are *truly* saved have *something* in their life entirely different from, and beyond, that which is of the natural man. We do not deny God's sovereignty, nor its holy mystery, but the suggestion that a *good man is in hell* is only possible when God's definition of goodness is sinfully attacked. That He *graciously* saves the unworthy is true: we acknowledge a problem here, but it is a problem of *free grace* (Matt. 20. 15). Election wrongs none. The *enormity* of sin against God, when it exists with kindness to humanity, is opposed to-day. This seems a special *aim* of the wicked one, to exalt man and lower God: the climax will soon be Antichrist. Humanity has become everything: and, as we have seen, its very glorification *apart* from a true centre, is inhumanity. In the Lord's strength, we would ever humbly emphasize that "there is none good, but One, that is God" (Matt. 19. 17). Thus our beloved Lord set forth His Deity, and those who are made holy by His finished work may well bow head and heart and worship. A believer cannot understand why such wondrous grace has reached an undeserving one as he is. But he knows that his Redeemer lives, and gratitude causes him to seek to be the means of leading other souls, not to reformation, nor to philosophy, but to Christ.

The Value of An Action.

HOW shall we value anything? The man who lives for this world translates all into pounds, shillings and pence. The student estimates the "knowledge" attained. Yet another has another centre and object, and so forth. But how shall we, if we are children of God, value any work? We think of the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts" of Isa. 6. 3 and the striking parallel in Revelation 4. 8. From the standpoint of *information*, what is there in this constantly repeated utterance? Do not *all in heaven* know already the majesty of God's holiness? Nevertheless, wondrous beings, of sinlessness and glory, are thus *occupying time*. They *cease not*. What does it all mean?

On earth we often estimate "value" from the standpoint of correcting errors, and mending breakages. But there are no *such* needs in the presence of God. Is it possible we have all *missed* the true aim in life, and the true attitude? May not the alabaster box of ointment give us another humbling hint? Human reasoning still says "a waste." Why? The standpoint of the glory of the Lord is *not* realized among men. But, actually, that *alone* is *not waste*: ALL else must be wrapped up therein, or ALL is vain. Henceforth let not our view of life be a mere round of activity for the bread that perisheth, nor with the aim of earthly knowledge, nor having the purpose of dealing with "wear and tear," nor even the benefit of our fellow men. Rather let it be, with much joy, the all-precious object of the *glory of God*. Nought else is high enough for those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Apparent Blessing on Forbidden Proclamation.

Matt. 9. 30, 31.

Mark 1. 44, 45.

IT seemed so natural to these healed men to make known what the Lord had done, just where they pleased. And on other occasions the Lord Himself had approved public testimony. Why not on this? Ah, we must let Him choose, and must not draw our inferences from what He has appointed at another time or to other persons. How helpful is this lesson. We all need to be humbled, and to wait for His counsel.

Apparently there was blessing. Multitudes were impressed. This is deeply important. Again we are not to draw our inferences. His will is good and gladly to be followed. Success does not prove the line of His will. Even "spiritual results" are not evidence.*

I have thought that the Lord may help believing sisters through these passages. At first they wonder at His words concerning silence in 1 Cor. 14, and the inspired limitations of 1 Tim. 2, but is not His will right? Does not He know best? Should we not joyfully acquiesce? And can apparent blessing compensate for pleasing Him, or prove His will is to be changed? No, beloved friends, we would simply please Him Who redeemed us, and lovingly leave results to Himself. Is it not so? There are many other spheres of service beside a platform, and publicity. Many a dear believer has lost thousands of golden opportunities given, while craving for one ungiven. But love happily loves His loving will, and thus He is glorified.

* Many dear children of God seek to argue from effect to cause, when they would honour Him more by working from cause to effect.

"REACTION."

IT is delightful to *know* that God is ever *worthy* of trust, and it is delightful to *trust* Him simply. Having experienced His power in dealing with our sins, and ruin, can we not look to Him for *daily life*? And not only in general, but for *to-day*? Too often we *expect* failure, and actually take the standpoint of "under the sun." *Believers have been born from above*, and should walk in the Spirit.

Satan would ever seek to find a weak point, not in our armour, for *that* is the whole armour of God, but in our use of it. He often tries to "wear out the saints of the Most High" even now; yet varies these tactics by a *sudden* onslaught from all points, as in Job 1. "We are not ignorant of his devices"; but, "Greater is He That is in you than he that is in the world" remains true to-day. The devil often tempts **ALONG THE VERY LINES OF OBEDIENCE**. For example, if one seeks to be *alone* with God, the aim of Satan is to exaggerate this, and spoil Scriptural *fellowship*. If one delights to *talk* with others of the Lord, Satan would diminish *private* prayer, and so forth. That is to say, the tempter often proposes a *disproportion* of something which is right, that those who *hate* manifest sin may be ensnared *unwittingly*. How we need humility, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to detect counterfeit coin, made to look *like* the reality, *as nearly as possible*.

Reaction is a peculiar danger. We find it among men of the world. A heavy mental strain may be followed by a craving for worldly relaxation, and things that would be disapproved at other times may be then excused.* As children of God, we need to guard against this. God has appointed *true reaction*, or "relaxation," in the *rest* of His gift of sleep, to take a precious example. But we must not allow the *flesh* to decide *what* our recreation should be. After a spiritual meeting, of earnest concern and tension, the enemy would oftentimes aim at a certain "mental relief" nominally, by some "lightness": *surely this should rather pain us*. After heavy trials, when we have seen souls hurrying to eternity, and professing believers careless, it is more than easy, unless we are very near the Lord to "relieve" the burden by an "ungirding," and a semi-indifference. We see in 1 Kings 19. 3, 4 *another* form of re-action, when Elijah went so quickly after blessing, *unbidden* (contrast 1 Kings 17. 3, 9)† to the wilderness. The man of God *fell*, even after such earnest faithfulness, amid the tremendous strain (1 Kings 13. 19). Another beacon is in 1 Sam. 27. 1, *so soon after* the victory of faith in the preceding chapter. Self-confidence *after* blessing is

* The world enlarges this: e.g. "light reading," and intoxicating drugs, and many schemes banish the half-felt seriousness of life.

† God's gracious dealing with the case is very suggestive (19. 5-8). Observe, however, the loss (19. 16).

easier than we think. Or we forget to take the physical "overstrain" to the Lord; *and claim protection.*

"Failure" is often used to make us lowly, but encouragement is a sore peril, unless we are *doubly* humble. It is deeply important to *expect* grace with regard to *these varying emergencies*. Even some bearing the Name of the Lord have urged a paper like "Punch," and worldly amusements, for those who may seem "strained" in a life of spending and being spent for Him. 'Tis an outrage on the way of "renewing" which the Holy Spirit has set forth (Rom. 12. 1, 2).

In this connexion we have already noticed God's loving contrasted method,* in His *simple* use of food and sleep with Elijah; and His teaching is clear. He does still use *ordinary* things—"sanctified" (1 Tim. 4. 5). "Reaction" may be brought about through mistaken self-attempts to be very devoted and spiritual, *linked with neglecting* the Lord's gift of sleep (Ps. 127. 2), and the very appointments to eat and drink, to His glory (1 Cor. 10. 31, 32), which we are pondering. The *USUAL tendency*, I grant, is *not* toward under-sleep, *nor* to be careless about His supply of daily food. *Many* dishonour by *over* use, but *some* have grieved the Holy Spirit by undue omission, and have thus, through an unbalancing of godly intentions, brought on a measure of *depression*. The *stress* on love to the Lord is beautiful, and we rejoice in intensity, and giving up even ordinary things at His bidding, but if a believer actually does less for his Lord, through *apparent*, but self-determined, "giving up," there is a peril. And *pride of self-disregard easily enters*. Moreover, if one "copies" another, without the stepping stones to his experience, there may be an invitation to failure, through getting out of personal depth, and acting *beyond personal faith*. The remedy is *not* indifference as to these things, *nor* eating and resting, for even one day, just AS the world, but love's earnestness to find out more exactly our Father's will in each bodily "detail," as in all else. We should pray to be humbly earnest, and also to be kept from undue proportion of time in thinking out food†; and so will He bless, and enable more knowledge of His way. Thus will many "reactions" be avoided to His glory. We are all weaker than we think, and, if a writer lovingly seeks to help others, it must *not* be thought he has reached a goal. Rather, conscious of his Lord's power and of his own imperfection, he would pray to illustrate much more the victory to which he would turn the eyes of his brethren of Christ. And if we are exercised ones, we can and should pray for "one another," and each one feels ready to add especially, "And for me also." Pride never flourishes in view of Calvary: we all have had too little of Job 42 and Isaiah 6.

* We dare limit Him.

† It is possible, dear concerned reader, to be self-occupied with an effort to avoid self-occupation, and to *spend more time for reducing time* spent on food, and to *think much* how we can think *less* about it!

But God draws His blood-bought people from *reaction* to Himself. "Jesus Christ the Same yesterday, *and to-day*, and for ever." There is no provision for reaction, nor for the flesh, only for simple faith. Let the words again ring out—they are the words of the Holy Spirit Who glorifies Christ—"AND TO-DAY."

"PARADOXES."

WHEN the Lord Jesus wrought wondrously, the people were often amazed, and, on one occasion, after reading of their fear, and of glory unto God, we find how they talked of the miracle. They said, "We have seen strange things to-day." Transferred into English the word is "paradoxes"; and the Holy Spirit's report of their attitude must be with some special lesson for us (2 Tim. 3. 16).* What is the word "paradox?" It has two parts, (i, a) beyond, and so, (b) contrary to, (ii) opinion, or thinking.

Surely the works of God in *grace*, as well as the types of those works, when Christ healed the blind, deaf, palsied, and others, are "beyond thinking."

It is here that the natural man fails. He would drag everything down to his opinion, and make *that* the standard. By so doing, he *convicts* himself, for he varies *from himself*, as well as from others.

By searching we cannot find out God, as Zophar rightly said (Job. 11. 7). God must be revealed (Matt. 11. 25-27). And the things of God are not known to the natural man (1 Cor. 2. 14). When any unwisely boast of their *limitation* to "seeing," they illustrate the very Scripture they denounce (John 14. 17).

Grace is BEYOND nature, and BEYOND "thinking." And even nature is BEYOND "thinking." Man is unable to grasp its immensity (Isa. 40. 12). In every way he falters. But that which is beyond opinion is not thereby made "unreal." The fault is in the thinker and the thinking, and the hearts of those redeemed by blood enter into the words, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11. 33). Thus they bow before Him and worship, and praise Him for those things which "Eye hath *not* seen, *nor* ear heard, *neither* have entered into† the heart of man" but which He hath revealed (1 Cor. 2. 9, 10),—ah, and they praise Him for all that He is *Himself*. Well may praise fill the life *at all times*.

* The *Scripture*, i.e. what is *written* by God, is inspired, and *profitable*, whoever *spoke* the words. God would not have *written* them unless there was to be a blessing for His people, and His instruction thereby. Moreover, have we not in Luke 5. 26 the word the Holy Spirit chose, to translate men's utterance, which may have been in Aramaic?

† Literally, "Come up to." God has sent *down* revelation.

"He Attained not unto the Three."

2 Sam. 23. 19, 23.

THESE words mean much to a believer, Abishai was the captain of a second trio, but he fell short of the first: and Benaiah was more honourable than the thirty, "but he attained not to the three." In some respects he may have had special advantages (2 Sam. 8. 15, 1 Kings 2. 35), but he fell short in others.

Our hearts are drawn to ponder the Judgment Seat of Christ. One Greater than David will decide. And how will our service appear then? There will be no rivalry or feeling of envy, but how we long that there may be much to His joy and glory Whose Name we bear. And what are we specially told of the first three? Never would we undervalue their personal prowess AGAINST GREAT FORCES. "The Lord wrought a great victory"; for "THY pound hath gained ten pounds" must ever be the thought (Ps. 115. 1). But "victory" is not the only thing. PERSONAL DEVOTION to David is before us: they break through the Philistines host—to fulfil David's "peremptory command?" Nay, only a wish, BUT THAT WAS ENOUGH. So will it be at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Whole Heart.

TURNING unto the Lord should be with the WHOLE heart (Jer. 29. 13, Ps. 119. 10). How definite is His reproof in Jer. 3. 10, "Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord." He hates lying, and self-seeking, mere imitation of others, and outward form or formality. DEEP feeling is deeply important. Let us hold back nothing from Him. The whole heart should be devoted. Is there any Scriptural use of the word "whole" more common than this? Surely God's emphasis is precious. The Holy Spirit never leads to unreality. If we "keep back" part of anything, not only of the price of a field, we are on dangerous ground (Acts 5. 2, 3). "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart" (Ps. 119. 2).

If we allow a good excuse to hinder morning Bible study we shall always find one: the only safety is prayerful definiteness that an excuse cannot be good.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 6.

June, 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

*"And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof" 1 Chron. 21. 27.
"The people that were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness." Jer. 31. 2.*

A Word of Introduction.

BY the favour of God we can again send forth these pages "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory." Popular subjects, attractive wording?—Nay, God's testimony is humbly set forth that His blood-bought people may please Him. His honour is all important. Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, though conscious of our insufficiency, we do desire to live for Him, and to encourage our brethren in Christ to be distinct from the world, to walk in the Spirit, and to live looking for our Coming Lord.

He Did Not Know WHOM To Thank. An Earnest Word To Serious Agnostics.

THIS is not written for the bold and careless atheist, who loves to pour contempt on that which is dearest to our hearts, and to utter the Name above every name with wounding flippancy. Such a heart attitude is, alas sadly prevalent, but this life is not a mere amusement, and the man who thus makes light of its real mysteries, is plainly drugged and deceived and duped, in some way or other, and seems afraid to take time to think.

But let us find one who is quiet and serious. He may have been saddened by "Christendom's" appalling hollowness, and, alas, has gone away at a tangent, till he says, "I am an agnostic: I wish to be kind to my fellow men; but much is dark before me: I reject revelation, yet not *a priori*: I do not know." Such should surely not resent our definite and conscientious words whenever we meet them. If we feel that, whether in our hearts

or theirs, *all* such ignorance has a *root* joined to *some wrong choice*, we dare not pretend to regard agnosticism only as a mental error. Nor should we be faithful if we glossed over it. To hide truth is not love. We would express, and not disguise, our convictions. A *serious* agnostic will, surely, not desire "beating about the bush." Our longing is that, while we speak of Him Whom our soul loveth, some among those who hear may be caused to receive His revelation within (Matt. 16. 17). This is too real and deep and precious an experience to allow our doubt. And how preciously the knowledge of *Him* solves the otherwise insoluble problems of a ruined world. But, in thus speaking plainly, we would not use abruptness, or lightness, or impatience. All pride denies the whole gospel: all off-handedness dishonours Him Who died for us. It is in love we would be plain.

But, for the present, one special thought is in our mind. One of those for whom we write may express gratitude for a measure of health, and for compensations in his own life, (e.g. the removal of one physical burden at the time of another), and so forth. *But he does not know whom to thank.* He may say, "I am thankful," but to whom? Agnosticism reveals its imperfection, even in the sphere of gratitude, because it deprives us of One to thank for so much. We cannot find a human being who gives to us many things. And this *moral* defect is surely a witness to a thoughtful agnostic *against his system*. The loss is too real to be ignored: it condemns the theory which cannot escape from it. The agnostic who wishes to be *grateful does not know whom to thank*. A simple thought, but how striking and important. How definitely it affects the whole of life.

Man's very being demands God. It cannot have a full orb without Him. Its moral conditions necessitate God, and Scripture reveals the very One Whom we need, and shows the channel of gratitude: nay more, it reveals a call to gratitude beyond measure, in the unveiling of a work beyond measure. Nature reveals beauty, but grace reveals love to the unlovely. Atonement sets forth mercy and truth met together.

We return a moment to the thought of gratitude. Not only does agnosticism fail to show whom to thank. *It cuts at the root of thankfulness by naturalizing all.* It makes gratitude very limited. Many of our *greatest* advantages cannot be attributed to fellow creatures. They are, therefore, to be received as a matter of course! The moral effect cannot be helpful to any: what will be its effect on a child? Apart from the arguing in a circle* of

* Only by *first assuming* that there is no God behind the growth and activities of nature can these things be brought forward as agnostic evidence. It may be said, "A plant acts as if reasoning, *therefore* apparent reasoning does not prove a personal agent," but this argument has no weight unless it dares to *assume* the very thing it aims to show, *viz.*, the act of the plant *without any controlling power*. How does the agnostic KNOW this? Why should it be thought *a priori impossible* for God to work in a plant?

those who instance the regularity of nature as against God, do they not often urge gratitude for *smaller* things, and ingratitude for *larger*? The whole system *lacks* something, and we would earnestly commend this thought to those who feel serious:—and, beyond it, His own gracious mission in that finished work of the Lord Jesus which has fully met our own need. Humbly we can dare to say that we know HIM in Whom we have believed.

—
"For *she was saying*, If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole."

"*He was saying*, Who touched My clothes."

"*His disciples were saying* to Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" Mark 5. 28, 30, 31.

THE Holy Spirit led Mark to use a certain tense of the *same* verb in these *three* sentences. Surely there is Divine emphasis, and Divine helpfulness. We picture the woman with her treasured "secret,"—her half-expectancy of deliverance *when doctors had quite failed*. "She kept on saying" to herself words of encouragement: she would buoy herself up with the self-cherished and oft repeated hope. And *thus* she came near to the Lord. A critical moment! But there was more than a physical touch, there was *faith*. "Thy *faith* hath made thee whole" (verse 34, cf. Jas. 5. 15, *not* the *anointing*, nor the words of the *elders*, but the prayer of *faith*, and *this* both *enlarges and limits* the prayer).

The Lord Jesus spoke. He may have repeated similar words *several* times. And He looked around. The whole message gives a revelation of His loving, *personal* interest, and also reminds us that it *cost* Him something to show His constant love. The healing of bodies and taking of infirmities thus, during His life, when He delivered the distressed, must be distinguished from *atonement*: it was His *active work of grace throughout* (see Matt. 8. 17). "*He was saying*": wondrous words of lovingkindness, to show how He leads to faith's simple *confession* and strengthening.

The disciples, as frequently, were ignorant of His meaning. The *innerness* of His love long remained mysterious to them. How slowly they learnt *His ways*. They thought of the *natural touch*: He dealt with *faith*. And of what do we think, and to whom are we like to-day? Ah, dear friends, this narrative is to search *our* ways, and to make us value Him, and the quiet power of dependent faith, more and more. The Spirit of God still *speaks* through the written words.

Hearing the Rod.

“**E**VEN so, come, Lord Jesus’—and, meanwhile, may I *hear* the rod, and become more like to Him Whose Name I *bear*.” These words occur in a recent article,* and two beloved friends suggested a misprint, “h” for “b”: i.e. “may I *bear* the rod.” This has been used of God to lead to further thought, and one admires the fulness of teaching in the *unusual* expression of the Holy Spirit in Micah 6. How much more is wrapped up in the word “hear.” We *bear* many things: but it has well been said that a child of God is not to be *resigned* to trials. He is to glorify God, and rejoice in all,—whatever He sends (2 Cor. 12 9, 10).

But *how* can we *hear* the rod? Does a rod *speak*? Wonderful, indeed, is God’s hint of love. HE speaks through circumstances, and His people are not to be occupied with *them*, but looking unto *Him*. “What has My Father to say to me?” And this even as to events that affect thousands, as in Micah 6. We need ears to hear. God’s voice was heard by Elijah *at once* when walking with Him (1 Kings 18. 41 lit: “voice”), but *slowly* when he wandered, at least in its fuller message (19. 11, 12). Have we a quick ear for God speaking in trials? “Sickness” and “loss” will be a burden to us if we look on them otherwise: we may even be tempted to call sickness a curse. Words of complaint will escape from our lips. But if we “hear the rod,” there is no longer a bare circumstance, but a loving Father’s teaching and discipline, exactly suited to our need.

The present-day tendency is to eliminate God. Nature instead of God; laws of nature instead of His control: salvation by “revivalistic” methods instead of by His loving voice (John 5. 25). These things are tendencies of the times. It is true that mere language will not make a man godly. If the trend of to-day is to call the voice of God thunder, whereas, of old, many called thunder the voice of God, we have not thereby proof that most were spiritual. But a *heart*-realization of this attitude is the fruit of salvation. Not with the view of a pantheist; not with the iniquitous exaltation of man to Godhead, but with true gratitude for grace, we *see God in everything*, or rather His hand in and over everything. There is no mere chance. Satan cannot touch Job without God’s permission, not one hair of the head falls to the ground against His will. Hence the blessedness of *hearing* the rod, and of *peace*;—yet humble searching of our ways.

The same principle applies to *Scripture*. That is not only a book, but it is God’s book, and the Holy Spirit still “saith” what has been “written” (Rev. 2. 1, 7). Hence the need for a quickened ear, *aye*, and an *attentive ear*.

* “The Curse of Sickness” reprinted from Jan: and Feb: gladly sent A testimony against the error which calls God’s chastisement, through sickness, a “Curse”

God has wonderful love to His people in *all*. Do not forget this. But God has holy rebukes for His people: they also are part of His love. We must not despise His real *chastening*. Though we hear *Him*, we do not thereby make the rod cease to be one. Grace is gentle, but not indulgent. And the Holy Spirit ever leads to a tender heart. Oh that we may see His Name* (another part of Micah 6. 9), and hear His voice, and be exercised and profited thereby, unto the praise of His glory.

THE LORD JESUS SAID:—

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

“Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.” Matt. 5. 19.

DOES NOT EVERY BELIEVER—

Who, though with godly wishes (which the Lord accepts and honours), **USES LEAVENED BREAD** at the Lord’s Supper—

- Omit His “*This Do*” in its simplicity?
- Open the door for tradition, since if *one* alteration is allowed, which Christendom has made, why draw the line at *other*?
- Shut out any who have a *tender* conscience for their Lord’s exact words?
- Persuade such, (through example), to have a *less* sensitive concern, and to give up this simplicity in the Spirit?

“Though he wist it not” (Lev. 5. 17), the believer has thus four results, at least, of a “little” action, and all are far-reaching. It was not for murder that Paradise was lost, but for *eating* wrongly. The size of sin before man is not its greatness, but the principle of *altering the words of God*. Love would affectionately emphasize the Lord’s “*This do*.” Beloved friends, suffer the word of exhortation: your Saviour *died* for you: will you not refuse to change His loving request?

“Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour and not suffer sin upon him.” Lev. 19. 17.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.” John 13. 17.

“How knoweth This Man letters, having never learned?” John 7. 15.

“Ye call Me Teacher and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am.” John 13. 13.

“Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.” John 6. 45.

* God’s *signature*, as it were. His autograph is on the canvas, if we have eyes to see: there is no mere happening.

"That Rejoice in My Highness."

THERE is all too little of *this* attitude to-day. *Man* boasts of *man*, but the believer should own "all flesh is grass". The fading glory of man should not *attract* a saved soul. A bubble has never *satisfied*. A mirage only deludes and deceives. Man is crushed before the moth. The flower perishes: why should we look to the vanishing glory?

Ah, we turn from *man* to *God*. HE is worthy to be praised (Ps. 145. 3). The mark of "that Day" is "The Lord alone shall be exalted" (Isa. 2 11), and those who are "of the day" should realize this more and more, in advance.

We would REJOICE in His highness as to CREATION. The heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19. 1). We would REJOICE in His highness as to SALVATION. His thoughts are infinitely higher than man's (Isa. 55. 7, 8: let us not narrow the immensity of the natural creation, nor of the new, 2 Cor. 5. 17).

Salvation is not only for our joy: it is "to the praise of the glory of HIS grace" (Eph. 1. 6; 2. 7). We would REJOICE in His highness in SANCTIFICATION (Phil. 3. 21, 4. 19). We would REJOICE in His HIGHNESS as to COMING GLORY:—for His holy wrath is righteous, and the Alleluias of Rev. 19 are right. Never let us degrade the glory of God: never let us belittle HIM.

How Christ Answered A Question.

THE lawyer in Luke 10. 25 asked a question. He wanted, or at least became a type of those who want, **fresh information**. The Lord Jesus in the mode of His reply, as well as its words, has wondrous lessons. "What has been written?" Observe the tense. It has been written and remains. The same stress on Scripture is learnt from His dealing with Satan in the wilderness, and from Luke 16. 29, 31, "They have Moses and the prophets." But there are further words, "How readest thou?" The writing was past, the reading is present. It is a responsibility. Possessions may be unused. Compare, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth" (Matt. 9. 13). And for redeemed ones there is reading, but not only reading. That which was written once has been said oft, and is still being said by the Holy Spirit (Rev. 2. 1, 7 etc.). Thus the Holy Spirit ever takes of the things of Christ. This explains His leading as something very different from emotion of the flesh,—and the putting aside of the Scripture. The thought has struck me forcibly that I have not realized as I should the joy of hearing God's tone before reading a passage in a meeting. And the principle applies in a hundred ways to daily life, and practical godliness there, not only as to a meeting, beloved friends.

"Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?"

Isa. 51. 12.

"TWICE" means emphasis (Gen. 41. 32) and this verse begins with the repeated "I," and the first three words are pronouns exalting Him. Surely God delights to direct His people toward Himself. If we realize what He is, *faith* will be a fruit, and, not only so, *sin* will appear more heinous. Everything depends on a right relation to the LORD.

Then we reach the question quoted above. "Thou" is emphatic. "Who art thou?" We are reminded that *seeming* and *intended* humility may not be *real*. Unconscious pride is a dangerous power. If our "thou" is so large, with a sense of our nothingness, that we forget the might of God is greater, there is spiritual loss. Moses rightly felt his unworthiness in Ex. 3 and 4, but when he persisted, as though God could not use a weak instrument (4. 11-17), he went too far. "Who art thou?" that there should be a *presuming to doubt*. Fear of grieving God is well. But fear of man bringeth a snare. A sense of insufficiency is Divinely approved (1 Cor. 2. 3, 2 Cor. 3. 5), but Satan has a counterfeit. He would make fear eclipse faith. Our unworthiness is to cast us on the Lord. 1 Cor. 2. 3 is not the climax:—"And my speech and my preaching" must follow to God's glory. The apostle dared not to be silent. So in 2 Cor. 3. 5, "But our sufficiency is of God."

'Tis the same with our sins. Satan would "occupy" us with them, to bring down to remorse, that we may be crippled from love's service. God would show us our failures, that we may have godly repentance and victory. He does not show us our sins in isolation. He reveals the precious blood. So is it *ever*. "Who art thou?"—that thou shouldst magnify *thy* weakness. Is it too much for the Lord to use *thee*? Art thou strong enough to defeat His love? *It is to doubt Him*. Thus unbelief and presumption join hands, alas.

The true view of man's weakness affects the whole life. "A man that shall die." Praise God for our living Lord Jesus. Praise God for the indwelling Holy Spirit. What can a man do to us? Let us seek to apportion the right value to *everything*. "I shall not be well for a week." How do you *know*? Is anything too hard for the Lord. "I cannot learn Scripture." What authority have you for saying this? Is past experience to exclude God? If you make up your mind you *cannot*, unbelief may come true. BUT *do not forget* the Lord (13). We often make our own burdens—"And hast feared continually every day." "Casting all your care upon Him" is a blessed experience. Forgetfulness of God makes sin easy. Can we be obstinate while truly remembering Him? Can we lose our temper in the light of Calvary?

Can we be filled with anxiety if we walk *with Him*? O that God may become real in our lives, and that we may not exalt the *minus* of "thou" to undo the *more than plus* of His gracious and precious sufficiency. He could not use Gideon's 10,000, "lest"—(Judg. 7. 2): but used 300, "unarmed," as men would say. His "strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12. 9). Why not trust God *obediently*? Sin is the only hindrance. An earthen vessel is no obstacle, an unclean vessel is.

"Now we call the proud happy."

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Mal. 3. 15, 16.

ARE you a "Now" Christian, in this use of the word, or a "Then" Christian? Moses named his son "Gershom, a stranger there" (not here), for he took the standpoint of that place toward which he looked. Do we take the standpoint of that Day? "Let us who are OF THE DAY be sober." We belong to the coming DAY, if we are in Christ JESUS

"NOW we call the proud happy," when we grumble because we have not what we want NOW. If we feel we have any rights, and thus murmur over our wrongs, we rob ourselves of peace, and rob GOD of glory. "NOW" we would praise amid, and because of, trials (Jas. 1. 2). The Lord Jesus did not say in Matthew 5, "Be resigned" or "Rejoice AFTER." Far otherwise.

"THEN they that feared the Lord." Living like men who knew their God, they could view the present as soon to be past. And those that wait for their Lord can thus endure, as seeing Him Who is Invisible.

Moreover, we have, in the change from "now" to "then," the change from man's talk to the Lord's utterance. "Then they that feared the Lord is His description and His record. Thus He marked, and marks, His approval.

And shall not we seek more of the restfulness of those who live in the light of that Day? Shall not we lay aside every weight? He is the Same, He is Real: there is no mirage in His promises. "Then" is a precious word, and may also suggest how quickly each day passes. Thus everything combines to make us say, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment," and "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The Holy Spirit never led a believer to murmur, or envy: He always leads to humble praise. •

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minories (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 7.

July, 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Prov. 3. 5, 6.

A Word of Introduction.

THE grace of God is permanent. There is no changeableness in His love. It was, and is, impossible for God to lie. Thus His people have a strong encouragement (Heb. 6. 18). It is with this consciousness that we send forth these pages. Merely "popular," they can never be. If we pleased men, we should not be the servants of Christ (Gal. 1. 10). "Amusing," they cannot become, while souls are hurrying to a solemn eternity. But a peace and joy, richer than earth's transient mirth (Prov. 14. 13, Eccl. 2. 2), may well be emphasized, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. The Way of Life, above to the wise, may be humbly, and gladly, set forth, and the statutes of God become songs to His beloved people, as they enjoy an Abraham-like pilgrim life (Ps. 119. 54), and live looking for that Blessed Hope (Tit. 2. 13).

THE BELIEVER AND GOVERNMENT. A FEW THOUGHTS ON ROMANS 13.

SOME beloved children of God appear to miss much of their Lord's instruction for everyday life found here. Indeed, we all must own how we miss its *fulness*, but if any further help seems to be received, it is for the sake of fellow-believers. With this desire the following lines are written. May the Lord be pleased to use them, and may the principles of *humility*, and non-assertiveness of self, which underlie His arrangements, be ours increasingly.

It is so needful that we should not *modify* Divine statements,

even unintentionally. The position of children of God *outside* a share in earth's government is very definitely set forth. In Rom. 12 we see their privilege *not* to avenge themselves: in Rom. 13, however, we behold judgment Divinely entrusted to "the powers that be," i.e. in God's governmental providence. But the sphere of grace, and the kingdom of the heavens is quite distinct. If a believer *even exercises a vote* he breaks through this distinction: one may be a Christian, but his act is not a christian act. And complete *non-resistance*, however unpopular, is appointed. But it may be asked, "What if an authority, as that of Rome, commands sin, e. g. worship of an idol?" The thought of many dear children of God is thus expressed, "Circumstances in which rulers overstep their authority, and in which it becomes necessary for servants of God to say, 'We must obey God rather than man,' are not in view in this passage." The *object* of this command is right,—obedience to the Lord alone. But a few thoughts in this crucial matter may help:—

(1) Do not *all* earthly powers *ever* fall very far short, and likewise "overstep," *again and again*? If a believer is permitted to "withstand" and "resist" on *such* occasions, in what way shall he do this? And *where* is the line to be drawn? If the ruler at any time ceases to be the minister of God to us, when he goes "his own way," since *all* governmental powers have totally failed, the lesson of Isa. 10. 5, 6 is set aside. The principle the Holy Spirit puts before us is illustrated, in *another* sphere, by 2 Cor. 12. 7. (Note also 2 Pet. 2. 10, 11 with Jude 9). Undoubtedly the child of God must humbly *omit*, and *even refuse*, to obey any command against the law of Christ, but this is *not* "resistance." To be *subject* for conscience sake and to *obey*,—are *not* the same. Error in this has led to an *uncertain sound* regarding the Christian's appointed *refusal* to use force, and many young believers have been (mis)led to participate in warfare. They have been told that submission means obedience.

Government IS to be honoured under any circumstances. It remains a part of God's providence, *even if it be that of a Nero*. Though we praise God for many privileges given to conscience in this land, we do not acknowledge authority simply because of these privileges, BUT BECAUSE GOD AUTHORIZES IT. 'Tis the wide question of *His* perfect overruling (Dan. 4. 17, 5. 21). To deny this is sin. "Subjection" is "*arrangement under*." If we make it synonymous with obedience,* we necessarily imply that a believer may sometimes be "insubordinate." The consequence is that God's *wide* command is narrowed, and there will be an unconscious weakening of the stress on verbal inspiration

of difficult commands. Moreover, the door will be opened for a measure of *resistance* in certain cases. But this is **NEVER** entrusted to children of God in the present age. "He doth not resist you" (Jas. 5. 6) is to be their *continual* attitude by grace. The usual word *to obey* is not used of Christian relation to authorities. Every command was to be weighed separately, and obeyed if according to the law of Christ. Any other position would be impossible under a government commanding idolatry. The verb in Tit. 3. 1 is not exactly "to obey," but to be persuaded and ruled by rulership: it is *not the usual term for obedience*. It occurs in Acts 27. 21 as well as 5. 29, and is forceful as to the *meekness* of saints, but the added statement in Tit. 3. 1 ("Every good work") prevents generalizing or indiscriminate carrying out of commands.* Hence the believer *abhors* revolution, *honours* even a persecuting government as God's minister to him, but can only *obey* in accord with the revealed will of God. And the Lord deigns to make His path clear. For instance, the most difficult point, *viz*, taxation is solved (Rom. 13. 7). The believer dare not plead the misuse of money, and claim passive resistance or "part payment!" he must readily pay *all in love to the LORD*. 'Tis an *act of service*. Ordinary actions are transformed, and made spiritual and precious (*cf.* Col. 3. 24).

(2) Linked with the narrowing of the Divine command, (through the identification of subjection and obedience), we find the suggestion as to verse 3 that "the Divine design of government is again here in *view*, and not the abuse of authority by tyrants." Would not this interpretation, unintentionally, invalidate the whole teaching? "The times of the Gentiles" have been marked by much "abuse." But the believer is ever to *submit*, and to see God's hand in all He *allows*. But it may be said, "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" will not fit in with *any other* interpretation. Rather, will it fit in with the suggestion just quoted? Surely not: truly constituted authority, in its higher examples, has *often* disappointed that which is good. The human heart ever illustrates John 3. 19. Shall we withhold recognition of government unless and until it praises good works? We should be attacking God's providence; and in an impossible predicament. The Holy Spirit's principle is as clear as in Heb. 12. 1-11. If a governor persecutes a saint, it is *because* God sees something in that saint which needs the fire. 'Tis *His* refining, just as when Satan was *permitted* to attack Job. We must look beyond all men and circumstances, to God. Hence, we return to the unlimited interpretation, i.e. as God never excuses sin, He commands *complete* obedience to Himself, and,

* ὑποτάσσομαι is "to BE arranged UNDER":

ἰπακονω, "to HEAR under": it is ACTIVE.

The two attitudes may be *found together*: but this does not identify them. The threefold submission of Tit. 2. 5, 9, 3. 1 is suggestive.

* Moreover, the verb to obey is here used *without* any direct object. In Acts, the PERSON to be obeyed is stated. *Not so here*. Thus the *principle* of quiet obedience is shown, but conscience is protected; since the Lord is the decisive Ruler, whenever sin is commanded by a man.

if we rendered this, He would not *unnecessarily* chasten.* Thus an *unlimited* acceptance of the words of Rom. 14. 3, as they stand, would lead to *heart-exercise*, and a conscientious concern before our Father to see His gracious reproof by every circumstance.

(3) This subject has a further bearing. The limiting of Rom. 14. 3 leads to the inference that "the injunctions here laid down in Romans 13 could not apply" under Antichrist. It is said by a reverent writer, "The government of the Man of Sin hereafter will be an entirely different order. It will consist solely of abuse of authority, inasmuch as it will be energized by Satan. This distinction is made clear in 2 Thess. 2, and again in Rev. 13." It would seem that, in the marked *absence* of any Scripture to postpone the tribulation till after the near Coming of our beloved Lord Jesus, this is almost the strongest *inferential* argument. And it should be prayerfully met. Those who earnestly maintain it will surely realize that the testimony of these pages is with a desire for God's glory. It has been said, that 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2 could not apply then. Why not? Let us seek to have Scripture rather than mere feelings. We own the terrible nature of that government. But Rev. 13. 5 rather makes clear that even this is not excepted from God's providential overruling. Its length is most definitely *determined*. And, concerning its climax, the statement is most remarkable, "God hath put in their hearts to *fulfil His will*, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. 17. 17).—Any other aspect would be calamitous beyond measure. If God's control were to be withdrawn *then*, the unveiling of all His authority would be obscured. As the Assyrian was the rod of His anger (Isa. 10. 5), and Nebuchadnezzar His servant (Jer. 25. 9), so *will it be then*. Indeed the strongest terms are used to show that the seasons are appointed by God,—the 1260 days, the 42 months, and the time, times and a half, are under His definite providential working. Rev. 11. 2 illustrates: the court is *given* to the Gentiles. Do the two passages suggested above (2 Thess. 2 and Rev. 13) contain a word against this? No particular verse is instanced. Rather, on the contrary, Rev. 13 emphasizes the word "given" in *two* relations (verses 5, 7, 14, 15a, as well as 2, 4, 15b, 16—ten times in all). The Lord does *not* forsake the earth: He does not abrogate His power, throughout the times of the Gentiles. Daniel 2 affords evidence of this till the very end.†

* We know it may be said, "Then the full realization is never reached." So is it with Prov. 16. 7. But is this remarkable? Promises, as well as commands, may be given to show our need (Rom. 3. 20. Gal. 3. 21, Ezek. 18. 31). Many *promises* await a Millennial fulfilment (e. g. Eph. 6. 3), but their principles have a *sanctifying* power to-day, and lead to the experience of Phil. 3. 14.

† Matt. 22. 7 is instructive. Some have said that the destruction to

But it may be said, "How could we pray for Antichrist and Anti-christian governments, as 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2 appoints?" Is not this question based on an omission of the *added* words, "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty"? Here is the *purpose* of the prayer, and of the praying. "The salvation of those in government is *not* mentioned, though in many cases we include the thought that our Father may save such. But, as we know that "Not many mighty" are called (1 Cor. 1. 26), the objection, raised above, answers itself. 'Tis prayer for a specific purpose *in our experience*, and the godly *silence* implied by the word "peaceable" (*ἡσυχίος*) will need *as much illustration* in the days of Antichrist as at any time (1 Pet. 2. 23). In full foreknowledge, the Holy Spirit has excluded any words of request for salvation, which would be unsuitable when those who have the unalterable "mark of the beast" are in power. Is not this with a purpose? And the language, "a quiet and peaceable life" does not suggest necessarily a comfortable life. As the second word is "silent" (note in the same chapter verses 11 and 12), so the first denotes *stillness*. The *English* may be misunderstood. The stress on absence of complaining (Isa. 53. 7), and on absence of "a voice in government," is for our admonition. It is rather suggestive that a word from the root "quiet" (the word *itself* is not elsewhere in the New Testament), it is used when Ezra sat *astounded* (9. 3, 4), in the Greek translation. It is *this* quietness we are to seek, not a merely physical "advantage." Nor must the further *added* explanation be overlooked, "in all godliness and solemnity." It is a believer's desire that God may overrule *all* to His glory, in the *godly manner* of His people before the world. Christ's attitude, before those judging Him, affords the example we ever need. Hence both Rom. 13 and 1 Tim. 2 have ever a message for believers, calling to spiritual separation from an earthly status, that the Lord's pilgrims may be *KNOWN* by their heavenliness, while they wait expectantly for Him from heaven.

The Lord Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and added, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." He did not need to make *Himself* ready, but, in wondrous love, He gave Himself to make the place ready by His work: yet beyond this thought of the place, how blessed to realize He does say, "I will come again and receive you unto *Myself*." Ah, it must be so, "He gave *Himself*" for His undeserving people, and will present them *TO HIMSELF*.

Jerusalem was the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy concerning *His* Coming. Nay, the King, *not* the King's Son, acts here. The King's Son *sits* waiting (Ps. 110. 1). *Of* the coming of the Lord of the vineyard, *not* His Son, in Matt. 21. 40, 41.

PRIVILEGE AND DUTY.

A PRIVILEGE may be a duty,—a duty of love unto the Lord. And that which has hitherto seemed only a duty may become a privilege. So much depends on a godly standpoint. In ordinary things we fail to realize this. It is my *duty* to sleep, that I may have strength for daily responsibilities. But who speaks of sleep as a duty? Our physical frame calls for it. And our spiritual life calls for many things which are forgotten when we are out of harmony with the Lord's will. A sick man may say, "I must eat a little, though I have no appetite." A healthy man eats to satisfy a need, and the very *taste* of food reminds us that our Father has appointed *joy in duty*. And if we do not enter into the taste, does the food meet the need as well? So is it spiritually. "*O taste and see that the Lord is Good.*" Jer. 15. 16 is parallel. Nor would we omit Ps. 119. 103. Bible study and prayer come to mind. They are parts of the Christian life, as eating is of the physical. The believer who has any experience of God's grace, and who is growing therein (2 Pet. 3. 18), cannot go on without such accompaniments. It is out of place to tell him, "You *must* somehow bring yourself to do a little Bible searching." He longs to feed on the words of truth, and soon he becomes hungry again, and *values the* real refreshment of whatever God has spoken.

It may be bondage to some to refrain from actions whereby many are caused to stumble, but a joy to others. "I don't want to be in bondage," says one, and flatters himself he is free, whereas the bondage exists *already*, even in self's selfishness, which stubbornly holds out against love to brethren who feel christian grief. Praise be unto God for His grace hitherto, but let us not excuse this sin. What a privilege to change standpoint, and to count as a joy that which was hitherto a weariness (Mal. 1. 13), and why? And how? More love to the Lord makes all the difference. An unhealthy Christian has a circle of two-thirds mere duty and one third privilege: a growing Christian may have two thirds privilege, and still remain occupied with one third "duty." But the standpoint of believers, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, toward which we would prayerfully strive, is the identification of privilege and duty, and the radiant joy of the Lord in *all* His will. Thus Christ lived. "I DELIGHT to do Thy will, O My God." And His people were instructed to count it *all joy* when they found themselves amid divers temptations (Jas. 1. 2). They were to look at *things* from their Lord's standpoint, and with a refreshing realization of His precious will in all things. The *joy* set before them was to be so real, even as that which was before *Him* (Heb. 12. 2, Jas. 1. 3). Do not let us seek to make our trials less by getting rid of them as *we think*, but by transforming them, in the more than golden alchemy of the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5. 13, 14).

NEARNESS.

WHAT is *nearness*? Merely physical nearness is not before us. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall *not* come *nigh* thee" (Ps. 91. 7). Ah, dear reader, what does this mean to us? Let us not regard any danger as near, if the Lord pauses over the door. If the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about, the cause of alarm is distant indeed. God can change circumstances, however close they seem, by *His* intervention. And thus the peril is more than distant. "It shall not come *nigh* thee." And there are other spiritual parallels. Christ was "Separate from sinners," though He walked amidst them. Would not we follow in *His* steps? And the solemn counterpart is true. A man may be in godly surroundings, and yet ungodly. How this speaks to those who have been brought up in homes where there is a real measure of love to the Lord, and to those who have heard hundreds of gospel addresses. They may remain far off. "*Nearness*" is not barely physical. The Lord is everywhere, but He is *NIGH* to those who call upon Him in truth (Ps. 145. 18), and the proud He knoweth *afar off* (Ps. 138. 6).

NOT WHAT MEN EXPECT.

GOD'S choice of writers of Scripture is remarkable. An eastern *king* was used to write Ecclesiastes, with 4. 1, and 5. 8, inferentially condemning oppression. We should have thought of Amos, a gatherer of sycomore fruit. In like manner, Paul, with his vast knowledge wrote 1 Cor. 8. 1, under the control of the Holy Spirit. It is natural for one who is uneducated to quote such a verse, without any spiritual feeling. But the Holy Spirit's choice reveals the importance of God's word beyond temperament and circumstances, not only as to inspiration, but as to our daily life. I am afraid of the condition of heart which sees most readily parts of Scripture which apply to some one else.

As a climax, we behold that the Son of God, Who was rich and for our sakes became poor (2 Cor. 8. 9), spoke against earthly settling down in wealth (Luke 6. 24, 18. 24, 25). Remember that He was the Owner of the glory set forth in Rev. 21, with its streets of gold. In man's fallen state, earthly gain is the reverse of gain. The socialist quite misunderstands Christ when profanely claiming Him as such. Matt. 20. 28 and similar verses are quite forgotten, and the meek rejoicing in being oppressed (Matt. 5. 1-12) is as foreign to socialism as to philosophy. But the believer, though conscious of his own shortcomings, sees here a marvellous unfolding of the training now appointed, and of the value of the *coming* reign with his Lord.

"There Hath Not Arisen A Greater Than
John the Baptist."

"John Did No Miracle; But All Things
That John Spake of This Man Were True."

John 10. 41 with Matt. 11. 11.

THESE two verses, prayerfully pondered together, are striking and almost startling. God is not restricted to miracles. Outward signs are not the greatest things. The world craves for display, and thus emotionalism, and modern methods of Christian work find a basis, and would affect even the Lord's dear people. O that the principle underlying 1 Cor. 14. 19 may be taken to heart:—"In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue." How many would really maintain this attitude? How many, not only among those who profess they have the gift of tongues? For in our sphere, beloved friends, the same principle applies. If we have any special privilege that marks "us" out, how often we are tempted to display this a little, or to use it disproportionately. Let love be measured by the "5" rather than "10,000"—for the sake of others. That is love.

And the same principle, laying low the spirit of showing off, is found in 1 Cor. 12. 31, after the references to gifts:—"And yet show I unto you a more excellent way." May our hearts meditate on these things, and be kept from seeking great things for ourselves (Jer. 45. 5). And this means further instruction as to the value of that which abides, even when "we see not our signs."

Moreover, we must not unduly be occupied with the absence of certain glories and with the thought of days of ruin. Spiritual blessings are more than we realize, as Mark 10. 30 shows clearly. We have not "lost all" in days of weakness. The Lord is the Same. Read 1 Cor. 13—love is more than outward works of apparent greatness. If John could be so blessed, without working miracles, let us, while humbled at any gracious chastisements, remember the Holy Spirit remains, and love and devotion are to overflow.

"He THAT hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3. 29. 30.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 8.

August, 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"AS IT IS WRITTEN." (Luke 3. 4).

"THEREIN WAS FOUND WRITTEN." (Neh. 13. 1).

A Word of Introduction.

It is delightful to have God's precious promises written, and to see their fulfilment accordingly. "He is Faithful That promised." We would ever in these pages seek to emphasize this to God's glory, and His people's spiritual profit. Let us also remember that the written words are to guide His people's actions, just as in the days of Nehemiah. The Holy Spirit still brings to remembrance, and impresses the written truth. And in spiritual warfare, we cannot fail to call to mind how the Lord Jesus repeated the witness "It is written!" Do we not need the same emphasis? Are not these days in which we are sometimes prone to forget our need, amid our many privileges. And let us recollect that we need food as well as "proof texts." While we deplore mental higher criticism, let us also beware of that which is of the heart, in daily life, when we omit to carry out the words of the Lord. Sound doctrine must be expressed by godly practice. Love loves to obey.

WHAT is the Gathering of the Tares? And WHEN Will It BE?

"WE must not gather the tares." Some such remark brought a reply to this effect, "No, I would not kill them." And thus we are face to face with the fact that many who bear Christ's Name have fixed this interpretation. *It is taken for granted.* But is it Scriptural? Obviously it is not for

God's people to kill now. The Holy Spirit *refers*, in such a verse as 1 Tim. 5. 19, to Deut. 17. 6, 7, but the *contrasted* discipline of Matt. 18. 16, 17, and 1 Cor. 5. 5 illustrates the *character* of this dispensation. *Here we have no continuing city, no earthly rule or jurisdiction, with penalties.* The "extreme" is exclusion, and *then* there is the prayerful desire of *restoration* (2 Cor. 2. 7): a death sentence did not allow of this.

But can we explain the gathering of the tares *thus*? Is there another explanation? Some have ventured on a different thought, which seems full of danger. They say, "You cannot have a pure assembly." This might be taken to mean *no* exclusion, which would *contradict* Christ's definite words in Matt. 18, (observe Rev. 2. 14, 15), and condemn the Holy Spirit's stress on assembly-cleansing, through Paul. Scripture *never* contradicts Scripture.* Nor can we say, "The tares were not manifest as such." The servants *recognized* the tares, at least in many cases (Matt. 13. 27), *long* before the harvest. Verse 29 may imply *some* were undistinguished, but others were visible. *Not one* was to be removed. The fundamental error of this misinterpretation is that it forgets, "*the field is the world*": it is *not* a local church. There is no parallel. Can there be the continuance of a local assembly without discipline? See Rev. 2. 14, 15.

But, to return to Matt. 13. This *parable only* occurs in one gospel: let us weigh every word. The Lord Jesus never made a mistake in His language. *Every word* is full of meaning. The ENEMY, i.e. Satan, sowed TARES. Then the Lord makes evident that the putting in the ground is *NOT* the beginning of physical life.

Accordingly, the "gathering" is *NOT* death, it is *NOT* manifest judgment, but, on the contrary, *followed* by a remaining *on the earth* in "bundles," and *then* a burning. The object is *burning*, but *that* is not said to be reached at once. The harvest is *not* a moment of time, but "the ending† of the age." That angels definitely work three and a half years before the climax, in preparing the *heavenly* part of the Kingdom is shown by the Holy Spirit, being clear from Rev. 12 §: may there not be a parallel as to the *earthly* sphere?

If then the gathering of the tares is *not* death, and if it *precedes* judgment, and if *binding* comes in between the gathering and the display of wrath, what is the gathering? And what is the binding? It would be altogether wrong to make light of the

* It is evident that *one* field and one only is before us: *all* the servants are connected therewith. There is no thought of a *local* gathering. Nor do angels gather bundles *thence*.

† Only occurs in Matt. 13. 39, 40, 49, 24. 3, 28, 20, Heb. 9. 26. In the last verse "the ending of the ages" seems to embrace the period (3½ years, Luke 13. 6-9) from the manifestation of John 1. 31 to Christ's death.

§ Observe *not* the Lord and His angels as in Matt. 16. 27, 24. 31. The principle of Ps. 110. 1 must be maintained.

Lord's word "first" in Matt. 13. 30. It can have *two* meanings (a) before the wheat (verse 29 implies this), and (b) before binding.

The objection which may have been raised, that the word "first" is not repeated, seems to ignore that *one* mention by Christ is full of meaning. *He* alone has put every word in the *parable* or likeness: but He has not interpreted every word *seriatim*. So with the command to "bind": that is part of the Lord's own "comparison." If He has not explained here, it may be He has done so elsewhere, but omission of explanation is not contradiction. That would involve a "Higher Critical" standpoint. Evidently something very definite takes place *before* the Day of the Lord, with its *fire*. The gathering is "*out of His Kingdom*." How different is the sending forth of Matt. 24. 31, and *that* is linked with "the sign of the Son of Man," and the seeing of *Himself*. There is no hint of this here. He is not manifested.

"His Kingdom" must be a sphere in which He *has* a right, and in which He is at least professedly acknowledged. But 'tis not an *earthly* rule in the present time (John 18. 36). Therefore, inasmuch as "stumbling blocks" and "those that do lawlessness" are *here*, within His Kingdom, it cannot be the *coming* Kingdom; but must it not be *Christendom*, as distinct from heathendom, and as distinct from the view of His true people in their *heavenly* acceptance? 2 Thess. 2. 7 comes to mind. And so we ask—Will *Christendom* exist up to the Day of the Lord? In the light of Rev. 13. 8, 15 it *cannot* thus remain. In the light of Rev. 17. 17 *Christendom*, in its present aspect, ceases before the Lord appears. The beast destroys *Christendom* when he commands, instead of "the *mystery* of lawlessness," the *open* worship of himself the lawless one. Would not this involve the unmasking of the *tares*? Can *lawless* ones be said to remain in Christ's professing Kingdom after this? Are they not *gathered* out at this very time? And does not Antichrist *manifest* this form of iniquity for 3½ years;—exactly the period between the angels' preparatory work in Rev. 12 and the Lord's Coming? The woman of truth is not driven to the wilderness *before*: she is *then* isolated as never before.

But it may be said, "Antichrist makes this *coup d'état*, not the angels." Rev. 13. 5, 7 and 17. 17 give the answer. That which happens is not apart from God's authority. Luke 22. 22 comes to mind, and the *twofold* interpretation of Paul's thorn in the flesh.

This interpretation acknowledges a clear meaning for *each word* of the parable. It explains *why* the growing together is not *allowed* (Matt. 13. 30) after Rev. 12. 12. It shows the stress on "*the appointed time* of the harvest," and on "I will say," for

* Up till that time, the servants are *not* to attempt to "improve" Christendom. This is deeply important. Many organizations ignore this, and at the same time forget 2 Tim. 2. 21, and *Scriptural* gatherings.

the Lord Himself does *not* then come. The word "first" is clear, for the saints are not caught up till the opening of the day of the Lord. But a new phase of the Kingdom of the heavens "then" begins (Matt. 25. 1), apparently, as we have seen, 3½ years before the Day of the Lord, and those who know not the Lord are no longer likened to the *harlot*, but to foolish *virgins*.* The *binding* is with a view to BURNING, and accordingly ALL who bear the mark of the beast will be condemned. 2 Thess. 2. 11 shows this very thought: those who have counterfeited the Lord's people are *bound*, in retribution, with a view to inevitable doom†. "But" the Lord has His wheat: yet Matt. 13. 30 will *not* indicate *when* that is gathered, except that it is *after* the tares. Nor are the angels said to touch the wheat in verse 42. The "then" of 43 fits exactly with other Scriptures, for it prevents any suggestion that the wheat are gathered immediately after the tares. The insertions and omissions of the Holy Spirit are alike parts of inspiration. One thing is certain. When the tares are cast into the fire, "then the righteous shall shine." May the Lord's added practical words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," be graciously used to-day by the Holy Spirit to prevent us from altering the parable to human theories, and also remind us that "correct explanation" is *not enough*. We ever need an ear for our Lord, that we may *please* Him. Prophetic study, *without growth in grace*, may become harmful. How blessed it is for the sheep to hear the Shepherd (John 10. 27). May this be our glad experience, in the leading of the Holy Spirit.

(If the Lord will, available as a leaflet).

"I PRAY FOR THEM: I PRAY NOT FOR THE WORLD."

John 17. 9.

THE Lord uses a special word which seems intended to give a *special view of His prayer*: it is not the same word as in Col. 1. 9, Jas. 1. 5, 6 (we find it in Phil. 4. 3, 1 Thess. 4. 1, 5. 12: "request"). He was *more than* a suppliant: the personal consciousness of His glory shines out in verse 5. How precious are *His prayers*.

Undoubtedly He always asked within the Father's will. Therefore the stress on those given to Him is forcible (6. 37). There was no claiming apart from a gift in the life of Christ. Thus any stealing, beyond the gift, would rob Him of His glory, and, moreover, involves the inference that He will not see all the travail of His soul. But human logic may force this precious portion of truth to the denial of Luke 19. 41. Whenever election is used to

* Contrasted with those who are characterized by doing lawlessness (Matt. 13. 41).

† Individual: "them" agrees with tares not "bundles."

stifle loving concern for souls, it is altogether misapplied. The majesty of His fulfilled petitions (*cf.* Ps. 20. 5) shines forth in Luke 23. 34. We are expressly told of blessing to one of the five for whom He definitely prayed there, and of a *type* of blessing to each of the others (John 19. 23, 24). The definiteness does not detract from the *principle* of this precious verse (Luke 6. 28). *That* is impressive as well: a believer is to be overflowing with love. *Apart from judicial authority, vengeance is malicious selfishness*, and anger is vengeance in its beginning, beloved friends. Oh for a holy watch over our *feelings*.

But there are further precious thoughts in John 17, to affect our humbled hearts. Verse 9 reads with 11, "I pray for them—keep *them*." The Lord's prayer is not for world-improvement, or for unsaved ones to carry out His precepts, but that His people may live for Him. "I pray for *them*": those involved in precious problems *because* of receiving the Lord's words (Matt. 13. 21). Thus the special aspect here those given to Him and *brought to Him*. Those *already* owning His name are before us, and His intercession is for His needy people amid their strains.

Thus we see the Lord's infinite care for His beloved followers. The world has its worldly troubles, but those given to Christ have their peculiar difficulties. Satan would ever oppose them, and the world hates them. Hence the music of the words, "I pray for them." The believer amid his problems is very conscious of his living Lord's intercession. At least he should be. How unwise we are if we lose this restfulness.

Further, may we not learn from this how we should pray for one another? Various epistles show the same. A child of God has a *prayer-share* in the burdens of his fellow believers (Gal. 6. 2). "And for me," said even an apostle (Eph. 6. 19). And the intensity of Rom. 15. 30, 2 Thess. 3. 1 illustrates a general principle. 2 Cor. 1. 11 is never out of date, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us." We little realize how many are the trials that may beset one delivered out from this evil age. Satan knows just *whom* to attack and *how*. Hence the need for reliance on Christ's intercession (Heb. 7. 25), and the delight of our prayer along the lines of His.

The Divine teaching that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, and that His blood is the blood of the Covenant, removes every suggestion of an indefinite atonement. At the same time it answers dispensational errors. Beloved children of God of various dispensations may have been awhile blessed differently, with different "earnests" of the fulness, but all the redeemed shall be "headed up" in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1. 10). His vicarious work involves living union with Himself. And the same precious teaching answers our fears, and calls to holiness of walk. Thus are blessings entwined.

"CRITICISM."

IT is very easy to criticise. It does not require an artist to see a circle is not perfectly drawn. But to see another's error and to avoid error oneself—how different. Pride is easier than we think, and we have need for more and more and more humiliation before God.

The object of criticism must be watched, even though the words are true and helpful. If the aim is nothing beyond criticism itself, it is poor, and worse. Actions should not be with a view to themselves, but to God's glory, and with love because of His glory. Indeed, "criticism" is so often unloving, that one would almost wish to use another word for gracious correction and advice.

The manner of criticism is never unimportant. And manner is not only "what I meant," but "what I appear to others to mean." We are more responsible for wrong, (yet natural), inferences from a wrong manner than we realize.

The swing of the pendulum toward what is regarded as non-criticism may become, in spiritual things, the excusing of evil. Love does not omit to warn because of personal imperfection, but a tangible beam should more often be sought, and pulled out of one's own eye first. When criticizing that which seems a badly drawn circle, let us be careful we are not looking through a very defective pane of glass. What if we make the straight appear crooked, or the crooked more crooked, by something of our own. If we examine our own arguments less carefully than our brother's, we draw near to hypocrisy, and grieve the Holy Spirit. As with all things, believers must be in meekness. They must seek, without pride, the unboasted leading of the Spirit, if they would point out mistakes to the glory of God. Let us search our ways more. We cannot be too lowly.

"No Man Can Serve Two Masters."

A STRIKE, and indeed, any dispute must call God's dear people to prayer, and realisation of the world's unrest. Though such things must needs be, the believer does not view them with indifference. He sees a call to more prayerful concern, more witness while he has opportunity, and more separatedness unto the Lord.

The problem of serving two masters has been illustrated. A contract with an employer *and* a response to a union's demands may be quite different. What shall the man involved do? He holds to one and despises the other. The position of a child of God is simple. He should realize that as a servant of the Lord he must not put himself, or be involved, in a contrary position. Therefore, he does not unite himself with the unions and brotherhoods of men. They are "natural" arrangements, but God has called His people to be supernatural.

It may be that the strictly limited acknowledgment of fault by some in certain trade unions * will make the "worldlike" believer say, "Membership does not now include illegal setting aside of other authority." But *postponement* of resistance does not set aside the principle of agitation; and separation from *partnership* with the unsaved *still* decides the path of a humble Christian. The principles of true love to men, because of love to God, and of meekness, keep him *outside*. One thought however is before us just now, namely the deeply important sidelight on Christ's words as to *two* masters. May our *relation* to Him include everything. We must not take upon ourselves anything that obscures this *one* dependence. We cannot have dual interests. He is our Master. "Ye serve the Lord Christ." Appointed daily business is *within* this sphere. HIS will is to wrap up everything for those bought with a price, even His own precious blood.

"INTERPRETATION."

MANY a dear believer has gone partly astray on some interpretation through a quite unintended modification of some word of God. Thus we see why some praying children of God sadly differ. This is serious and solemn. An interpretation which has become fixed in the mind, and in connexion with which we may have apparently received much blessing, † is brought face to face with some verse of Scripture, which almost seems to support it. One word however represents a difficulty. The unconscious tendency, with us all, is to bring the Scripture to square with the interpretation, instead of being bowed before our Father, and bringing the interpretation to square with the Scripture. Whatever it means, and involves, let us seek grace to avoid this error, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. If it involves waiting further, if it modifies part of "our interpretation," if it brings us to a measure of silence awhile, on the passage concerned, till we see more fully its true

* For this we thank God, and for *every* acknowledgment of fault, and all recognition of the sanctity of a contract. But we dare not overstate. These things are not the reign of peace: the heart of man is still self-centred.

† We do not always know where the blessing lies. A dear child of God may be much refreshed in pondering the privileges of a Christian home, and its responsibilities, and then erroneously think the blessing is linked with the unfounded addition of a "household baptism" which includes infants. Or he may rejoice in the Scriptural stress on Christian-fellowship, and *then* associate the blessing with a mode of gathering which compels silence in parts of truth, for harmonious working. The Lord does not delay His blessing till we see all the truth, else we should never receive it, but we sometimes link it with the *alloy*, whereas it belongs to the *gold*, in our *mingled* service.

bearing, let us be humbly willing even for this, willing to acknowledge we do not know. If we are the Lord's disciples, let our hearts be zealous for every word of God. Half the doctrinal difficulties, and more, among children of God, are simply linked with the danger here noted. The force of a passage is often not "felt," because our interpretation is fixed first. But reverence for His truth is deeply precious, and if we seek that His words alone should be exalted, our interpretations, (in some cases), and our mode of expression, (in others), will be changed. Thus God will be glorified, both in the condition of heart willing for this, and in its fruit. So will He deign to teach us more and more unto His own glory.

**"O Lord, our Lord, how Excellent is
Thy Name in all the Earth."**

Ps. 8. 1, 9.

SOME psalms, as 8, 103, 118, begin and end alike. Doubtless all psalms have a wonderful structure. And this arrangement gives a precious emphasis. The eighth psalm is a night one (hence the stress on the moon and stars), but it looks on to the coming Day:—all things will be under Christ's feet (as Heb. 2 shows). The Lord alone is to be exalted in that Day (Isa. 2. 11). "I will be exalted in the earth," is the prophecy of Ps. 46. 10. We call to mind "Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62. 7). It is important that we should notice this stress. The earth is to acknowledge the Lord Jesus. At the present time, His Name is dishonoured in the earth, but it will not be then. The very earth where Christ was rejected is to be marked by His exaltation. "The meek shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37. 11, Matt. 5. 5). These are not mere dreams.

It is a wondrous privilege to be IN CHRIST. How definitely God's people should manifest the gratitude of UNWORLDLIKE-NESS, unto His praise.

Faith looks at problems from the Lord's standpoint: unbelief looks at the Lord from problems' standpoint. Faith looks through His love at things: unbelief looks through things, as a distorting glass, at His love.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minories (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

If **THE LORD WILL** — Bible Gatherings for ALL who own His precious Name (Aug. 2nd, 3 and 6. 30), 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E. 7. Will you seek to come, and mention to others? O for a holy season of men and women exercised before God.

Vol. xxiv. No. 9.

Sept: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel."
Hos. 13. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

A GAIN, in God's love, we go forward with the desire to send out messages concerning His will. But we are conscious of our need, and conscious how important it is to be in holy dependence on Him. It is a solemn privilege to tell what He has said. But, whether on a platform, or in print, a solemn responsibility. Ah, it is a responsibility to represent Him in a workshop:—anything for Him is wondrous. Deep, deep humility is needed. Only as we are conscious of the Lord's gracious presence, and of a simple obedient desire to please Him, can we expect to be His lowly instruments.

**"I have given them THY WORD;
and the world hath HATED them."**

John 17. 14.

THE world does not always hate religion. It is religious in its own way. It approves honesty as "policy." It applauds respectability. But there is somewhat which raises opposition. And that is "Thy Word." "Thy Word is Truth," says 17. The human will does not like the "legalism" of truth, but the freedom of Judges 21. 25. The term "legalism" is often a catchword, to kill an unanswerable argument for the Lord's appointment. "Call it by a bad name. Then many will fear it." This seems the devil's aim. Beloved children of God, shall we give way to this? Surely our hearts refuse? What if tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word (Matt. 13. 21), shall we be offended?

The Word is so searching, and so comprehensive. "I accept it to a certain extent." Nay, we must acknowledge the authority of the whole, with love's simple "must." A grateful "must" is a beautiful "must." "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them" (John 17. 8). Precious thought. It is enough that we have His words. Faith needs no more. Human reasoning objects in vain. "This is not reasonable," and so forth. There is *nothing* legal when our hearts love that which is appointed. *Condition* decides our standpoint. It is not legalistic to breathe. I do not feel myself "bound" to eat, by some *external* law against which I fight. The law is written in my very feelings, and the law of Christ is in the inward parts of *His people* (Jer. 31. 33).

"I have given them *Thy Word*." Mohammedans rightly say that we are a people who, at least, possessed a Divinely given book. They erroneously add that they are the same. But if only we had a spiritual reverence parallel with their "natural" regard for *their* book! Truly the children of this age are often wiser with a view to their generation than the children of light (Luke 16. 8), and often put us to shame. "I have given them *Thy Word*." And our possession is to be our characteristic. How do we value, and act on, this Word? Is there a reality in our spiritual use thereof? It is blessed to possess the Word of the Lord, and to walk in the Spirit accordingly.

SEEING HIM.

THE women beheld how His body was laid (Luke 23. 55). On the first day they came to see the sepulchre (Matt. 28. 1), and saw the stone rolled away (Mark 16. 4, John 20. 1). They saw the place where the Lord lay, once more (Matt. 28. 6), but *Him* they saw not (Luke 24. 24). Happy indeed were the disciples when they could say, "We have seen the Lord" (John 20. 25). Now we see not with earthly eyes, but, by faith, we can endure like Moses, as seeing Him Who is Invisible (Heb. 11. 27). We are bidden to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18). How wonderful is the encouragement. And in the pages of Scripture we see Him (Heb. 2. 9). Are we enabled by grace to behold His glory?—Ps. 63. 2. Do we see His goings (Ps. 68. 24)? Are our minds more occupied with earthly things than with Him? How frequently must we acknowledge that this is so. Even activity for Christ may soon take us off, and keep us off Himself. We find that we value what we do for Him more than Him for Whom we do it. And different parts of service have their value according as "I like" decides. "He was seen of above 500 brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15. 6) is a beautiful reference to the witness of His resurrection, but if He is seen, in the simple enjoyment of faith, that is the witness we are raised up together with Him (Eph. 2. 6).

GOD'S THOUGHTS AGAINST DECEIT.

THE UNIFORM testimony of Scripture against deceit is deeply important. God's dear people readily acknowledge that He is "a God of truth," and they hate and abhor lying (Ps. 119. 163), but they need to APPLY to every part of daily life, and to be very definite in their testimony against the thought that it is justifiable to "tell" a lie in any way, or on certain occasions, e.g., to SAVE A LIFE. This theory is common in the world, and such untruth in war-time is even regarded as heroic, in order to protect those in danger.* But GOD'S PRINCIPLE is inflexible: we dare not do evil that good may come (Rom. 3. 8). It is in these matters that the believer is shut up to the privilege of appearing mad, and of trusting God AGAINST APPEARANCES, and he is open to the charge of unkind neglect as to others, because THE LAW OF HIS GOD must be ever in his heart (Ps. 37. 31, Dan. 6. 5). Business truthfulness, too, is more far-reaching than many realize, and it is a privilege to see God's testimony as to the tongue, for example, in the often forgotten Book of Proverbs. The Holy Spirit applies the teaching so graciously, but so firmly.

In this connection some NARRATIVES of Scripture have an important bearing against deceit. Genesis 20 is solemnizing. Abraham spoke to himself instead of trusting God (11, cf. 1 Sam. 27. 1). The result was a "scheme" with a MODICUM of truth (12), but the INTENTION was deceit. And thus there was evil before God. It is not in accord with Scripture to mention this at once, but by quiet COMPARISON of Scripture with Scripture we learn God's holy disapproval. And the much latter FRUIT of this sin is seen in Isaac's similar lie (Gen. 26. 7), without the MODICUM of apparent truth, even as Esau INTENSIFIED Isaac's craving for food (Gen. 27. 4, 25. 29-34). This contains a solemn warning to parents: children often reproduce the sadder parts of character.

The chapter just before us witnesses against deceit also. Rebekah† and Jacob schemed, with goodly raiment and goatskin. God kept HIS plan,—HIS ever perfect covenant plan,—and the younger one, (as in the families of Adam, Noah, Terah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph), still received the blessing. The deceit did not secure this: the marvel was rather that it did not undo, but, as with Aaron under Sinai (Ex. 32 after 28, and yet ch. 39), the Lord maintained His way and sovereignly, yet righteously, forgave, though there were solemn "howbeit's" (cf. 2 Sam. 12. 10, 14).

When we reach the book of Joshua we find the mingled fruit of Achan's sin and of the self-confidence of Israel (7. 3), in the defeat at Ai. Then God revealed His power to a humbled people (ch. 8). The gift of spoil was, apparently, a reproof, even as the Lord still grants oftentimes a visible blessing, if we are not able to bear Job's

* This is not surprising, for the natural man holds that the end justifies the means, and strategy in war is *intentionally* to deceive the enemy, by *any* and *every* means.

† A witness against a divided home: parents should be of one mind.

strain, or to rejoice in the thorn in the flesh. An ambush was the Lord's appointment. But He could have dealt with the men of Ai without Joshua's added scheme to bring the men out.* Could He not have made them go forth, as the Syrians heard a sound (2 Kings 7. 6), and then drew their inference? God is not at a loss. But "We will flee before them" was unappointed deceit, and with this intention (Jos. 8. 5, 6). The Lord did not withhold the blessing, any more than when Moses wrongly smote the rock, but He did not justify it, any more than He justified Elisha's USE of a miracle in 2 Kings 6. 18, 19. These things are written for our learning, and it is noteworthy that in 2 Tim. 3. 16 **THREE WORDS OUT OF FOUR** imply a measure of rebuke. We cannot be too humble.

Many have misunderstood the records of Rahab's faith, a little earlier in the same book. We all, alas, **ALLOY** our actions, and it was **NOT FAITH BUT UNBELIEF**, when she said, "The men went out." She had trusted God up till that point: but no one can describe such language as the utterance of faith. Hence the Holy Spirit emphasizes **FAITH**, not alloy, in Hebrews 11, and, when calling attention to works in Jas. 2, expressly mentions **WHAT** the act of faith was, and **LEAVES OUT HER "PLANNING."** Yet it is **EASY** to condemn one just being delivered from heathenism. Let us condemn ourselves. How often have **WE** begun in simple faith, and then mingled "our devices." Well may our Lord say, "If ye have faith, and **DOUBT NOT.**" The great danger is **THE AFTERMATH OF DOUBT.**

Two other women now come before us, Deborah and Jael. We are helped by carefully considering the Holy Spirit's record of Deborah's prophecy. "The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Jud. 4. 9). The word "sell" surely implies in Scripture the **EVIL** action of those thus obtaining. There is no hint that Deborah spoke prophetically in ch. 5. We see God's references to the result of pride by comparing Judg. 6. 4 with 4. 10, and the stress on **SELF** in the song (verse 7) hardly seems of God. But verses 24-27 are crucial and decisive. The prophetically condemned action is here approved, and deceit is commended. Inferentially this illustrates God's record as a **WARNING**; and thus His holy hatred of untruthfulness. May our hearts be responsive,—and responsive to-day. The practical power of Scripture is very precious.

The danger is ever ours, **ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF PERIL.** Unbelief is inventive of deceit. David's bright faith is unseen in 1 Sam. 27, and he plans—without seeking from God. Proverbs 3. 5, 6 would contrast. In wondrous love God extricated him, and Ps. 34 contains not only suited praise, but **SELF REPROOF**, when we notice the heading "He changed **HIS TASTE**" (same word in verse 8), **AND THEN READ VERSE 4** in the light of this. A similar lapse is found, alas, in 2 Sam. 15. 34, **IMMEDIATELY** after the prayer of 31,—even as the children of God faltered **AMID** continued prayer in Acts 12. 16. How

* Cf. the added interpretation with reference to Ps. 69. 25. in Acts 1. 21, excluding Paul. A leaflet, "The Other Apostle" gladly sent.

we need to be kept on our guard.. Doubtless there are **MANY** other Scriptural warnings, and the disciple who wants to please his Lord will remember Peter—after "**WELL-meant**" self-confidence. The Lord's restoration was **TENDER** (Mark 16. 7, John 21. 17), but sin is never excused. Nor can we forget the humbling record of Gal. 2, and the solemn word, "**dissimulation.**" Through fear or influence we too are more easily deceived than we think. "**Dissimulation**"—"even Barnabas." How heart-affecting. May we not be carried away, but walk "**uprightly toward the truth of the gospel**" (verse 14).

Yet even the dear servant of God who detected this sin compromised in Acts 21, as he heard of the thousands who believed, and were zealous for the law. The ominous words sounded forth, "And all may know that . . . thou thyself also walkest orderly, and **KEEP-EST THE LAW**" (24), "The Jews which were of Asia" evidently knew Paul in his **REAL** character more than he then knew himself. They could not imagine he had set up a barrier between himself and Trophimus (29). But this **MISLEADING** attitude, though overruled, brought him to imprisonment. It is impossible to read aright without the preparatory Acts 21. 4. How important to take the Holy Spirit's negative hints, and not to hurry before the Lord's time. We are all weaker than we **THINK.**

And so, beloved friends, we have a fuller realization of God's will for His people, and an evidence that we must not change His gracious condescension and forgiveness, into a defence of the dross we mix with His gold. He may work although we falter, but do we not long to render holier, ever holier, service unto Him? He is a God of truth, and is willing to step in, if His people trust Him simply. When Moses did not scheme, the Lord divided the waters. When Jehoshaphat did not attempt to work out his devices, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, and His hand is not shortened. Simple faith can look to Him. It is not willing to play at bravado—"When they persecute you in this city, flee ye unto another." But there is the quiet dependence on God in flight, not added scheming. These lessons may be needed much, when persecution again breaks over God's beloved people, but **HE WILL NOT FAIL.**

GOD WAITS.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S casting down did not take place for a whole year (Dan. 4. 29). The warning had been given, yet God waited. But when the king **SPAKE**, and while the word was in his mouth, the same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar (verses 30, 31, 33). The power of **WORDS** is thus shown, and we remember the result when Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. "Every idle word that men shall speak" is noticed. "They shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment" (Matt. 12. 36, 37). We little realize how death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18. 21).

God waits. Nineveh was promised 40 days, but when there was

earthly repentance the city was long spared (Jon. 4. 11). The same principle of God's waiting shines out in the words, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15. 16, cf. Rev. 2. 21). Nor can we forget how the Shekinah glory tarried in departing from Jerusalem. Ezekiel's record is affecting. Thus we ever see the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and longsuffering (Rom. 2. 4) : He endures with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (Rom. 9. 22). And we would never complain of this infinite patience. God waits, and, MEANWHILE, we can declare His truth. But He does more than wait—He saves out from a ruined world (Mic. 5. 7). In longsuffering He is, as it were, passive—He endures. In sovereign grace (Rom. 5. 21), He takes the initiative (Phil. 1. 6, 1 John 4. 19).

"IMPOSSIBLE."

IN both the Old Testament and the New are we reminded that God is not a man, not bounded by limitations (Job 42. 2, Jer. 32. 27, Matt. 19. 26). It is deeply important to realize that He is subject to no laws, though He may be pleased to appoint usual modes of working. The theory that regularity in nature is less a miracle than an extraordinary act is based on lack of consideration. The idea that certain things are impossible is surely an impossible one,—in a world of such extraordinary "miracles." And thus a believer is graciously drawn away from theories, and doubt and unbelief. He is drawn to the simplicity of faith. It is enough that God lives and He can do whatever He pleases. Faith has a quiet confidence. "The Word of God is not bound."

But the inference from this is not carelessness. Because God can work miracles, I am not called to miss my train and hope He will enable me to reach my destination. We should not set aside the usual workings of God's wisdom. We must not presume on His love. Can we ignore food and sleep with advantage? Surely not. We receive from His hands, and He normally works thereby. Our hearts would not misapply His omnipotence, or seek to use this against His wisdom. All the attributes of God are in precious harmony.

But the sweetness of His infinite power is realized when, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we are privileged to pray for any, and our prayers seem unanswered. God is STILL Almighty. We need not lose heart.

Again, the choice unveiling of His grace is felt in little things as well as those which are harder. We feel our insufficiency for various parts of service, and our hearts cry out, "Who am I?" And the Lord answers, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and He IS the Same, and the daily giving of daily strength is more wonderful than we realize, and more needful than a sudden supply of power which would OVERWHELM us. We praise God for a multitude of little things, in His TENDER SUPPLY, to help us at the right moment.

"WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE."

Heb. 3. 6, 10. 21.

THIS expression is not only a display of the devotion and unity which should ever exist among God's dear people. It definitely sets forth the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is ever exalted. Moses' glory is that of "the one MADE," contrasted with the Maker (verse 3), and the added testimony, "But He That prepared all things is God" (4), leaves us in no doubt. Incidentally, moreover, we view Moses as part of the one house, in accord with 11. 40 and 12. 23. This is deeply precious. We can understand why Moses esteemed the reproach of CHRIST, and the glory of the Lord Jesus thus continually flashes out. The men who stand out in history, as Abraham, Moses and John the Baptist, have no hesitation in calling attention to ONE, and to His glory. Abraham tells of THE Lamb to come after a typical ram had been offered. Moses speaks of a Prophet to fulfil—everything, that sinners "die not." And John humbly and firmly says, "HE must increase, but I must decrease." There is a concurrent witness to the majesty of Christ.

And so we return to the words, "Whose house are we." "The Son abideth in the house for ever" (John 8. 35), and His people have a fullness of union with Him. If He abides for ever THERE, the house must abide. The loss thereof would be HIS LOSS. Thus He has knit His people's safety and joys with His own honour.

But what about the added "if"? We can never pass over God's "if's" slightly. The Lord means to PROBE our hearts. But He would not terrify our hearts. "If" joined with a future, in the ACCOMPANYING clause, suggests uncertainty as to the future, but joined with a present tense, it uses the present as a precious TEST. And that is the Divine lesson. It is better to be CONCERNED as to the present than to lightly assume all is well. God keeps by godly concern from an ungodly apostasy. The true assurance of His love has never made a man careless, and we would praise Him for this. Oh how wondrous are His methods of dealing with our varied needs. We must not assume we are His house because of doctrinal profession or verbal confession. Holding fast does not make us His house, but absence of holding fast shows we are NOT that precious dwelling place.

The tendency of many in days gone by was variability. And so it is now. The Lord's proof is CONTINUANCE. We hold because we are held, but when there is grace there is a holding. And the response to His love is a precious response. May it be ours, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The blood of Christ is ever emphasized by the Holy Spirit, and he who values not the blood of Christ cannot know the real nature of sin, nor the amazing love of God, nor the meaning of a new creation with new power in spiritual every-day living. A right realization of Christ's atonement is a stepping-stone to a holy walk.

"AND JOAB ANSWERED."

1 Chron. 21. 3.

If there is one thing we do not expect in Joab's character, it is **spirituality**. He was loyal to David year after year, but the loving temperament of the king found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him. A man of determination, (witness his entry into Jebus), a man of skill in warfare, Joab does not shine forth as a man of God. He could not have become the sweet psalmist of Israel. David awakened love. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David" (1 Sam. 18. 1); "All Israel and Judah loved David" (1 Sam. 18. 16); "The people answered, Thou shalt not go forth" (2 Sam. 18. 3); "The men of David swore unto him, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel" (2 Sam. 21. 17). In such language we see ardent affection. Joab was cold and calculating. By his murder of Abner and Amasa we see his "policy": he would take no risks. He was ready to suspect. David was generous.

But **EVEN JOAB** was able to warn David with regard to the numbering of Israel. There was wisdom when he dealt with the king's excessive grief in 2 Sam. 19. 5-8, but that may have been ordinary wisdom. And we must not forget David's sense of **HIS OWN** sin, as the background for the sword not departing from his house (2 Sam. 12. 10). Indeed, he could behold in Absalom's earlier sin, that led to the first flight, the effect of Amnon's sin, and that, in turn, a reminder of his own. The order of the inspired record suggests this.

But in 1 Chron. 21 we have a different narrative. David was carried away by Satan's working, and, apparently, by pride. **EVEN A JOAB MAY SEE SOME SINS OF THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD** earnestly, and may rebuke. Let us realize the **DISHONOUR** of this, but let us not refuse the reproof because Joab gives it. Rather let us be swiftly humbled. Do we need a man of the world to condemn us? Do we not need to walk with God sufficiently to perceive more quickly His will, and to detect more speedily our departure from Him? Oh that we may be enabled to hear God's voice humbly, and to have His guidance, **FIRST**. Many human schemes **ARE** attractive, but let us beware of all that is without **HIS** warrant. Pride is more subtle than we imagine. If Joab answers, let us seek to give up our devices; but is it not better to know God's will **BEFORE** Joab speaks?

It is so important to grow up unto Christ in *all* things. The flesh is glad to "specialize" on certain actions. Spiritual life is never seen by such a condition. If I love *part* of God's will, my love may have *motives far different* from the precious motive of love to Him.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 10.

Oct: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."
John 17. 14, 16.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."
Heb. 3. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the loving kindness of our God we send forth these pages, a little token of His love, and a little testimony for Him. Are evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse? Are many who bear Christ's Name being deceived? Is Satan using every effort to deceive the elect? Should we not be **CONCERNED**? Apart from outward blasphemy, and denial of the very Scriptures, by those who **SAY** they are Christians, do we not behold the tendency for the love of many to wax cold (Matt. 24. 12)? Are not many believers "linked up" with evil which they personally deplore? Is there not a peril in worldliness? Are not many children of God afraid not to compromise with the world's fashions, and, strangely, are not these the very ones who, in slavery, themselves, remark that Christians who avoid such evil are bound by those who emphasize godly neatness? And is there not some fear of this taunt even among earnest believers? Are not the times perilous? Imperceptible departure from God is so easy. **IMMEDIATE** backsliding may be rare. But many who confess the Lord Jesus do many things which they would not have done once, and gradually dull their perception of the heavenly calling. Is it not so? Surely there is a need for a deep reviving, not a merely emotional revivalism, that God may be exalted, as His Word and His indwelling Spirit have the right position in the **DAILY WALK** of those redeemed by precious blood, looking for that Blessed Hope!

THE BELIEVING ONES Or the Privilege and Joy of CONTINUED FAITH.

EVERY word of Scripture is precious, and every distinct grammatical form is used *by the Holy Spirit* with a purpose. There is a holy emphasis on the *present* tense in the usual description of children of God as *believing ones*. We meet it first in Matt. 18. 6, and John 12 has the *same* refreshing encouragement. The mark of a saved one is *abiding faith*. Continuance is the test. The rarer perfect participle is found in John 8. 31 to characterize those who have believed with an *ever-present effect*.* But the usual participle is itself *present*, e.g., John 3. 15, 16, 18, 5. 24, 6. 35, 40, 47. 7. 38, 39, 11. 25. 12. 44, 46, 17. 20 (probably). The prayerful reader will see a *remarkable* repetition. Faith, faith, faith, "we *walk* by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5. 7). A godly *characteristic*, and of the deepest importance, for it is by faith, and not by reasoning, that we can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. The "aorist" is found in John 20. 29: the context illustrates that the *primary* thought there, is *not* so much the continuance of the faith. Rather, a contrast with Thomas is before us. This tense is likewise found in Mark 16. 16, 17: and we would ponder the language. If we had here the *mark of believing ones* generally, throughout the dispensation† would not the *present* have been expected? It is well to be clear on this, *not* to encourage unbelief and seeking to doctors, *but* that "believing ones," may not *despond* if the Lord permits physical trials to-day, and that there may not be the theory of condemning as *unbelievers*, those who do not perform miracles. The Holy Spirit never makes a mistake. We are *not* told that Acts 2. 17, 18 shall mark the end of the dispensation, *any more than the verses 19, 20 marked the beginning*. The *second* fact is often overlooked. Praise be unto God for the works of power. Let us be humbled because of the disunity which was linked with the loss of power. But while beloved children of God are, alas, scattered

* Acts 15. 5. using the same participle, seems to allude to this, to remind us how Satan would seek to hinder *even when there is the fruit of faith*. The power of early prejudice is great. We need to pray for victory in the Holy Spirit. How readily *we* should have assumed that these knew nothing of *faith*. The Lord corrects our inferences.

† It is worthy of prayerful consideration that, where *obedience* is concerned, we have "Unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28. 18-20: *Of*, "Till He come," 1 Cor. 11. 26, a wondrous hint that assemblies will be raised up to keep the Lord's Supper Scripturally even in the last days): but there is *not* the same addition in Mark 16. 19, 20. And a special act of faith seems before us, to remind us that believers must have a *warrant* from the Lord as to miracles: there is not the statement that these signs follow *believing ones*: we cannot demand this "warrant" just as the natural wish pleases. O for more humility. The Lord's hand is *not* shortened. But we must ask in the line of His will.

in various organizations, may there not be unconscious pride in assuming signs which were associated with a united "body" (1 Cor. 12. 13), and which are not promised in the definite precious unveilings of revivals in the closing days? There is need for *more faith*, even amid trials and chastisements: and we would not *crave* for display: godliness needs more emphasis than it receives.

We return to the present tense in Acts 2. 44, 5. 14, 10. 43, 13. 39 (mark the *individual* experience), 22. 19. Again the abiding of faith. But it is fitting to notice the *same* form of the word in Acts 4. 32 as in Mark 16. 16, 17, and also in Acts 11. 17—peculiarly appropriate, linked with the fulfilling of Christ's promise. He has kept His Word so wondrously. Passing through the Scriptures, we notice the stress on the "perfect" tense in Acts 16. 34, 18. 27, 19. 18 and 21. 25. Here the *continuance* in the Lord's Word is graciously brought to the front with the thought of an *effect* or *fruit*. Beloved friends, do we show this, as we should?

The Epistles have a further, and parallel message. The *usual* "present tense" is before us in Rom. 1. 16, 3. 22, 4. 3, 11, 24, 9. 33, 10. 4, 11, 1 Cor. 1. 21, 14. 22, Gal. 3. 22, Eph. 1. 19, 1 Thess. 1. 7, 2. 10, 13, 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7, 1 John 5. 1, 5, 10, 13. How often are believers thus described. An untrusting believer is an anomaly. We refer *not only* to faith in inspired words, but also to a simple trust amid daily trials, which would otherwise become daily worries. The "aorist" is rare, but the Holy Spirit always knows His meaning. Mark the occurrences. 2 Thess. 2. 12 is negative, and linked with those who believe signs and wonders of evil. In Eph. 1. 13 we have the positive, but the word used adverbially (and thus without the article): 2 Thess. 1. 10 gives the standpoint of "that Day," and looks *back* on faith, when faith is changed to sight. The *link* of tenses in Heb. 4. 3 would seem to give the reason for the Holy Spirit's choice of this tense. "We who believed *do enter*," and Jude 5 shows the failure of Israel in the type. The perfect occurs in Tit. 3. 8, a unique occurrence, but with a beautiful reason. Here the thought is not so much an emphasis on the characteristic of *faith*, but the characteristic of *fruit*. How blessed to realize both parts of truth. *Should we not have more fruit?* Thus, beloved friends, our hearts are stimulated by about 40 examples of the present participle. God has a right to expect so much from His beloved people. He has given them *all* things that pertain to life and godliness. He never stints them. He will enable life more abundantly. The river of grace is not a winter brook. The trees of oil supply the need continually. Keep on believing, whatever be the circumstances. Unbelief will despond, complain, scheme, and otherwise dishonour the *Lord*. May it not be that half the devices of Christendom have been largely brought about through lack of simple dependence on the Lord even when His way means 40 years in the desert, or apparent spending of strength in vain? 'Tis then the reproach of men

goads to the use of strange fire, unless we are made willing to wait for God's time, and simply please Him IN FAITH.

TRUST GOD.

IT is a privilege to know the trustworthiness of God. Faith is a very simple thing, but very precious and powerful. SIMPLE, indeed, in its quiet DIRECTNESS. It takes no account of CIRCUMSTANCES, when God is concerned. His will decides: nothing else. Nothing else has even a voice. "The Author and Finisher of the faith" alone illustrated this fulness. We often fear—at least to some extent. "Be not afraid, ONLY believe" has a wondrous meaning. Do not MIX anything with faith. Let faith be SIMPLE. Not that we can have "faith" at human will, or whatever we "like," as we "like." Nay, faith needs a word of God. But THAT is sufficient. One word of God will remove mountains of human speculation, whether they be the mountain range of FEAR, or of WORLDLY PRUDENCE.

Trust God, and be not anxious. That is to say, if you are seeking to please Him. The splitting up of Scripture is unwarranted. None were to rest on the seventh day among Israel, unless they did six days' work first. And to professedly obey the command, "Be anxious for nothing" is inappropriate WHILE one makes light of OTHER COMMANDS. The doctrine of God is one.

Trust God as to the body. The FIRST thought before us is not the use or disuse of a doctor or a "medicine." Something far deeper, namely, the use of human wisdom. "Cease from thine own wisdom." Here is a brother who takes a certain medicine. It may be you and I feel grieved over this, and realize that he is losing spiritually. But there is something worse if he trusts to that medicine, and says, "I cannot do without it." He is like the smoker who says, "I CANNOT give up." Just as a child of God may be blest in breaking a LEAVENED loaf on the Lord's Day morning, blessed because of devotional love, though there is a twofold failure, the Lord may bless the faith in HIMSELF that a brother has, ALTHOUGH he may ignorantly attach it to something else, the use of that which is UNAPPOINTED. Hence, if you have, by grace, given up human "remedies," be careful lest you trust to YOUR GIVING UP, three years ago, instead of HIS enabling TO-DAY. We must know GOD. LIVING FAITH IN our FAITH may be more harmful than unapproved means, when there is, nevertheless, faith IN HIM. Rahab's unbelief, which told a lie to save the Israelites' lives, did not UNDO the faith, and ITS reward. NOW, with FAR MORE knowledge, you and I would be much more sinful if we told a lie. Some beloved children of God err in this. They think that if another is blessed, ALTHOUGH he does a wrong action, they can do the same, and be blessed, after THEY HAVE BEEN CONVICTED of the Holy Spirit as to its wrong. Sins of ignorance are not justified by ignorance, but knowledge intensifies.

Trust God as to circumstances. Do not scheme. Rebekah schemed

to obtain the blessing for Jacob. It was a grave mistake. The Lord would have looked after Abraham in Egypt without a lie. Joshua ADDED a "make believe" to the Lord's COMMAND,—added, "We will flee before them" (Jos. 8. 6).^{*} The Lord did not say this. HE could have worked as easily without it. He is by no means limited. When Peter was to be brought out of prison, the Lord had no difficulty. There was no "need," to bribe the guards. There was no "need" to use a lie. God has all the keys, and evil that good may come is never justified. When Paul escaped from Damascus, the use of the basket was good: and illustrated, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another" (Matt. 10. 23). The disciples did not ADD some deceit. So is it to be at all times. Trust God.

"I Complete Cures, To-day and To-morrow, and the Third Day I Am Completed" (Brought to the Goal). Luke 13. 32.

IT seems almost impossible to render the fulness of this wondrous declaration. And, indeed, it is. The privilege (and responsibility) of a translator is to avoid positive errors AGAINST the truth, but he ALWAYS omits much. The NEGATIVE failures are very real: who can be proud?

The Lord Jesus suggests not only His COMPLETENESS of work in healing (e.g. Matt. 12. 22, Mark 3. 5, cf. Luke 8. 35), so that there was an entire change, but also an anticipation of that Day.[†] And, further, He illustrates His ACTIVE obedience to the will of the Father, and then, by the added passive, the OTHER part of His one complete life. John 17. 4, "I HAVE finished the work," and 19. 30, "It hath BEEN finished" have been long in the mind, to set forth this precious twofoldness. THE WHOLE was ONE obedience (Rom. 5. 19). Surely Luke 13. 32 emphasizes the same teaching, which the Holy Spirit would impress on our hearts. There is no incompleteness in the work of the Lord Jesus. How grateful redeemed ones should be. He, the Perfect One, was, (as the sacrifices in the types), COMPLETE, that He might COMPLETELY bear the wrath of God for us, and thus He also COMPLETELY accomplished righteousness, (for there was active love right up to the last moment); and saved ones have become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). It is all so wonderful, and RESTFUL, and thus a call to love's devotedness in our lives. There were no deficiencies in Christ: may we seek more likeness to Him, and a godly walk in the Spirit.

^{*} See leaflet GOD'S THOUGHTS AGAINST DECEIT for fuller notes.

[†] Note Phil. 1. 6, and Jas. 1. 15 for the same word, and one similar.

"ARE WE AS HIGH AS PAUL IN GOD'S SIGHT?"

THIS question reaches me, and the meditation on it proves helpful. Therefore I would pass it on.

First, it is blessed to realize that "in Christ Jesus" God's people are made near, and in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3. 28, cf. Col. 3. 11). That is the precious meaning of "all one in Christ Jesus." Such oneness in no way undermines God's other arrangements: the Christian parent is a parent still, and the Christian child delights to be subject. So is it with brethren and sisters: 'tis only the misuse of "neither male nor female" which would hinder. As to the love of God in Christ Jesus, ALL believers are UNITED. "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me (John 17. 23). What could be higher? Concerning "life,"—how blessed to realize all children of God are equally living. And Matt. 23. 8 applies the underlying thought to warn us against all pride. Truth is ever to be experienced felt enjoyed.

Secondly, as God has made distinction among unfallen angels (1 Thess. 4. 16 illustrates), and as He was pleased to appoint a difference between man and woman before Adam fell (Gen. 2. 18, "a help," and "meet for him"), so He has ever shown His sovereign wisdom. "God hath set some in the Church, FIRST apostles, SECONDLY prophets" (1 Cor. 12. 28). A Divine order. We cannot put ourselves above apostles in this matter. All envy and jealousy are grievous indeed. Rather, we thank God for another's privilege. The words ring out, "As it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12. 18), and any complaint is schism (25). Does our physical foot feel it is "as high as" the hand, or our little finger oppose the thumb's exaltation? O for more love to the Lord's will. Paul was set on high with other apostles; and we humbly thank God for "first apostles," and then rejoice to add that "those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary" (22)* Furthermore, much fervent love gives a true dignity (1 Cor. 12. 31, with ch. 13). Seek this.

Thirdly, the friendship of John 15. 14 is precious, and conditional. Our "height" with regard to this depends on our spiritual obedience. An earthen vessel may be used to honour, and an unclean golden or silver vessel laid aside. "If a man love Me, he will keep My Words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto Him, and make Our abode with Him" (John 14. 23). Beloved readers, do we seek this enjoyment of His love as we should? Let us beware of the spirit of Luke 22. 24, and also of glorying in men (1 Cor. 3. 21). The glory belongs to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit ever exalts Him! Thus we look on His people as His, and value for His sake, and the parallel in our physical frame which delights His

* A leaflet will be gladly sent.

heart is, that if one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. 12. 26). What a wonderful thought.

THE MARVEL OF GRACE. A SIDELIGHT FROM NATURE.

GOD speaks through everything. Yet His people alone have ears to hear, and eyes to see. Their hearts have been opened to behold His hand, and they praise Him for all that He sends. The sun is "His sun" (Matt. 5. 45). The sea is His (Ps. 96. 5) and they realize the beauty of the words "His earth" (Prov. 8. 31). Hence they understand, in measure, God's wondrous testimony to Job in the well-known 38th. chapter of that marvellous book. The natural tendency toward complaining seemed to have a real ground in Job's life, but his heart was silenced, except to confess sin (Job. 40. 3-5), and then He spoke of God the thing that was right (Job 42. 7). And God used His works in nature to bring His tried servant to this delightful end.

Happy are we if we recognize the Lord more. An imitation-science thinks that by explaining some laws of nature it has eliminated the Lawgiver, unmindful that an extraordinary action oft repeated becomes no less marvellous.* A gift of £100 repeated daily would not make the money cease to be valuable. In all else, except nature, repetition would be regarded as intensifying the display of glory, but man wishes to get rid of God.

The stress on the earth in Scripture surprises some. "Ah," they remark, "It is evident the writers did not enter into the immensity of the universe." Wait one moment. Who now enters into this? Who claims that the writers understood all nature? But, if we realize their personal limitations, the fact that the Book never contradicts real science becomes a strong witness that One beyond them spake through them (1 Pet. 1. 11, 12). The critic often displays the glory of Scripture the more, to his own discomfiture.

"But," it may be added, "though nothing can be found definitely against the breadth of the universe, there is much that over-exalts the earth." Vague charges are usually an evidence of a failing cause, and so we must regard the attack on Scripture to-day. And, further, IS there not a stress on immensity? "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways" (Isa. 55. 8). When God would lay stress on a tremendous contrast, this is the very one He uses. Again, "As far as the east (not of the earth, but the east in its widest sense) is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103. 12). Here is a

* A strange confusion exists, in many minds, that "miraculous" is a synonym of "extraordinary," but ordinary things may be equally beyond man.

picture of an infinitely wondrous removal.

And with all man's "knowledge," what does he really know of the stars? He speaks glibly of other "worlds." **Scripture does not.** What **evidence** has he of life, parallel with ours, elsewhere? His intelligence may seem great to him, but there is a continual full stop in his researches. So **frequently** is he checked, that a **little** increased information is heralded with joy, **because** there are **so many** full stops, and each one provides an opportunity for more knowledge. The **extent** of human ignorance gives the **amplifier** scope for some discoveries, but man forgets the **humbling** nature of **such** discoveries.

"But," we are told, "Is it not, presumption to say that the earth is so exalted, and the sun, moon and stars wait upon her?" Although this seems a misrepresentation of the striking **distinction** as to the stars in Gen. i. 16, and although many overlook God's testimony in Isa. 40. 26, there is something more to be said. But first we quote the testimony, "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, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth." There is no thought here of a few insignificant lights. But, granted that there are exalted works of God, ministering to men on this earth. Is this strange? What if it be **AN INTENDED PARALLEL TO A GREATER MARVEL?** When some belittle the stars, and others, on the other hand, wrongly complain that Scripture belittles them, we would remember against these contrasted errors, a **condescension** before which all other surprises are as nothing. And what is that? The Son of God's love came down to this earth to die for guilty sinners! Wondrous indeed! And when I look at the **great** works of God in nature, and see how much they seem to do for this earth, I feel God is giving me a picture, faint but beautiful, of how much more He has done for insignificant me,—though I am but one upon the earth, and His Beloved Son is infinitely greater than all the stars which He has created. Yet, (wonder of wonders), "**the Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me.**" I know **nothing** in nature to compare with this, but I find in the way in which nature is caused to serve and attend to the earth on which we live, an **appointed** reminder that God has thought of me with a love which I cannot comprehend, and saved me to be His. And if we are quickened from above, and the Holy Spirit has given our hearts this precious unveiling, what manner of persons ought we to be!

The writer is much impressed with the loveliness of this lesson in nature, and he would earnestly plead with any believer, to whom it may not be quite clear at once, to re-read, and ponder, while gratefully rejoicing in the death of the Lord Jesus.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.
(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

student-thoughts.com

Vol. xxiv. No. 11.

Nov: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Isa. 40. 29.

A Word of Introduction.

"**BY** the grace of God":—oft repeated words, but with ever present meaning. It is of His mercies we are not consumed. Wondrous indeed is the privilege of declaring His Name. The Lord Jesus declared the Name of the Father, and His people are sent forth to continue His work of declaring. NOT to continue His work of saving. **THAT IS FINISHED.** And it is on this ground that we have the privilege of emphasizing His Words and Will. Amid the perplexities of a changing and disappointed world, we would seek to tell of Him. And if there is life from above, if we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, how wonderful is the privilege of counting on Him for every "to-day" when it arrives, and of knowing that HIS strength is made perfect in weakness. These pages are sent forth to encourage to a simple and loving confidence in the Living God.

"WHAT CONCORD HATH CHRIST WITH BELIAL?" or DID THE EARLY CHRISTIANS KEEP "CHRISTMAS?"

DEAR BELIEVING readers, are you willing to follow God's will even if it alters many of your arrangements? If not, is it wise to read these lines? What if Christmas is not in the mind of God, as revealed in Scripture, and any of us have made up our minds to keep it, will not information increase our sin?

* Other literature as to this deeply important subject, for prayerful use, gladly sent.

Have you ever thought as in God's presence, over YOUR REASONS, if any, for keeping Christmas? Perhaps not. "I always thought," very many say, "that it was the birth of Christ." Honesty is precious, but it does not make an error into truth. The point is, are we sufficiently honest to be WILLING to find out? God will guide the MEEK in judgment (Ps. 25. 9). When "all the proud men" (Jer. 43. 2) sought prayer with minds already made up (Jer. 42. 20, cf. Ezek. 14. 3), what was the profit? Are we humble enough to want God's will, or do we want God's will to second ours?

The Lord Jesus was born at the appointed time (Gal. 4. 4). Praise be unto God for the wondrous Gift. Precious types were granted of His death and resurrection, and of the descent of the Holy Spirit. And the TIME of the year was indicated in each case. No such type of His birth is found. Apparently the old time saints did not keep a feast which led up to Christmas. Even this would not give us a warrant so to do. But the omission is striking. We notice that when the Lord Jesus was born, Joseph is NOT said to have been near Jerusalem for a Jewish feast, but for a Roman census.

The shepherds came to Bethlehem in accord with the loving message, "Unto you is born THIS DAY in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2. 11).^{*} The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God (Luke 2. 20); there is no hint of an observance introduced. NO CLUE as to the exact day is given. How different is it in Esther 9. 21, 22.

In the earthly life of the Lord Jesus we have no record of HIS observance of a birthday. When an exact age is given (Luke 2. 42), we are at once told that the record concerns the feast, not His birthday. The thirtieth birthday was marked out for the Levites, in the service of the sanctuary (Num. 4. 23, 30, 39, 43, 47). In the plain ALLUSION to this in Christ's life the Holy Spirit specially says, "ABOUT thirty years old" (Luke 3. 23). These are the TWO time-marks given,—apart from Matt. 2. 16, which shows Herod did NOT know the exact age from DILIGENT ENQUIRY of the wise men.

The work of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 fulfilled the type of Leviticus 23. SABBATH WAS THUS PASSED OVER. There is a yet more striking passing over as to Christ's birth. Passover time, reminding of Christ our Passover, is more than once mentioned in Acts, (NOT, however, as an ANNUAL remembrance for believers), but even the hint of the date of His birth is not before us. Indeed, His death and resurrection are frequently in front, rather than His birth. The very hour He was put upon the cross (Acts 2. 15), the hour when darkness came (22. 6), and the hour of His death (3. 1) are all associated with the record of the fruits of His finished work. It is the BLOOD that makes atonement. Hence when Paul emphasizes birth, HE PASSES OVER THAT WHICH MANY WOULD HAVE MENTIONED, AND

^{*} "This Day" is not marked out in the same manner as the resurrection "This day" (Acts 13. 33, Ps. 118. 24); though even in this latter connexion we have a *weekly* memorial, and a thousand years, not an anniversary.

REFERS TO THE BEGETTING FROM THE DEAD (Acts 13. 33). The RESURRECTION day is emphasized, THAT is the time of being born. We realize union with Him on RESURRECTION ground, and ask again, "Did the early Christians keep 'Christmas'?"

We may well search the epistles as the Acts. There we find clear indication of the first day of the WEEK (1 Cor. 16. 2), but no hint of an anniversary. The apostles do not tell us WHEN Christ was born, although the references to His position in Judah, and His relationship to David, are clear. The arrangements for God's people are given, but no hint of Christmas. Does God teach us all that is necessary? Undoubtedly. Did not Paul warn the believers against observing days and years (Gal. 4. 10)? If there were any exception, should we not find some guidance on this matter, as in the case of the Lord's Day? The absence of such instruction is striking, and (may we not add?) conclusive. Would not a humble believer have been AFRAID after such warning, to keep Christmas, in the absence of Scriptural teaching to keep it?

The Book of Revelation gives a last view of Christian assemblies. The Lord Jesus Christ is gloriously exalted. He is ALPHA and OMEGA. The Lord's Day is mentioned, but the only possible reference to Christmas is a parallel with Balaam and Balak's feast (Rev. 2. 14). For, however we hide the reality, Christmas is not ONLY an unwarranted observance, it has an historical basis, far back in heathenism,—in mythology which has a reality, a Satanic reality behind it. December 25th belongs to paganism, not to the New Testament, beloved friends. Shall we not say, "Let it remain there?" Is not Nehemiah's definiteness needed?—"IT GRIEVED ME SORE: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber" (Neh. 13. 8). "For what concord hath CHRIST with BELIAL?" (2 Cor. 6. 15).

"They Reasoned Among Themselves, Saying, IF." Matt. 21. 25.

IT is a precious privilege to know the TRUTH (John 8. 32). It is a precious privilege to be CONCERNED regarding the TRUTH. There have been, and are, many to whom truth is less important than comfort, and quite secondary to success. This is a peril in daily life and business. But a child of God can EXPECT heavenly victory. He is quickened from above, and the Holy Spirit indwells.

The chief priests and elders were asked a plain question. They did not say, "What is the RIGHT answer?", but "What will be the EFFECT of our answer?" Here we have an extreme case of the argument FROM EFFECT TO CAUSE, showing its grave danger. If we know the Lord, we must leave CONSEQUENCES with Him. His questions may change our ACTION, as we seek humbly to find the TRUE answer. But His will is best.

"A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a Just Weight is His Delight."

Prov. 11. 1.

THERE is no doubt as to the practical nature of the book of Proverbs. God's appointments extend even to details of DAILY LIFE, and it is in these things we can "adorn" His doctrine (Tit. 2. 10). The thought is full of attractiveness. Vast opportunities for God's dear people are before us. Those saved by grace can please and glorify Him in tiny actions. Nothing is small, if it springs out of love to Him. Nothing is trivial. Everything is a privilege.

But it is equally true that this book is full of Christ. Not only is He unveiled as the True Wisdom, but we see Him more than once as the Righteous One, and as the One Who makes an atonement in ch. 16. 14, as well as the Glorious Son of 30. 4, and the Mighty Man in a virgin (30. 19 lit: with Isa. 7. 14). Nor is He to be omitted from the "Surety" passages (e.g. 11. 15*). Christ is everywhere.

Is it surprising then that we find His work in 11. 1? "Weighing" is not only of MATERIALS (4. 26, 16. 2). Men weigh their own actions wrongly, and OVERestimate their "merits." They little realize that they themselves have been weighed and found wanting (Dan. 5. 27). The false balance of SELF-righteousness is an ABOMINATION, but there is a "PERFECT STONE" (margin), Which is His delight. That "PERFECT STONE" is UNHEWN, the VERY WORD for the altar in Joshua 8. 31. But plainly in Joshua we have a view of the work of the Lord Jesus. HIS people are acceptable, but they need HEWING (1 Kings 6. 7). It is not so with Him. It is wondrous to view His actions as needing NO alteration or modification whatever. They are "complete" and "unhewn" stones, and the word "PEACE" is from the same root. Herein we see the OPPOSITE of the mind of the flesh which is enmity against God, and, moreover, meditate in measure, on the infinite SATISFACTION which the Father has in His Beloved Son, "His Delight"—(cf. Matt. 12. 18).

But the thought is PARTICULARLY helpful when we think of weighing. A weight is MADE according to a STANDARD. But here is an UNHEWN Stone Which exactly fits that STANDARD. There is no need for addition or substitution. Either would SPOIL. The Stone is brought to the standard of God's law, and at once exactly weighs. And, henceforth, that Stone becomes the Standard for further weighing. Thus we see the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the sinner, weighed against Him, is shown to be a FAILURE. And then we realize that the "COMPLETE STONE," the "DELIGHT" of the Father (precious word), is the One Whose perfection is counted to His people. They are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21, with Prov. 11. 4). THEY, too, are "His delight." They can add nothing to this work of acceptance, nor take from it (Eccl. 3. 14), and their

* Elsewhere the Surety-gives up bed (rest, 22. 22, 27) and garment (20. 16). Wonderful He gave up both on Calvary, for "strangers"

secured salvation is a wondrous joy. Will God abandon those who are His delight? Will He undo the work of His Beloved Son? IM-POSSIBLE! Thus the joy of salvation shines forth, and the redeemed are able to rest in a love that has no parallel, and no end. Surely they should love more because FIRST loved (1 John 4. 19).

How can a believer live as a member of a ruined world? The heavenly calling takes away all pride, and removes the false balance that God hates, but the Holy Spirit thereby leads to the simple confidence of living faith. God will not suffer His faithfulness to fail. "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift."

SEEMING SURPRISES.

WE need God's grace for everything:—to be kept from GRADUAL backsliding, and ALSO from sudden and and surprising re-action. We need grace to realize the ENTWINED relationship of sin with sin, however unlike they appear. When Peter said, "I am ready," he was soon TOO ready, and drew a sword unbidden. Willing to go to death, he proved more willing to cause death. And then, almost immediately, being "afar off," denied his Lord. Thus through lack of prayer, he ENTERED into temptation. Human minds may study psychology, but God has HIS unveiling of the tendencies of the flesh, the trend of the human heart. Phosphorus may be in more than one condition, and graphite and carbon may appear very different, but they are one. The same illness too may take various forms, and it is easy to pass from hysterical laughter to crying. Is it surprising then to find that pride and despondency are practically identical, or, rather, the fruit of the SAME attitude? Two or three inches on a mountain range may decide which way the stream flows. If I look to self, I may be proud or discouraged, AND PASS FROM ONE CONDITION TO THE OTHER in less time than it takes to write this: how important to look to Him, and to judge self, and to be above circumstances. Is it strange to find Jews and Roman Catholics friendly against the Gospel? Their root-principle is the same—salvation VIA works. Pilate and Herod were made friends against Christ. Sadducees and Pharisees were joined in rejecting Him. Rationalism looks to man's mind to-day, Ritualism to man's mind yesterday, faith looks to God's mind. All "ism's" depend on "development": God's people should depend on His unchanging truth.

Luke 22. 24 is startling. The surroundings should have banished such a thought, but WISHES will conquer everything. O for CON-SECATED WISHES. "If any one will to do His will":—a precious thought.

To-day's obedience is no guarantee for to-morrow. Manna even a day old stinks and breeds worms. Uzziah was marvellously helped, and THEN failed. The delightful determination of Hezekiah in Isa. 38 is not seen in chapter 39. "If ye CONTINUE in My Word" means much (John 8. 31). Though Moses obediently took the rod in Numbers

21, he soon disobediently smote the rock. The man of God stood firm against the king, but he faltered when he sat down (1 Kings 13).^{*} Purpose of heart to CLEAVE to the Lord is so important (Acts 11. 23).

A praying meeting has a precious fragrance. But it was at a prayer meeting that the dear children of God were SURPRISED when their own prayer was answered, and unkindly said to Rhoda, "Thou art mad." The error of one who "opened not the gate FOR GLADNESS" is suggestive - WE are often thoughtless unintentionally. But the sin of those who spake rudely is more startling. And we, too, may speak unwisely THE MOMENT we rise from our knees, unless a watch is kept before our mouth (Ps. 141. 3). We marvel at the UNBELIEF and sinful language alike. BUT do we KNOW OURSELVES, and our limitations, - enough to depend on the Lord more? Do we wonder at the gracious warning, "BE NOT DECEIVED." We are less dependable than we think. How valuable is SIMPLE faith. How gracious is the unveiling that the Holy Spirit indwells, and is willing to lead (Rom. 8. 14).

"NO DOCTRINE."

THERE is no doctrine in the earliest epistles, only a life to live."

Some such words were addressed to me by a Gentile in a Jewish watchmaker's shop at Manchester. They provided a background for the glorious gospel, but reveal an utter confusion. Remarkably, PART of 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10 was offered as a proof, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." The last words were significantly omitted, "Which delivered us from the wrath to come." It is solemnizing to see how many quote a PART of a passage, and thus change its meaning. May we be thoughtful and honest! But, even apart from the last words, how much precious doctrine is found throughout.

The turning to God here set forth is an acknowledgment of HIS DEITY against polytheism, and a confession of the ruin of man. The order, too, is helpful: "to God" before "from idols." He is the Centre, and herein is the power. The service of the Living and True God is a LIFE indeed, but how do we know what service is, apart from HIS REVEALED will? And service implies the acceptance of sound doctrine as to His authority and His standpoint. "And to wait for His Son from heaven." Here we behold the Deity of Christ, and His ascension, and, moreover, the glad reception of His promise, "I will come again." Many will call this a declaration FULL of doctrine. And the added words emphasize deserved wrath, and the atonement of Christ. Furthermore, the earlier verses of the chapter show the fact of election, and the RESULT in Christian faith, fellowship and prayer. It is true that the Gospel was not "in word only," but it WAS "in word" as well. A creed without a life is vain, but godly knowledge must precede godly action. The whole theory of divorcing faith and conduct is a grievous mistake. The Lord links the practical

^{*} A leaflet will be gladly sent.

arrangements of the home with sound DOCTRINE (e.g., Eph. 5. 24, 25, Tit. 2. 5). The employee's life is to adorn the DOCTRINE of God (Tit. 2. 10, cf. 1 Tim. 6. 1). And we must speak the things which become sound DOCTRINE (Tit. 2. 1).

The extreme of this error is seen if we hear those who disparage inspiration, say, "It is not a book that we want, but a Person: the glory of Christ as a Living Person is to be realized." The man who sets aside the words of Scripture will delude unwary souls whenever he speaks in rapture of the Living Christ, and of devotedness to Him. But HE said "Me and My Words": "If ye love ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS." And there are many APPROACHES to this evil before us, not a few of them unconscious. To exalt Him while putting aside His own declaration is easier than we think. Fellowship of believers which is only possible while election, for example, is UNMENTIONED, and while baptism of believers alone is kept in the background, can hardly be to His glory. But it is easy thus to grieve the Holy Spirit, and the more so, because those who point this out have sometimes SHOWN LITTLE LOVE. Hence the natural inference, "YOU are less loving than those whom you correct." The swing of the pendulum is sad. "Deeds not creeds" must ever be regarded as a sinful motto, but sound doctrine without warm love to the Person of Christ is more than incomplete. The testimony of Rev. 2. 5 is graciously severe. May those who read these lines, and the one who writes them, alike be exercised before God to grow up unto Christ in ALL things, and to show spiritual FAITH by spiritual WORKS, that He may be exalted in an all-round Christian experience.

CÆSAR'S FRIEND or CHRIST'S.

(John 19. 12).

(John 15. 14).

PILATE did not wish to be condemned. Cæsar's friendship was more to him than Christ, and there are many to-day to whom position in life and the world's friendship are more than they themselves realize (Jas. 4. 4). A salary binds many souls. They are not conscious how deeply the world's approval has entered into their life. They do not know how the world's threads and shoe-latches tie them up. And have not many believers undervalued spiritual things? Is not the friendship of Christ less to them than it should be? Ah, it is less to ALL of us than it SHOULD be. But is there not a manifest disregard of His wishes by many who bear His Name? His "Whatsoever" is a far-reaching word. He has a right to command and, if we love Him, and joy in Him aright, we delight that He DOES command.

John the Baptist rejoiced to be the FRIEND of the Bridegroom (John 3. 29): he anticipated the precious words of John 15. 14. It is remarkable that the epistle which unmasks a friend of the world emphasizes that Abraham was "a friend of God" (Jas. 2. 23, 4. 4)! An ancient translator rendered "servant." Could he not realize the height that grace makes possible?

We would confess that we are not Cæsar's FRIENDS. Let not this be misunderstood. We would render HONOUR to whom HONOUR is due, and the powers that be ARE ordained of God. We gladly pay our taxes, as part of Christian service, and cheerfully render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but we are not Cæsar's friends. We hate the spirit of human revolution, we delight to pray for all in authority, we regard them as the MINISTERS OF GOD for good to us, and Rom. 13 is impressed on our hearts, but we are not Cæsar's FRIENDS. We deplore the spirit of complaint, and dare not ever speak evil of dignities (2 Pet. 2. 10), but we are not Cæsar's FRIENDS. To despise government is iniquity,* and the attitude of any government to us is NOT the deciding factor, for if it treats us cruelly we bear no malice, if it is kind toward us we accept God's mercy, with gratitude to men, but we are not Cæsar's FRIENDS.

OUR FRIENDSHIP HAS BEEN SEALED WITH CHRIST: at least this is our desire. And our longing is for HIS COMING. We cannot ignore His Words. If any one commands us to break His appointments, we cannot be in two minds for a moment. Christ has the pre-eminence!

Nor can we enter into Cæsar's standpoint. Friendship rightly implies some fellowship of heart. But Christ has changed the whole attitude of His redeemed. Let Cæsar be an individual or a parliament, there MUST be the sword: there cannot be meekness; but "blessed are the meek." National interests are real to men of earth, but Christ died for sinners of all nations alike, and geography of a man's birth, and the colour of his face, are nothing to CHRIST'S friends.

The friendship to which He calls is one of rejection, and if any of Cæsar's friends catch a glimpse of it they must COME DOWN FROM THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT, where they would necessarily be called, at times, to punish believers for obedience to Christ, as in a time of warfare. They must, because of the enfranchisement of Christ, lay aside their earthly vote,—that bids for friendship with Cæsar, inasmuch as it desires unity with the ruling party.—And they must take a simple path outside the camp, bearing CHRIST'S REPROACH (Heb. 13. 13). Hence, while we praise God for His providence in ordering government, we must confess that He has put His people in a heavenly calling (Heb. 3. 1), even THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS. We own that Christ is in the glory,—and so our interests are there, our hopes are THERE, our friendship would ever be THERE. We are NOT Cæsar's FRIENDS. How can we be? There is more in the words of 1 Cor. 2 than at first appears, "We have the mind of Christ." The music is beautiful, but let us ask ourselves the question, "Are we, in business relationships, as well as in meetings, those of whom our Lord says, 'MY FRIENDS'?"

* A leaflet will be gladly sent.

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone: MARYLAND 2196.

(No Messages received on the Lord's Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see "Thoughts from the Word of God."

Vol. xxiv. No. 12.

Dec: 1926. Free.

The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"By grace are ye saved" Eph. 2. 8.

"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."
1 Cor. 3. 13.

A Word of Introduction.

GRACE never obscures responsibility. An ABSOLUTE SALVATION does not make the Judgment Seat of Christ unnecessary, or undesirable. There is a perfect BLENDING in all God's arrangements. If He saves, He never undoes the work, but He never excuses one sin. The WAY of salvation honours law beyond all else. If we may so say, there is even MORE stress on law in satisfaction, and complete settlement, by the work of Christ, than in the everlasting punishment of those who never fully understand what His anger means,—to approve thereof. It is a wondrous thought that God's wrath cannot be regarded as COMPLETELY dealing with sin unless the One Who bears it entirely takes God's standpoint, and COMPREHENDS, and thus approves it ALL. How wondrously this exalts Christ's Name. And, after salvation, though there is no death penalty in the family, there is a holy hatred of sin. And works that grieve God's Holy Spirit will be burnt up. The future testing will be very real. To some this seems nothing. To others, it may be an emphasized theory, and nothing more. To yet others, it may become an object of fear. But to others, it may be made a sanctifying encouragement to walk in the Spirit, and to please the precious Saviour, Who died for us.

OBEDIENCE.

The standpoint of obedience means much. Complete obedience is complete approval of the will of God from His own stand-

point. But if we are "dutiful" because we are afraid of the consequences, that is not satisfactory, though reverential care is good in proportion. If we "obey" for reward's sake, there is selfishness, unless we mean that our desire is to have reward unto His joy. We would not *undervalue* rewards and *our* joy, but all must be wrapped up in seeking *His praise*. If we only keep to God's commandments because of habit, we misuse a right principle. If we obey because we feel happier in obeying, we make a precious effect the cause. If we walk in His ways, because we have said this is right, we are only partly setting forth the link of doctrine and practice. Christ died for us. Here is an argument for love's grateful obedience. The law on the heart signifies that we have a new power and wish within; and *not to obey* would be unnatural to the new nature. The will of God is the will of the new life born of God, and sanctification is the experience, in the Holy Spirit, of willingness for His gift of a new life to have its right recognition. The redeemed person is *privileged* to exalt his Lord for his Lord's delight, and to mortify the deeds of the body, because self has been set aside. Love is to be the motive power.

IRRITATION.

WHAT is irritation? Is it not displeasure at our circumstances? Is it not therefore complaint? Even the slightest "irritation" *forgets* God's perfect will. It questions *His* wisdom. Is this right? Irritation is not gratitude. If we murmur at our lot, we are not praising Him. To try to be resigned to trials is a poor thing. To put up with circumstances is a failure. "In everything *give thanks* : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5. 18). How precious is the privilege of praising God for all trials. Rejoicing in tribulation seems strange to the natural man. But the Lord Jesus appointed this. If I am irritated because of what "A" says, and what "B" does, I am acting as though A and B are able to touch me without my Heavenly Father's permission. *But it is not so.* The trial was *censored* by Him *before* it reached me. Why should I be irritated? If I feel annoyed, I am like a man who complains of his position in the world, and feel envious of others. How sad is this condition of antagonism to God. Many saved ones need to be reconciled (2 Cor. 5. 20).

Grace brings *gratitude* unto *everything*. There is only one thing for which we should be troubled, our own sin. For all else, by the time it *reaches* a believer, he should give thanks. Let it be repeated,—whatsoever comes is from a *Father's loving* hand. Let us seek to learn His lessons, and to rejoice in Him, as never before.

A RETURNED LETTER.

A LETTER has been returned, refused because *unstamped*. God has some lessons in every detail. Shall I learn His lessons from this, or am I largely unmindful? I *want* to hear what He says in each circumstance, but in the service of daily life it is easy to take things for granted. But nothing is "a matter of course." If we are His children, our Father graciously speaks even by a lost train, a mislaid article, and a slight cold.

There is the general instruction against carelessness ever needed. How prayerful should one be *not* to make mistakes. They often hinder others, and waste the Lord's money as well. But, secondly, I think on *this* occasion He indicates that the suggestion in the letter is not His will at *this* time. It is well to *ask* Him *what* He deigns to teach. How graciously He alters our wishes. It is blessed to learn from Him. May we *never* be peevish, or irritated. Is there a hint that I should have been omitting to follow His holding back *without this extra guidance*? Possibly, then, the time spent in writing was not used to His glory. It is often possible to find out His will more fully *first*, is it not? Again, it may be that the letter would have involved extra work, without any result to His praise. Graciously He spares me. He knows best.

"Threepence surcharge." A loss. We should not *worry*, and His lessons are worth much more, and often *learnt* best by a little *loss*. But every penny belongs to Him, and one may wonder if we are concerned as we *should* be, or as we *used* to be, regarding the tiniest waste. Ordinary business problems may make us *expect* some "accidents," but there are no accidents with Him. I fear we do not pray enough that, if He will, machinery may not go wrong, and that, if He will, certain breakages may be prevented. These are just examples among many. He can cause our clothes to wear longer, for, surely, if we are walking *with Him*, we do not *want* to vary these, nor to change for the sake of change.

"Redeemed . . with the precious blood of Christ."

'Tis precious to be bought
And *not* to be our own,
In love redeemed and brought,
Made *His* and *His* alone,
Who took our place, our doom to
bear,
In wondrous grace:—we had no
share.

Precious indeed the cost,
And precious is the goal:
We shall not now be lost,
Christ's work remains *one whole*:—
Ne'er will He change, nor forfeit
one,
Nor rearrange:—the work is *done*!

Let praise indeed flow out,
The praise that loves His Name,
His love removes each doubt,
His truth we would proclaim;—
Redeemed by blood, and *His* for
aye,— [way.
To praise our God, and walk His
Soon will our Lord come back,
And we *His* face shall see,
Then nothing shall we lack,
Redeemed eternally!—
A prospect *vast*, The Cause and
Goal,
The Centre—Christ,—Himself the
whole.

A QUESTION AS TO ATONEMENT.

Does "Atonement" belong to the Old Testament and "Redemption" to the New Testament?

THE thought underlying this question may be one of love to the Lord, and gratitude, that He has *not merely covered* His people's sins, but put them away altogether. There is indeed, a wondrous contrast in His work with bare covering (Prov. 28. 13), and with the putting *aside* of sins (Rom 3. 25 marg.), in accord with the types which could *never* take them away (Heb. 10. 4). We praise God for every desire to exalt His beloved Son and His *finished* work, and for every heart-felt realization that the Antitype *far* excels the type. How blessed to be in Him!

But we must be prayerful and careful lest we misunderstand and adopt interpretations without the Holy Spirit's foundation for them. So many thoughts have been uttered by some who are esteemed, and then others keep on reproducing, without examining the Scriptures. This failure has caused much dishonour to the Lord in prophetic *misinterpretation*.

It is a fact of the deepest importance that God permitted one, and only one, translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, which we possess, *before* the New Testament. And the language was *Greek*. Thus the Holy Spirit in the Greek Scriptures can allude very definitely to certain *Hebrew* words, by using the already known Greek translation of them. And He *has* done this as to the word "atonement." Somewhat remarkably our valued English version uses "atonement" in Romans 5. 11, where the original has the word for "reconciliation," and yet employs "reconciliation" in Hebrews 2. 17 where we find the ordinary verb from which "atonement" comes. We do not receive the atonement: God has both provided and accepted that: believers enjoy the *fruit*. At-one-ment is not atonement, any more than "now here" is "no where." This verb is found only here and in Luke 18. 13, where we have *mercy because of atonement*, a beautiful thought, explaining an added definiteness,—"*the* sinner," not *a* sinner. Substitution is implied by the Lord Jesus, and without substitution what have we? This verb occurs in the rendering of the atonement-word of Ps. 65. 3. and 79. 9—"Thou shalt make an atonement." 'Tis God's gracious work.

The use of the derived *nouns* is yet more striking. In 1 John 2. 2, and 4. 10 alike we have "propitiation," the *same* term being found in the Septuagint of Num. 5. 8. Thus Christ was sent to make atonement. The Holy Spirit marks this as *the* object in view. And Romans 3. 25 contains the very name of *the mercy seat* (cf. Heb. 9. 5) i. e. the very word emphasized in Exodus

25 and Leviticus 16. Now "mercy seat" and "atonement" are inseparably united words in Hebrew, and our beloved Lord *is* thus declared unequivocally to be the "A' onement," and "the Mercy Seat": He is the Antitype. "Atonement" *is* a New Testament word.

This is what we should *expect*, for on the day of atonement there was the *bullock* for the priestly family, as well as the goat for the nation; and could we separate this first type from saints in the present dispensation? Moreover, the Epistle to the Hebrews is built up on the teaching of the day of atonement, and the way into the holiest for saved ones *now* is associated *therewith*. Far from being a *partial* word, "atonement" tells of *full* acceptance (Lev. 1. 4 etc).

The Holy Spirit's quotation of another word for "covering" in Romans 4. 7 makes evident that there is no suggestion of covering *up*. Far otherwise, the thought is that God's eye is on the work of His beloved Son, and the sin of His people is blotted out. And the word "atonement" cannot be limited. It brings before us a righteous meeting of righteous wrath, so that there is a holy *appeasing*.* Forgiveness is the fruit—mark the order in Lev. 5. 10. Thus there is the covering because of a righteous settlement, that iniquity may not be before God's eyes. (Contrast the sinner's condition in Psalm 90. 8, and man's vain attempt in Genesis 3. 10 and Job 31. 33).

Probably some of God's dear children have assumed a merely physical covering instead of a *legal* covering, and have thought that the sins *remained* beneath. But even in English we use the word more widely. "This will cover your debts" or "your expenses" does *not* signify that they *remain unsettled*, but the reverse. And the Holy Spirit uses language of mightier force.

On another occasion the Lord may grant a study of the precious thoughts of purchase and freedom wrapped up in the word "redemption." Meanwhile let His people *rejoice* in what atonement means to them.

"RELIGION."

"PURE religion and undefiled" is precious as a fruit and effect, if a man has salvation *first*. But how can he have *pure* religion unless he has pureness of heart? A *motive* is needed, and that motive must be, "Unto the Lord." Religion is valuable, as a second thing, but mere religion as a *first* thing is not pure, nor is it powerful. It is an *attempt* to "bind," but it is

* This is the one fundamental idea, common to *both* the Hebrew word and the Greek. Proverbs 16 6, 14 may illustrate, "By mercy and truth iniquity is made atonement for," and "A Wise Man (the truly Wise One) will make an atonement,"—appeasing wrath.

transient, and incomplete. Till a soul is saved by the grace of God, and "a new creation in Christ Jesus," everything lacks its true value. 'Tis *then* that new things are brought about, and all things are of God. The man in the street thinks that we preach *religion*, but we preach *Christ*. Religion has *never* saved a soul and *never* can save. "*It*" is powerless. The gospel is God's power. The axe is laid at the root of the tree, and God, in wondrous love, brings out of death into life. He does not merely patch up. How wondrous is eternal salvation by the precious blood of Christ!

"CHRISTMAS TRADE."

IF the "Christmas" shops are meant to remind us of the Lord Jesus CHRIST they offer but a caricature. He Who was Rich, for our sakes became Poor, (2 Cor. 8. 9), and sometimes He hungered, and had not where to lay His head. And, not only so, the link of the name of Christ with "Christmas" shows Satan's aim to-day. He Who said, "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (John 2. 16), foreknew a parallel sin in the present time. The woman of Babylon dwells awhile in the *ephah* of commerce, and the rebuilt metropolis of the world's religion shall be the metropolis of commerce also. Is it not a fact that some of the world's "choice" wines have been sent forth by "religious orders"? A remarkable beacon of a far larger Satanic scheme. Revelation 17 leads up to Revelation 18; and commerce is central in the latter chapter.

Therefore when any plead that "Christmas is good for trade" they at once brand it as *not of God*,—to say nothing of the overstrain of many, and the problems of children of God, enabled to witness against taking up remunerated work on the Lord's Day. "Trade" and a dispensation of "strangers and pilgrims" cannot have the same standpoint.

The metropolis of the future is God's exalted city to which worshippers flow up (Isa. 2. 2)—"contrary to nature" (Rom. 11. 24),—as grace always is. "There shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14. 21)—the merchant (Hos. 12. 7).

We cannot but notice how Israel in *departure* from God have become merchants, and we remember Solomon's decline (2 Chron. 1. 16, 17 with Deut. 17. 16). Believers need to be on their guard, and to beware of the spirit of Christmas and Christmas trade. Let them avoid patronizing this trade, and, if they have an opportunity as salesmen let them lose for Christ's sake, rather than deal in the goods that will pain their hearts. Christ is worth and worthy of many a loss, if less it can be called. O to exalt Him. The Holy Spirit never ceases to glorify Him.

* Further literature gladly sent, for witness in the Lord's Name.

"I Came Not To Send Peace

But A Sword." Matt. 10. 34.

POSSIBLY we have met the man who glibly quotes this verse against our beloved Lord. A little thought would often prevent such a sin. Does the questioner *really* think that Christ advocated *force* on the part of His disciples? Did He not *continually* show meekness, and begin the address on the mount with "Blessed are the meek"? Did He not emphasize glad suffering for His Name's sake? Moreover, a little honest consideration of this context might surely be expected—"Ye shall be hated of all" (22). "When they persecute you, flee" (23), "Fear not them which kill the body," He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me" (38). Few chapters are more decisive. Nor have we exhausted the verses, "Behold I send you forth as *sheep* in the midst of wolves" (16), "They deliver you up" (19): you do not attempt to deliver them up. But then there may come the sinful attempt to escape from the difficulty, and to charge the Lord Jesus Christ with contradiction. This, however, is equally futile,—and equally sinful. Granted He speaks in parables, in accord with Matt. 13. 13, we have the definite testimony that His people would *have* foes, not *be* foes (36). He came to cast one sword on the earth, not two conflicting swords.* He did not come to bring conflict, but a position of rejection for His blood-bought people. Hence there is *not* a quarrel in verse 35, but *one* bears injustice, and that one is the Christian, as verse 38 makes abundantly clear. Are we willing for this, beloved friends? The testimony of Christ is precious and humbling. Christendom has substituted a new arrangement instead of the rejection of a pilgrim people appointed by Christ. "The disciple is *not* above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord" (24). *Why* are we not rejected as *He* was?

"I Will Pray for You."

I would ever desire to say, and *feel*, "Thank God for everything," but I am not quite sure in what way I should say, "Thank you." Permit my plainness for I find within a tendency sometimes to put "praying" in the place of acting. It is precious to pray about everything (Phil. 4. 6, 7), but prayer is not a laziness. And a promise to pray is not precious, and not to the glory of God, if it is only a way to avoid loving labour, or whatever it may be. And the "promise" is not always fulfilled by thinking once or twice of the problems of a dear fellow-believer. How much grace we need to be honest and transparent in these things.

* Observe that in Luke 12. 51-55, where *division* is mentioned, and not a sword, *both* sides are before us.

These *are* occasions when we can *only* pray—a blessed “only.” Anything else would, sometimes, usurp the Lord’s place, or involve wrong identification. But we need prayerfulness of heart that we may know when this is so, and that we may walk in the Spirit.

PRAY—GO.

Matt. 9. 37, 18, 10. 6.

Luke 10. 2, 3.

THE LINK of commands, as often in Scripture, is precious. And many thoughts are entwined. The Lord Jesus would not approve of going without praying : so as to everything. Prayer is preparatory. And the CONVERSE is true. Praying ones are not to be content with praying. I do not mean that in every case we can “go” physically, or that our prayer should be limited to the lands we personally can reach. BY NO MEANS. The Lord did not appoint prayer for one district alone: the WHOLE “harvest” was before Him. And an aged bed-ridden saint is not excluded : the WILLINGNESS of Abraham to offer up Isaac was acceptable, and thus accepted. Moreover, the “going” must be in AN APPOINTED WAY. If the Lord leads NEXT door, I must not wish to journey 1000 miles. If He says, “Go to the workshop,” the mission field is THERE, not in Africa. Never would we forget Africa, but neither would we forget THE WORKSHOP. In this sense “the field is the WORLD.” And the FOREIGN field is not limited, for a believer is a stranger and pilgrim everywhere, a FOREIGNER except with the saints (Eph. 2. 19).

Observe the prayer is not only for ONE’S OWN sphere. There is more selfishness in asking than we realize (Phil. 2. 4). Have we noticed sufficiently the order? Not “go—pray,” but “pray—go.” This is helpful as to the WHOLE daily life. And there is also the thought that willingness to do God’s will must be learnt on the knees. A shrinking heart may be brought to true confidence. Fear may be shaken, as we pray. Hesitation and impetuosity are twins: and prayer witnesses against both.

“Pray—go” is a solemn message as to ALL else. Ofttimes we pray one thing AND DO ANOTHER. We ask the Lord to save our dear ones, and then put stumbling blocks in their way. ’Tis true that GOD answers prayer, and OUR actions are not decisive, but frequently we are not in a condition to receive the blessing. Moreover, LACK OF INTEREST, in that concerning which we pray, hardly suggests prayer in the Spirit. A mere sense of duty does not befit a child’s approach to his Father. The throne of grace is for felt needs, not for mere forms.

Correspondence from believers and enquirers welcomed :—Percy W. Heward, 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London, E.7. Phone : MARYLAND 2196.

(No Messages received on the Lord’s Day).

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minories (Tues. 6. 30), see “Thoughts from the Word of God.”