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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"If any one will to do HIS will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."
John 7. 17.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Words of God are true. Our faith rejoices in Him, and in them. Faith dare not boast of itself, but dare not deny Him, nor question His certainties. The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 1. 20) and we look upward with gratitude. The world may scorn, but truth is truth. The unbeliever may condemn divergencies among those who profess to go by the same book, but this humbles us. Truth is not thereby shaken. We are not meek enough, else we should know His guidance (Ps. 25. 9). Nor can we speak of others alone: we would speak to our own hearts. That believers may be drawn together unto the glory of God, in the simple enjoyment of John 7. 17, and that we may alike give up our inclination and our prejudices, drawn by the Holy Spirit to our Lord's will—is the object of these pages. O that we may be sufficiently in true prayer, and rightly prayed for, to receive continual and increasing foretastes of the blessing of Eph. 4. 13.

"The Apostleship of the Circumcision."

Gal. 2. 8

MANY theories have been built up on these words and their context: are they warranted by the Holy Spirit? We need to come to Scripture with open minds for God's own truth. There is not the slightest statement, nor hint, that "the gospel of the uncircumcision" was different. What if there was only a difference of appointed SPHERE? And surely the subsequent context shows this. Paul was led to emphasize "the truth of the gospel" as one, for Peter and himself, as verse 14 asserts.

And, further, why was Peter the apostle of the circumcision? It

would seem in the light of Matthew 28. 18-20 that he was NOT thus limited at first. And Acts 1. 8 comes to mind. We see a "hesitation," and the Lord sent to preach one set to serve tables. The fact that AFTER Acts 6. 3, 4 the very next two chapters give us the ministry of the first names on the list in Acts 6. 5 has not been sufficiently realized. And the words "EXCEPT the apostles" mean much in 8. 1. God replies to delay in obedience.

A miraculous working was needed to make Peter willing for the journey to Cornelius. And AFTER THIS Acts 11. 19 shows where the children of God still remained. "To every creature," "All nations," "The uttermost parts of the earth"—such words were not realized. And thus the commission of Matthew 28. 18-20 was not given again to the eleven in the same way, BUT the Lord raised up Paul. This accounts for the strange twofoldness of the book of Acts, and Peter's prominence at first, and then the silence regarding him. In a similar way Barnabas falls out of the narrative after 15. 39. Critics quite misunderstand this. If we WILL have our own way, the Lord often holds us to it. When Israel desired a king they were ALLOWED to have one. In like manner, Matthias was granted, but Peter had STOOD UP before the appointed time (Acts 1. 15 with Luke 24. 49 lit.*), hence Matthias is NOT CALLED an apostle as the others, albeit numbered with them.

In other words, "the apostleship of the circumcision" seems to have been entrusted to Peter in wondrous condescending love, AFTER he drew back from the WIDER commission. How this removes the thought of a NEW dispensation with Paul. Peter had the commission BUT... Yet the Lord would carry through His one perfect plan, and so if one of His servants hesitates He can raise up another. 1 Kings 19. 16 is somewhat similar, with Micaiah, not Elijah, in chapter 22. Let us be concerned, not only to see the setting aside of an erroneous undispensational (because ultra-dispensational) explanation of Gal. 2, but also the call to more prompt responsiveness in our own lives unto the Lord (Rev. 3. 11).

"A Brand Plucked out of the Fire."

Zech. 3. 2.

OBERVE that the Lord does NOT deny Joshua's iniquity. The charge of Satan has a foundation, But the resister is resisted because the Lord hath CHOSEN. In Rev. 12. 11 we have the overcoming by the BLOOD of the Lamb and WORD of their testimony. Thus we see a reference to our Triune God.

It is deeply solemn to see Joshua the high priest in filthy garments, contrasted with the garments of glory and beauty, and even still more with the white linen garments on the Day of Atonement, for it was then that the high priest appeared before God.

Joshua had no personal right. As a brand plucked out of the fire,

* A leaflet will be gladly sent.

he was deserving of judgment (we are reminded of Ezek. 15), but grace overflowed, and the Lord will not forsake the work of His hands.

"A brand plucked out of the fire," and yet CHOSEN. "A brand plucked out of the fire," and yet precious to the Lord. "A brand plucked out of the fire" and never to be cast away. It is important to see this. It humbles a man to the dust, but also shows forth the wonderful grace of God.

The Mystery of the Death of Saul.

SAUL is like Lamech, Nimrod, Sennacherib, Neduchadnezzar, and Antiochus:—a solemnizing type of Antichrist. His death is deeply solemn, and the Divinely given record is impressive. It is evident that the Holy Spirit says he fell upon his own sword (1 Sam. 31. 4).^{*} The added words of verses 5 and 6 seem to leave us in no doubt.[†] Sin is SUICIDAL, and suicide was Saul's goal, even as it was that of Judas (Matt. 27. 5).

The Philistine's action in cutting off the head, and stripping off the armour, (as if in reply to the laying low of Goliath), lays no claim to killing. But in 2 Samuel 1 a young Amalekite asserts that he killed the king (10). A solemn principle is set forth in verse 16:—men are often judged according to their claims. But David's words may hint that he was DOUBTFUL—"Thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying." If any would assert contradiction here they betray ignorance of the fundamental principles of criticism. The Holy Spirit inspired REVELATION and RECORD, but "record" can contain the words of an evil man, or even of Satan. The record is TRUE, but the man's pretensions may be quite unfounded. It is evident that the Amalekite HAD crown and bracelet, and this agrees with the silence of 1 Samuel 31. 9. But NOTHING MORE is proved. David knew the motive (1 Sam. 4. 10). The Holy Spirit would apparently show us that Saul spared some Amalekites (1 Sam. 15), and an Amalekite was near him in his death, and professed to have dealt the blow. The spiritual lesson is obvious (Num. 32. 23). It is remarkable that David mentions Jonathan as laid low in 2 Samuel 1. 25. Did he know of Saul's suicide? Surely the whole narrative not only emphasizes the truth of Scripture, but warns our hearts, showing the tendency, and development and fruit of sin.

Spiritual decisiveness is needed. But we must not confuse this with obstinacy. They are FAR DIFFERENT. Godly firmness is well, provided we seek to walk WITH GOD, and never encourage "pride of fixity" or a badness of temper that proudly refuses help through those who may, in other things, be "younger" in the faith.

* The preparatory wounding by the archers is important. Contrast the Lord Jesus, wounded by men, but not in warfare, and laying down His life in devotedness: the reverse of Saul's attitude.

† We can no more hesitate than as to Samuel's personal appearance in 1 Sam. 28. 15 which surprised the woman, who expected personification.

**"With a view to My Remembrance."
"Remember the Word."
"Ye Ought . . to Remember the Words
of the Lord Jesus."**

Luke 22, 19, John 15, 20, Acts 20, 35.

HOW often we have forgotten HIM, and HIS WORDS (Mark 8, 38). Hence so many sad failures. The words of Luke 22, 19 include a remembrance afterwards—throughout the week, as well as one part of one day. O that we may not restrict them in our experience. And John 15 20 especially came before the writer. Amidst trials, REMEMBER THE WORD. When rejected, REMEMBER THE WORD. He hath remembered (Ps. 105, 8, see Ps. 119, 49). The Lord has told His people before, in order that they may not be taken by surprise (John 16, 4). The stress on remembrance in this address of Christ is precious (see John 14, 26). How different from the appointed attitude of John 15, 10 is that of the rocky-ground hearer, "when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake" (Mark 4, 17).

And the Holy Spirit led the apostle to give a similar emphasis on memory. Forgetfulness of Christ's Words will cause many failures, as on the resurrection day. The women might have used the money for spices in another way to HIS glory. His body needed no embalming: He was raised. How strikingly Luke 24, 8 sounds forth "AND THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS." Let us seek deliverance THUS, and enabling THUS, in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, as Psalm 17, 4 points out, for the comfort and strengthening of God's beloved people.

"NEAR HER CORNER."

Prov. 7, 8.

TAMPERING with sin is a peril: we know this. Samson dallied with the alliance and fascination of Delilah. And Christendom is THUS portrayed. Safety is NOT in meeting half way. Many are unwisely afraid of being too separate, lest there be a reaction among their children. They give the wild animal a taste of blood, as if to keep it thus from wanting more. The whole principle is wrong,—personally and in the home alike. UNHAPPY separatedness HAS a reaction, but service should be with gladness of heart (Deut. 28, 47). THEN there is a far different result, Compromise, and the spirit of "What a weariness is it" (Mal. 1, 13) are the cause of "reaction." "NEAR her corner." Let us not parley with evil. We need Nehemiahs to-day, who will UNHESITATINGLY cast out Tobiah's household stuff, rather than "do things gradually." The writer recently saw an indictment of modern methods of raising money for professedly Christian work, and an emphasis on the simple arrange-

ments of the Holy Spirit. But then came the suggestion at once that it might be desirable to go along awhile with those on wrong lines. It was "nicely" worded, but therein lay the greater peril. A right man in a wrong place becomes a decoy.

Scripture is DEFINITE. The Holy Spirit is DEFINITE. Love loves, but it does not love evil. Let us avoid the EDGE of the whirlpool. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" is a precious verse (Prov. 4, 15). Eve LOOKED at the tree. "NEAR her corner"—the words ring out, and at once we read, "THE WAY TO HER HOUSE." When Lot pitched his tent TOWARD SODOM, he was on the high road to a house IN SODOM. Evil grows. Satan is subtle: he does NOT propose everything at once. The spider is in the centre of the web, but the meshes reach to the circumference as well. May the Lord give us grace to be more definite, beloved friends, and to fear being ensnared. We dare not trust ourselves. And oh, that we may lovingly sorrow for others, without a particle of pride being approved. To boast of being outside Christendom is to display the Christendom SPIRIT. Love to Christ never boasts, except in HIM. Love to CHRIST leads to humble repentance, and spiritual gratitude, unto His glory alone (Gal. 6, 12).

"His Enemy Came and Sowed Tares."

THE enemy is the devil (Matt. 13, 29). Thus Satan's aim is hereby unmasked. He is NOT always producing infidels, but rather, at this time, IMITATION-CHRISTIANS sown AMONG the wheat itself. Hence he can LEAD MANY TO PROFESS and to say that they "give their hearts to God." He may patronize preaching, in order to make converts who are LIKE CHRISTIANS, in various ways TILL "the time of the harvest." This view of the devil's work is often forgotten by all of us. It is so contrasted with present-day opinions. The "conversion" of thousands is now, without thought, heralded with joy, but rather there is joy in HEAVEN over ONE sinner THAT REPENTETH. This is ENTIRELY different from a decision card. But unless we accept CHRIST'S KEY, we are perplexed, and are often drawn to modern methods. God is sovereign and may use any means He pleases, and honour the gold of faith, though dross be mingled. God's unveiling of Satan's special aim is overpowering, to hold back from much that would at first appear to be "Christian work," in an "attractive" way. A spirit of Python was QUITE willing to advertise [preaching (Acts 16, 14). Observe this was the introduction of the gospel to EUROPE in the apostle's missionary travels, and it is in EUROPE this travesty has been on the largest scale.

The enemy positively desires awhile a LARGE number of PROFESSING Christians AMONG God's people,—in their very MIDST—to corrupt their way. This explains so much that has been called "backsliding." REAL backsliding is solemn, and God brings a soul back to

Himself painfully, as Naomi (Ruth 1. 20, 21). But the real backslider is usually MISERABLE. Many have never been saved at all. Moreover, this parable explains the "success" of many missions, on broad lines. "Free churches" may ignore inspiration altogether and yet have "converts" and claim revivals. The humble disciple is NOT aiming at "results," though he is humbled by the ABSENCE of conviction of sin, lest he has been unfaithful. Ah, he is to be HUMBLLED BY EVERYTHING. The Holy Spirit ever teaches. But he dare not ENVY those who are working on THEIR OWN LINES, nor desire to be like or with them. One closing word,—if we assume that most who profess Christ are really His, have WE ANY ROOM FOR Christ's parable? But if we have no room for His words, OUR POSITION must be against His mind and instruction.

How are we to Understand Eph. 4. 11-13?

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." We must not explain away one word, nor must we lower, to suit our experiences and ideas. God HAS shown the meaning of Ephesians 4. 11: the gifts of our risen and exalted Lord Jesus (10) were manifest in the early church: in like manner when the infidel attacks Mark 16. 17, 18, we answer, "The passage WAS fulfilled among believers: you were not present, and have no right to deny: we thank God that trustworthy records have been handed down." But can we blame the passage if there are SEEMING gaps, and appointed limitations in the duration of fulfilment? Obviously not: unless a passage indicates "This is all, necessarily, for all, at all times," we must not ASSUME it is so. God promised Abraham the land, BUT GAVE him none inheritance (Acts 7. 5). Abraham did not complain: the promise SHALL yet be fulfilled in resurrection. 2 Sam. 7. 10 has been misunderstood because of two things:—(a) The fulfilment, as of 1 Chronicles 17. 14, looked onward to Christ and that Day: this has not been felt. (b) "And not STILL more": "Not STILL afflict" may more accurately give the interpretation as to the olden times. The departure from Judah TEMPORARILY was indicated (Gen. 49. 10*), and the scattering of Israel was prophesied. The gap did NOT alter the Divine plan. Thus His promise as to Zion REMAINS—to be fulfilled. The Divine Architect keeps His plan (Isa. 49. 16). He waits, but He does not forget. Accordingly Eph. 4. 13 is fixed, but the passage does not say that there must be a CONSTANT supply of apostles, etc. Other Scriptures may be used to guide. Prophets are not promised in the last days, and apostles and prophets were a foundation gift (Eph. 2. 20). Nevertheless, in days of weakness, evangelists and teachers (2 Tim. 4. 5, 2. 2) can be granted.† But we would not add to the Lord's

* "The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah for ever, for Shiloh will come."

† It is noteworthy that in the *last* view of assemblies in Scripture, *false* apostles and a *false* prophetess are seen (Rev. 2. 1, 20), but fresh ones

Words. He GAVE certain gifts: the past tense is remarkable, and indicates that we STILL have blessing from those gifts (cf. John 17. 20, Heb. 11. 4,—this principle is found in Luke 16. 31, Rom. 4. 6, Heb. 10. 15). Not that the past tense shuts out; the Holy Spirit HAS BEEN GIVEN: He had, and still has, everything to bestow at the fitting time. The gifts were given with Him, their manifestation is as He wills (1 Cor. 12. 12) in His work of glorifying Christ (John 16. 14). Hence we would thankfully receive whatever teachers may be granted to-day, but we must not forget our blessings THROUGH the gifts of years ago, in the first century. "Till we all come" is a striking change of expression, implying that, whatever be the weakness, the "we all" of 2 Cor. 5. 10 (and other passages) shall YET reach the glory (Eph. 2. 10), and YET, in the mighty display of sovereign grace, enjoy the appointed unity (Heb. 11. 39, 40). John 17 looks on to this climax. As we honour the Lord, Ephesians 4. 13 (with 14) will have (a) a local illustration, and (b) a further application among revived saints generally—this reviving is promised—but (c) the complete fulfilment in "that Day." Thus the Holy Spirit shows what SHALL be, AND explains what SHOULD be. May the Lord's people be concerned to walk in the Spirit, so will there be the exaltation of His holy Name.

JONAH'S GOURD.

"THE LORD GOD prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief" (Jon. 3. 6). God is very tender with us too. Our grief is sometimes wrongly caused, or increased, but the principle of Ezra 9. 13 as to Israel, ("Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities"), has many illustrations in the present time. The sudden growth of the gourd is, in itself, no more remarkable than growth at all. Men have become used to regard everything as wonderful merely in proportion to infrequency. This is a "natural error": grace supernaturally lifts us above it to realize OUR GOD. But there are other lessons in Jon. 3, as in all God's tender dealings. "Jonah was exceedingly glad of the GOURD": "It"—not the Giver.—Here we see SELFISHNESS. How often we value salvation selfishly. We think so little of the fact that Christ "shall see of the travail of His soul and be SATISFIED." His joy is secondary to us. In prayer, too, we value blessings for OUR OWN COMFORT. Thus Jonah learnt not the Lord's message, and therefore he was NOT truly "delivered" from his grief, so it was necessary FOR HIS GOOD (Ps. 119. 75) that God should take THE GOURD AWAY. And have not we "lost" in a like manner? We have built our hopes on some "it," and valued "it," instead of thanking HIM. THE GOURD WITHERED. It may be some financial advantage is our resting place, and THE GOURD WITHERS. Amid trials we find one relief,

according to God's heart are not implied. Thus this coincides with 2 Timothy: where apostleship is not viewed as continued: an evangelist is to continue Paul's work, and *teachers* are sought.

and **THAT** relief vanishes. The Lord would shut us up **TO HIMSELF**, when we are misusing the blessing,—whatever it is,—to shut out Himself. But if the gourd withers, the tree of life will **NOT**, and the fruit thereof is constant (Rev. 22. 2), and the One (of Whom it is suggestive) never fails. We may value our gourds too much, but we cannot appreciate Him too much.

JOTTINGS.

The habits linked with discipleship become a peril, unless a condition of spiritual nearness to the Lord is maintained. One who is undisciplelike is obstinate, and does not welcome fresh humbling from God, but the disciple is ever on the look out for His gracious teaching, and that which is new to the heart is received with meekness and confession of sin, as well as joy in grace. Such an open hearted condition becomes a peril, however, as soon as there is a little wandering. The door is open for error, and the one who has been disciplelike, through the habit of being willing to be guided, is more easily led astray than the one who has had a mental fixity as to a measure of truth, and who has not been receiving God's fuller instruction. The remedy is **NOT** a closed heart, but a continual watchfulness in the Spirit, that we may be **KEPT NEAR** our Lord, and thus able to distinguish His voice from that of strangers.

Our natural tendency when we have some "small" physical trial is to wish at once for ITS speedy removal, and to ask God for this. It may be a headache, it may be a cold, but whatever it is, we **READILY** ask God to remove **THE TRIAL**. But should we not be more in accord with His will if we asked Him rather to deal with the cause of the trial, since there is a loving **REASON** for His permission? And **ALSO** we might ask in faith to **RECEIVE** the appointed **EFFECT** of the trial, and in this way He **WOULD** remove it, in His own good time and way, but we should become occupied not with "it" but with "**HIS WILL**," and have our minds not on the **CONTRACTED** view of our own feelings, but on the **LARGER** and godly view of His own gracious purpose to His own glory.

How precious is the thought of 2 Peter 1. 12. "To put you always in remembrance of these things, although ye know them." Let us realize the privilege of encouraging **OTHERS ALONG THE LINES OF ALREADY EXISTING KNOWLEDGE**, that the impression may not become blurred but rather deepened. Let us not be weary of writing or saying the same things (Phil. 3. 1). Continual emphasis is needful. The humbling thought "though ye know them" implies "Ye may forget," "and we remember "Though ye once knew this" in Jude 5. O that there may be a growing in the knowledge of our Lord (2 Pet. 3. 17), and thus the remembrance of "these things" from His standpoint.

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"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." Ps. 25. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN a little witness for One Who is Worthy to be altogether praised. POPULARITY, what is it? SUCCESS, what shall we call by this name? The only true treasure is pleasing the Lord. His wondrous love has dealt with our sins RIGHTEOUSLY: and, being accepted in the Beloved, we would now declare HIS precious Name, and work, and glory. If the reader has FELT judgment to be deserved, and has seen FREE grace, and has proved the gospel to be a POWER, surely he will welcome a testimony for CHRIST and not self, CHRIST and not a system, CHRIST and not a human organization.

God sets forth no third alternative. "In Christ" or "without Christ" are the two positions, and these pages are to tell of Him and His way, while, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we humbly look for Him to come again. Reader, do you know Him? Or not?

PENTECOST AND THE FIRST DAY.

EVERYTHING which is given by inspiration should be very precious to God's beloved people. And the "feasts of the Lord" should never be overlooked. Wondrous were the types granted of old, written to direct our attention, and affections, to Christ,—the All-Excelling Antitype (Rom. 15. 4). The Passover tells of Him, the Atonement tells of HIM; and, in-between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles, we see the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Greek, Fiftieth), which was also a time of **GATHERING**, albeit only **ONE** day.

If the Holy Spirit tells us Who is the True Passover (1 Cor. 5. 7), He seems to make clear that the **FULFILMENT** of Pentecost was n

Acts 2. "In the fulfilment (or being fulfilled) of the Day of Pentecost"—NOT ONLY "fully come."* This twofold meaning helps us much. The DAY was exactly reached :—God does not act before the time (nor is He late) : AND the PURPOSE of the type also was reached. Hence, we do NOT find Pentecost in Ezekiel 45. This remarkably illustrates the real FUTURE meaning of that prophecy.

If Pentecost was rightly the FIRST DAY of the week, various Scripture hints coincide to help, but only the Karaites among Israel preserve this ; rabbinical Judaism makes OTHER days possible. We are not surprised at such an "alteration" : it is SATAN'S AIM throughout to "change." Shall we seek, without prejudging, the teaching of the Holy Spirit ?

Pentecost is Divinely dated from "the morrow after the sabbath" of Leviticus 23. 11 (15). Is this a special sabbath, or an ordinary day ? (The tendency to ASSUME a special day is found in many misinterpretations of Col. 2. 16 equally, but, UNLESS GOD SAYS OTHERWISE, we should surely take the word "sabbath" simply). If there is some UNUSUAL reference, will it not precede Lev. 23. 14, else the passage misleads ? Many, even among God's dear people, have called the 1st and 7th days in passover week "sabbaths," BUT the Holy Spirit OMITS this description in Leviticus 23. 7, 8, though using it in verses 32 and 39 AFTERWARDS.† There is no mention or hint of any sabbath except a SEVENTH day, prior to VERSE 11. Shall we not notice this ?

The objection raised that we have a stress on "THE sabbath" (in Lev. 23. 11) hardly stands, for how would THIS make it refer to a day NOT called by that name in the chapter ? Rather "the" suggests a SECOND mention, and the Holy Spirit would seem to allude to verse 3 : and to indicate the barley firstfruits offering‡ was NOT to be before the morrow AFTER the day of REST,—an appointed type of Christ. Nor does the objection from Joshua 5. 11 seem weighty, even if the TRANSLATION "old corn" as "store corn" is not maintained. There is NO statement that this was the NEW produce.§ It is well just to mention these points, for they remind us that real SCRIPTURAL testimony against a Pentecost first day is lacking, hence unwarranted "inferences" are brought forward. And thus the Divine stress shines out the more :—the firstfruits WERE presented on a first day of the week, and Leviticus 23. 16 dates from this.

* The word occurs elsewhere in Luke 8. 23—"they were being filled" and 9. 51—a close parallel, for a fulfilment of *prophecy* is included. The prefix suggests thoroughness.

† I.e. with regard to *Tabernacles*. Let us mark the distinction.

‡ Exodus 34. 22 illustrates this. Note Ruth 2. 23. It is well to notice Scripture "seasons" etc. There is God's teaching in all.

§ May we not take this with Numbers 33 ? Another example of the "self-same day" (Ex. 12. 41) : "the times and seasons" are in His authority (Acts 1. 7, Dan. 2. 21).

Exodus 12 helps us. There the first and seventh days ARE holy convocations, but NOT called "sabbaths" (16). Every word of God is pure. But, it may be said, "Are not the special days in tabernacles called 'sabbaths,' ALSO 'holy convocations' in Numbers 29 ?" Yes, ALL sabbaths were holy convocations, but not all holy convocations were described as sabbaths. And the Holy Spirit makes this very clear distinction in Leviticus 23, and that is the chapter before us. Shall we not humbly acknowledge His wisdom ?

There is a tendency to-day to weaken GOD'S emphasis on the first day of the week.* Here we see an example of it. I do not suppose, at all that every one is conscious of the fact. We may hinder testimony without knowing it. But how remarkable that the stress on the first day, in BOTH parts of Scripture, should be set aside by those who are widely sundered in other things.

The SIMPLE acceptance of the Divine teaching that Pentecost was a first day, is strongly confirmed by the absence of A MONTH DATE, given to ALL other days in Leviticus 23, except this, AND the day after the sabbath of verse 11. This fact should not be ignored.

Having, therefore, first the EVIDENCE, we may next turn to the precious typical teaching. It will be seen we do not make THIS the basis, but the accompaniment. Hence all objections that we build on personal "ideas of a type" would fail to apply, would they not ? Notice the remarkable way in which the first day of the week is not before us in the gospels TILL Christ died and rose again, and then it suddenly becomes prominent, and with equal suddenness the sabbath becomes absent, in all the four narratives. The Holy Spirit tells us that Christ is the Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15. 23) : it was, therefore, fitting that He should be raised on the VERY day of the presentation. John 12. 24 shows how this perfigured resurrection, AND, blessed be God, the acceptance of His beloved people "in Christ." Hence, John 20. 17, "My Father AND YOUR FATHER." The present tense "I AM ASCENDING" reminds that there WAS an ascending, the same day, typified long before by the waving, or EXALTING of the sheaf. And Pentecost was dated from this. Thus, appropriately, the present dispensation began on a resurrection day, telling of a finished work. And so we have an appropriate PARALLEL with Exodus 12, and passover—a new beginning—but there of MONTHS :‡ the present dispensation having a beautiful stress on the unveiling of nothing beyond BREVITY, pilgrimage, and the near Coming of our beloved Lord. In this way everything harmonizes, to refresh our souls. The other feasts of assembly to Jerusalem had a WEEK each ; this only one day, and YET the journey for ONE DAY, and that day could NOT be a sabbath. But Israel dare not travel on the sabbath :

* From Gen. 1. 3. *via* Ex. 16. 4, and Lev. 23, to John 20 (three times, it seems) Acts 2. 1, 20. 7, 1 Cor. 16. 2, and (if we take the unique word used with its *only* other occurrence in 1 Cor. 11. 20) Rev. 1. 10 :—a remarkable chain, and it can be *enlarged*.

‡ So a new beginning of the year seems foreshadowed, as to *that* day, in Lev. 26. 9, 10.

hence they were required to be at Jerusalem for the sabbath, BUT, nevertheless, it is expressly passed over. And THIS is the Holy Spirit's PROPHECY of the present time, as we have seen in Acts 2. 1. The SABBATH was made for man, but God is not dealing with man in the flesh now. A NEW CREATION shines forth, and with it the HEAVENLY calling, and separation from the world's politics, conflicts, fashions and customs. As I write, Christendom is about to celebrate Christmas : an illustration of the SAD mixture against which the first day still loudly witnesses.

The more we realize that Pentecost could NOT possibly be a sabbath, and that the sabbath is left out from Acts 2, the more we have food for thought. The Jewish reckoning of evening and morning might have presented a difficulty, but the whole of the Saturday evening is omitted too : the passage does not suggest more [than the early morning, of our first day, some time before 9 o'clock (verse 15). How wondrously God meets our need, and calls to a contrast with Judaism, even as baptism is contrasted with circumcision.* And now an already noticed fact will have more suggestiveness.—

The Millennial Kingdom will be a sabbath keeping, and the seventh day will be observed, when God again deals with men as men in the flesh. Hence we have the feasts of the first and the seventh month in Ezekiel 45. 21 and 25, but NO Pentecost. Is this an accident? Nay. The Holy Spirit confirms His teaching that it has been fulfilled. Some may reply "Passover likewise." We earnestly commend them to Luke 22. 15-18, and a future fulfilment linked with the cup BEFORE supper. There is a TWOFOLDNESS in Passover : verses 19, 20 give the present type (1 Cor. 11. 25, "after having supped"). There is no confusion in the testimony of God.

May it be ours, beloved friends, not only to ponder the Scripture, and not only to see what God has appointed for His children, but to know that simplicity of heart which would walk in His ways. He is not seeking a grand display. He does not want a parallel with Babylon. Success in the earth and elaborate buildings are not His appointment. His Beloved Son became poor (2 Cor. 8. 9), and His dear people are called, not to earth's greatness, but to go forth to Him without the camp (Heb. 13. 13) : their citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3. 20). And their worship is heavenly (Heb. 10. 19). There is a marked contrast with all of earth, and the precious words ring forth, "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4. 23). O that the heavenly calling may mean more to us than ever hitherto, even in the midst of daily business, and as our homes set aside the display and ornaments and pictures and music of the present age, and we ourselves gladly look for our Lord from heaven.

It is precious to COMPARE Scripture with Scripture, and from Exodus 16. 1, 7, and 27 we learn that the sixteenth day of the

* Again affording a picture of resurrection (Rom. 6. 1-5).

second month was a FIRST day. If so, the eighteenth of the preceding month was a first day. And does not Numbers 33. 3 indicate the fifteenth evening of that month, verse 5 the sixteenth, verse 6 the seventeenth, and verse 7 the eighteenth? Accordingly verse 8 shows the linked morning OF the eighteenth, and the type of RESURRECTION passing through the Red Sea. If the morning of the first fruits had been on the morrow of the passover, there would have been no relation : but we have seen the Holy Spirit indicates it was on the morrow AFTER THE SABBATH : hence the SAME DAY as the type of RESURRECTION. Christ is exalted !

A QUESTION.

DID THE LORD JESUS LAY ASIDE HIS PRE-INCARNATE GLORY?

WE VALUE all concern to honour our beloved Lord, and to avoid any expressions which (a) suggest SPECULATION as to His wondrous Person, or (b) detract from His amazing glory. Many dear children of God need more care in wording : unconscious irreverence often hinders the truth. Thus it is when they ADDRESS our adorable Lord as "Jesus." Though the Holy Spirit sometimes speaks OF Him thus, the disciples never spoke TO Him in this way. And there are many other opportunities for witnessing against the undue "familiarity" of to-day.

Christ's pre-incarnate glory is emphasized in such passages as Romans 9. 5, John 17. 5, (12. 41 and 16. 28 makes clear the precious actuality), and Philippians 2. 7.*

It is evident that HE emptied Himself of that which was HIS, yet remained HIMSELF. Evidently He laid aside the glory set forth, which He had, but there was still a glory in all He did before THE FATHER, and before BELIEVERS (John 1. 14). The display on the transfiguration mount when He received from God the Father honour and GLORY (2 Pet. 1. 17), and was THUS crowned (Heb. 2. 9†), would show the nature of the glory laid aside "for a little while" (Heb. 2. 7). There remained the glory of His essential Godhead (Himself), and the glory of His obedience was added. Hebrews 10. 20 gives the Holy Spirit's own declaration of THIS glory, in His interpretation of the type. The veil was exquisitely beautiful (Ex. 26. 31, 32, Matt. 17. 5). Nor was there compulsion, nor INVOLUNTARY humiliation in His experience. If He received commandment from the Father (John 10. 18), it was His own joy to be the PERFECT Servant. ALL the statements made, are conformable with this. Not ONE denies His Deity, but, on the

* "He Emptied Himself" (literally). Leaflet readily sent.

† Prior to His death, as "that" indicates. J. J. J.

other hand, THEIR ABSENCE would have veiled His COMPLETE obedience. If His covenant service had not been thus humble, it would have been IMPERFECT, and at once His Deity would have been disproved. Hence, every unveiling of voluntary humiliation illustrates His perfection, and thereby His Deity. Hence, the stress on HIS OWN further humbling of Himself AFTER He became a Man (Phil. 2. 8*): His glorious VOLUNTARINESS shines forth.

BEFORE men He was despised, and the badger skins' type comes to mind. They saw no majesty that they should desire Him. This is suggested by the Holy Spirit's use of the word "tabernacled" in John 1. 14. Hence, there was a definite veiling, yet, amid all, His words and works revealed Who He was, but the world knew Him not (John 1. 10), and thus men crucified "the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. 2. 8). Now He is HIGHLY EXALTED (Isa. 52. 13, Phil. 2. 9), having retained His essential glory as God, and returned to the glory of John 17. 4, 5, and received the glory of His obedience unto death (1 Pet. 1. 21). Well may we say—"Worthy is the Lamb That was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12).

TYPEWRITTEN NOTES on "The Glory of Christ in John's Gospel" gladly forwarded, if the Lord will, for a fortnight. We would give thanks for His gracious use of these notes on many subjects, and supply further particulars to His praise.

FALSE VALUE.

WHAT is the STANDARD by which we shall value everything?

Men have many standards, MISTAKEN standards to-day. Business success is the aim of not a few, and the "value" of all is told in pounds, shillings and pence. 'Tis a poor standard, for "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (Mark 8. 36). The book of Ecclesiastes sets forth the TEMPORARINESS of golden profit, and the fact that a man has no power to make it part of himself. He must LEAVE IT. "We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6. 7). Money is a poor standard: Gilt-edged securities, and only "EDGED" thus, are anything but secure. Even as man's life-insurance is because of THE ASSURANCE OF DEATH, so everything of earth's gain has a DARK CLOUD hanging over it. Well may we turn aside from this vain quest for "value."

But another man finds "value" in pleasure. The amount of CHANGING AND FADING joy he has in an action, is the measure of its excellence to him. "Vanity of vanities." His sun soon sets, and what has he?

Yet a third finds the "value" of everything in the esteem it

* cf. "He made naked His soul for the death" (Isa. 53. 12 lit.).

brings among men. To such an one the words are foreign, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16. 15). The One Who suffered without the gate, loaded with reproaches (Rom. 15. 3), that broke His heart (Ps. 69. 20, remains unknown.

Others have their varying "standards," and, with some, learning may become an idol. The tree of knowledge is still attractive INSTEAD of the Tree of Life. The goal is perilous. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom (Prov. 3. 13, 1 Cor. 1. 24).

But even when we approach Christian service, there is the danger of Satan's temptation, is there not, beloved friends? We may value the work because we enjoy it, and forget our Saviour's joy. The scaffolding may become our CHIEF structure: or we may adorn this till we hide the building we intended at first. There may be too much FOLIAGE to allow of FRUIT. Surely our hearts know what this means. What is the value even of preaching unless it be THE WILL OF GOD (Rom. 10. 15)? Think, dear reader, of the Lord Jesus, Whose every word was golden, yet how little of His life was public ministry. Tell me WHY He spent years in work that "others could have done" (Mark 6. 3) as men say, and then learn the loveliness of pleasing Him in workshop and kitchen, so long as you are resolute to have time for Mary's good part (Luke 10. 41, 42), and godly proportion that seeks to gather with saints, and not to let business drive out direct witness for Him.

How sweet to a shut-in saint is Ezekiel 44. 11-16 concerning "value." To draw near to the Lord, to minister to Him, was, and is, and will be, more than to minister to the people, however popular the latter may seem. The "holiest of all" suggests a SANCTUARY rather than a PLATFORM, and the rewards of Matthew 6 are particularly linked therewith. Diversities of gift did not rob ANY saint of the love that was GREATEST (1 Cor. 13. 13), and diversities of sphere of ministry do not take from ANY believer the high privilege of drawing near. PRIESTHOOD is not restricted (1 Pet. 2. 5), though ministry to men may be.

The will of God ALONE gives "value." Even sleep may be to God's glory, else would He not GIVE it (Ps. 127. 1, 2): but the disproportion of the bed, and late rising, must grieve Him. 'Tis the will of God alone that is precious, not greatness, not success, not results, and not even blessings in themselves.

To know "values" aright, we must know Him, and walk in the Spirit. Let us pause and ask ourselves more and more—WHY do I want this or that? Is it "time" which is before us? Why do I desire "time"? To study and know His Word? And why to know? That I may obey and tell others? And why to obey? Only that I may have joy, and reward in that Day? Ah, let it not be so! HIS claims and glory are paramount. And why also tell others? Is it only that they may be saved? Wondrous blessing. But BEYOND THEIR SALVATION, is the glory of God therein.

And thus we reach the climax, emphasizing all that is precious

WITHIN ITSELF. And at once we look back to the first commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thine heart." No room for OTHER love, only for love INCLUDED in this. Thus the SAME principle shines forth throughout; and "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things" (Rom. 11. 36). The secret of "VALUE" is learned—at least in doctrine. O that it may be ours in experience also. A Centre is found, and all life revolves around that Centre. The Father has highly exalted His beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit ever glorifies Christ. Christ is the Centre of all, and His pleasure the only Standard of value which redeemed ones can own.

THE realities of life and death, and of heaven and hell, cannot be changed by denying them. Words will not alter facts. Indifference has no power to remove danger. Carelessness as to God's judgment will not diminish that judgment. A man has no strength to hinder the justice of God. Laughter and mockery do not obliterate the lake of fire. We may hide our eyes from the realities, but they are not varied: the only result is that we, adding sin to sin, hurry blindly toward them. "We may hide." Ah, thanks be unto God, some of us can now say that we cannot do this, for our eyes have been opened, and our hearts know the realities. And they know the deliverance also. The precious blood of Christ is a reality. Do any careless readers feel surprised that, believing this with a heart-knowledge, we must lovingly warn them of such realities? Disregard is cruel, and silence is criminal. We cannot all preach, but a word here and a word there, and a holy life daily, may tell of Christ. Shall it not be so?

The PRACTICE of accepting all things from God in PARTICULAR is far different from the THEORY of accepting all things from God in GENERAL. The true test is love's living experience to-day. We can all formulate "general principles"—"TO apply": it is a precious privilege when we "DO apply" God's principles NOW.

If any reader knows the Maltese language:—if any reader loves the Maltese people—for the sake of the Lord Jesus: if any reader prays for Malta, the island where God blessed the apostle so abundantly (Acts 28):—how glad we shall be to hear from such.

For Particulars of Meeting at 2, Minorities (Tues. 6. 30), see
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Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"THE LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED IN THAT DAY."

(Isaiah 2. 11, 17).

A Word of Introduction.

THE characteristic of that Day will be the exaltation of the Lord. Should not those redeemed by blood realize this standpoint now? Is not the glory of God in nature the holy contrast with human speculation? How wondrously Job 38 lays low modern theories. Is not the glory of God in grace the mark of the true gospel, as distinguished from present-day counterfeits? And should not the glory of God be the aim of daily life, with the setting aside, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the worldiness which would lay hold of us. And shall not the testimony of these pages be the exaltation of the Lord, and not man's? O that this may be so, from the first page to the last. Let Christ be Central!

"TWO REASONS."

SCRIPTURE often sets God's people prayerfully and practically thinking. Its educational value for the mind is thus illustrated, since He Who provides for the BODY looks after the MIND (Matt. 22. 37): and if dear Christian parents REALIZED this more as to their children, and manifested more separatedness from the world in all educational aims, how blessed it would be. But desiring for ourselves to grow up into all things in Christ, beloved friends, let us not only "think" but "obey," and let our hearts desire the devotedness of Mary, as we sit at our Lord's feet to hear His Words (Luke 10. 39, Deut. 33. 3). WE CANNOT BE TOO DEVOTIONAL. It is so easy to be orthodox without devotion, and energetic without devotion. The writer would speak to himself: "the Father

seeketh" true worshippers (John 4. 23, 24). May all our studies be spiritual.

We recollect the two references to the name of "Bethel" (Gen. 28. 19, 35. 15). Nor is this strange. God was pleased to DEEPEN His work in His servant. He doubled the dream to Pharaoh: is it unexpected when He doubles the lesson as to "the house of God" for Jacob? Was not this Jacob's CONTINUED need? His natural tendency was so different. How patient is the Lord.

Another beloved one NEEDED a similar deepening. Simon was called by the Lord Jesus "Cephas" in John 1. 42 at the first. But he NEEDED a further realization that HE was not the foundation, not the arranger, but a DEPENDENT one, a stone, to be built upon his Lord, and to be part of a spiritual house for His glory. Hence, Matthew 16. 18. And, in the Lord's love, the apostle learnt this lesson (though slowly, see Matt. 16. 22), and the inspired words of 1 Peter 2. 4, 5 sound forth to the continual encouragement of saved ones, and an equally continual witness against Romanism, and the undue exaltation of a man. The INITIATIVE is not ours: but faith responds to His initiative.

In like manner we find a TWOFOLD reason for the field of blood (Matt. 27. 8, Acts 1. 19). Nor is this extraordinary. God is OVER nature and history, and He can "cause causes" to unite to bring about ONE effect. "A coincidence" men say, but we recognize One Who makes the coinciding. We behold a wondrous unveiling of this when the Son of His love was delivered up for guilty men. The "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" was manifest, but we behold the wicked hands of men as well (Acts 2. 23), and also His own amazing love—He gave Himself (Gal. 2. 20). Thus there was a THREEFOLDNESS in this. Let us adore Him.

And it is deeply interesting to see that when Satan sent his messenger to Paul, this, as in Job's case, was by God's permission, and HE had a precious object, that His beloved servant might not be lifted up. So graciously concerned is our Heavenly Father that we may not be proud. Pride is so harmful. He loves us too much to leave us alone (cf. Prov. 29. 15). A thorn in the flesh is a rich blessing if it humbles. Trial after trial must be reckoned as a gracious appointment in ANY case, but we see His gentleness very definitely if we are thereby kept lowly. PRIDE is a far worse disease than physical pain. Hence, though Satan had his object—to buffet: God had His object—to chasten (2 Cor. 12. 7). And HIS object was reached, He was glorified (9, 10). So is it with all tribulations when we are exercised thereby (Heb. 12. 11). Thus the Holy Spirit blesses to believers their varied experiences.

In 2 Corinthians 8. 16, 17 we have another precious example of two reasons. WHY did Titus go to Corinth? HE ACCEPTED THE EXHORTATION. He lovingly owned guidance and spiritual oversight. But also "of his own accord" he went. The one reason did NOT exclude the other, and he will not lose reward for love's spontaneousness AND love's obedience UNITED.

A solemnizing illustration is found in Galatians 2. 1, 2. The journey was required through false brethren (4), BUT the apostle, in holy dependence on the Lord, would not submit to them. He went up, not at their bidding, but under the Lord's guidance. How deeply important is the stress the Holy Spirit lays hereby on motive in Christian service.*

And thus, beloved friends, we are refreshed in a matter that sometimes much concerns dear children of God. They almost think that "love" and "duty" are incompatible. [But surely the life of Christ witnesses against this.]

Was it MERE duty when He MUST needs go through Samaria (John 4. 4)? Was it MERE duty when He MUST be lifted up on the cross (John 3. 14)? By no means. He loved, and therefore He DELIGHTED to do that which was also the will of His Father (Ps. 40. 8, Heb. 10. 7-9). It is thus we see the holy blending. And may not we act in love, with the spontaneousness of spiritual love, and YET because we are graciously commanded so to do? Paul was so concerned, in connexion with Christian service, to make it his "very own" by seeking to avoid A MINIMUM (1 Cor. 9. 18 helps to illustrate). The man of God did not want to act ONLY as one controlled, though delighting in this, but also as one who readily LOVED to do that which He was bidden and caused to do. Thus we fill the mould of doctrine, as it were (Rom. 6. 17 margin), and hold that which holds us, as the tabernacle boards fitted the sockets. It is this loving RESPONSE to the will of our Father, this holy twofoldness, which gives a freshness to Christian witness and daily life. It glorifies CHRIST, and He will not forget it in that Day, when the rewards will be HIS joy (Matt. 25. 21, 23), and to HIS praise and honour, and glory (1 Pet. 1. 7). O that His glory may ever be first and central, and the climax!

"PRAYER."

THE PRIVILEGE of prayer is great. We come to the throne of grace (Heb. 4. 16). and there is One on the throne. But who are the "we"? BELIEVERS can draw near. Christ is the Only Way to the Father (John 14. 6).

It is a PRIVILEGE to be those who pray, yet we would not be "occupied" with those who have the privilege. Our minds would go beyond THEM.

What is FIRST impressed on our heart? Do we think of the petitions? It is a wondrous privilege to bring forward our needs, and our desires, and Psalm 145. 19 is not a dead letter. But there is a danger lest we become "occupied" with OUR necessities, and OUR selfishness may come in unexpectedly. The great thought of prayer is not to be—"I can obtain thus my longings without my effort." Colossians 1. 29 gives a further view of the INTENSITY of the apostle's

* Leaflet gladly sent.

prayer, which we often overlook. But another helpful meditation is just now before us. Primarily we would exalt, not the praying one, not the PRAYING, not the PRAYER, but the ONE TO WHOM WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO PRAY.

In like manner the psalmist does not merely emphasize "Precepts" but "THY precepts," and not only the statutes of truth, but "TEACH me"—i.e. the PERSONAL LOVE OF OUR PERSONAL GOD is before us, and in prayer we would think much of HIM to Whom we speak, and of HIS will from HIS standpoint, and HIS joy in the basis of our prayer, and its fulfilment.

OUR FATHER NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE.

BUT what if He permits that we are laid aside? Is it in lack of love? By no means! He knew all from eternity, and knew what He would do. He has a purpose and He saw the 'after-wards' of the trial from eternity. His gold shall not be destroyed. It is wondrous to rest in His love. But one desires to know His lessons, for He *must* have a purpose. Are we learning it?

Sanctified afflictions are blessed, but afflictions may be unsanctified. "To these which are exercised thereby" means much (Heb. 12. 11). Are we *exercised*, or do we only wish to get well?

Why does our Father allow the trial of being laid aside? Is it, among other things, to show us that He *can* do without us? It is His loving condescension that He uses us. But He delights so to do? Why then does He permit the laying aside? We should do more work for Him if we were not thus hindered:—should we? Would it be only works for Him, or labour in the Lord? (1 Cor. 15. 58). Is it that He sees richer service after, springing from more Christlikeness?

Ah, but there is another thought. He deigns to accept our service, but He values us so much, and He desires our refining. How precious to know His *changeless love*. 'Tis true the trials seem to hinder the Lord's work. But the Lord will not send that which is against His own precious interests. He values our refining even more than our activity. He has given, as it were, Egypt and Ethiopia for us, and draws us aside from labour generally, that *we ourselves* may be blest. So graciously is He concerned in our spiritual growth, that He permits us to be laid aside, and even to seem to lose time, rather than to lose refining. How great is His love. How real His joy in the gold He has given us, that we, redeemed by the blood of His beloved Son, may walk in the Spirit. Shall we not be "exercised" by all the apparent disappointments and burdens, and thank Him for them? He values *us ourselves* so much.

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE.

Gal. 5. 22.

A PRECIOUS fruit on a wondrous tree. And it grows plentifully if there are no hindrances. How blessed it is whenever God's people bring forth MUCH fruit (John 15. 8). SHOULD there not be MUCH love? SHOULD there not be GREAT joy, and GREAT peace (Luke 2. 10, Ps. 119. 165)?

May we not go a step further? Our relationship to salvation is our relationship to Christ. We rightly meet everything in connexion with HIM. All commandments are in Him (1 Cor. 9. 21). He is the Law-giver (Isa. 55. 4). All the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Him (2 Cor. 1. 20). And our trials are to be understood in relation to Him (Col. 1. 24, with 2 Cor. 12. 9). In other words, "If any one is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17). How wonderful is this thought.

Hence, if we would know what love means, we know it by knowing Him. And to express this more fully we wish Him to put the word "My" in front:—"MY love," "MY joy," "MY peace." Can we find such expressions anywhere? We can, and they are together. In John 15. 9 we have "MY love," and in 15. 11 (with 17. 13), "MY joy," and in 14. 27 "MY peace." So He Himself, when speaking of the Spirit (John 14. 16, 26, 16. 13 etc.), illustrated the FRUIT. And likeness to Him must include the possession of this FRUIT. How can there be spiritual power if there is a bad temper? How can there be likeness to the Lord Jesus if there is a complaining, joyless attitude? How can there be that which glorifies God if there is an irritated, fretful mind?

And there is a wealth of meaning in "Continue ye in My love." 'Tis the consciousness of His love which will encourage us to love Him (cf. John 14. 21, 23). And observe that He Who said, "MY joy" is uniquely ANOINTED with the oil of gladness (Heb. 1. 9): and is not He the One That REJOICETH in Isaiah 64. 5, Ps. 40. 6-8? And He Who says, "MY peace," knew what fulness of strain was, yet there was perfect calm. He sets forth the TWOFOLDNESS in John 16. 33. May our hearts realize what this means. Nor would we overlook the "peace, peace" of John 14. 27 and of Isaiah 26. 3, 57. 19 contrasted with Jeremiah 6. 14 and 8. 1. But we read, "Peace I leave with you, MY peace I give unto you." Why not "MY peace" in BOTH sentences? Is it not because WE needed peace with God first (Rom. 5. 1) in the removal of sin, which He needed not! Thus we have the peace of salvation and of service, as the grace of salvation AND of service in 1 Corinthians 15. 10, and the rest of salvation AND of service in Matthew 11. 28, 29. Oh that we may enter more fully into His riches, for He has nothing but fulness. "MY love," "MY joy," "MY peace." Is it not wonderful? And the Holy Spirit receives of the things of Christ and shews to us (John 16. 14).

“UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH.” Matt. 16. 18.

THE wondrous answer of the Lord Jesus shows that in the very passage in which He commends the SERVANT, He sets forth His own far-exceeding glory. Peter realized this. 1 Peter 2. 4 shows the One Lord Jesus. Verse 5 His dependent people (cf. Heb. 3. 5, 6). Hence, Peter is the stone, or, rather, A STONE : Christ is a ROCK, nay, “THE ROCK.”* He points out Himself, even as in John 2. 19, “Destroy this Temple.”

Moreover, by these wondrous words He claims to be Builder and Owner, as well as the Foundation of the Church. He is exalted throughout.

The certainty of Christ’s work is before us, and the futurity of the building. For the Church of this passage was not before Christ’s death and resurrection. John 12. 24 explains the underlying thought. How could there be this UNION WITH HIM previously ?

The characteristic of His people is seen in the word “called OUT.” Election, and separation, and bringing together for a purpose, are all before us. Nor does He save as if making a machine. Those saved are CALLED (John 5. 24, 25).

The added message must not be overlooked, “The gates of Hades shall not prevail† against IT.” Grammatically “it” may refer to the Rock and to the Church, i.e. to CHRIST’S resurrection, and the separation of His people from Hades. THIS twofoldness is precious—those joined to Him. And it is noteworthy that Heb. 2. 15 and 1 Cor. 15. 55 rightly rendered show a “TRANSFER” at this very time for old-time saints, who were, in their earthly life, servants, not knowing sonship as believers now (Rom. 8. 15). And, secondly, that the victory over DEATH is future, the victory over HADES is ALREADY manifested. Hence there is NO thought of saved ones now going to Hades, nor of believers who went there remaining there (Heb. 12. 23). Thus the gates of Hades cannot hold down.

This unveiling is far different from that of Romanism, even as the EARLIER sentence expressly contrasts Peter with THE Rock (observe the NEXT utterance to the SAME apostle in 16. 23, and the TWO NEXT dealings with him in 17. 4, 5 and 17. 25. How wondrously is Scripture arranged. There is moreover, the Lord’s witness against a mistaken ultra-dispensationalism, and a precious setting forth of the union of His people on the ground of His finished work. Thus the old-time believers are bound together, and His uniting work shines forth to awaken the heartfelt praise of Romans 11. 33-36, with the loving obedience, even in little things, and in the WHOLE MANNER, which Romans 12. 1, 2 so helpfully sets forth. May these be our inferences, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

* Mark “the” in verse 16 also.

† Note the thought of holding DOWN.

“SIN.”

WHAT is sin ? We often hear the word, and say it again and again. But *what* is sin ? Can you give me the answer—the *right* answer ? Sin is a fact. “Sin” is something against God. Indeed, everything which is against God is sin. Many things appear outwardly good, but if they are not God’s will, *they are sin.*

This thought is important, very important. Many people *change* their opinions. Sometimes one man thinks one thing is right, another says “No, it is wrong.” Whom shall we believe ? The answer is easy. We do not believe this man *or* that man. We believe God. What has God said ? God *has* shown what is sin. God has given His own commandments. They are in Scriptures. Here is the standard. Here is the touchstone, the only touchstone. That which is not God’s will must be sin (Isa. 53. 6). Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3. 4). Even the thought of foolishness is sin (Prov. 24. 9). Sin leads us away from God, both now and for ever. The *fruit* of sin is death. The punishment of sin is *necessary*. If God should excuse sin, this would be unrighteous. But He does *not* excuse it. He *will not* excuse it. Many will see, and fall underneath His righteous anger “in that Day.”

If there is to be any hope, it must be in accord with righteousness (Rom. 5. 21) : *sin* must be purged, (the word for atonement Ps 79. 9), covered (Ps. 85. 2), blotted out (Isa. 44. 22). In His wondrous love, God has provided such a way of salvation,—but there is only *one* way of salvation. The Lord Jesus came into the world, and lived in a perfect way. He did no sin. *Then* He died in the place of sinners (2 Cor. 5. 21). Thus “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6. 23), but He died for *others*. He had *no* sin of His own. Hence the sins laid on Him *have been* dealt with just as definitely as those upon sinners *will be* dealt with in the day of judgment. We remember the type : as much water fell on the *ark* as on those who were destroyed ; but atonement was between Noah and wrath. Blessed be God !

Sin in the heart, and sins in the daily life—both have separated men far from God (Isa. 59. 2). But the Lord Jesus has made a way into the very presence of God, and if we have seen our sins, and sought God’s salvation through the death of Christ, eternal redemption is ours ! Ah, dear reader, is He your Saviour ? Saved ones can live to please God. If we are His, we should now *gladly do* His will in the power of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3. 8). The Lord Jesus saves His people FROM their sins (Matt. 1. 21). While we look for the coming of the Lord Jesus, this is to be our joy. This is our hope. This is our privilege. *All* blessings belong to the people of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they will soon see His face, and be like Him (Ps. 17. 15), enjoying sinless service for ever.

"AT THY PRESENCE."

HOW impressively the first three verses in Isaiah 64 end. It is delightful to realize that in God's presence is fulness of joy: but do we sufficiently feel the majesty of His presence? Elihu rightly said, "With God is terrible majesty." It is true that believers are made NEAR in the blood of Christ, and that they can now cry "ABBA, FATHER," but the privileges of grace never make familiarity or disregard of the glory of God.

If it were not for HIS OWN LOVE, and HIS OWN way of salvation, we could NOT draw near, the sword would remain at the gate, and the bow would have an arrow ready to shoot. It is all by grace that saved ones are accepted in the Beloved, and brought into His presence.

Isaiah 64 gives a wondrous background to verse 4 in these opening verses. If God touches the mountains, they smoke (Ps. 104. 32, 144. 5), but He can lay His right hand of love upon His people, and His revealed command of grace is "Fear NOT." What manner of persons ought we to be in view of such majesty, such tenderness, such patience, such unchanging fulness of "all grace" (2 Cor. 9. 8).

The Scriptures are not only BETTER than other books, they stand in a class by themselves: the very Words of God. In like manner the Lord Jesus Christ was not only GREATER than other men, He was unique. He was God and Man,—yea, He Who was over all, God Blessed for ever, became Man, to save worthless sinners. And accordingly Christianity is not merely the best religion, it reveals the ONE way of salvation, the only way. Men love to compare, and the study of "comparative religion" is still popular, but the principle expressed in Isaiah 40. 18, 25 applies fully in this context. Listen to the weighty words of the Holy Spirit, "To Whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" And again, "To Whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." We need more reverence for God.

Prayer is not a matter of eloquence, nor even a matter of grammar, though slovenly prayer, and laziness in daily life are not to God's glory. But if we are occupied with technicalities of words, we may go no further, and even exalt self. The privilege of a saint is to be in communion with the Father, and thus to express wishes that are His will, from a full heart, which delights to please Him. How we fall short of this: yet the remedy is NOT prayerlessness, but rather PRAYER THAT WE MAY PRAY. A "clever" prayer is a miserable failure: a humble prayer, from a heart which RESPONDS to the Lord's will, shall receive His gracious response, and thus lead to further prayer, in the precious ALTERNATION of supplication and answer.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD, MY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL IN MY GOD: FOR HE HATH CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HATH COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." Isaiah 61. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN, by enabling grace, we are privileged to send forth a little witness for the Lord of GLORY. Salvation is no small matter, we are not seeking to advertise that which needs human recommendation. We dare not drag down the gospel of the grace of God to questionable methods, to win the fickle natural faith of men. And we dare not alter God's revealed arrangements for His blood-bought-people,—as far as by grace we see them. It is for us to rejoice in Him, and in them. The path of His grace is not meant to be a miserable path, but a delightful one. To be able to call God "Father," to be able to draw nigh, to be able to please Him, to be expectant of His guidance even in tiny things:—who can over-estimate these privileges? Ah, beloved readers, if we are "a new creation" in Christ Jesus, let us show the wondrous grace we have received, and live unto Him Who died for us and rose again, seven days a week, with love's joyful devotedness.

THE VINEGAR OFFERED TO THE LORD JESUS.

EVERY detail of Scripture is precious, and the narrative of Christ's death, impresses us with the unveiling of His wondrous love and humiliation. Moreover, the Scripture was fulfilled. Let us take one example:—"They gave ME also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69. 21). It is worthy of notice

that the offering of vinegar was TWICE (Matt. 27. 34, 48): so is it with many things in Scripture. How readily would men have glibly said that the event was only ONE, if the narratives had been found in different gospels. The Holy Spirit has prevented this misunderstanding by including both in Matthew 27.

Another thought has come before some, and it is for believers to be honest, and see everything in the light of the sanctuary. Was the drink fermented? And if so, did Christ partake of it? The question seems crucial, for was He not obedient UNTO DEATH, and is not ferment "leaven"?

It is deeply important that children of God should be OPEN-HEARTED to Him. If they have a difficulty, let them not force themselves to assume they have solved it. 'Tis important to be humble, even if we say, "I do not know, but God never makes a mistake."

The word used for "vinegar" (oxos) denotes something SHARP. By derivation it proves nothing as to ferment. However, the Hebrew word for vinegar is CHOMETZ, (cf. chametz, leaven*), and is translated by the Greek word before us in the LXX of Num. 6. 3, Ruth 2. 14, Ps. 69. 21, Prov. 25. 20. Apparently, therefore, the ὄξος was, in some way, fermented. Hence, we want humbly to ponder this problem.

That our beloved Lord refused on the FIRST occasion is clear. Matthew 27. 34 thus shows us not only that He would, with undulled mind, fully suffer, and realize what Divine wrath really meant, but that He WOULD NOT contradict the Divine plan in Exodus 12. He WOULD NOT partake of anything leavened or fermented. The tasting, gave the background for His definite rejection, and there is no evidence that any portion was eaten or drunk. Indeed, the Holy Spirit declares that He was NOT WILLING to have drunk it. Observe that the tense is NOT merely "to go on drinking." Rather it implies He would not drink it at all.†

But on the second occasion He had said, "I thirst." This, too, was, in fulfilment of Scripture, and links the prophetic Psalms 22 and 69. At first we feel concern, because the Hebrew SEEMS to mean "caused to drink." But, invariably (may we not say?) the Holy Spirit solves His own permitted difficulties. The SAME word is found in Jeremiah 35. 2, and certainly the Rechabites did NOT partake: they were only OFFERED drink.§ Hence, there is NO evidence from Matthew, Mark, and Luke that Christ partook. Luke 23. 36 emphasizes the mockery, "Coming and offering and saying." Hence, neither the prophecy, nor these gospels, give any other suggestion than

* One is aware that different pointings may show distinction (e.g. Genesis 11. 3). But here the two words are TOGETHER and to assume entire contrast between chomets and chamets hardly has similar evidence.

† The force of the Greek aorist is striking. As to Christ's action, Rev. 3. 16 comes to mind.

§ The Septuagint contains the same verb as Matt. 27. 48, Mark. 15. 36, ποτιζω.

cruel insult. And we know how He treated this. His patience and His silence, amid the WORDS of mockery, would find a parallel in His rejection here, amid the WORKS of scornors.

But for a long while the writer has felt that more might be said as to John 19. The matter is of the deepest importance. It seems to have a bearing on the very symbols of love's obedience at the breaking of bread. It seems to cause prayerful concern regarding the prohibition of anything leavened,—with respect to the inclusion of liquid. And, if the Scripture shuts out all ferment, surely a believer's heart longs to know what Christ did, for He became under the law (Gal. 4. 4) and was obedient unto death.

Our translation says that He "RECEIVED the vinegar," and this, at first, to the passing reader, looks like partaking. But the verb used (λαμβάνω) is not regularly so applied. Somewhat remarkably it comes in Matthew 27. 48 for "taking" the sponge, and, yet more remarkably, for Christ's action as to the bread in Matt. 14. 19, 15. 26, 26. 26, where there was no thought of HIS PARTAKING. And, when He commanded the disciples to "EAT," this word, rendered "take," concerns a PRELIMINARY action (Matt. 26. 26). Even John 13. 30, as to taking the sop, does not necessarily refer to the partaking, but may quite as well allude to Christ's OFFERING.* And there are other verses which help, e.g. Matthew 16. 5, 7, 8, John 21. 13, and Genesis 40. 11 and 2 Samuel 23. 16 in the LXX.

"To take," therefore, is to ACCEPT, but NOT necessarily to partake. Referring again to Matthew 26. 26, we may infer it PRECEDES eating or drinking. In the light of other Scriptures, if our beloved Lord's hands had been free on this occasion, we should have probably thought He received THUS. But the Holy Spirit is pleased to draw the veil. He took; NOT—"HE TOOK AND DRANK." Our hearts surely must respect HIS SILENCE; and, in the view of Christ's action as to other mockery, it is fitting to say, "He took," but inasmuch as on the previous occasion HE WOULD NOT PARTAKE, does not the humble believer conclude that His "taking" here was the FINAL ACTION as to acceptance, and that He did no more as to PARTAKING? Could He not have rejected from that mouth which fed on the words of God's mouth (Matt. 4.4), as before?

The difficulty is precious, for it helps comparison of Scripture with Scripture, and shows our Lord's humiliation, and, as, with many other difficulties, tests our faith, and our willingness for God's silence. We seem to have been near a precipice, but the words do not bring us to the falling from its height. He preserved His spotless perfection unto death, and we delight in all the details of His unveiled glory, as we say "Worthy is the Lamb That was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12), "This is His Name, whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23. 6).

* Possibly in verse 26 also: Christ did not PARTAKE.

GOLD AND DROSS.

THESE wondrous words give a key to MANY daily life problems which exercise children of God. "WHY am I suffering so many difficulties?" Now, dear believing reader, first of all, let us not be irritated, and ask impatiently. As soon as you or I ask with annoyance, we are manifestly out of harmony with God, and thus hindering ourselves from all true perception. Our Father NEVER makes a mistake. The words "Be ye reconciled to God" are addressed to BELIEVERS (2 Cor. 5. 20). Remember that even one word of complaint displeases the Lord (Num. 11. 1). You are speaking against HIM, not against circumstances. No thought of "This is too much for me" can be acknowledged. Moses lost when he spake thus (Num. 11. 11-17). "In everything give thanks" means what it says, —what HE says. Let us be ready to COMPLAIN of the cause within that needs the chastening, even our own waywardness and faltering, but never of the chastening. That is in love. I do not mean we are to be Stoics. The Lord is not unmindful of His people's tears (Ps. 56. 8). "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. 103. 13). But the "O" of disappointment, and of a wish against His wish—the fretful THOUGHT, however brief—cannot be excused. "In everything" give thanks" (1 Thess. 5. 18).

Why then does God permit trials? There is a NEEDS BE (1 Pet. 1. 6.). Who refines refined gold? The testing of the Lord Jesus, it is true, was that He might pass through all (Heb. 2. 17, 4. 15). But our chastisement is that we may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12. 10) There is something lacking in our lives. This verse sweeps aside "perfectionism" in the flesh. Job had a wonderful testimony from God Himself, yet he NEEDED testing that the end of the Lord might be reached, and that he might speak of the Lord the thing that was right (Jas. 5. 11, Job 42. 8).

The figure which God uses,—gold in 1 Peter 1, and of silver in Malachi 3. 3,—must be prayerfully pondered. 'Tis very precious. Our Father chastens BECAUSE of His love, and BECAUSE He values us so much. The "circumstances" that come to a believer have quite a different meaning from that which they have when they come to the world. His Father sits, as it were, refining. The trial is one of FAITH. No believer can say, "I am all gold." It is in this connexion that many dear children of God err, when they remark, "A Christian should never be ill." They rightly declare that ENTIRE deliverance is in the atonement. But, if we humbly own we fall short now, THE FULL FRUIT OF CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK is "in that Day," and, in like manner, the full BODILY application is "in that Day." We still have dross, and therefore, our Father lovingly permits trials. If we claim deliverance from them WITHOUT seeking deliverance from the CAUSE, and victory over the defects to which they call attention, we shall lose at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Yea, we are grieving the Holy Spirit, somewhat, in the very

same way as those, whom perhaps we condemn, who think an illness is "something to be got rid of" as soon as possible, and therefore hurry to adopt ANY and EVERY human method. 'Tis NOT a nuisance to be "removed" at all costs: 'tis NOT "something" regarding which our first thought in prayer should be "removal"; rather, 'tis a visitation in love's permission, as to the GROUND of which prayer is primary. Our Father's LESSONS are precious. The trial, whether He overrules a physical oppression by the ENEMY, or a persecuting MAN, is only a beacon, a messenger of love BY THE TIME IT REACHES US. "It" is not the great matter. And so love's "Why?" of enquiry, befits a grateful believer, not the "Why?" of irritation.

Gold MUST be melted, though gold is ITSELF gold. Thus the trial AFFECTS the believer in his SPIRITUAL experience. 'Tis NOT ONLY a burden for the physical frame. THE GODLY GOLD MUST GO THROUGH THE FIRE. Hence, the precious painful SPIRITUAL EXERCISE, without which there is no fruit (Heb. 12. 11). The NEW life knows the strain.

Have you ever thought how close dross is to gold? Yet there is NO compound. Gold is gold, and dross is dross. But you cannot separate by pulling apart, or by a knife. WATER fails, there must be FIRE, AND FIRE PAINS. But the Lord's will is perfect, and His object is beautiful, and the resultant display of His gold will more than compensate.

The NEARNESS of gold to dross explains much to-day. Here, it seems, is a godly man who speaks well of the Lord, and yet is identified with a society or denomination in which some dare to oppose inspiration. Again, two men earnestly pray: both write well on grace, and, then, one writes on believer's baptism, and one on the sprinkling of infants. And they BOTH continue praying. The dross is NEARER to the gold than we think. There is no excuse for one in error, THOUGH HE PRAYS. But the thought humbles us all, for OUR OWN FAILURES ARE HERE. Yesterday's obedience is NO PROTECTION. We may be praying, and THEN say "Thou art mad" (Acts 12. 15). The dross is NEARER the gold than we think. We need more humility, more humility, more humility. We need a closer walk with God in the Spirit. Oh for clearer perception of His will and more consistency. O for less dross. What does this mean? More fire, it may be.

But one word more. Melted gold and dross may solidify together AGAIN. Many a child of God is awhile exercised. The fire works, and God is glorified. But the step of faith is NOT taken, and the gold and dross are left together still. This lesson has impressed the writer much. O, beloved reader, if the Lord MELTS, seek His removing of the dross, WHILE THE GOLD IS MELTED.

The vine branch is to bring forth fruit. If it does not, every OTHER bringing forth is empty. The Christian life is the expression of what Christ is, and of HIS glory.

PROPITIATION.

A WONDROUS WORD. It implies God's mercy, but also that His holy claims must be satisfied. Thus we see GRACE reigning through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21). And God is wondrously exalted. Salvation is NOT a compromise. It is not "Take thy bill, and SIT DOWN quickly, and write fifty," but, (wondrous love), the handwriting against me has been wholly settled! Not OUR writing, but HIS: yet justice is fully met, and so we are made to SIT together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 6).

It is precious to see that the word "Be merciful to me," in Luke 18. 13, is from this root. And, likewise, "I will be merciful" in Hebrews 8. 12*. The mercy of God is not caused by Calvary, but His eternal love has a channel opened by the precious COVENANT Sacrifice of the Son of His love.

In addition to 1 John 2. 2 and 4. 10, we have another beautiful word from the same root, indicating the Mercy Seat, and thus meeting with God in the very Holiest of All, in Romans 3. 25; and the verb occurs in Hebrews 2. 17.

Then on the basis of God's Unspeakable Gift (2 Cor. 9. 15), we have His delight in a CHEERFUL giver in 2 Corinthians 9. 7, and the word "cheerful" has the same origin. We GIVE because of atonement: thus redeemed ones are devoted to Him, and give as THE WORLD cannot (Rom. 11. 35). Saved by grace, their giving and praying, and all, must rest on the ever precious work of the Lord Jesus in Whom they are fully accepted, and in Whom God the Father is fully satisfied (Isa. 42. 1). Thus the Holy Spirit ever directs the eye of faith unto Him, and His glories.

A FRAGMENT ON LOVE.

TRUE love is not merely gratifying MY FEELINGS OF LOVE, but seeking the joy of THE ONE LOVED. This has a wondrous bearing on love to God, and reproves me, though, at the SAME time, refreshes as to His willingness to be delighted, and opens up avenues of privilege, along which His people would long to walk, to HIS joy. It unveils HIS love also, for He does not love me for His sake alone† (though with HIM the ultimate object must be His own glory, since ALL ELSE WOULD BE DEFECT): He loves me, to make me rejoice in His love. He does not desire that I should walk mournfully before Him. The clouds and pain are only when I need them, and for my good. He loves to give me His peace and joy. Is it not wonder-

* The only other occurrence of this adjective is in Matthew 16. 22. "May He be merciful to Thee": but the Father spared not His Own Son (Rom. 8. 32); aye, and His Beloved Son willingly suffered, and BORE JUDGMENT, that the mercy might be FREE TO US. A wondrous plan of love. "He saved others: Himself He cannot save" (Matt. 27. 42) meant more than men realized.

† This is evident on Calvary, where His love cost Him so much.

ful? But it is not only wonderful. God's grace is a reality, a present reality, and He loves with a deep concern for His blood-bought people. Their true delight is His. He has entwined His interests with them and theirs. He loves, with infinite joy in the joy of the ones He has loved, and loves, and ever WILL LOVE.

Peace with God! How different is the view of peace among men. There may be a holding back from war, and men call it peace. But God's peace has a ground of righteousness, and no bitter feelings. God has no outstanding claims against us. Truly His peace is peace indeed, and believers are meant to have the enjoyment of it, by grace. "GRACE be unto you, and PEACE!"

THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS.

IF you desire in any measure to please God, and to live for Him, you will be "misunderstood." But do not think the converse is always true, and that to be misunderstood is a proof you are pleasing Him. We ALL make ourselves many burdens by our unwisdom, by our mannerisms, and so forth. And, that which is on the writer's heart is not usually contained in the words "to be misunderstood." There are TWO misunderstandings. Some will oppose, but some will honestly, not flatteringly, think of you more highly than you can approve. They will see a following along the Lord's way in your experience, and humbly sorrowful that they themselves do not love Him more, they will lovingly rejoice in any faithfulness they see in others, and, in their lowliness, think you are more loving, more devoted, more patient, more unirritated, more regular, and, in brief, more spiritual than you are. Do not misuse their gratefulness to God, for His work in you, to shut your eyes to your failures, and your INcompleteness,—except "in Christ."

It is in this connexion that our need seems greatest. We may, in mercy, reject flattery. We may be blessed when some speak against us. Their words may be unkind, but we know more against ourselves in the holy light of our Father than they can detect. Possibly they think hardly of us, for 'tis common to find ALL misjudge, and either undervalue or overvalue. But GENUINE overvaluing is THE peril. To respect a fellow-believer is precious; to rejoice for the grace of God in him is well. But let us beware lest we speak of him in a way that, when he hears of it, hinders his loving humility. How many have "conscientiously," but unwisely, over-praised a brother's knowledge or earnestness. Others have repeated, and untrue "biographies" have been the result, leading others to a swing of the pendulum, and the thought that children of God untrue. Some indeed, may be described as in Philippians 2. 20, and will only be humbled. Nor is the effect harmful when we rejoice in the grace of God in ALL His own (1 Cor. 1. 4, 5), but, if we are puffed up for one against the other (1 Cor. 4. 6), the harm is real. If you speak of a humble background

believer in terms of high esteem, because he is "in Christ," and because love sees, with glad eyes, the fruit of grace, the more prominent believer will NOT be damaged when he too is mentioned in the same way. But if HE is exalted, and the OTHER is somewhat despised, though there may seem to us a TRUTHFUL distinguishing there is a danger. How precious is love, and commendation now in its right proportion only, and how important is 1 Cor. 4. 5.

"WHY?" Psalm 22. 1.

THIS word, recorded by the Holy Spirit, affords a wondrous unveiling of the character and love of Christ. In both Matthew 27. 46, and Mark 15. 34 a similar thought is further IMPRESSED by the Greek translation. This is the more remarkable because the same rendering is not given.* 'Tis NOT the "why" of complaint, but rather of future triumph, beheld amid strain--"With a view to what?" Yes, thanks be unto God, there was an object, a purpose in view, and the Lord Jesus delighted in THAT OBJECT, for His people were, and are, very dear to Him. Thus we realize that there was no mere drama, but the working out of an eternal covenant plan, which SHALL be realized. The holy justice of God shines out. If souls are to be saved, if the glorious purpose is to be fulfilled, the spotless ONE Himself must bear wrath vicariously. Substitution is a fact, and, without it, Calvary would be inexplicable. And thus the glorious Saviour of sinners asked a question, to keep on resounding in OUR ears, THAT THOSE FOR WHOM HE DIED MAY GIVE the answer, with simple heart-felt gratitude:—"The Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). Everything is wonderful beyond measure. A WONDERFUL covenant, a WONDERFUL condescension, a WONDERFUL completeness. Nothing is left out. The work of grace is perfect, and grace reigns through righteousness. Well may God's beloved people cry out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift."

* *iva ti* and *eis ti*.

God does not deal with our needs as we think, but as He thinks. And how much better is this.

"He Which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Where the Lord emphasizes His Words, He soon emphasizes His Coming. The WORDS lead to HIMSELF.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU."

Matt. 5. 22, 28, 34, 39, 44.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Words of God are of the deepest importance. And we would emphasize the complete inspiration of Scripture. Lack of verbal inspiration means lack of authority, lack of confidence, lack of dependability. It is a wondrous privilege to have the truth, and God's blood-bought people should ever rejoice in this privilege.

Some have thought that the striking testimony of Christ in Matthew 5 suggests an "evolution" beyond the Old Testament, and they speak of its defects and errors. Have such read Matthew 5. 17. in the same context? John 5. 47 convicts such.

But the Lord Jesus does make clear that there ARE special dispensational commands for His disciples to-day. They are a heavenly people, with a heavenly calling, standpoint and hope. O that we may live up to this more and more, in the Holy Spirit. A Christian is not an improved man of the world, but one chosen out of the world (John 15. 19). "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14, 16).

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST'S WORDS IN GETHSEMANE, AND THEIR UNVEILING OF HIMSELF, WITH SIDELIGHTS ON ATONEMENT.

THE words of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane have often deeply affected His beloved people, and this is well. There is a remarkable link between His THREEFOLD "It is written," and His THREEFOLD prayer, in the two specially recorded conflicts with the evil one (Luke 4. 1-13, 22. 39-46, note John 14. 30); and we cannot but

feel the contrast with Deut. 3. 21, 26, nor are we unmindful of the apostle's memory of his Lord's thrice praying, in 2 Corinthians 12. 8, 9. And, throughout the narrative, Hebrews 5. 7 shines before us. We are soon made conscious of the majesty of the Lord Jesus, and, likewise realize the intensity of His feeling. We would not, we cannot, we dare not, seek to intrude into the recesses of His unspeakable love. Nor can we comprehend all through which He passed—for us. It is remarkable that the veil seems drawn even yet more closely concerning the Son than the Father in Matthew 11. 27. We pause and wonder, aye, adore. Whereas argument falls short of faith, worship is entwined therewith, and we would praise, as befits those who are "accepted in the Beloved."

With this preface I would desire to pass on some thoughts that helped me. The precious repeated words of Christ have seemed to some to imply a contrast between His will, and that of the Father. But He ever did those things that pleased the Father, and the law was in the midst of His affections (Ps. 40. 6-8). For a long while the writer felt there was a possible parallel with any passage which shows Christ's real physical nature, which would not have been true humanity if it had found a physical delight in pain, and which therefore could not wish for this, from the physical standpoint. But, one day, further help seemed vouchsafed. I began to see in the words a revelation of the Lord Jesus Himself in His gloriousness, and His personal appreciation of the cost of atonement. I suppose many of us have delighted to realize His own perfect ACCEPTABLENESS, on Calvary, at the very time when the waves and billows of wrath broke on Him as the Sin-Bearer. He truly said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou FORSAKEN Me?" But, at the identical moment, He was still the Well-Beloved of the Father. His active obedience was not followed and superseded by His passive bearing of judgment, but was itself continued till the very last moment, as His dying words of ACTIVE devotion beautifully indicate. Hence He was viewed as the Obedient One, AND the One in the place of the guilty at the same time. It is all so wonderful that we can only worship. To fathom all is beyond us, but to praise acceptably is made His redeemed people's privilege in the Spirit.

May there not be a parallel with the twofoldness of His work just noticed, in His ANTICIPATION of wrath in Gethsemane? It is clear He desired His Father's will throughout, and wholeheartedly. BUT, if He had wished for wrath as such, there would have been imperfection. His very perfection must have involved a feeling as to wrath which we cannot explain, but which could not seek this tremendous load. A shrinking, as it were, from wrath AGAINST ONESELF is part of perfection. Hence the twofoldness. Viewing judgment as the will of the Father He said "THY WILL." But, as the Obedient One, did He not unveil His will as the Perfect Servant, the Holy One, made under the Law, the Righteous One, Whose standpoint in this matter must be different from that of the Judge? His appropriate perfection of SERVICE and of FEELING were necessarily present, and in the

language used He reveals THESE. This thought has helped me much. It exalts the Lord Jesus, and shows that the seeming contradiction is in the perfect harmony of truth, and that the absence thereof would be the real contradiction.

And so we unexpectedly reach a marvellous sidelight on atonement. Had He been regarding Calvary only as a manifestation of supreme devotion, and surrender, the words concerning HIS WILL would have been inappropriate. Yea, they would have involved imperfection. But if we accept the only interpretation—alas, ignored and forgotten by many to-day—and if we behold SUBSTITUTION as a reality, and WRATH as a fact, we have the key. Our Lord's language IMPLIES that HE KNEW this wrath was to break on Him. He could not but loathe sin, and thus regard its doom with horror. And His love to God the Father was such, that if He had "WILLED," in His perfect humanity, to meet WRATH, would He not have underestimated and wrongly viewed the AWFULNESS of wrath, and thereby destroyed His own perfection? Thus the words set forth ATONEMENT in a most impressive way.

This thought makes clear the language of Matthew and Luke, where the "if" is so precious. Thereby we call to mind the continued proviso "If the Lord will." The same interpretation may seem at first to explain Mark 14. 36, because of the preceding "if" (35). But it appears to me there is a further thought in this passage. The Holy Spirit distinguishes the verbs of the two verses. Our beloved Lord prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him (παρερχομαι as in Matt. 5. 18, 24. 35). But in verse 36 He definitely said, "All things ARE POSSIBLE unto Thee." Since it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6. 18), the "ALL THINGS" must be thus understood with an "exception" (1 Cor. 15. 27), and cannot contradict the "if" already mentioned. Hence there are TWO thoughts before us, and our Lord asks here that the cup may be "borne ASIDE" (aorist of παραφέρω*); and, in accord with the principle of Hebrews 5. 7, was He not heard, and physical strength granted (Luke 22. 43), as He thus desired that the wrath should not THEN break, but be temporarily held back? On Calvary, at the appointed time, the wrath was manifested. No longer did He utter the words which, in their APPROPRIATE place, were part of His OBEDIENCE unto death, as He took THE REVEALED WILL of the Father in His attitude toward judgment. But on Calvary it was no longer needful to impress upon us this fact. He had prophesied why He was there, in the very language which has been before us, and the inspired message of Isaiah sounds again in our ears, "For the transgression of My people was He

Cf. παρα in Romans 3. 25, not remission, but "putting aside" till the Antitype came—"Because of the putting ASIDE of sins that are past" which required a SUBSEQUENT complete atonement to DECLARE God's righteousness, which SUCH a "putting aside" seemed to obscure. NOW we have the putting away of sin (ἀφαιρέσις), thanks be unto God.

stricken," and again, "He bare the sin of many." It is delightful to know the work for which He came has been accomplished, and the resurrection, UNDOING man's putting to death, has NOT undone His death, but vindicated and manifested its triumph; and His believing people, sheltered by His precious blood, break forth into a note of praise, and say from the depths of their hearts, "My Lord and My God."

"AND PETER."

Mark 16. 7.

THERE is a wondrous pathos in the words of the Lord Jesus, and, moreover, we behold the exact OPPOSITE of resentment. Peter had grievously sinned before men: he had denied his Lord thrice, although he was warned, and checked again and again. Weeping bitterly did not remove the sin, but, thanks be unto God, there was a contrast with the weeping of Numbers 14. 1, Aye, and He Whose blood removed the sin, WILLED TO RESTORE GRACIOUSLY. He had already looked upon Peter (Luke 22. 61: indeed this "look" brought remembrance). And the Lord Jesus would continue His work. Of those given to Him He would lose nothing. "I have prayed for thee" meant so much (Luke 22. 32). But, as with Jonah, the Lord restores in a holy, as well as a tender way. He would not, and cannot, excuse sin. Hence the words are first to the fish, and not to Jonah, nor does the Lord speak directly to Job in chapter 42. And so is it in His ministry through angels here. "Tell His disciples, and PETER."—Peter was thus SPECIALLY mentioned, though the name distinct from the "disciples" would awaken humbling thoughts as well. It is thus that our Lord reveals His hatred of sin. But He does not fail, nor is He discouraged in His restoration. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter was to be converted. There was no doubt as to this. Wonderful grace shines out. And Peter was to be used after conversion, used to strengthen others, after he himself had proved so weak.

It may be, we feel ourselves specially set aside, and well nigh forgotten. After infinite grace we may feel ourselves so unworthy of anything but rejection, and in love, holy love, the Lord may cause the heavens to seem as brass, but there is no bitterness in His heart: there is still the message,—"And Peter." His character is not changed. If we are willing for His reproof, He will not despise, nor abhor, but still welcomes the broken in heart.

GOD'S love is not only UNCHANGED, it is UNCHANGING: not only is it UNCHANGING, it is UNCHANGEABLE. How we should praise Him!

* The four following verses is Psalm 119, linked with His look in 132, seem before us in the gospel narrative: note definitely 136: there may be more association of verses in this marvellous psalm for learning than we have realized.

"Will you please explain Rev. 3. 5?"—"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."

A PRECIOUS declaration, and promise. The Lord meant what He said. Strangely many have been more occupied with what He did NOT say, and have said, "This means He will blot out other names." The Holy Spirit does not say so, and we should beware of adding, unintentionally, to His Words. NEGATIVES do NOT always, by any means, imply the contrast, "I will never leave thee" does not suggest, "I will leave OTHERS." "I will not feed you" in Zechariah 11. 9 does not convey the thought "I will feed OTHERS." If God wishes the TWOFOLD thought, He can say it, as in Jeremiah 30. 11. "Ye will NOT come to Me that ye might have life" has been interpreted to imply, "Some have a natural will to come." Should we not rather have reverence for what the Lord has said, beloved friends?

Further, "thou hast a few NAMES even in Sardis" seems to suggest that these were not in harmony with the one who had a name to live but was dead. Were not such in need of their Lord's comfort? Might not their NAMES be cast out as evil (Luke 6. 22)? And have not such words as these been a refreshment to dear children of God when their names have been expunged from human rolls for Christ's sake?

Concerning other passages, note the margin of Rev. 20. 19; and Psalm 69. 28 has not the added words of Rev. 13. 8 concerning the Lamb. Israel were a TYPICALLY saved people (Jude 5), but they are not all Israel which are of Israel (Rom. 9. 6). There are two Jerusalems, and often two aspects. Daniel 12. 1 shows the security of those written WITH THE RIGHTEOUS (to quote Psalm 69. 28 itself), and righteousness is by the blood of the Lamb.

* Nor does the Greek render by the same word.

"CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS."

1 Tim. 1. 15.

WE have heard these words SO OFTEN, but have they lost their meaning? By no means! Have they lost their charm,—aye, let us rather word it "that which is more than charm"? Ah, beloved friends, we all need still to ask ourselves such questions, that we may not become so USED to truth, that we hear and utter it unthinkingly, even as oftentimes we hardly PONDER thanksgiving before food. Surely we would praise God more that His Beloved Son came into the world—all the way, and to Calvary itself,—to save, to save fully and completely—poor, guilty, lost, ruined ones—in a word, "sinners." And such were we! 'Tis not only "Such were SOME of you." These words may be used of certain forms of open iniquity.

But all of us were sinners. And, if we are saved, 'tis on the same level as the outcast, and manifestly reprobate from man's standpoint.

Grace REIGNS ! But it reigns through righteousness. God will not save on easy terms: law must be fully magnified, and made honourable. And it has been fully magnified, because the Son of God's love came into the world to save sinners.

A man could not do the work, so He became Man ! Angels may marvel, and desire to look into these things, but they could not accomplish the work, or even part of it.

And thus we have now the faithful SAYING, because of the finished WORK. We can " SAY " what He has " DONE " : the words are ours in grateful faith, the work was His alone.

" Worthy of all acceptance," of all welcome. Implicit confidence is befitting. Faith and joy are to be blended in the Holy Spirit. There is no room for misgiving. There is no room for fear. Entire acceptance and entire restfulness are God's will for those who, owning themselves sinners, are enabled to rejoice in the Lord Jesus, and then, upon this foundation, to build up that which pleases God

VANITY OF VANITIES or THE SONG OF SONGS.

Eccl. 1. 2, Song 1. 1.

THE two books come strikingly together, and God used the same writer to give them to us. How remarkable the contrast ! On the one hand, we have the uncertainty and disappointment when one is occupied with things " under the sun " : on the other hand, the blessedness of relation to One Whose love is dearer than all of earth (Song 1. 2, 8. 6). The distinction is vital. RELATIONSHIP to the Lord is all-important. " Things " can never satisfy,—NEVER. The blessedness of being " in Christ " is set forth in Ephesians, and there we behold " all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." And this is the key to the Song of Songs also. The brightness of the whole book is nearness to a PERSON. Again and again in Ecclesiastes we have a full stop, or a question of despair.

We find burdensome labour without profit, and the impossibility of taking anything away out of this world. We are shut up to ourselves. Nothing is permanent, nothing is complete. The place of righteousness under the sun is marked by iniquity: the joy that the man has is followed by the days of darkness. WE NEED A PERSON. There is no ONE to attract our love with His love in the vanity life of Ecclesiastes.

And thus our hearts realize, that it is deeply important for us to be kept from " mentalizing " the gospel. The Lord Jesus is a personal Saviour, and head-knowledge of " it," (even when " it " is the truth), will never take the place of heart-knowledge of Him. The bride in the

Song of Songs finds defects in herself, and they are set forth, they dare not be hidden, but yet there is a Song of Songs, because we are not shut up to ourselves. Confessed failure is realized the more in the light of HIS changeless love, even unto death, whereby His redeemed ones have both forgiveness and power. Grace calls for a song !

" BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD."

1 Cor. 15. 29.

HOW many children of God have felt a difficulty as to this verse. But, if we prayerfully ponder it in its context, I think God will graciously show how many precious and simple thoughts are easily reached, to His glory.

First, we notice a contrast between " THEY which are baptized " (BEING baptized), and WE who are in jeopardy every hour. And, secondly, between " THEY " and " THE DEAD." Thus there are THREE classes—(1) the ones just being baptized, (2) the apostle and other older brethren in Christ, (3) the dead. In this chapter " the dead " would seem to refer to BELIEVERS WHO HAVE DIED. Hence we have (1) the new converts, by grace, (2) the older disciples, and (3) those who had departed to be with Christ. The older disciples are viewed as in danger, and Paul said he was dying daily. The Christian life was not meant to be an amusement (2 Tim. 3. 12). It was meant to be a strain, which would need the more-than-compensating love and joy of the Lord.

And so we hear the pointed question—" WHAT shall they DO ? ", and again, " WHY are they baptized ? " If there were no resurrection, would not the CONFESSION OF CHRIST in baptism be a delusion ? Why should young believers TAKE THE PLACE of the dead believers (ὑπέρ " for," " in place of "), and fill up the ranks* of an army in JEOPARDY and without hope ? " Why ? "—if there were no resurrection ! The holy argument shows the character of the Christian FAITH, and the character of the Christian LIFE. O that it may be ours, beloved friends, to REALIZE THIS IN THE SPIRIT.

Among Israel, one who is baptized is still counted " dead," and is it not so among some of other religions ? BAPTISM HAS A MEANING THEN. And when a man is cast out for his Lord, and liable to cruel treatment, he values the hope of his Lord's return, and the beautiful picture of resurrection in baptism.

Thus this verse teaches nothing of some mysterious ceremony, but clearly sets forth the work of Christ, and the appointed unity of the redeemed, and their STANDING TOGETHER as a rejected people, bearing the precious Name of Him Who died and rose for them. May many such be those who are " BEING baptized " to-day, and may older saved ones be ready for " jeopardy," or at least for reproach as they stand outside the world's wishes and fashions, with their beloved Lord.

* The military figure in verse 23, and the reference to the trumpet.

"WHO DID HINDER YOU?"

Gal. 5. 7.

THE apostle, writing in the Holy Spirit, warned the Galatians very fervently. He felt a deep concern that those who once RAN well were ENTANGLED (verses 1, 7). Those who are entangled cannot RUN (Heb. 12. 1, 2). It is deeply important to be frank and earnest. Let us "take stock." How frequently we fall short of that going on from strength to strength which glorifies our Father.

Ah, dear friends, we ought NOT to be hindered. There is no excusing here. The Holy Spirit does not say, that the believers were excusable, because they were hindered. The Lord's dear people are responsible. The man of God in 1 Kings 13 DIED when he was deceived. He should have been on his guard.

But there is a further thought. Do we HINDER others? It is easily POSSIBLE to be a hinderer. We are so closely related to one another that we influence one another more than we think. How blessed the contrast when we become fellow-helpers and fellow-workers (3 John 7, 1 Chron. 12. 18). Unhindered believers, and unhindered prayers (1 Pet. 3. 7)—how precious an aim in view! May it be ours.

If we know the Lord, in any measure, and seek, by grace, neither to hinder, nor to be hindered, but to please Him, His Name will be glorified and, as Galatians 5. 7 shows, there will be both obeying the truth and running well. Ah, these blessednesses are linked, as Psalm 119. 32 indicates. How can we run well without HIS path?

All our temperaments need spiritual watching. There are some who can so easily cause, or, rather, "encourage" irritation. They sometimes "think" they are the VERY ones to put things straight, but their VERY manner awakens "friction." They have no wish so to grieve the Holy Spirit. But by their MODE of action they hinder. Indeed, it is possible by a gracelessness of "manner" to undo the testimony which we generally and PRAYERFULLY desire. Often a child of God may even be conscientiously concerned to please Him in something or other, but may do more harm by the METHOD of expressing the conscience than good by the conscience. Particularly is this so in the matter of reproof. What then? Is the remedy carelessness? No, but A DOUBLE VICTORY: a victory in MANNER as well as action. A holy truthfulness will be brought about VIA communion with the Lord, and this may be VERY firm and definite, because in the Holy Spirit, but UNASSUMING. Thus will God be glorified in TWO ways at once, by zeal for His will, AND the manner of showing it. Is not this possible in the power of the Holy Spirit? It should be.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"HE THAT HATH MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD
FAITHFULLY." Jeremiah 23. 25.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN enabled by amazing grace (yet see Zech. 8. 6), we would send forth a few pages concerning Him in Whom alone believers are accepted. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 11). Therefore we would tell of Him, not of a system, not of a religion, not of men, not of ourselves, but of Him (2 Cor. 4. 5). He is the only, and the altogether Lovely One (Song 5. 16). How wondrous to be accepted for ever, made nigh in the blood of Christ (Eph. 2. 13). That precious blood reveals God's character:—His infinite love, His unchanged holiness, His hatred of sin. Mercy and truth are met together in the atonement of the Lord Jesus. Surely the fruit of such a salvation should be grateful obedience, in a pilgrim life, while waiting for Him Who loved, and loves, and will love, so wondrously. The Holy Spirit ever leads to this.

SOME STRIKING CONTRASTS IN TWO PARABLES CONCERNING PRAYERFUL IMPORTUNITY,

Luke 11. 5-9, 18. 1-8.

IT is deeply interesting to see the Lord's stress on prayer. The gospel which records these parables brings before us that He was praying when baptized (3. 21), and when on the mount of transfiguration (9. 4, 29). The urgency of prayer is marked out, and the zeal of the friend at midnight is given as an example.—So is it with the

"CONTINUAL" coming of the widow. But is it not possible that SOME CONTRASTS INTENSIFY the teaching yet more? Certainly they do in the types, and Christ's exaltation is infinitely beyond the priests of Aaron's line (e.g. Heb. 9. 25). And Luke seems characterized by contrast parables. We call to mind, "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke 12. 36). Observe—YOU are to be like them, but YOUR Lord is NOT like theirs. How precious the OPPOSITE to the words "When He will RETURN from the wedding." Our beloved Lord comes to receive us unto Himself, and welcomes into "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19. 9). Hence, the music of the added words, "Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12. 37: 17. 7-10 implies a similar antithesis*).

Shall we seek grace to enumerate a few contrasts in Luke 11. 5-8, and then look upward for power to illustrate more, the intense prayerfulness, which should mark those drawing nigh to ONE Whose love INFINITELY exceeds that of the friend in bed?

First, we notice that the request is made of one who is equal, and merely for the USE of THREE loaves. There is not the word "give," there is not an expectation of an ABUNDANT supply, there is only thought for another (right in its place), and not for one's own needs as well. How gloriously the Lord GOES BEYOND the expectation of the man here portrayed. HE delights in abundance, fulness, overflowing. Mark the hint of this in verse 8, "AS MANY AS HE NEEDETH," and the word "give" is used there. Nor is this strange to those who KNOW THE LORD.

But we continue to ponder the appointed limitations in the parable. The one who yields to importunity grants NOTHING because of "friendship." There is no evidence of love at all. How different, dear fellow-believers, is it with OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. And the cold words NEVER sound on our ears, "Trouble Me not." These are the words that stand out as a signpost, to unite with the parable of Luke 18. —"This widow TROUBLETH me" (5). Can we imagine anything like to this in our gracious God? And whence come such words? "He FROM WITHIN shall answer." But God welcomes His people into His very presence. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. 4. 16, cf. 10. 22). If He at times causes us to realize "a door" it is only for faith's KNOCKING (Luke 11. 10), NOT to keep us outside. "The door is now shut" is a solemnizing expression: do we sometimes act toward others thus? For this passage is meant to teach us LOVE as well as importunity.† "Locked" affections (1 John 3. 17) ill befitted a sinner saved by grace (Matt. 18. 32, 33). The Lord's door WILL be locked (Luke 13. 25), but NOW He welcomes.

* "Say, 'We are unprofitable servants,'" but HE does not say this: see 19. 17. His love is wonderful.

† So the parable of The Good Samaritan is not only to unveil salvation, and the complete work of Christ, but to teach us kindness, "even" to those of other nations. How sad is the thought that the word "even" is NEEDED among professing believers, especially at "war time."

"ALREADY shut" is actually the striking expression of the refusing "friend," and he adds, "My children are with me." What does this imply? "You are not my children, you are not with me." At once we feel the stress is on non-relationship. Every word is eloquent. Here are two points, though closely entwined. Praise God for the CONTRAST.

The message is the same as we shall see in Luke 18. The widow is not related, but the contrasted BRIDE is so dear to the Lord. And returning to chapter 11, another antithesis meets us—perhaps the most striking to some readers—"In bed." OUR Father neither slumbers, nor sleeps (Ps. 121. 4). We are sure He is not sleeping (1 Kings 18. 27). How refreshing this FURTHER emphasis on His love. But have half a dozen* contrasts or more exhausted the passage? By no means. We go further. "I CANNOT." Blessed be God, there is no cannot with Him. "I cannot rise": but our Father is WAITING to give,—waiting, dear fellow-believer. Waiting!

It is wonderful that believers are urged to IMPORTUNITY in approaching One Who does not need it (Luke 11. 13). Why is this? Is it that WE need this discipline, to be in a condition to receive? Hence the appointed asking AND seeking AND knocking. And let us learn the humbling message of "I HAVE NOTHING." He welcomes us with ALL our needs, and 'tis often a dark "midnight." But let us remember OUR OWN hunger also, that we may be strengthened to please Him more, yet never to be self-confident, nor to boast of this "pleasing." So shall we enter into another midnight scene of Scripture (Acts 16. 25, with Ps. 119. 62).

We may well turn to Luke 18. The judge has a throne, but the One Whom we approach has a throne of GRACE (Heb. 4. 16). He is the reverse of unjust: verily He is Faithful and Just (1 John 1. 9). The one who comes to the unjust judge is a widow,—she is bereaved. She has no one to defend her. SHE IS NOT AT ALL RELATED TO THE JUDGE. The one who was her bridegroom is DEAD: we know nothing about HIM. She is alone and lonely. Every word is FULL of precious contrasts. The people of God look forward to meeting their BRIDEGROOM. Prayer is unto their Father. The brightness is in view: the relationship is NOW. Probably there is another contrast in the prayer itself. Truly He WILL avenge (7), but they cry unto Him. WE ARE NOT TOLD WHAT THEIR WORDS ARE: the silence is helpful. Undoubtedly the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" involves His return in flaming fire, but the thought before their longing heart is, "I want to see Him, and His glory." The unjust judge "WOULD not." If our Father waits, it is not because His will is against us. Far otherwise. His time is the best. We can trust Him. The persistency of the widow makes the cruel judge change his mind. How different is the case with our

* The reader may profitably look back and enumerate them with thanksgiving.

gracious God. The soliloquy of the evil man in Luke 18. 4, 5 unveils the beauty of our Father's love. Thus we reach the "much more," as it were, of verse 6. "Though He bear long with them" (7) is rather "And BE LONGSUFFERING over them." This implies another antithesis. The fault is all on the judge's side in the parable, but on the petitioner's side in the Antitype. He is longsuffering, else how could we expect His deliverance? We have been so unfaithful, but He abideth Faithful. And thus He will keep His promise, and come again. Hence, to intensify the contrast with the widow ONCE MORE, the words sound forth, "When the Son of Man COMETH." The unjust judge refused the prayer because he had no love to the widow, yet he afterwards accepted the prayer because of love to himself. But our Father's love to us is intense. Truly He delights in His own joy, for NOT to do so would be imperfection, but His joy is in our joy, or rather OURS is in HIS. He is not wearied by our perpetual coming. The weariness is on our part (Isa. 43. 22), except that He speaks of a weariness with iniquities (Isa. 43. 24). He does not answer our prayers to get rid of us, but to cause us to come the more. If He seems to tarry, there is no less love than when He answers before we call (Isa. 65. 24). His hand is not shortened, His ear is not heavy (Isa. 59. 1). The privilege of prayer is greater than we realize. O beloved friends, if we are made nigh in the blood of Christ, and stirred up by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to earnest prayer, with thanksgiving, let us value and use our privileges, with love's importunity, and faith's simplicity, and hope's expectancy, until we see our beloved Lord face to face.

WHY?

WHY (for love's frankness does not beat about the bush) call A BUILDING OF BRICK OR STONE, "a church," WITHOUT the warrant of Scripture? And why have ELABORATE buildings, at all, raised at great expense, although the words of God suggest nothing of this character in the present age?—See Hebrews 13. 13.

Why speak of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as "sacraments," if the Holy Spirit has not described them by any parallel word? Why refer to "ADMINISTERING" these "sacraments," and prefix ecclesiastical TITLES, although the Lord's words in Matthew 23. 7-10 are plain?

Why alter the time, and propose the Lord's Supper in the MORN-ING?

Why seek to baptize those who have no PERSONAL faith, and who are therefore NOT "spiritual infants" in God's family, but still dead in sins? Satan hates this testimony as to DEATH.

Why keep "CHRISTMAS," without a thread of evidence that Christ was born then, but much evidence that it was a heathen feast? Why seek links with this world when the Lord has chosen His people out of the world?

These "ALTERATIONS" are too systematic to be "accidental."

If the Holy Spirit uses the word "church" in one way, it is specially commandeered for another use. If the Lord Jesus appoints certain symbols, they are persistently changed. Why this COMPLETE and SYSTEMATIC alteration? An enemy hath done this. 'Tis part of an ORGANIZED scheme of the wicked one to adopt the phraseology of truth in some points, and corrupt truth, and only to change the phraseology when it suits the SAME purpose—viz., the exclusion of THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Beloved friends, surely we are desirous of being among those to whom the apostle said concerning the devil, "We ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES" (2 Cor. 2. 11). But remember—REMEMBER—a clear perception of error is NOT love in the truth. To give up error proudly is to ADD to error. To "come out" apart from love, is NOT obedience. Let us beware of unsanctified truth, and head-knowledge. Enoch walked with God.

A LITTLE INCIDENT

concerning

THE GREAT DIFFERENCE.

IT was on the writer's heart to visit a street he knew from childhood, once famous as "Ratcliff Highway." Many of Israel live there now, and at a street corner a little witness was given, and children gathered round. Questions were soon asked. Israel and the Egyptians were before us, and the children said that they were LIKE to Israel, and NOT to the Egyptians. Then we went back to Cain and Abel, and they maintained their likeness to Abel, NOT to Cain. But what was the great difference? Cain brought fruit: Abel honoured God's testimony and rested on a SACRIFICE. The Lord LOOKED and "had respect, unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4. 4). In like manner, "I will SEE THE BLOOD, and I will pass over you" rings out in Exodus 12. 13. Then a question was put to this effect—"To WHOSE blood does God look, FOR YOUR SAKE?" A child answered "our own." But how quickly could it be shown that this was NOT SO with Abel, NOT SO with Israel. So another narrative came in front of us. "Where is the Lamb?" said Isaac. It was not Isaac's blood that made atonement. "Where is THE Lamb?" "A ram" was caught, but this was not THE LAMB, for AFTERWARDS Abraham prophesied that the fulfilment was STILL future (Gen. 22. 14). Precious thought. Three times over God looks at the blood. Delightful words, "In the mount of the Lord HE SHALL BE SEEN." The quietness of the children (unusual when a fair proportion are Jewish), was marked, when they could not tell to Whose blood God looked, on their behalf. But can you, dear reader? Or have you NO ONE Who has answered for you? Have you NO ONE in Whom God is well-pleased on your behalf?

CHRIST'S OWN ESTIMATE OF HIS WONDROUS WORK.

A MAN usually over-estimates or under-estimates his own efforts. SOMETIMES he boasts, SOMETIMES he becomes despondent. Others too, wrongly value a fellow-creature according to their bias, and limited knowledge. We can well enter into the Divinely inspired words, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (1 Cor. 4. 5). THEN the believer's life will be rightly weighed. Motives and actions will all come before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and a striking anticipation of this is given in Revelation 2 and 3.*

But man's greatest failure in judgment is found when he would, with his own natural powers, appraise the life of the Lord of Glory. There are found those who dare to criticize Him. Ah, they know Him not. Yet He, in the perfect grandeur of His work, did not lay low those who judged Him of old. And He waits in patience unequalled, while foolish tongues condemn Him still. We behold "the majesty of reserve" in this patience. God waits,—and waits to be gracious.

Unlike men, the Lord Jesus not only knew what was in man (John 2. 25), not only knew what He would do (John 6. 6), but knew the Father (John 8. 55), and knew Himself. He could perfectly describe His own work, and it is deeply important to see HOW He describes it. The holier a man is, the more he confesses his sin. But this note is missing in the life of Christ. It is missing because sin was missing in that life. Humility in a godly man portrays himself as unworthy, and in some respects, less than others (Eph. 3. 8). Christ was the Meek and Lowly One (Matt. 11. 29), but He CONSISTENTLY viewed Himself as sinless (John 8. 46), and in this sense the Opposite of His people (Matt. 20. 28, 26. 28 illustrates), and His work as the ONE ground of their salvation. This is deeply important.

In accord with His perfection, and the wondrous knowledge of which John 2. 25, 6. 6, 8, 55, 13. 1 give us some unveiling, the Lord Jesus contrasted Himself with His disciples. We have already noticed Matthew 20. 28 and 26. 28. And now we may call to mind Matthew 23. 10, and John 13. 13-16. But we must never forget the wondrous revelation of the parables. Who is the Sower in Matthew 13? Who is the Owner of the field in the second parable? Who sells all to buy the field and the pearl in Matthew 13. 44-46? Who is the Unique Son of the Husbandman in Matthew 21. 33-41, and the Son for Whom the marriage is made in chapter 22? Who is the Bridegroom of Matthew 25, and withal the Master of the servants, and the King to utter the words, "Come ye blessed of MY FATHER" (verse 34)? There can be no doubt as to the reply.

Our minds are directed toward the Good Samaritan, the Wonderful Shepherd of Luke 15 and John 10, the Corn of Wheat in John 12. 24, and the True Vine on Whom all the branches depend in John 15. The

* A leaflet, "Who Walketh in the Midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands," gladly sent.

question is answered as soon as it is asked. Then it is evident that Christ is Central in the parables. Here we see, therefore, a remarkable stress on His own work, as the foundation of blessing, and on Himself as the One for Whom all things are arranged. This position of glory reminds us of the tabernacle and other types. It is quite similar. We cannot bring the work of God the Father into the showing forth of a redemptive death. Hence the Lord Jesus must be before us.

Thus there was no misconception as to His work. There was not a gradual reaching of an ideal. It was not only when men rejected Him that He declared His death. To Nicodemus, at the outset, He showed the symbolic lesson of the brazen serpent, revealing salvation for sinners in Himself alone. Others were deserving death: He was the CONTRAST. And even before this we have Luke 2. 49. Nor did He at any time waver from His glorious purpose (Luke 9. 51). There is NO uncertain ring as to His own work. He Himself used the word "MUST" in John 3, and, conscious of His relation to the Father, did not view any as obtaining a ransom apart from Himself (Matt. 20. 28). Unlike Israel's many priests, He did NOT NEED a sacrifice for His own sins, for He had NONE.

The simple grandeur of His prayer in John 17 sets forth the same teaching. He still indicates His humiliation, but in full view of His majesty (e.g. verse 5). And there is a beautiful confidence in the words, "Those that Thou gavest Me." He had kept and would keep: He was the Keeper, and they were the kept ones. His glory is often before us in His intercessory prayer: "Father, I will."

Nor must we overlook the appointment of the Lord's Supper just previously. That was a clear unveiling that His body and blood were quite different, morally, from those of others. Observe He is not viewed as a little greater or better than such. The sacrifice was always the opposite of the one or ones for whom it was slain. Thus, by every sacrificial type and utterance, Christ manifested His own worth and work!

Ah, beloved readers, what is that work to us? Do we regard it only as history? Or have we been brought to realize HIMSELF FOR OURSELVES? Never shall we find rest elsewhere! The Lord Jesus offered NO ALTERNATIVE, but He still gives salvation by His own glorious finished work, and this is the message in which His people delight, as, in mercy, led by His Holy Spirit, they take His standpoint, and exalt Him.

PHRASES THAT LEAD FROM THE TRUTH.

WE have all heard many such expressions and need a watch set before our mouth (Ps. 141. 3). The writer has been asked about the words, "THE EXTENSION OF THE INCARNATION," a term apparently used by more than one "party."

First, may we not learn that we need grace to be simple. Let us be-

ware of high-sounding phrases. Let us mean, what we say, and say what we mean, with loving simplicity before the Lord. And let us be more and more immersed, as it were, in the very language of Scripture. The words which the Holy Spirit teacheth have a wondrous effect.

Secondly, many to-day quite misrepresent the wondrous incarnation of the Lord Jesus. He does NOT save by incarnation, nor does THIS reveal a "solidarity of the human race." Far otherwise: He was born outside the headship of Adam, to witness to the rejected Truth (John 7. 7, 18. 37), and to die for sinners, to bring a great number, whom no man can number, into A NEW CREATION. Hence the striking words of 2 Corinthians 5. 16 The UNRENT VEIL shuts man OUT (Heb. 9. 8). There is no "way in" by incarnation. The WHITE curtains of the tabernacle were beautiful, but they were not the DOOR, the BLOOD-COLOURED curtains provided the door: it is the blood that maketh an atonement." "Christmas," with its family-reunion, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, in worldly pleasures, illustrates the same putting aside of ATONEMENT by HUMAN theories of incarnation.

Romanism, too, with its conception of the real presence, is not only a denial of 1 Corinthians 11. 26, but ITS OWN CONDEMNATION, for sacrifice was only in the COURT and that is now CAST OUT (Rev. 11. 2): Romanism THUS confesses that it is not in heavenly places, and thereby proclaims its worship is God-rejected. And its assumption that there is something akin to Christ's incarnation, in His body of humiliation again, is not only a sad misrepresentation, but a denial of His risen glory—the only place of UNION with Him (John 12. 24).

Many others would emphasize Christ as Teacher, or an Example; yet they know Him not as Saviour. Observe that when any came to Christ thus, it seems He rather reproveth, and showed the need for a DEEPER WORK (John 3. 2-7), and the passage leads on to atonement (verses 14-16). The altar of burnt-offering pictured Christ's life, but it NEEDED the sacrifice to complete its meaning (its very name implied this), and God will not meet with men apart from the blood (Ex. 25. 22). The theory that men apply an extension of Christ's incarnation, and thus continue His work, is a daring denial of His entire contrast with guilty sinners, whose only SAFETY IS IN THE PRECIOUS BLOOD. May it be ours to rejoice in His fulness on the ground of His death and resurrection, while our hearts say, "Come, LORD Jesus."

Spirituality one day a week is not spirituality. Godliness that will not suit kitchen and workshop is not worthy of the name.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"THE GOOD HAND OF HIS GOD UPON HIM: FOR EZRA HAD PREPARED HIS HEART TO SEEK THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND TO DO, AND TO TEACH." Ezra 7. 9, 10.

A Word of Introduction.

IT is a privilege to tell of God's grace and truth. Daily His people are sustained and enabled. May these pages help such, and lead some to Christ, and may all the glory be His, not ours.

Amusements—intellectual advancement—human organization—what are they? We need the will of God, and thus the deep work of the Spirit of God. His work is ever in the heart. May this EVER be our prayerful thought in EVERY issue, and may each article, and page, attract to Christ, and show the path of HAPPY separation, in view of His near Coming.

ONE CUP, OR MANY.

EVERY arrangement of Christ is perfect. Human reasoning may object to many things, but human reasoning often misleads. ONE word of God is sufficient to silence EVERY other voice. Faith can trust Him,—trust Him simply and gladly. The Holy Spirit always leads to such faith.

At the outset, a prayerful glance at Matthew, Mark and Luke seems to imply only one cup. "Drink ye all OUT OF IT" (Matt. 26. 27) is deeply suggestive. And Mark 14. 23, "And they all drank OUT OF IT" is confirmatory. He GAVE them the cup: they did not fill separate cups for themselves.

Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus expressly distinguishes Himself from His disciples, we cannot interpret His taking the cup as merely lifting

a cup, to set them the example of drinking. He did not personally partake (Mark 14. 25). Hence we infer He gave one cup to all.

The symbolic teaching is associated. "This is My blood," and "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Thus ONE LOAF and ONE CUP are fittingly before us. And now we understand more fully WHY He did not partake. He needed not redemption: He was the Redeemer. How wondrous His love.

1 Corinthians 10. 16 helps us—"a having in common" is beautifully typified. May the spiritual meaning be more and more realized.

Hygienic objections seem out of place, if we have His WORDS. Cannot He Who knew the frame, prevent contagion? And if believers try and protect themselves in their own way, is it not possible they will fall into the very difficulty? Surely some can record the Lord's preservation hitherto on this line of faith in Him. Can instances OTHERWISE be readily found? A dear child of God may, when feeling that he has a heavy cold, choose to partake LAST, and loving discretion honours God, but a fear that alters the Lord's commandments is not the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.

"THE GIFT OF GOD."

Romans 6. 23.

FREE! Wondrous word. Have we become so used to God's grace that we take it as "a matter of course?" Grace is the **OPPOSITE** of "a matter of course." It is **QUITE OUT** of the course:—unmerited, and quite apart from all natural expectations.

"The Gift of God." Ah, 'tis not "Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty." Poor comfort. The only hope is the blotting out of the writing (Col. 2. 14). A **FRESH** "writing" would be unjust, and, however small, it would condemn. Anything short of complete salvation would be complete condemnation.

"The Gift of God." We had no title or right. We did not earn, nor did we even seek. Every iota of boasting is buried, together with every iota of fear—buried for ever by the fulness of "grace." Grace is the joy of the heart-broken, and withal the grief of the self-righteous. It is the encouragement of the hopeless, and the discouragement of those who have vain hopes. "God commendeth HIS love": not OURS, but HIS. The power of the gospel is in its freeness. Conditions there are, but they have all been fully met, and grace **REIGNS** through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21).

"The Gift of God." Not only an offer. God emphasizes the fulness of His work. His is the outworking as well as the plan. His the application as well as the outworking. Grace from beginning to end calls for praise from beginning to end. O that it may be so, in the experience of blood-bought believers. If we become **WEARY OF GRACE**, and the simple gospel, then there is something wrong. It is well to follow on to know the Lord, and to receive out of His ful-

ness, according to His riches; but the simplest words of **GRACE**, however long they have been known, and however often they have been heard, are never out of date. The Holy Spirit is never weary of manifesting the preciousness of the blood of Christ. Weariness of praise belongs to earth not to heaven, and do we not desire to become more heavenly in our daily experience?

"I MUST DO AS I AM LED, MUST I NOT?"

"**NOT** necessarily." The questioner is surprised. What, am I to ignore "a **LEADING**?" I did not say "Ignore," but "Test it." Unless you are brought to see that the leading honours God and His **REVEALED** words, why should you follow it? "As I am led" implies that one has perfect knowledge the leading is from God, without testing it. Herein is the danger,—a **TEMPERAMENTAL** danger, an **EMOTIONAL** danger, a **SELF-ASSERTIVE** danger. And it is this that opens the door for Satan to work on the feelings, and, disguised as an angel of light, to seem awhile to lead aright, **IN ORDER TO LEAD WRONG**. He will sugar the poison, and cover up sin in well-disguised wrappings. The Holy Spirit warns against the tendency toward **IMPLICIT CONFIDENCE** in being led. Mark the inspired words of 1 Corinthians 14:—"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (14. 37). Observe in the context, that even the prophets were lovingly guided,—"**The spirits of the prophets are SUBJECT TO THE PROPHETS**" (32). 'Tis not that **THEY** were subject to the spiritual gifts. We need to be very careful lest we "assume" a leading must be from the Lord, **BECAUSE** it appears to honour Him. Have we not all "felt led" to do things which we have afterwards grieved to see were against His words? The Holy Spirit cannot contradict Himself. And, regarding the statement, "appears to honour Him" may we not humbly call to mind the possessed woman of Acts 16? "These men are servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Was there anything wrong in what she said? Did she oppose the truth? When others were indifferent, was she not seemingly anxious to call attention to God's grace, and to bring about a meeting, and religious revival? The devil can declare **MUCH** truth, to prepare the way for veiled error. It is when believers are off their guard, through enjoyment of that which **SEEMS** excellent, that he takes advantage. He knows that then they will not "test." Whatever be the leading, however spiritual it may seem, **TEST IT**. Do not imagine, dear reader, that "feeling led" to do a right action is a proof that all the leading in connexion with it is of God. Remember the Holy Spirit applies the **WRITTEN WORDS**, and emphasizes **ALL** the truth.

DO YOU SMOKE?

YOU answer "Yes," sometimes, and the question is asked, "And are you a child of GOD?" You feel almost insulted. You have owned His Name for years, and godly men have "smoked," and thus you have your foundation. Moreover, you do not wish to be brought into bondage. And so the matter ends.

BUT DOES IT END THERE? Others are watching you, and even the world is surprised if those who emphasize spirituality smoke. "Ah, but," you say, "We cannot always take notice of what people say." No, not when they speak all manner of evil against us **FOR CHRIST'S SAKE**. Howbeit, we are to walk circumspectly, and not to cause the world to stumble (1 Cor. 10. 32). Furthermore, there are **YOUNG BELIEVERS** watching you,—and imitating. Are you **GLAD** when you see them beginning to smoke? Do you give **THANKS** for this "encouragement" in their spiritual life? Why not, if you are really satisfied before the Lord as to your action? Is it not possible that you connect smoking (more than you realize) with the public house rather than with the meeting room, with the earthly race-course rather than with the heavenly race? You are pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling: what reward will you have for your smoking? Do you feel the Lord will say that your example was more helpful thereby, your body made more fit for His service, and your money lovingly spent for His glory? **DOES THE MATTER END WHERE YOU THOUGHT IT ENDED?**

You feel pained when you see women smoking. Why, if it is a spiritually and mentally helpful action? Why would you rob sisters in Christ of that which you find so beneficial in your own life? You recoil from the thought. Why, if it is so soothing and refreshing? Why should it be so unkindly restricted? Do not these questions suggest a quick retracing of steps? If in error, do not defend it, beloved reader. 1 John 1. 9 stands, and the Lord is gracious **TO-DAY**.

Have you ever known a child of God who found it hard to give up smoking when he felt it desirable? What does this suggest? Does not the habit "hold" many? "I will not be brought under the power of any (thing)" was the beautiful witness of God's servant (1 Cor. 6. 12). But you may not want to bear **OTHERS'** burdens in this way (Gal. 6. 2). You think that "others" should look after themselves, as you do, and that "others" should not be grieved; yet Romans 14. 15 and 1 Corinthians 8. 11-13 are still as much part of Scripture as John 3. 16. And with the psalmist you want to say, "My soul hath kept Thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly" (Psalm 119. 167), but you "cannot" give up this practice for the sake of others! The Lord graciously keeps His own (John 6. 36), yet the trend of your action is to destroy a brother, and He Who says Abraham actually offered up Isaac is not unmindful of the natural, deadly result of your wounding a brother, though He deigns to prevent and to heal.

But you have been blest **WHILE** smoking, and you suggest, "I do not think God would have used me if I had been grieving His Holy

Spirit." Remember the flowing water when the rock was **WRONGLY** smitten, and the blessing to Israel when peace was made with the Gibeonites **WITHOUT** knowledge of the Lord's will. The Lord does not wait till we are free from grieving Him to use us, but we ought not to misuse His tender patience, ought we?

"Ah," you add, "every man must be guided for himself," and "It is wrong to interfere with personal details," and "This is such a small matter." But can we not help one another? And what if the guidance **HAS** been given in Scripture? What if even 1 Corinthians 10. 28, 29 applies. If this is so trivial, and you are not "bound" by the habit at all, you will readily give it up rather than trouble those who own the Name of the Lord Jesus. If you feel no chain, the giving up will be so easy.

"I have never been **LED** to see I ought to give up smoking." One moment, beloved friend, if it causes to stumble, do you ask for the "leading" that has already **BEEN GIVEN** in Scripture? And, further, do you think you were "**LED**" to **COMMENCE**? Some of us must own that we have had qualms in **VARIOUS** matters, and have not always been so responsive when our own wishes have been involved, **AS IN ADVISING OTHERS**. I wonder if you have ever been **UNCERTAIN** before the Lord regarding this, and if you have acted before being sure it was of the Lord? If so, it may be there will result a slowness to perceive God's will.

For all arrangements, we want the Lord's principles or precepts, expressed in His words. Would you collect the passages which seem to you a Scriptural reason, a **POSITIVE** Scriptural reason for smoking? It is not enough to say, "I do not wish to argue, or to do anything of this kind." IF you have a Scriptural basis, will you help us by this Bible Study?

Incidentally the financial aspect has been mentioned, but I do not want you to feel that "we" would interfere with "your" use of "your" own money. There is only this thought in our mind. It is blessed to remember we ourselves are **NOT** our own, and there are more spiritual opportunities than we realized.

The physical effects have been hinted. They are sometimes, at least, **MANIFESTLY** harmful. And the body is not unimportant. It belongs to the Lord, and is to express love to Him. Are you encouraging believers to use the body as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12. 1), or do you **WONDER** if, after all, it is otherwise? It is so delightful to seek to glorify God in the **BODY** (1 Cor. 6. 20).

But you think "Enough has been said." Then will you go and pray over it, without **ANY** "wish" to continue or to maintain the point? Permit loving plainness of speech. It is so important for us all to be delivered from **ANY** "WISH" even in this matter? It is so natural to "wish" not to change. "Giving up" looks like a confession "I was wrong," and it seems humbling, and "people will talk." But at least they will not say you are becoming more worldly, and more unlike Christ. If you bear reproach, it may be His reproach after all (Heb. 13. 13), and that is a treasure (Heb. 11. 26).

I do not want to burden you unduly, but I have sometimes found a strange selfishness as to smoking. I do not only refer to the LAWLESS entry of a NON-smoking railway carriage, but why should a loving child of God sit in front of others on a tram, and puff smoke out of his mouth that blows in thier faces? Is this the fulness of courtesy? Some do not like it. But they SAY little. How readily smokers shut windows, and hinder this blowing in THEIR OWN faces. And the smell of smoke remains, as an evidence of the habit. Have you ever sought to hide this? Would an anxious soul specially welcome the earnest dealing of any whose breath and clothing were permeated thereby? Let the man who is TROUBLED over sin indicate whether he would desire the witness from such. Would he be impressed thereby that he was speaking with a man of God who valued Christ more than all earthly things, and who was living, in the Holy Spirit, DEVOTEDLY for Him?

It may be you feel a little "concerned." Do not, dear reader, set aside such a condition. Do not smoke WHILE waiting on God regarding HIS WILL. We agree that "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14. 23), do we not? If, therefore, we persist in anything, may we not hinder the openness of heart which will perceive the loving WILL of the Lord? And in view of His Judgment Seat, when all actions done in (or, literally, through) THE BODY must be dealt with, it is WELL to be concerned (2 Cor. 5. 10). Smoking is manifestly done THROUGH THE BODY: what reward, or what loss, will it bring in the Day when the Lord Jesus comes back?

(The writer desires to record to God's glory that believers with whom he is associated, in the Lord's service, are of one heart against smoking by children of God). Copies of the leaflet from which the above is slightly enlarged gladly sent: applications have been received, and, with thankfulness to God, we reprint. May He have all the glory.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

WE rightly think of the GREATNESS and POWER of God, but God has other wondrous ATTRIBUTES as well as majesty. The WISDOM of God is marvellous, but that is not all. The righteousness of God stands out—spotless—unchanging—glorious beyond measure. But God reveals LOVE also, and not only love to Himself in His Triune Glory, not only love to unfallen angels, but love to sinners. And, STRANGELY, it seems to be this attribute which is MOST REJECTED. The love of God is TOO WONDERFUL for the HUMAN heart to understand. But what a privilege we have, to speak of the love of God! And we can speak of this love as that which we know and have proved 1 John 4. 16.

It is all SO AMAZING, and past NATURAL searching out. The One Who deserved to be loved (Deut. 6. 5) has Himself loved the unlovely and unloving. And this love has been shown forth in His ONE COSTLY ACT. CREATION could never be a problem to God. PROVIDENCE can have no burden for Him. But His love MEANT much,—it meant the death of His Beloved Son for guilty sinners. It is

this that Israel and Islam UNITE to REJECT. But why? What is the real difficulty? Is it "TOO MUCH LOVE?" Is that the only "reasonable" rejection? Surely it must be so. The only word "against" is thus caused to set forth the glory of His love all the more.

The argument of many is based on THEIR own idea of God. They forget that HE CAN DO EVERYTHING, and that the "body prepared," (the incarnation, to make atonement possible), was not impossible with Him.

Moreover, (alarming though the thought is), pride is at the root of much opposition. The sinner imagines he can do SOMETHING FOR salvation. He does not realize that his GHASTLY sin NEEDED a stupendous work in which he has no glory, or ELSE he must remain a sinner for ever. It is the fulness of GOD'S love that buries all pride. Salvation by any display of LESS LOVE would TAKE the glory from God, and imply that a fallen creature could contribute his quota! A terrible thought.

But when we gratefully accept God's love in its reality, as He Himself has unveiled it, we behold the only work which could satisfy His affection, and justice alike,—and the only work which can meet our need, and give peace to our conscience. It is this completeness of satisfaction—in every possible direction—that makes clear the glory of God's gospel as HIS OWN. Every human counterfeit fails to satisfy in one direction, ah, more than one. The attributes of God harmonize in view of Calvary. Justice and wrath are as definitely unveiled as love: yet they do not diminish the love one iota. And again we revert to ponder THIS LOVE. If an earthly king exalts a man to high honour, if a millionaire gives away a fortune—earth resounds with the news. But God's love has not only made His people pardoned servants—they are JOINED with their beloved Lord in the glory, loved with THE VERY LOVE with which He is loved, and made members of Himself for eternity. And they were CREATURES, WEAK creatures, FALLEN creatures, REBELLIOUS creatures. Herein is love! We cannot REALIZE it all,—we cannot REPAY it,—but shall we not RESPOND to it, with love's devoted gratitude, and praise, and obedience, in the Holy Spirit?

"The time is short," and will you spend it so much in the affairs of THIS age? Will you work overtime, and offer God a sleepy half-hour? Will you be industrious in extra labour for an earthly master, and then close your eyes, and "lose yourself" in a Bible reading? Will you willingly, or, at least, because you feel you "cannot help it," allow yourself to be the tool of commerce, while your spiritual life is neglected? You say, "I cannot avoid the work: it must be done." Ah, dear friend, this is an "argument" which Satan often uses, and if you yield to it, you will find the claims of business more INSISTENT. There are often ten REASONABLE excuses for being absent from a meeting, but the Holy Spirit rebukes them in Heb. 10. 25. Break your chains in His power.

EXODUS 14.

THE emergency was a very great one. Pharaoh was not yet humbled. How quickly the evil heart "recovers itself" to rebel with defiance. But God had not forgotten His people. He permits trials, but only up to a limit. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shalt thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38. 11). Sometimes it *seems* as if the trial is too heavy, but it is not so: God is Faithful (1 Cor. 10. 13). He causes us to feel our need, and our dependence. Israel sank under the strain, and uttered the distrustful words of verses 11 and 12, after they had cried unto the Lord. How quickly we too forget. But Moses was, by grace, enabled to stand. "The Salvation of the Lord" was to be revealed. The greatest trial was to become the greatest victory. "Ye shall see them again no more for ever." Not that all trials would be past. "Then came *Amalek*" (Ex. 17. 8). Satan has fresh plans, but the Lord can step in wondrously to remove certain troubles. Would we not trust Him? When Moses spoke to the people he depended on the Lord, yet the Lord showed that faith was to be in *action*. "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." And *the rod* was to be used, the rod speaking of wrath, and thus of transferred wrath (17. 6). Israel were to pass through, *not* on mud but on *dry ground*, a picture of complete deliverance by Another taking wrath. So in Genesis 1. 9 and 8. 13, and Joshua 4. The Lord does His work thoroughly. "Dry ground" has a precious message, whenever water figures wrath.

Exodus 14. 17, 18 must be noticed. Everything is to God's glory. Salvation is not only for our joy, but to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1. 6). And the wrath of men must praise Him, or be restrained (Ps. 76. 10).

The gracious arrangement of the cloud *between* Israel and the Egyptians was a precious encouragement to faith. The Lord keeps His people. "All the night." And then, on the typically striking first day, He brought Israel through, and as the waters of the flood bore up the ark, so the waters here were a wall (verses 22 and 29): how complete is grace. *Dry ground* and a *wall*. Thus the Lord *saves* (verse 30). Well may we sing His praise (Ex. 15. 1), but O that we may not soon forget (Ps. 106. 12, 13). "Great is the Lord, and *greatly* to be praised."

The standpoint of a believer should be the standpoint of his Lord.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

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

A Word of Introduction.

GOD delights to prove His Sufficiency for His people. He delights to be trusted. In His lovingkindness we have been enabled to issue hitherto. Often have we been conscious of our weakness and need, but HE has never proved unreliable. Our rejoicing is that He has used some of the articles to some of His beloved people, and to His own glory. Nor have we been without tokens of His speaking to our heart while writing, as we have felt how we, too, have fallen short. Pride ill befits a sinner saved by grace, and if any think that editorial work is only to hand the Lord's reproofs to others, they make a serious mistake. O that we may all be bowed before Him.

Did Not the Lord Jesus Mean What He Said?

"If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matt. 5. 30.

OUR hearts must feel exercised as we write upon these words. The Lord Jesus had no doubt as to hell, and He showed and EMPHASIZED the paths thither. He spoke to believers about hell. The body is Satan's vantage ground, unless we present it to the Lord, as our reasonable sacrifice (Rom. 12. 1, 2). How these words pierce writer and readers alike. Surely we feel how we have fallen short. Let not any assume that the writing of an article is a claim to have reached a pinnacle. FAR OTHERWISE. One feels how often the

messages are to ONESELF, and one is almost concerned to write, lest there be a quite-unwished inference, "You think you are better than we are." The testimony of Jas. 3. 1 rings out, "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive greater judgment." Any trusteeship to pass on parts of God's truth is solemnizing. One DARE not be silent, but how unworthy one is to speak. Let the reader think of the message: the instrument is AS NOTHING; he feels his unworthiness, but the Lord sees it yet more fully.

To return to Matthew 5. The RIGHT hand may "offend" as well as the left (Matt. 6. 3). It may "cause to stumble." NOTHING is free from danger. Undoubtedly there are GENERAL thoughts which are HELPFUL. "Be willing to give up anything for the Lord." And how slow we are to follow this. And the "test" for one is quite distinct from the test for another. For example, many a dear child of God would gladly give up witness from natural nervousness, but for another to give up public service would be a strain. I do not say the Lord appoints it, but "Are we WILLING to give it up?" Solemn is the thought in this connexion, "Unless we are willing to GIVE IT UP for Him, probably it IS causing us to stumble." As soon as "IT" becomes the centre, there is rejoicing in the scaffolding,* and the Lord Himself is in the background. Pride and self-pleasing have excluded HIM, or at least, robbed Him of much of His central glory. But the loved activity is NOT "thy right hand."

Next we think of Abraham, and his test of faith. "Take thou thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" (Gen. 22. 2). We know the result, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me" (Gen. 22. 12). Here was a beautiful illustration of the principle that the Lord MUST be first; and if our dearest one becomes idolized, the believing life is stripped of its beauty. But "thine only son" is NOT "thy right hand." ILLUSTRATIONS of a PRINCIPLE, though valuable, are not the definite COMMAND of the Lord, and we must not exclude THIS by emphasizing THEM.

"Thy right hand" is part of "thyself." Shall we see what happens if we humbly dare to take the verse literally? The point is crucial, for the opposer says, "The Address on the Mount is not literal," and if once this is conceded, have we not taken away the AUTHORITY of Christ's teaching, and opened the door to human "spiritualizing"? The objection is, "Did Christ command mutilation?" The question is easily answered, IF the heart is kept quietly before the Lord. Did not the Lord here, or in Matthew 18. 8, 9 use a PRESENT tense? "If thy right hand IS CAUSING THEE TO STUMBLE." Accept His words as they stand. Does He command the cutting off, if the right hand HAS DONE THIS in the past, and ceased so to do? We dare not say He does. Can a humble believer, who knows anything of his Lord, be found, who will say that when there is the WILLINGNESS to carry out this action

* See a leaflet, "A BEAUTIFUL SCAFFOLDING."

LITERALLY, the hand is at that moment causing to stumble? If it is NOT, the "willingness" dare NOT be put into action. AS SOON AS grace uses the command to bring to love's humbled willingness, AT ONCE another precept is reached:—"Present your bodies" (Rom. 12. 1), "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6. 13). Thus there is NO contradiction between Paul's testimony in the Holy Spirit, and his Lord's. They refer to different aspects, but there is a PERFECT harmonizing. The TWO precepts are needed to search our hearts. 'Tis as in Matthew 5. 22, the Lord Jesus keeps His people from the danger, by definite language, and from the very condition, that needs the command to be carried out, by the plainness of the command. Thus the LITERALITY stands, but we cannot find a man who should obey it WILLING, and when he is broken-heartedly WILLING, it no longer applies to HIM.* The Lord's command has done its precious work.

There is a striking parallel when a soul is first brought to the Lord. Then for the first time he owns the SEPARATION that sin has brought, and in the OWNING of it, the separation is, in mercy, NO LONGER appointed. Blessed be God, "And in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2. 13).

There is another parallel in Romans 13. At first the child of God says, "Shall I have praise even of a persecuting power, if I am faithful?" Then he is caused to realize that he has never done that which is ABSOLUTELY "the good," and that, therefore, God has ALLOWED the trial as a humbling reminder to him of THIS DEFECT, and that he may be chastened and purified. How lovingly the Lord teaches. The Holy Spirit's work is very precious in showing us that we ought to obey a command fully, but that, when we have done much more than previously, we still need to be humbled. Do you think God would allow a persecutor to inflict his wounds unless it were for His children's profit? Can men harm? Will not all things work for His people's good? If you own CHASTISEMENT IS NEEDED, it is clear "the good" of Romans 13. 13 has not been fully done.

But again to return to Matthew 5. Beloved friends, the writer feels the Lord means much by the literality, and that He humbles for the absence of THE WILLINGNESS. O for more willingness. O to value pleasing Him more than the limbs of our body. O to realize the solemnity of hell, and that a believer must never excuse sin. O to dread grieving the Lord more than physical pain. The writer would speak to himself, and ask the humbling question, "Hast thou such a loathing of sin, that thou would cut off thy right hand? Or dost thou hope the Lord will grant holiness COMFORTABLY?" The intense feeling implied in WILLINGNESS to do this, is that which I WOULD LONG TO KNOW. Such grief over sin:—O where is this degree in my daily life?

* This explains passages which at first seem to warn the believer of falling from grace, and reveal God's use of them to keep him in grace, and THUS to fulfil the purpose of love (John 10. 28, cf. Acts 27. 24, 31, 32).

"Let Not Thy Left Hand Know What Thy Right Hand Doeth." Matt. 6. 3.

THIS verse is usually taken to rebuke the seeking the praise of others, and well may we avoid this. But the witness of the Lord Jesus goes MUCH further. 'Tis "THY left hand." The Lord Jesus was speaking to DISCIPLES, and it was, and is, the privilege of such to do their Father's will. But they are very conscious of His wisdom when He commanded their prayerful humility, "FORGIVE us our sins." They have a LEFT hand, as it were, and sorrowfully know this. There is something in them which WOULD misuse all that God graciously bestows and enables, unless there is a mortifying. "Let not THY left hand know." How such words search us, and we praise God for His tenderness and forgiveness. We want to please Him, but there is that in ourselves which we CANNOT approve. Paul's INTENSE hatred of the flesh, and its activities, is marked out. He dreaded every captivity to this. And is not our longing for "that Day" particularly a longing, because then we shall be able to serve sinlessly? Surely every believer, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, longs to have nothing but perfection in the glory of being with his Lord.

"Thy right hand" is to be active. Let it do much for the One Who did everything for thee. But NEVER esteem self highly. Remember there is "thy left hand" also. Do not let this be examining the service, and comparing and contrasting self with others. But at once we feel the difficulty. HOW can we keep anything in our very selves from knowing? We WOULD do so, but HOW. And thus we come to learn the need for the imprisonment of the flesh. As a government may appoint that no information is to be taken to a prisoner, so is it in this matter. But, while we write, we feel our need. O for grace so to CONTINUE walking with God that there may be the habit of this imprisonment, and the state of godly victory! The heart cries out in deep concern. But O for deeper concern still, in the Holy Spirit.

Expectation.

GOD encourages and honours expectation. NOT all expectation, but that which is linked with His will and His promises, and that which is bright by hope because of a realization of what He IS. We find it easy to exercise general faith as to the future, but present faith, with expectant buoyancy, is needful amid the trials. How blessed to realize God's interest in His people. We often receive according to our non-expectancy, because till we become expectant, we are not in a position to be entrusted with many things. Faith is not merely a mental logic. It has a brightness, and a hopefulness, a restfulness in the Lord. "Wait on the Lord" seems to imply "expect," and this attitude glorifies God, and rules out so many fears, and complaints. If we are not expectant, we fail to witness for our Lord, and He is not exalted.

"Paper and Ink." "Ink and Pen."

2 John 12 ; 3 John 13.

IT is evident that God's servant (in an inspired book) rejoiced in "face to face" intercourse : but how grateful we should be that he did not leave EVERYTHING till thus meeting. WE should have been much the poorer. How frequently we have failed to realize the blessings that have come to us through the "distance" of God's people, and through the "difficulties" of others. Thus God may use our difficulties too, about which we almost feel inclined to complain, or HAVE sometimes so felt. May there be a true humiliation before Him for this.

"Paper and ink" are very ordinary things : a "pen" is nothing remarkable, but God can use it. And how precious it is to see this, and to remember how He brought a little lad, a captive maid, some BARLEY loaves, and a few SMALL fishes into His service. And can He not thus deal with US ; if we are cleansed and simple enough ?

If we cannot see some fellow-believers "face to face," I wonder if we can encourage them by "paper and ink." It may be so. Let us not lose the quickly PASSING opportunities. Our Heavenly Father delights in love, and love is thoughtful. A FEW words now may be blest. Some wait till they can write a long letter, and THEN it is NEVER written, or if written, it may be too long, and somewhat wearying. O for a holy balance, and to be led by the Holy Spirit. Thus will our Father be glorified.

"Paper and ink" till we meet ; and thus the LAMP of the written Scriptures till the Light comes, and we see our Lord, and behold His glory. Let us value the "paper and ink" used by the Holy Spirit in inspired Scripture much more than hitherto : we cannot overvalue the love of which it is one precious token.

"Our Own Strength."

"I Retained No Strength."

Amos 6. 13, Dan. 8. 10, 17.

IT is delightful to turn from the self-confident to a humble servant of God. Daniel was graciously kept from boasting. We think, too, of Job when he was humbled, and Isaiah when he saw the glory of God. And how definitely is the apostle in Philippians 3 contrasted with those who trust to their own righteousness. Humility is a mark of God's work, and where there is no humility there is sad proof of a DISTANCE from Him. This is so not only as to salvation, but afterwards. Not only do the words of Romans 5. 6 apply to the UNBELIEVER, but the words of John 15. 5 are for the BELIEVER. We overestimate our strength, both to detect and to resist temptation. The true blessing is only in humility. We are cast down if we remember our weakness alone, but it is blessed if we are drawn thereby to remember the Lord more. "By strength shall no man prevail" (1 Sam. 2. 9), but the

OTHER PART of the verse says, "He will keep the feet of His saints." And if we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, the OTHER PART of the Scripture is linked, "But our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3. 5). Hence, as we realize that we can do nothing, we must not stop with that fact. Moses, in Ex. 4, seemed to think his nothingness greater than the mighty power of God. This was an over-balancing. Jehoshaphat worded it rightly when he said, "Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee" (2 Chron. 20. 12). Our emergency is not a difficulty to God. He has beheld all from eternity, and knows what He will do. The Lord is still willing that His strength should be made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12. 9). The Lord does not seek mighty ones: He seeks clean vessels. If we are, in mercy, conscious of this, and usable, we shall not fail to experience His tenderness, love, and power, yea, all His attributes linked for our good. O that we may enter into this blessedness, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

"We Believe That We Shall Also Live With Him."

Romans 6. 8.

THANKS be unto God for this holy hopefulness. We have a simple faith that we shall live with our Lord Jesus (John 14. 19). How can it be otherwise, if He was our Adorable Substitute on Calvary? If He was there in OUR stead, and has been raised from the dead, because it was not possible that He, the Righteous One, should be holden, is not HIS LIFE OUR LIFE before the very throne of God? Have not we become the very RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Him? It is WONDERFUL! Yet though it seems too good to be true, it IS true, and so, "We believe that we shall also LIVE WITH HIM" (1 Thess. 4. 17, 18). And how delightful it will be to see Him, and to serve with perfection, and joy, for ever and ever!

But the prospect of eternal glory is not before us IN ISOLATION. We are not taken into this glory at once. 'Tis "After that ye have suffered a while" (1 Pet. 5. 10). And the Lord's grace in leaving His people here, with "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1. 3) is marked out by the Holy Spirit. And this is the problem which brings us to our knees. Do we desire glory WITHOUT the fiery trial? Do we want heaven WITHOUT the pilgrim path? Do we expect the fruits of victory WITHOUT the warfare? Perfect service WITHOUT TEMPTATION will be blessed, but the path thither is VICTORY amid temptations of VARIED character. Hence Romans 6. 11-14, and indeed, all the rest of the chapter. Ah, beloved friends, how we need to look up for GRACE! Satan is more subtle than we think, and he works gradually to deceive. And the flesh is real, more real than we think. O how humble we all should be, that there may be reviving and victory to-day in the Holy Spirit, and with the WHOLE armour of God.

"I Will Bring It Health and Cure."

"I Will Cleanse Them."

"I Will Pardon All Their Iniquities."

Jer. 32. 6, 8.

THESE precious linked-promises show forth the fulness of the Lord's work, and refresh His troubled people. It is remarkable how He uses His words to Israel, concerning the constancy of His grace, and His restoring mercy, to cheer those who are conscious of their need to-day for His similar dealings personally. Sin is a crime, and we feel the importance of pardon. Thanks be unto God, the believer, made near in the blood of Christ, is enabled to rejoice that his sins HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN. Thus there is no more legal "conscience of sins." But the FRESH REALIZATION of the precious blood of Christ is essential. Sin is an uncleanness also, and we desire to know our Father's holy, yet tender, dealing with this. Hence there is music in the words, "I will cleanse them." Justification is not without sanctification, nor is sanctification without justification. The blood of Christ is not without the washing of water by the Word, nor is the water without His precious blood. The altar does not make the laver unnecessary, nor does the laver ever supersede the altar. There is a precious harmonizing.

And sin is a disease. Sin grips and weakens and seeks to lay hold of the whole being. Hence the DELIGHT with which we read the words, "I will bring it health and cure." Our Heavenly Father DELIGHTS to encourage His people, and the Holy Spirit ever causes us to see such wonderful love. May it be ours to enjoy more fully the fulness of our Father's present provision, yet never to forget the future INTERPRETATION REGARDING ISRAEL, as we gladly keep this hope ever prominent in our wishes and our prayers. Indeed, as we ponder the literal meaning of Scripture we are in a condition to realize the various precious APPLICATIONS, in accord with the CHARACTER of our Father therein set forth. The application of truth is precious as we are conscious there are so many parallels in all the dealings of our God.

God's Varied Workings in His Perfect Ways.

HOW gracious is our God. He loves His people so much. But 'tis not the love of indulgence or weakness. Witness His holy severity even toward Moses, "Speak no more unto Me of this matter" (Deut. 3. 26). Yet He did not cut short Moses' life, but granted him innumerable privileges within the LIMITS of that which His united grace and righteousness appointed. And the same mercy frequently shines out. If David was not permitted to build the house, he WAS

allowed to prepare abundantly before his death. Not that we can dictate to our gracious God. His way is in the sanctuary and in the sea, and we would own His wisdom in EVERY varied circumstance. And thus the man of God in 1 Kings 13 was cut off, as suddenly as Uzzah. Miriam was healed of her leprosy, not so Uzziah. God is sovereign. Jonah had a second opportunity, but we cannot demand this. Ananias and Sapphira were cut off as swiftly as Achan, though the MODE illustrates the change of dispensation, and that no sword is now in the hands of God's people. But in other cases there was a wondrous tarrying, and even the man delivered to Satan, broken down with sorrow, was to be received and forgiven (2 Cor. 2. 7). Grace shines out wondrously in these varied histories, and cannot we testify to the same in our experience? Have we not felt the good hand of God when we loathed ourselves, and realized that He might well have cut us off? And has not He deigned to use those who have felt their service seemed so full of dross that they could hardly see the gold? How tender has He been, even as to Jerusalem when the Shekinah glory hovered, and as to Israel in Judges 2.

Not that we have always felt His love in the same way. Sometimes its FORGIVING power has melted us. At other times its HOLINESS has been brought to bear, that, humbled by the Spirit, we might confess we had no right to live. Thus has He been pleased to teach us, though we have mourned our slowness to learn His lessons; And have felt ashamed because of our sins.

The ways of our God are to lead to SIMPLE faith. We are not to reason, or complain. "Why?" in IRRITATION ill befits a child of God. We may ask reverently to know His holy will, but that is vastly different. Oh that our hearts may be opened to His instruction, and that the experience of Job 33. 14-30 may not be in vain for us. May each consciousness of God's dealings draw us to more holiness, and hatred of sin, and more devotedness to Him in the future.

It may be we have not gone this way hitherto, and that He brings us to see our dependence on Him. We are uncertain from our standpoint what a day will bring forth, but He knows the end from the beginning, and, though His plan may test our faith, it is not to kill our faith. If there were no test, there would be no spiritual profit. Isaiah did not say "Woe is me," theatrically. He felt it. The burden was real and heavy. And so God causes His people to feel. If the instruction were only mental, there would be no depth, and no fruit. May our hearts be exercised to His glory, and so shall we rejoice in His lovingkindness. The Holy Spirit always leads to humble willingness for God's ways, and ever directs our attention to our Father's love, and to the preciousness of the precious blood of Christ. There shall be fruit, if we are exercised by all that we endure.

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"I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP." Acts 20. 32.

A Word of Introduction.

WE need not be such as Paul the aged so to write. Not only in view of departure, but in view of EVERY need we would commend His people to Him. Though we remain with one another, we need Him. And the link is ever beautiful: "God and the Word of His grace." We compare the utterance of Christ, "Me and My Words." May it be ours to be built up, and to know the precious value of His Words in building up. How many are "unbuilt up" because His Words are neglected.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."
Matt. 5. 42.

THESE precious words have often been used, and MISUSED. They have, alas, been taken as an argument against the precious teaching of our beloved Lord, as if He commanded that which was impracticable. I hope, by grace, we would accept His Words, even if they seemed "impossible." Rather would we doubt ourselves than His Words, if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. But are the words so impracticable as they seem to the cursory reader?

Their OPENNESS is intended to search our hearts, and to make us afraid of not TRUSTING the Lord. Is not He able to prevent the problem that some fear,—“What if I ought to give, and yet ought NOT to give?” This exercise of heart is healthy. We can never find two contradictory commands to be carried through. The Lord will step in, at the last moment if not before, to show that one com-

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mand does not apply at the time when the other applies, and that He has graciously put some barrier.

In general, moreover, we notice the following limitations. The command is PERSONAL, and the asking is PERSONAL. 'Tis not a giving in response to a GENERAL APPEAL. Furthermore, the context deals with those who oppress. Indeed, it is plain in the light of Romans 13. 8 that the parallel command of Luke 6. 35 could not involve lending to a believer. If the "asking one" is thus described in a context that deals with "enemies," we may interpret much in the light of this. So the "compelling" to go a mile.

This is very precious and searching, and drives away the spirit of irritation and antagonism, which we all naturally feel when opposed. It is important to see the LOVING absence of resentment which the Lord has appointed. There is no suggestion here of giving to a wrong society which "appeals." We are commanded to pay taxes, and we are sometimes to give when we know not how our gift will be used, but we are not bidden to build up that which is against God.

But some will rightly feel that these suggestions, though helpful to the heart, do not exhaust the Divine Words. The next thought one would set forth very cautiously. Strangely, most readers have interpreted this mainly of MONEY, whereas money is NOT mentioned, and most have inferred, "Give WHAT is asked," but this is not stated. "To whom" is the Lord's appointment. I feel the need for caution as to this, lest the subtle flesh should blind us to the real denial of self implied. The passage makes us THINK humbly "Am I to give WHAT is asked?", but it declares only that I am to give. Thus it exercises the soul, without burdening it.

If then we are asked, what are we to give? The context prevents unspiritual narrowing down. If a GARMENT is snatched, we are not to forbid a CLOKE also. We are to show ourselves defenceless among men, and to make clear that the things of earth are not our portion, or aim, but that the Lord is beloved. The absence of a spirit of grasping, i.e. of the spirit of antichrist, is very important. The Lord Jesus illustrated His own principles. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not. The giving of the other cheek is NOT a merely figurative expression. 'Tis a testimony that the SMITING DESERVES a further smiting in retaliation, but that the One Who was smitten has Himself taken the doom for those brought to believe on Him. Hence His people are gladly to preach "substitution," and the gospel of grace, by their attitude.*

Hence the whole principle of GIVING UP is to reveal the Lord Jesus, and yet there is the omission of any word which would make it necessary to give against one's conscience. Thus the Lord exercises the HEART, yet holds the MIND in subjection to Himself, so that we may please Him. There must be no turning away, no hasty decision by self-will, but a recognition that the Lord has allowed the trial to come, and that He must be sought, and that we must give something,

* A leaflet "An Eye for an Eye" gladly sent.

according to prayer, and after fellowship with Him, because He has a purpose in the request which reaches our ears. Something must be done "expensively," as by Abraham in refusing the king of Sodom's goods, and by Jeremiah in buying the Jerusalem-field, to show that our faith is a real one. May it be ours not only to know this but to illustrate simple faith in the Lord.

GOD'S STANDPOINT.

HOW rarely we seem to look at things from God's standpoint as we should. We do not grieve, as we desire in our inmost heart to grieve, over that which grieves Him. We would not wound our Lord, if it were in our power to wound Him physically as it was of old :—ah, we shrink from the very thought. The mere suggestion is an abomination. Yet in our actions we wound Him. We sin against Christ (1 Cor. 8. 12). We love Him when on our knees, but oft forget Him when on our feet, till trials come. And then we seem to think more of our deliverance than His glory. We are grateful for salvation, but how quickly gratitude becomes self-centred. We look on perishing souls, and wish WE could bring THEM to Christ, rather than emphasizing Christ FIRST, the "THEM" "second" and the "WE" third. O to see in souls, hurrying by, a world from which HE is claiming those for whom HE had TRAVAIL OF SOUL UNTO DEATH, and O to measure our own sin more by the agony it caused Him, our loving Lord, on Calvary. The "theory" of this is precious, but "theory" ONLY leads to knowledge. Let believers pray for one another (the writer feels his deep need), for the LOVE of Christ to constrain, and that truth may be an experience in the Holy Spirit, and not only a theory.

SATAN AND OUR SINS.

THE evil one ever seeks to bring us to a WRONG view of our sins. First, he will belittle them: but, if this fails, he will seek to make them relatively so great that they shut out the view of Christ's work—both for atonement and victory. Specially would he make us doubt victory. His great object is to use our sins to make us sin. If we sin by carelessness, he is happy: if we are anxious, he would make us sin by depression and doubt. And he will play fast and loose, and vary his tactics every five minutes, if he can thereby deceive. When forgiving love becomes sweet to the heart, he will suggest, "Your sins were not so bad." When there seems a barrier between us and the joy of forgiveness he will dwell on our sins, to make us think that a barrier is fixed for ever. His great object is to catch us in his meshes, and take our eyes off CHRIST. Zechariah 3 well shows his tactics, but it reveals Christ's victory. May this be ours, in the power of the Holy Spirit, even now.

BLEMISHED.

OUR hearts are praiseful for grace. 'Tis the grace of God. But are we not painfully concerned to grow up unto Christ in all things? Is there not something in all our lives that humbles as we see there is not a growing up unto Christ in all things as there should be? We hinder oftentimes sound doctrine, because we are not so spiritual, in our little things, as some who are less instructed. If we showed a complete all-round godliness in our daily walk, might not some say, "This one's doctrine needs prayerful pondering, if he thus walks with God!" It is in these details that we find blemishes, and the whole witness is damaged. If I become irritated when the truth is proclaimed, some will feel more restful in THEIR ERROR. If I grieve the Lord by some mannerism, is it not probable that some will be more occupied with the mannerism than with the truth! Our wishes are right, but . . . we are not so spiritually determined as we should be. O that God may grant a deeper concern for an unvarying and unblemished witness that He may be glorified IN ALL. Thus shall we be encouraged in His love, and caused to grow in grace, as it befits those redeemed by the blood of Christ, seeking to walk in the Spirit.

DOES THE LORD WORK WITHOUT US?

"When thou shalt hear a sound of going in the top of the mulberry trees, thou shalt go out to battle." 1 Chron. 14. 15.

"And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power . . . And Asa and the people . . . pursued them unto Gerar . . . they were destroyed before the Lord, and before His host." 2 Chron. 14. 11-13.

"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye, and see the salvation of the Lord with you." 2 Chron. 20. 17.

THE Lord is not limited. He can work WITHOUT us, OR THROUGH us. If we become proud, He may put us aside: if we become, in measure, lazy, He may withhold His working, until we prayerfully act. To trust to MEANS is vain: to trust to the ABSENCE of means is equally presumptuous: to trust to HIM is blessed. Truth in the head is beautiful, but truth in the heart is sanctifying, and the writer feels the need of seeking this more. If we work instead of praying, we are in error: if we pray instead of working, we are in error, our hearts and our labours are to be UNITED: O that both may be in the Spirit.

The Lord can use five barley loaves and two fishes, or He can have bread and fish on the shore prepared. Yet even then He may say

"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." The Lord may use Gideon, and his 300, instead of 10,000. The work must be His, whatever be the means. The glory must be His, His alone. The joy is ours and HIS, or rather, HIS and ours.

God can work without us, but usually [He emphasizes His] people's humble acknowledgment of their privilege to be usable and used. He does not make us mere machines. "PRESENT your bodies" is the gracious command. 'Tis not that the Holy Spirit mortifies, but "if YE through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body." The leading of the Holy Spirit implies a willingness to be LED, a spiritual docility that cannot be less than an experience.

God can bring a soul to Himself WITHOUT US, but, as a rule, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" How easily could the Lord have blessed Eliphaz without Job's prayers, but He deigned to use these. How simply could the Lord have given Jairus' daughter sufficient food, but He condescended to COMMAND this. How gloriously could He have removed Lazarus' grave-clothes, but He gave the word of privilege, "Loose him." And thus He still grants us the joy of service, both in our personal sanctification and in our witness. I sometimes think I should like the FRUIT of victory without the STRAIN of conflict, but do we not long for Him to choose the inheritance AND THE PATH THITHER?

"I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD, MY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL IN MY GOD: FOR HE HATH CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HATH COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Isaiah 61. 10.

HOW wonderful are these words. The prophet had many trials, many more than we realize, but he was enabled to thank God amid all. The fundamental reason was a real one. He could rejoicingly rejoice IN THE LORD because of what the Lord was, and is, for He is ever the Same. His SOUL had joy. There was true RELATIONSHIP, "MY God." When we have "MY soul," and "MY God" there must be joy. I grant that trials surround, but what are they compared with God? The writer experiences two disappointments as he writes: of one he can see the heart-humbling reason; for the other, much smaller, he cannot see any cause. But nothing can happen by chance. "Things" usually come along certain lines, but God can step in, and alter each. And faith simply thanks Him for all that He permits. The robe of righteousness is worth more than all earthly wealth. Have we the garments of salvation? Then why should we complain? Hell is our only fear (Matt. 10. 28). Trials here are but for a moment.

Observe there is only one robe of righteousness, albeit many gar-

ments of salvation. So was it in the type of John 19. There we behold the one seamless robe, made ours by grace. How many are the accompanying blessings, like to so many garments of salvation for the Lord's redeemed. "The riches of His grace." And the accompanying figure of Isaiah 61 reminds us that the Lord taketh pleasure in His people. He regards them as united to Himself, and their glories are His. This view of grace is wonderful, but it is true. God delights in the persons, and prayers, and privileges, and practices of His people. "Thou art Mine" is not bare language with Him. It seems so strange that we doubt Him. Granted that His ways are in the sanctuary, they are nevertheless HIS ways. And I think we may learn His love more by the woundings of His love? If anything could rightly hinder His chastisement, would it not be His love, but He loves too much to remove it; unless we are, alas, in a condition not to be profited by it,—or unless, thank God, we are made so responsive, that the chastisement has already its fruit. The believer who does not rejoice in the Lord DISHONOURS Him. The lack of spiritual gladness is a spiritual loss, and it undoes a testimony. God has clothed His people with gladness (Ps. 30. 11) that they may give thanks to Him and not be silent. May this be our experience to the praise of His glory.

And the next verse sets forth a further thought. Israel will be blessed, and become the righteous nation of that Day. God will clothe them with glory. Thus the prophet personally anticipated the joy of Isaiah 60. 21, 61. 2, 3. The joy will be Israel's when the Lord alone is exalted in that Day. As soon as believers become careless about the interests of Israel, they lose spiritually: God has linked Israel's joy with His own delight in His people.

"WHO SHALL DELIVER ME FROM THE BODY OF THIS DEATH?"

Romans 7. 24.

THE apostle felt what he wrote, as few of us have felt. He saw the evil and REJECTED "law" working in HIS MEMBERS: he felt the body, in its almost UNCONSCIOUS working, a tyrant. It is remarkable how past habits affect the body. Sleepiness at the right time, is not wrong, but how definitely some of us find the habit of sleepiness at the wrong time, seeking to tyrannize over us. "The body of this death" is a real peril: it so easily becomes a vantage ground for Satan. The enemy found nothing in Christ, but he finds something in us, and we long for sinless, temptationless, unhindered service. Yet there is much restfulness, even to-day. It is wonderful how He gives His beloved SLEEP, and they forget their trials. Nor is life a burden without joys. God has not appointed one long "minor key." Far otherwise. He comforts His people, and bids them rejoice.

But, amid all, He makes them feel very conscious of their NEED, and they own "the body of this death." Temptations have so much power through the natural body. Let indulgence as to eating be taken as one example, out of many.

There is no Scriptural theory of improving the flesh, but we would seek grace to mortify the deeds of the body. This is an important distinction. It is worthy of notice that as we have the empty, swept and garnished house, and as we have Paul alive without the law once (Rom. 7. 9), so we may have "the goodliness of the flesh" for a considerable season. Thus we may be taken off our guard, and less prepared for a renewed attack. There is "no good thing" in the flesh, though it may appear to behave well awhile. If Satan can through this, introduce his subtle workings, he is pleased so to do. Temptations of various kinds may be withdrawn, and we may feel encouraged, while, all the time, a mixture, of that which appears to be God's will, and that which is self-will, is dragging down our spiritual experience. How blessed it is to realize that the Lord is well acquainted with all the enemies' tactics. O that we may go unto Him more, and be forewarned.

"The body of this death" is, furthermore, very evident when we feel the incompleteness of our service. We want to do everything so much better for the Lord than we do it. We try, as it were, to draw a circle, and we make a dozen angular points. We cannot rightly say, "'Tis only the body of this death." Nay, if we had walked with God more yesterday, the labour would have been more spiritual to-day. The failures, which seem unavoidable, crystallize the results of myriads of failures that were plainly avoidable. A simple illustration will show this. Give me an untrained man. He CANNOT produce handwriting with style and character. But there was a time when he COULD have been trained thus to do. So is it spiritually. "The body of this death" is a continual drawback. But it is not for us to SIT DOWN and acknowledge the fact. To own failure, and to REMAIN there, is failure. To be content with sin is sin. To desire the fruits of victory without the strain of the path is not the mind of the Holy Spirit. May it be ours to walk with God, and to have spiritual encouragements in these matters.

"MANY TEN THOUSANDS OF JEWS.. WHICH BELIEVE, AND THEY ARE ALL ZEALOUS OF THE LAW."

Acts 21. 20.

NUMBERS always attract, and it is easy for us all to be led astray thereby. When we hear of others, and their blessing, however humbly it is recorded, naturally we look for OUR encouragements and would mention these. And it is here that pride comes in. The largest number that refreshes us SPIRITUALLY is the five thousand men o

Acts 5. of which John 6 gives a type. But here we have "ten thousands," "myriads," and there was a definite "belief," BUT—! Ah what shall we say concerning this "but"? "They are all zealous of the law." They were willing to be Christians, if they could remain, as it were, JEWS ALSO. Here is the usual spirit of COMPROMISE. The old religion was maintained, and something fresh was sewn upon the old garment. These did not see that "Christ is the End of the law INTO righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). They could not understand the words, "I THROUGH LAW DIED TO LAW" (Gal. 2. 19). They were zealous of the law that condemned them. They wished to have a standing in GRACE and in LAW at the same time. That was their serious mistake. Strangely many Jews, without owning Christ's precious Name, maintain a similar attitude. They do not realize that the law can do nothing for a man who has ONCE broken it. The unbroken law is beautiful in its glorifying power, but the broken law is beautiful only in its condemnatory power. And many professing children of God make a similar error. They have not come to an end of themselves. They have not seen themselves in the light of Christ on Calvary. The end of ALL FLESH comes before God there. The flesh may be lulled to sleep, or approve of a house, "empty, swept and garnished," but it will NOT deny itself. It is the flesh still (John 3. 6). Ah, beloved friends, have we still SOME confidence in the flesh? Still SOME hope in ourselves? Do we think ourselves only forgiven "little"? Or do we feel the hopeless ruin apart from grace, and rest simply on Him we love? It is this humbling thought that cuts off from "many thousands." Religion has numbers of adherents, but grace has quickened souls, PERSONALLY "in Christ Jesus." Blessed be God.

Through these myriads, Paul was awhile led astray, and took a vow. We also do not like to offend, but TRUTH is sacred. O for grace to realize this. God is not seeking mass movements, but heart-broken sinners. Have we been such? Possibly we have never seen ourselves FULLY KILLED by law. Our best works killed as well as our realized evil works! If we have had this experience, let us seek, in the joy of the new creation, to be ZEALOUS FOR HIM Who has begotten us to a living hope. Grace does not make a man indifferent. Grace does not take away our responsibility. Far otherwise. It only takes away our pride to bring us to a new ground of obedience, with love's gratitude.

Many were informed against Paul that he broke their laws and customs. Talkativeness is often a combination of truth and error. There was zeal against Paul because he truly established law (Rom. 3. 31). There is no real exalting in law in a man's compromise-obedience. The attempt of the flesh is an insult to law. Grace magnifies law. And in Christ Jesus we have the true honouring of law. Thus the believer can rejoice in that which exalts God throughout, and brings us to true joy and peace. Let there be few, or let there be many, but let Christ alone be exalted.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"A SWEET SAVOUR UNTO THE LORD." Lev. 1. 9.
"CHRIST ALSO HATH LOVED US, AND HATH GIVEN HIM-
SELF FOR US, AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD
FOR A SWEET SMELLING SAVOUR." Eph. 5. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

IF the type was precious BECAUSE it prefigured the Anti-type, how precious was He of Whom the MANY types were appointed interpretations. The Lord Jesus is altogether Lovely before the Father, and those redeemed by His blood should be so grateful for the joy that God the Father has in their salvation. The thought of a sweet smelling savour is attractive. Sinners are not saved by a mere compromise. God the Father is well pleased with His beloved Son, and well pleased with all in Him. He joys in His love, and joys in the love which springs from His love. Every fruit of this work of Christ is fragrant unto Him. The unvaried delight of the Lord Jesus in the will of His Father stands out in striking contrast with the sin of Adam, and self-will. What manner of persons ought we to be as those who are in Him, if indeed by grace we are.

A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH 53.*

HAVE you ever asked yourself why this passage is NOT read in the synagogue, though SURROUNDING chapters are included, Is there a reason? It has a message which many of Israel, and of the Gentiles too, forget. It tells forth God's own way of salvation, a

* The Lord graciously enabled a Yiddish Translation of these thoughts as the second issue of "The Glory of Israel." Our brother Mr. Ruda has taken many to the continent, in the Lord's lovingly granted service. The writer was

wonderful salvation. The words "My Servant" in 53. 11 bring before us a PERSON. Verse 12 shows that we do not have the picture of a nation. Who is this Person? Do you know His Name? Would it not be well to read ALL the passage to see WHO HE IS? Observe the words of 53. 1, 2. Thus we behold ONE Who was not welcomed, One Who grew up before the LORD as a tender plant—living, but NOT great in men's opinion. And ALL around Him there was death—a dry ground, NOTHING TO ACCOUNT FOR HIS BEAUTIFUL LIFE BEFORE GOD. When Adam sinned, he died BEFORE God, and HIS son was in HIS likeness. But here is One Whom God views as living ("before Him"), yet there is nothing on EARTH to explain His acceptability to God. Who is THIS? He is without majesty: He has no EARTHLY grandeur. 'Tis not a king like Hezekiah, for Israel desired such an one. Far less can we imagine for one moment that it is the people of Israel, for "there is no beauty that WE should desire Him" is THEIR acknowledgment. Here is One quite rejected, but beautiful before God. Read verse 3. Is not this ONE PERSON? And is not He quite refused? "We esteemed Him not." Hence to find the One of Whom the prophet tells, we must find One Whom Israel AS A NATION REFUSE. In the fourth verse we see that This Rejected One bears something for OTHERS. And who are the others? Plainly they are Israel. And they think that God is against Him, whereas all the time God is against THEIR SIN (see verse 5), and He is well-pleased with the very One they imagine to be "stricken of God." The transgressions belong to Israel, NOT to Him. The iniquities are theirs, not His. He bears the chastisement to bring them PEACE. Ah, dear reader, do you want peace with God? Then here is the One through Whom it is possible, THE ONLY ONE. Sin is a terrible disease. We need "healing." Here is the promise of healing. How evident it is that such words can apply to none other than the MESSIAH of Israel. A SINNER cannot be the Saviour of another SINNER. There is no healing by the sinner's bearing of his own stripe, the stripe he has deserved. But there IS healing in ANOTHER. Do you know HIM?

And what shall we say about verse 6? "All we" leaves no room for boasting. Here is the cry that repenting Israel will yet take up. They will own they have turned TO THEIR OWN WAY. If you do not confess this, dear reader, you add sin to sin. Our own way is sin. This verse makes that fact perfectly clear. Therefore we need a Saviour. But the sixth verse does not end with the sinner. "The Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all." There can be no mistake as to this. The One Who saves is not Israel, but a PERSON contrasted with the sinful nation (Isaiah 1. 4), and "The Lord made to meet ON HIM the iniquity." Whatever Israel say

privileged to share at Antwerp in this labour. We sow in hope. Prayer for Israel is a great privilege. Brief particulars of an earlier journey to Poland have appeared in September "Thoughts from the Word of God." Letters written during this, and other, journeys can sometimes be lent to those exercised before the Lord TO PRAY.

nowadays, it is plainly God's good pleasure to appoint a Sacrifice, to bear the sin of others. This is NOT an animal. It cannot be a sinner. Who is it? Someone despised by Israel is yet to be acknowledged as the Sacrifice Who died for them, since this is the thought of bearing sin. Where is He? The Jewish religion to-day has no room for HIM, but the words here exactly fit with the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. So evident is this that if a Jew heard Isaiah 53, for the first time, he would probably say, "That is in the New Testament."

The words of verse 7 are very beautiful in their twofold meaning. Every Jew knows, or should know, that the absence of points in the original Hebrew gives this fuller richness from time to time. "He was oppressed and He was afflicted," or "It was exacted and He Himself answered." Both statements are true. There was the full demand, and the Substitute or Surety must answer, and pay the WHOLE expense. We think of Genesis 44. 32: and "He That is Surety for a stranger shall smart for it" (Prov. 11. 15). From Prov. 20. 16; 22. 26, 27 we see that the Surety must be prepared to lose GARMENT AND BED. Does not this give an indirect prophecy of the Surety of Whom Isaiah 53 speaks? Certainly HE had no bed, but was hanged upon a tree, bearing THE CURSE as Deuteronomy shows,—the only way a sinner could be saved. And Psalm 22. 18 says, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Speaking of Psalm 22, perhaps you have not noticed that Isaiah 53 refers to this Psalm: to verses 6(7), 24(25), 30(31), 31(32) at least (see Isaiah 53. 3, 11, 12): here is further evidence that the prophet spoke of a Righteous INDIVIDUAL, not of the unrighteous nation (Isaiah 1. 4). The verse now before us in the OFTEN-FORGOTTEN chapter of Isaiah adds, "Yet He opened not His mouth." And this is repeated, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." How different from every COMPLAINING nation. You cannot find an ordinary man here, far less a company of men. Who is this REJECTED ONE, this SUFFERING ONE, this PATIENT ONE, Who is also God's DELIGHT, and the Bearer of Israel's sins? Every explanation fails which forgets that the UTTERLY REJECTED ONE OF ISRAEL is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is not one word used of the Holy One in this chapter inappropriate to Him. This is a more remarkable fact than any Jew, Who carelessly puts it aside, has considered.

"From prison and from judgment was He taken, and His generation who shall declare? For He was cut off out of the land of life: by reason of the transgression of My people—the stroke that was for them." It is evident that the One before us was not merely imprisoned without an EARTHLY family, He was cut off. But the transgression was NOT His: the plague (בִּצָרָה) was Israel's, and He took it. Who is this? In the sacrifices, a man could never bring PART OF HIMSELF. Even Aaron needed a sacrifice quite distinct from himself? Here is One Who is sinless, in the place of Isaiah's sinful people (עַמִּי). Who can it be?

"And (the people) gave His grave* with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, and there was not deceit in His mouth" (9). The people rejected Him. His grave was appointed before He died, BUT GOD OVERRULED, and His body was with a rich man in His death. Who is this rich man? Have you ever heard of Joseph of Arimathea, who stepped in and obtained from Pilate the body of the Lord Jesus, and thus changed the people's "giving"? Strange that this should be mentioned over 600 years before! No, it is not strange. Here is PROPHECY. Again we have HIS MOUTH, and its sinlessness. His whole life was a contrast with SIN. Thus we read עֶשֶׂה לָאִדְמוּם עֶשֶׂה לָאִדְמוּם and not only עֶשֶׂה לָאִדְמוּם. We shall find too that He is called the RIGHTEOUS ONE.

"And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (10). This verse is remarkably full. The Lord is not PLEASED to bruise without reason. Zechariah 13. 7 is parallel. The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33. 11), but "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death belonging to His saints" (Ps. 116. 15). And so God was well-pleased with the offering for guilt, that sinners might be saved. And so we read, "He shall see a seed." This is the contrast with "Who shall declare His GENERATION?" He had no earthly family, but "A SEED shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for A GENERATION" (Ps. 22. 30). THERE IS LIFE BY HIS DEATH. Evidently This is the prophet of Deuteronomy 18. 15, 16, "According to ALL that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not." And He too is raised from the dead, "He shall prolong His days," as the Righteous ONE of Lev. 18. 5.

Isaiah 53. 11 tells of the labour of His soul, and assures us He shall see the fruit, and be satisfied. In His knowledge—perfect knowledge of the will of God—He makes a righteousness for the many. Is not this the Lord our Righteousness of Jeremiah 23. 6? "My Servant." The Individual. "My Servant" is contrasted with the people. The nation ought to have been God's servant, but they failed. He failed not. And He not only makes a righteousness, but bears their iniquities.

THUS verse 12 opens with triumph, "Therefore will I divide for Him with the MANY." He is to be exalted, and extolled, and very high "And He shall divide the spoil with the STRONG."§ But why? "Corresponding with the fact that He made His soul naked for the death." Observe, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," but here is One Whose willingness of soul for death is His glory. "And with transgressors was He numbered": none can doubt that THIS was

true of Jesus Christ. And to Him, dear reader, the next words also apply to the full extent, "And He Himself BARE the sin of many." If you have no one Who has borne your sin, your peril is real. Exodus 34. 6 and Micah 7. 18 show a remarkable fact. God Himself forgives sin by Himself BEARING it. Israel have no room for this part of His teaching in their own Scriptures. Unless God becomes a Man, HOW can He THUS forgive sins? Ah, Israel may mock, but they mock GOD. Men may cry out, but they cry out against the Lord Himself. Yet such is the love and tender pity manifested that the VERY NEXT sentence in Isaiah 53 reads, "And He made intercession (or a meeting place) FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS." God knew there would be those who would scorn the precious way of salvation. And thus at once He added the record of the prayer of the despised Saviour for the very ones who despise Him. And so the chapter ends with such amazing love. Well may the very next word be "SING" (54. 1), and we WOULD sing of the mercy of the Lord. as we rejoice to tell you, dear reader, of Him AS OUR OWN SAVIOUR, And our hearts long that you may in heart-brokenness seek Him, and not despise THE ONLY ONE TO WHOM ISAIAH 53 CAN APPLY!

HEROD AND THE YOUNG CHILDREN AT BETHLEHEM.

HOW often, alas, men attack the Scriptures with much carelessness as to the very FACTS which God has stated. Here is a solemnizing evidence of "bias." THIS should be even to themselves a witness against themselves; and the thoughtful critic who regards himself as honest, and honourable, may learn much if he asks himself, "Why is this bias prevalent? Does it betoken widespread searching after TRUTH? Does not a bad pane of glass make a good thing look distorted? How many have suggested a contradiction between Matthew 2, recording the journey of the wise men, and Luke 2, detailing the visit of the shepherds. Possibly few have noticed the marked contrasts as to TIME and CIRCUMSTANCES.

(1) In Matthew we have NO reference to the immediately preceding birth ("Unto you is born this day"). Far otherwise, time for a JOURNEY is implied.

(2) We have the HOUSE in Matthew 2. 11, and not the MANGER.

(3) The Young Child is emphasized in BOTH Scriptures, but in Luke 2. 17 we have the word "Babe." The Holy Spirit's language is perfect.

(4) Moreover, Herod's killing of the children, "from two years and under," was definitely "according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2. 16). How could this be IMMEDIATELY after birth? Here then are four points. Can they be overlooked? But it may be said, "Both events are in Bethlehem." Is this strange, if Joseph was of the lineage of David,

* Or "His grave was given" (same letters, different pointing).

† "Not-violence He did:" not only "Violence He did not."

§ A leaflet referring to the "many" and the "strong," gladly sent.

and the passover journey was normally made (Luke 2. 41)? The human heart imagines difficulties. May we praise God for all willingness to wait upon Him, and see just what He has caused to be written.

It is delightful to find many lessons through every problem. The valued message as to the salvation of those who die in infancy is linked (Matt. 2. 16-18 with Jer. 31. 17 last clause).

Thus, too, we have in Scripture the birth of Christ, THEN when He approached TWO years, THEN the return from Egypt, NEXT twelve years,—and, after that, His “manifestation” to Israel. The details are precious, and show God the Father’s joy in Him.

But how evident is the contrast with narratives in the human “gospels” of the soi-disant “early church.” It is a great privilege to be preserved from “the traditions of men.”

These “parallels” may remind us that OTHER partly similar events have been wrongly IDENTIFIED. And do we not also see the appointed STANDPOINTS of the gospels? The Lord Jesus was visited by the great ones of earth in the gospel which emphasizes the KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS—the only gospel that mentions the CHURCH. The wise men were evidently GENTILES. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit inspired Luke, a Gentile, by birth, to tell of the humble shepherds—evidently of Israel. How precious to know Christ died for Jews AND Gentiles, and that saved Jews AND Gentiles are in Him and worship Him. May we love Him more!

“I fell at his feet to worship him.”

Rev. 19. 10; 22. 9.

AT first this seems impossible. John knew so much of the Lord. And the repetition in 22. 8 is yet more remarkable. But we learn much through these passages. First, they are made a background to emphasize the Deity of Christ, for He ALWAYS accepted worship. The angel did not refuse on the ground that he was not sufficiently exalted, but BECAUSE HE WAS NOT GOD. The highest CREATED being is quite unworthy of worship. The difference between God and created beings is one of kind, not of degree.

Secondly, we notice the glorious appearance of the angel: possibly John wondered who he was. This may help us as to some other passages of Scripture, and prepare for the enjoyment of Phil. 3. 21. If the angels are so magnificent, what must the majesty of the Lord Jesus be?

Thirdly, we learn the result of a DEEP IMPRESSION: few passages suggest more clearly how men under deep emotion will do what they would not do on another occasion. Many wrongly act on this to-day in order to produce emotional results: but we should keep to the Lord’s methods, and lovingly leave all with Him. The appearance of success is not our aim, but His will. The effect of a magnificent appearance is here strikingly before us. John records how he was, in measure,

rebuked, because unwittingly about to sin through the unveiling. Thus we see how the holiest of men need the guidance of Scripture: feelings are insufficient.

IF YE BE WITHOUT CHASTISEMENT.

THE deeply precious words of Hebrews 12 concerning chastisement have often appealed to our hearts. We have felt their power, but there is still more instruction in them. What if we have an easier time? What if our physical frame experiences no strain? What if we enjoy the perfect health which some emphasize? The words of our title have a solemn message, “If ye be without chastisement.” Surely we should not take the other alternative, and assume we have reached perfection. We need chastisement: if we do not receive it, is it the saddening fact that we are not sons? Is it that we are only professing Christians, and really without Christ? O how deeply searching is the thought. Complain not of chastisement. Seek to learn its humbling lessons. Thank God for its pains, however real they be. He does not inflict a pain without a purpose. Whatever He permits, He permits for our good. Perhaps you want the trial to be removed. Beware of the danger. “To be without chastisement” is no real gain.

He hath said in his heart, God hath Forgotten. Psalm 10. 11.

THE wicked do wickedly, and they persist the more when they persuade themselves “God Hath Forgotten.” The realization of GOD’S MEMORY often deters. In like, and yet contrasted, manner, the believer is ENCOURAGED by the precious words, “God is not unrighteous to forget.” God never forgets His people. There is an exquisite beauty in the words, “Forget not the congregation of Thy poor for ever” (Ps. 74. 19). But there is the other aspect. He never forgets the sin that has not been blotted out. “They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness.” “I will never forget any of their works.”

Thus the very theme that brings delight to the redeemed, strikes terror to the unsaved. And so is it often. How much depends on standpoint. Another thought from this verse is deeply important. The Judgment Seat of Christ is REAL. Let believers live in the light of this, and let them feel that every action, and word, and thought are before the Lord. He NEVER overlooks. How sanctifying is the effect of a true realization of His deep interest.

"THROUGH THEIR WORD."

John 17. 20.

THE value of the words of the apostles recorded in Scripture cannot be over-estimated. How many have been brought to believe "through their word." Not that we would overlook those who were saved through their testimony while living on the earth. Thanks be unto God for these also. All the Lord's people are very dear unto Him. But the written Scriptures are always powerful, as Luke 16. 31 shows, referring to the earlier. Yet we must never forget the added statements of 2 Timothy 3. 15, "Through FAITH which is in Christ Jesus." "It is the Spirit That quickeneth." Thanks be unto God for this.

Observe the singular: the UNITED testimony of God's servants was, and is, precious. So the apostles' DOCTRINE in Acts 2. 42. The word "doctrines" is never employed in a good sense. All doctrine is one. We praise our Heavenly Father for this. "Through their word." Divergent words hinder the witness. There should be a remarkable evidence of the unity the Holy Spirit has brought about in the harmony of God's beloved people. Is it too much to expect this? 1 Corinthians 1. 10 is part of Scripture.

And we go further. The Lord is still pleased to use His servants. Romans 10. 14, 15 must encourage. Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. The witness is to be humbly given, NOT ONLY IN PUBLIC. The Lord hears conversational words (Mal. 3. 16). It is a privilege to speak to a soul in private. How marvellous that He should condescend to use means, "Through their word." "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. He is pleased to bring His people's "five loaves" and "small fishes" into the carrying through of His purpose. Yet 'tis not "because of their word" or "by the power of their word": "through":—the power and glory are His, His alone.

"That He might have Mercy upon All."

Rom. 11. 32.

THESE precious words have, I fear, been misused as to universalism. The STRESS of the context is clear. "That He might have MERCY upon all," i.e. the Jews as much as the Gentiles are dead in sins, they are shut up in unbelief, that when the remnant is drawn by grace, it may be clear that the work is one of MERCY, and that the natural branches are not grafted in again BECAUSE OF MERIT. They must be saved as believers now. MERCY! None apart from mercy. No human glory can be allowed. Nothing but praise to God. The precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shuts out all boasting. God is rich in MERCY, and if we are brought near to Him, 'tis in MERCY. There is no room for anything else. MERCY, ONLY MERCY. May our hearts leap for joy.

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"For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
2 Cor. 4. 6.

A Word of Introduction.

By the mercy of our God, and dependent on Him day by day, we would again send forth these pages praisefully. We have a salvation worth proclaiming. It is so deeply important that His praise should be sounded forth. "The gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 4) takes all merit from man, or rather shows they have no merit, but the reverse.

But grace super-abounded, and "let the redeemed of the Lord SAY so" (Ps. 107. 2) even though they cannot show forth all His praise. Thus is it in Isaiah 12. 1, "In that day thou shalt say," and in Psalm 66. 16, "I will declare what He hath done for my soul"—"to the end that my glory may sing praise unto Thee and not be silent" (Ps. 30. 12). HE is worthy to be praised.

THE MESSAGE OF LEVITICUS 16. Some Thoughts on God's Dealings with Sin and Sinners.

AS the above title is being written, one feels the need to explain: for who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth ALL His praise? And who can declare the FULLNESS of Leviticus 16? We do not imagine OUR ability, far otherwise, yet "the message of Leviticus" may be received, as we partake of bread without partaking of ALL. Surely our hearts long that this figure may apply more fully, and that we may FEED on the words of God day by day.

Leviticus 16 occupies a somewhat CENTRAL position in the five books, even as the Day of Atonement is almost central in Israel's

year. Much of the Epistle to the Hebrews is an inspired commentary on the Holy Spirit's teaching as to that day. Alas, Israel trust to "it," and so we find many who are called "Yom Kippur" or Day of Atonement Jews, because at other times they are far from their synagogues.

Many believers know something about the precious teaching of the 10th day of the 7th month. They rejoice to realize that God's dear people are not only PARDONED, but WELCOMED: not only FORGIVEN, but made the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST (2 Cor. 5. 21). Hence they rejoice to behold every type that brings before us something beyond NEGATIVE blessings, precious though these be. Whereas the Day of Atonement itself laid stress on exclusion, in general ("not at all times," 2) and on affliction of soul, and whereas on that day even the high priest who entered must be covered with a cloud of incense, that he might not die (13), yet God was pleased to suggest thereby that access was not an IMPOSSIBILITY (Heb. 9. 8), and the rent veil has changed the gloom into brightness, and the shadow into substance. "Having boldness, therefore, brethren, to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus." It is wonderful; and we WERE "children of wrath even as others."

There is no doubt as to the spiritual meaning of the bullock for Aaron and HIS HOUSEHOLD. We behold with joy the family of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews emphasizes the stress: instead of "for himself and his house" 'tis "Himself for," but "the house" is in the same position, in Hebrews (3. 6; 10. 21; cf. 11. 7). Christ is the Redeemer, believers are the redeemed. We could well pause to meditate on this. The blood was poured out, and taken within, and sprinkled before God! Wondrous is HIS condescension in grace.

Here we have a figure of the ENTIRE removal of sin. Atonement is not "covering up": 'tis legal covering, that the sins and iniquities may be remembered no more (Heb. 10. 17). God delights in worship, not only in deliverance from judgment. Grace REIGNS!

But why a goat also? Why are not Israel included in the BULLOCK? Evidently we have a FURTHER application of the work of Christ. And to whom will that be? Will it not be to Israel in the Day of His Coming? And is not the Day of Atonement, in the SECOND half of Israel's year, AFTER tabernacles (Lev. 23. 34), a type of Zechariah 12. 10?*

But, it may be asked, why then are the Lord's dear people of to-day included in the second half of the year? Is not Jeremiah 31. 31-34 future? But Hebrews 8 shows that we enter into the blessings BY ANTICIPATION. So is it as to Leviticus 16, though the FULNESS, concerning us, for the body also, is "in that Day" (Rom. 8. 23, 24).†

* Hence we can understand the parallel with Leviticus 4. The first TWO sacrifices include the PRIEST, and the bullock is before us, but the latter TWO concern the RULER (earthly) and the people "of the LAND" (27), and thus there is no bearing "without the camp" for the latter, since the aspect of REJECTION in verses 12 and 21 indicates the present dispensation (Heb. 13. 12-14).

† Accordingly verses 16 and 19 emphasize the accompanying uncleanness of Israel, but similar words are not found in 6 and 10: for, when the application of the day of atonement is reached, the priestly family will already be clean.

Hence we see the heavenly family AND the earthly nation alike righteous when our beloved Lord comes back. One striking problem may seem to remain. Why "without the camp" for the goat also? Observe this is not till after the removal of the "scapegoat," and may look onward to the climax-reproach of Revelation 20. 9 although God quickly steps in. But one realizes humbly that our gracious Heavenly Father has yet more teaching which our hearts will learn, as we wait on Him.

But what shall we say about that which has been called the "scapegoat"? Does not Leviticus 16. 8 make us question this rendering? 'Tis NOT "the scapeGOAT," but the goat is "FOR AZAZEL," who is contrasted with the Lord. The usual interpretation, that sees in this goat our beloved Lord, seems to miss some very important points:-

- (1) The already mentioned fact that Azazel is opposed to the Lord. The second goat is NOT for Him.
- (2) There is NO REFERENCE to its DEATH.
- (3) Far from a suggestion of resurrection, we have the sending away, to banishment, with a load of sin REMAINING (16. 22). There cannot be resurrection APART from a sacrificial death.
- (4) The dealings with the second goat follow "an end of reconciling" (16. 20).
- (5) There is no parallel therewith in connexion with Aaron's family.
- (6) The Holy Spirit never alludes to this as a type of Christ, not even in the Epistle to the Hebrews with its detailed comment on the day of atonement.
- (7) Other types have nothing to correspond with this, in the picture of the Lord Jesus.*

Some have thought there is an allusion in John 1. 29, but there we seem to have a passover view, and certainly a SACRIFICIAL suggestion. To bear and take away sin always meant death to our beloved Lord. Israel's passover was for ONE nation, Christ is for sinners from ALL nations (John 3. 16). Thanks be unto God. How happy are those who have been brought by the Holy Spirit to see Him as their personal Saviour.

Hence we would earnestly suggest "the goat for Azazel" does not typify Christ, (Who was ALTOGETHER for the LORD), but THE EXACT OPPOSITE. If Abel pictures Christ, the second goat pictures Cain, who is a vagabond, in a land afar off, with his UNREMOVED WEIGHT of sin (Gen. 4. 13), and whose escape by death is unrecorded, for "the wrath of God abideth" (John 3. 36). If at Jerusalem we behold the Sacrifice well-pleasing to God for a sweet-smelling savour, we behold also Barabbas, as the goat for Azazel. And in the future the goat destined for separation, as the name indicates, will be Antichrist, who will remain "alive" (Rev. 19. 20; 20. 10) in the Lake of Fire,—

* Leviticus 14. 1-7 is by no means parallel: "clean" is OMITTED in chapter 16: (we know the sacrificial Goat WAS clean from other Scriptures): in 14. 4 "alive and clean." Moreover, the dipping in the BLOOD has NO likeness in ch. 16. Who can see any similarity between the glorious freedom of 14. 7, prefiguring resurrection, and the burden and desolation of 16. 22?

truly a land of separation. Hence as the accepted goat for the Lord sets forth our precious Saviour, and, in and with Him, His people: so the one of which the blood is not poured out sets forth the devil's representative, and his people. "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8. 44, Gen. 3. 15). As soon as we grasp this, we realize the nation is divided, as in Zechariah 13. 8, 9. The remnant of Israel return to the Mighty God, but MANY are linked with Antichrist. And at once we understand why there is NO BULLOCK FOR AZAZEL, inasmuch as in the family of the Great High Priest there is no rejection but ONLY ACCEPTANCE. If the type were one of Christ, we should MISS THIS TEACHING in the EARLIER part of the chapter. But if the true interpretation is found everything seems to fit.

Possibly some earnest reader, while rejoicing in grace, and thankful for the warning which this chapter is now seen to emphasize, feels concerned as to the verse, "The goat, on which the lot fell 'to Azazel,' shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him (lit: upon him), and to let him go to Azazel into the wilderness" (10). There is no difficulty in one part of the expression: everything is before the Lord. When a king did evil, we read, "in the sight of the Lord," as much as when he did good. But what about the word "make an atonement"? The root is "cover" as Genesis 6. 14 shows. And the passive in Isaiah 28. 18 is rendered "disannulled":—covered, obliterated. This does not suggest atonement in GRACE. Must not ALL sin be removed from before God? And does not "the land of separation" (Lev. 16. 22) show the removal? The difficulty is largely produced, because we have forgotten God must be honoured, and all sin put away, either on the sacrifice OR on the sinner. The "twofold" aspect reminds us that in the Hebrew the same word is used for the punishment of sin, and the offering for sin. "With him" in verse 10 is hardly clear: literally "upon him." In other words the goat is not said to be the atonement, but to need a covering, and this "covering" seems to be described in the NEXT mention of this goat for Azazel. In verse 21 we have the same word "upon" or "cover," and the same reference to the ABSENCE of sacrificial death, and to a sending away. 'Tis a solemn view of abiding sin and judgment, but the law of God is honoured, there is the "covering" away from His presence (2 Thess. 1. 9). O that sinners realized MORE FULLY what this means! A covering in wrath—a WRATH-SATISFACTION, for a broken law is so tremendously appalling, and we would value the precious blood of our beloved Lord yet more. The goat for Azazel has nothing to do with reconciling or access in Leviticus—nothing to do with the Lord when sent away. How contrasted is the testimony as to the blood of the accepted Sacrifice!

Many other thoughts in this precious chapter awaken our praiseful meditation, when the Holy Spirit applies them, e.g. the stress on affliction of soul is important, but it is NOT MADE PART OF THE ATONEMENT. It is not mentioned till afterwards (29). Israel disown this lesson, and trust to self. The humble believer rejoices in

the way God brings to REPENTANCE, but repentance is the fruit, not the cause, of atonement.

The significant omission of verse 24, "For himself and for the people" (not "for himself and his house and for the people"), not only remind us that the Lord Jesus has identified His people IN the PRESENT DISPENSATION wondrously with Himself (1 Cor. 12. 12),* but prepares for the stress on affliction with "ye" rather than those linked with Aaron (29-31). One reason is clear: WHEN the Lord's people are saved now, they are humbled and broken in soul, but in that Day when Israel mourn, after the blowing of the trumpets, saved ones will be in glory.

The word "atonement" is normally in the plural. It is precious, therefore, to observe the twofold language of 16. 33, 34, (1) on the people, i.e. a robe of righteousness, (2) "on the children of Israel, FROM all their sins," i.e. the covering of sin. So in ch. 17. 11 we have the atonement ON the altar (to take away guilt), and ON "your souls" (literally, as in 16. 33, 34), to indicate RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED (Rom. 4. 6, Isa. 61. 10). Thanks be unto God for the fulness of salvation, and for His UNSPEAKABLE GIFT. May our hearts rejoice in so costly and glorious a salvation!

(A Tract on THE SCAPEGOAT will be gladly sent.)

"It Was a Cloud and Darkness, but It Gave Light."

Exodus 14. 20.

ONE may be impressed by the wondrous grace of God in the change of position of the cloud. And is there not much precious teaching, for a believer to-day, in the words that head this exhortation? Do we not sometimes forget that a believer has a new attitude as to everything (2 Cor. 5. 17)? God has marked him off from the world, and put a line of demarcation. Moreover, we may apply the words thus:—The very things that alarm an ordinary man have spiritual power and encouragement to a believer, for he is on the OTHER side.

But yet a further thought was before the writer. Do not these words partly explain the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? The light of God is darkness to a Pharaoh. He is on the wrong side of everything. If God protects His people, a man in his right mind OUGHT to rejoice. A barrier put in the way of iniquity OUGHT to awaken his praise, but, INSTEAD of praising God, he obstinately presses on. SUCH IS MAN. What a mercy to be a new creation in Christ Jesus. What manner of persons ought we to be. The sun that melts wax hardens clay. God's precepts harden a sinful heart as Romans 7. 8 shows. But what man would argue from this that there should be no commandments?

* In eternal glory, all the redeemed will be brought into a oneness (Eph. 1. 10).

"I HAVE FOUND AN ATONEMENT."

Job 33. 24.*

ELIHU rightly said that only "One among a thousand" could speak thus. But He is **THE VERY ONE WE NEED**. Ah He stands **OUT FROM** all the thousand, leaving the other 999, definitely marked out as unable to make any atonement. Solomon also refers to This One, and gives us the Key. "The One Man among a thousand," Whom the wise king **FOUND** (in Ecclesiastes 7. 28), is the One Who has **FOUND** the atonement. Two precious findings. The question comes, "Have you been brought to find Him?" Observe Solomon could **NOT** find a woman. If we were only dealing with ordinary fellow-creatures, should we not expect to "find" a woman as much as a "man"? But we are brought to One Greater than all others. He is not an ordinary man. The Hebrew Scriptures reveal One, and only One, Who is Righteous (Psalm 15). He is to be called "the Lord our Righteousness" **BY BELIEVING HEARTS**, and yet is a Man of David's line (Jer. 23. 5, 6). 'Tis **IMPOSSIBLE** that a man should become the **LORD**: the only alternative is that the **LORD** becomes manifest in the flesh. **ISAIAH 9. 5, 6 IS UNEXPLAINED IN ANY OTHER WAY**. And thus the Scripture testimony is true, "There is none righteous" (see Psalm 14), and **YET** One among a thousand stands out! Thanks be unto God, He has found an atonement. Observe **HIS** intercession in the context, "Deliver him from going down to the pit" (Job 33. 24). And thus the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, saves, and it is a **RIGHTEOUS** atonement that He has made, by bearing the sin of many (Isaiah 53. 12).

Ah, dear Jewish reader, - or Gentile reader, it matters not—**YOU ARE AMONG THE 999**, and unless the atonement made by **THE ONE** is yours, you are without atonement, and so without salvation. The 999 seek out and find out many inventions (Eccl. 7. 29). They are **UNrighteous**. None of them can deliver his brother, or give to God **AN ATONEMENT FOR HIMSELF** (Psalm 49. 7, 8). But the Righteous One has made an atonement for sinners. Yet you are still trusting to something else, to something you have not done, and cannot do. Vain is the setting aside of **GOD'S ATONEMENT**. Not a bullock, not a goat, not a day, not blood lost by fasting, but the One Who has **FOUND AN ATONEMENT**, and He only, is the Way to God. "Thanks be unto God for His **UNSPEAKABLE GIFT**."

* Circulated among Israel to God's glory in a Yiddish translation.

Matthew 8. 8, Humility ("I am not worthy") and faith ("a word") linked: it is important to see that the former **ALONE** would have been **INCOMPLETE**. 9, He realized the **POWER** of Christ's Word inworking out the will of the Father. (Notice Psalm 33. 9; 147. 15, 18). Shall we be disobedient, and do something else instead of His "This"? 10, The Lord's delight in faith (15. 28): observe, in both cases, faith was not joined with a personal wish alone, but with the **WORD** of the Lord Jesus **ALSO**.

The Enthusiasm of God's Servants for His Words.

PSALM 119 is a revelation of enthusiasm for the things of God. "O how love I Thy law." There is a deep delight in such a statement. One feels how often these words make us ashamed. Do we love God's law thus? Do we rejoice at His Word as those who find great spoil? Have we a freshness of love for the Lord, or do we merely take a mental interest therein? It is easy to be earnest **NOW AND THEN**, but sustained earnestness is the test, is it not? The law of God's mouth was, to the psalmist, better than "thousands of gold and silver." How easy for us to make such statements, but God has not approved of a lie. These words were true. The zeal was genuine zeal, the love was real love. And we need the same earnestness.

Can we believe that we have been saved from the wrath to come, and that we are made the righteousness of God in Christ, and that an unsaved soul is still on the path to judgment, and **YET** remain indifferent to the precious words of our God? Worldliness is an evidence of a light grasp of the value of grace and salvation. The wondrous forgiveness of sins, and acceptance in the Beloved Son of God, must never be made unimportant. If Christ is ours because we are His, if the Scriptures are our Heavenly Father's Words to us, how can we be like the world, **OUT OF** which we have been chosen? It is a blessing beyond measure to be a child of God, and His will for us should be sweeter than all else. "His will,"—how graciously has He revealed this. If we had not the Bible, if we did not know which way to go, if we were in unrest, how solemn would be our chartless voyage. But shall we not praise God for that which is, at once, the heavenly food to eat, the needed rod to correct, the bright lamp to illuminate and the unerring chart to direct? The Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and the Holy Spirit delights to apply the Scriptures. May we rejoice in the Words of our God, more and more abundantly.

"Worse than all that were before him."

"Above all that were before him."

1 Kings 16. 25; 1 Kings 16. 30.

THE Words of God are very striking as to sin, and how sin goes forward and increases. How blessed to realize God's power in salvation from sin; and even a Manasseh reached by infinite mercy.

We notice, moreover, that there are **DEGREES** of sin. Omri exceeded others; and Ahab exceeded Omri (2 Kings 17. 2 affords a contrast). In like manner there are degrees of **SIN TO-DAY**, and there will be degrees of **PUNISHMENT** as the Lord Jesus showed when He gave His solemn words as to Capernaum. There is a weight of

judgment for all.* Again we realize the fulness of grace in the precious finished work of the Lord Jesus. How grateful we would be for eternal salvation.

We often read of those who copied one another's sin. There was a walking in the way of Jeroboam, and the imitation of a father is specially recorded. We all have more influence than we think. The blessedness of a godly home comes to mind, and we praise God for this. May we, by grace, seek to use influence for God.

But as Omri not only copied, but originated, so it is blessedly possible to glorify God by a freshness of love to Him. We need to beware lest we are "held" by the actions of others, and hindered from going forward. There is a grave danger if we hesitate to obey the Lord because others have hesitated. It is ours to seek to remember that if we only do the same as believers BEFORE US we really do less, for we have the privilege of their example, that, spurred onward, we may do MORE AND MORE, in the Holy Spirit.

* A booklet entitled "MORE TOLERABLE" will be gladly sent.

A Note on Matthew 10. 11. Abraham WAS not in "the Kingdom of the heavens," yet Christ said he WOULD be: so the statement "Old Testament saints WERE not in the Church" proves nothing as to the future: will it be confessed that they, brought to the goal (Heb. 12. 23), have life in union with Christ which could not be before Calvary (John 12. 24), or will it be said that they will live for ever without SUCH UNION with Him? Did not His death make an actual as well as a legal change for them? 12, Observe "the Kingdom" without "of the heavens," cf. Matthew 21. 43, and the exact use of every word in Scripture.

If only we looked at *sin* more from God's standpoint it would be well. If only we realized what *wrath* meant to Him *Who delights in love*, we should be blessed in this experience. Too often we are occupied exclusively with the *other* aspect, viz., what it means to the sinner feeling it. So with *salvation*: 'tis not only the saved one's joy, but Christ shall see of the travail of His soul. This is wondrous.

Faith loves to build upon GOD'S SURE PROMISES, not upon imaginations, or human ideas.

Feeling may do much, but it lacks permanence. Grace has undying fruit.

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The STUDENT of SCRIPTURE.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I WILL MENTION THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD, AND THE PRAISES OF THE LORD, ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE LORD HATH BESTOWED UN US, AND THE GREAT GOODNESS TOWARD THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, WHICH HE HATH BESTOWED ON THEM, ACCORDING TO HIS MERCIES, AND ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF HIS LOVINGKINDNESSES." ISAIAH 63.7.

A Word of Introduction.

THE wondrous lovingkindnesses of God are never realized till we see what sin is in God's sight. Doubtless, we sometimes FEEL its hatefulness, and behold in ourselves that which we CONDEMN. But the fullest view of what sin is in God's sight is at Calvary. There the Holy Son of God is made a Sin Offering, and the waves and billows of judgment go over Him. None can say that there would be NEEDLESS suffering to the Spotless One. Such a thought would question the righteousness of God. Aye, and He was the Altogether Beloved One. And YET He passed through that AWFUL experience. No words can describe what this meant to Him. But THERE we behold God's view of sin. O that we, dear believing readers, may hate what He hates, and LOVE WHAT HE LOVES. And O that these pages may be used to bring many to His standpoint.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON WINE, AND ON GRACIOUSNESS IN EXAMINING DIFFERENCES.

MANY children of God think that when wine is mentioned, and some conscientiously refrain, that it is what many would term, "A Temperance Question." Then they frequently add a few thoughts on LEGALISM.

We are persuaded that these dear friends, however kindly in their

intention, are somewhat (may we say ?) **ONESIDED**, and, venturing to use a little of their seeming definiteness, we would enter an earnest appeal, which they will not reject:—Shall we turn to the Scripture ? How precious is that touchstone, when employed in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

But, seeking grace to do so graciously, may we, in passing, refer to what is called, "Legalism" ? How many of us have forgotten that "Legality" largely depends on the "ATTITUDE." In other words, I may make "love" itself legalistic, if I feel "I ought," and yet **WOULD RATHER NOT**. And so, self can make **EVERY** command "legalism," but spiritual love delights in God's law, and can make many seeming burdens a privilege, when including them in the law written on the heart. Thus the cry of "legalism" is often quite out of place, beloved friends: **IT JUDGES MOTIVES**, and thereby usurps the position of the Holy Spirit, and assumes, "I know my brother does that action under a sense of compulsion, **BECAUSE** I should." It is **THIS** which we deplore.

Have we ever met one who was **QUITE FREE** from legalism, i.e. the sense of the "unwilling must ?" Do we not all own we have sometimes thus grieved the Holy Spirit ? But for a child of God to say that another, who gives up, lest he causes a fellow-believer to stumble, is animated by legalism, is **ENCROACHING ON CHRIST'S DECISION AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT**, and affectionately, yet firmly, we plead, "Beloved, stand back from this." Possibly a brother's wrongly judged motives are part of **LOVE**: if so, I should honour them. If he adds to Scripture and overrides others, it is well to warn, but if he personally gives up in application of the commands of Romans 14, we have here a grace which we all feel we manifest too little.*

But to return; we are exercised, are we not, as to the Scriptures and wine ? And the ready way in which many have remarked that unfermented wine is a contradiction in terms, and a scientific and historic impossibility, has something of the hasty generalizing of those whom, in mercy, we all sorrowfully disapprove. The writer feels that it is easier to SAY "unhistorical" and "unscientific" than to prove it. And the sad way in which we all MENTION "authorities" when they agree with us, and TEST them when they differ, is humbling. We all need more of the full **LOVE** of Him Who is the Truth. If these few lines bring beloved children of God to **LOVE** one another more, and to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," it will be well. "Generalizing" has often hindered spiritual drawing together. Well might the psalmist say, "I hate thoughts: but Thy law do I love." If we seek to do to other's arguments as we would that they should do to ours, it will be well. Many an one has been helped in error through

* These thoughts are, of deepest importance to prevent us from judging others by ourselves. The thoughtful and spiritually minded reader will realize that a right motive cannot make a wrong action right, but "giving up" **LEST** one cause to stumble is **NOT** a wrong action, unless it is giving up that which is commanded. The danger, lest Satan should foist on a wrong motive **AFTER**, is affectionately urged upon believers who are encouraged by this thought.

an off-hand dealing with the error. "Love suffereth long, and is kind": yet never compromises. Beloved friends, let that mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus, and we shall wound less with our tongues O that there may be grace poured over our lips, and not the poison of asps. We all need this exhortation.

But one turns to an authority beyond all others. The Lord Jesus has long ago decided in Luke 5. 36-39 that unfermented wine is to be called **WINE**, new wine.* Thus the **LANGUAGE** argument falls, and, not only so, but the theory that Easterns did not **KNOW** unfermented wine falls, by the same verse, and, remarkably, the objection that they could not keep it seems anticipated by **HIS** words, "**BOTH ARE PRESERVED.**"

And may we not go a step further ? Why does the Lord Jesus liken the unsaved to a **FERMENTED WINE SKIN** ? Why is the **EVIL** man the one who says, "The old is better" (agreeable) ? Why again is the word "fermented" used for the blood of **SINNERS** in Isaiah 63 ? And why is the type of Christ's blood always said to be the "fruit (product) of the vine," in which ferment is **NOT** ?

John 2 is often brought forward. If any think that our beloved Lord made an immense amount of intoxicating wine, we acknowledge a difficulty in the light of such inspired warnings as, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red" (Prov. 23. 31). But not only so, can we say that He manifested **HIS GLORY** in producing that which is in a **CHANGED** state, **PARALLEL** with sourness, and, in some respects, even putrefaction, which God never creates in the grapes, but which is the result of a foreign element which works in the dark, very **LIKE** to the leaven, which He has condemned in types ? This would seem a strange way of showing forth **HIS GLORY**, beloved friends.

I wonder if any dear children of God who differ have ever explained the uniform omission of the generic word "wine" from the Lord's Supper, and yet the **USUAL** inclusion of it when men speak. There are no mere **ACCIDENTS**. Reverence for God's inspiration must make one concerned. It is somewhat strange, too, that the Lord Jesus adds "When I drink it new with you." The word "it" is emphatic: nothing else can be substituted.†

Hence we affectionately urge that this is not only "a temperance question," it is of deepest importance as to the words of the Lord Jesus. If He made the new wine a picture of His gospel, and condemned the fermenting of it by the old ("washed") wine skin (of the reformed, yet unregenerate, heart),‡ we can no longer say that unfermented wine does not exist. The symbolism is **EXACTLY** parallel with that of the

* A leaflet on the teaching of this striking parable gladly sent.

† Has "New," though primarily it may suggest "anew," a further precious emphasis on unchanged fruit of the vine, in **SUCH** a context, from the lips of One Who never said an unnecessary word ?

The word "recent," elsewhere employed, for "new" is **NOT** used; is this because the fruit in **THAT** Day will depend on **HIS** work of long before ? **THIS** point is **NOT** given as a proof: but as food for one meditating.

‡ The last state is worse than the first: everything is rent. Mere reformation is to destruction. So with the washed sow of 2 Pet. 2. A new **CREATION** is needed.

woman leavening the fine meal of His doctrine. Many beloved children of God WERE unwilling to acknowledge this, but now many have been brought to own His teaching. May it be so in this similar parable also, unto His glory.

Returning once more, in closing, to John 2, we plead for an earnest stress on Christ's manifestation of HIS GLORY. Would this be by a large supply of that which He has so definitely used as a type of the ALTERATION of His gospel? It is rather remarkable that in His first recorded arrangement for food, and in the last Supper we have that which many have associated with intoxicating wine, in one case WITHOUT any evidence, and in the other WITH strong contrasted evidence. Why this error? We know Babylon's sadly OPPOSED cup, but let us realize CHRIST'S SIMPLE SYMBOLISM. The objection that this involves a Nazarite vow is quite unfounded, for the Nazarite refrained equally from the grape itself, and, secondly, it is not a vow. 'Tis a matter of humble concern for the inspired words, and a lowly desire to please our beloved Lord; and NOTHING BUT SCRIPTURE DISPROOF can touch this ground. Satanic travesties, by Gnosticism and Vegetarianism, if drawn in, can only serve the purpose the evil one seems to have in all such counterfeits, VIZ., to bring the Lord's will into disrepute. Actually there is NO similarity. We repeat earnestly, only the authority of our beloved Lord's Word, and loyalty to Him and to them, can decide for HIS learners. Thank God for the great multitude who, even though some, at present, differ, will own this, and will feel no bitterness to the writer for frankly expressing what is on his heart, but will lovingly ponder, with their ever opened Bible, seeking the application of truth by the Holy Spirit.

The Witness of the Holy Scriptures with regard to Mary, the privileged mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1. 22, 23, Isa. 7. 14.

"And when they were come into the house they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him."

Matthew 2. 11.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES are quite unique. They are a priceless gift to believing men and women. We have there God's OWN testimony, even the book which He has given. If one whom we love writes a letter to us we read it, and if any love God surely they will

* "If the Lord will," as a leaflet for prayerful use: also translations in French and Flemish. The writer has felt the need for some such leaflet, more especially through a little service abroad. Copies gladly sent.

read His Book. And as the law of a land is WRITTEN that it may be clear, so God in His love has caused His will to be written. But there is a great difference. God has given His teaching in simple language, and we are sometimes specially reminded in the Bible itself that the words are addressed to the ordinary people. How graciously has God used common words, and how great a mistake it is NOT to read what God has caused to be written. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, there was a MIRACLE. He Who was God took upon Him a human body, that He might be the Saviour of sinners by His precious blood. But He was not born as we were born. In accord with a prophecy, hundreds of years before, the power of God came upon His virgin-mother, and her privilege was a very great one. Many people imagine, quite wrongly, that those who take the name of "Catholics" are the only ones who think rightly of the mother of the Lord Jesus. But this is a great error. There are many, who desire no other name except "Christians," (for He is the only Saviour), who accept gladly EVERYTHING that the Scripture says regarding her. They rejoice that she was so favoured of God, and they delight in her own words:—

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me happy." Luke 1. 46-48.

Thus we see that she herself stated her need of a Saviour, and she NEVER claimed to save anyone herself. If we deny her need of a Saviour we make out that she did not tell the truth. Many actually do this without knowing it.

Remarkably, too, the SIN OFFERING which the law of Moses appointed for a mother, is expressly mentioned to have been offered for her, in Luke 2. 24 ("A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons"). "The one for the burnt offering and the other for a SIN OFFERING" is the comment which we must acknowledge from the very words of the Holy Spirit in Leviticus 12. 7, 8, where we find the mention of "atonement" and "cleansing." Thus she is shown to have confessed HER need of these.

The mother of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned about twenty times BY NAME in the Holy Scriptures, but she is also referred to otherwise, and all the descriptions used are helpful. She is called—"the virgin" (Isaiah 7. 14), "My mother" (Psalm 22. 9; 69. 8; Isaiah 49. 1),* "His mother" (Matthew 1. 18), "the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1. 14), "the handmaiden of the Lord" (Luke 1. 38, her own description), "Mary" (Luke 1. 30), "One who has been blessed" (Luke 1. 42), and in Luke 1. 45 she is declared to be HAPPY because she believed. May many a dear reader have the SAME happiness, by God's grace. What a privilege to believe the Words of God. It is important, moreover, to see how she is NOT described in the Holy Scriptures. And at once we notice that she is not called "the mother of mercy" or "the fountain of blessing," but, in contrast, a receiver of blessing. Names which are often applied to her, such as "our Life,"

* Christ speaks prophetically.

"our Hope," "My Refuge," "the Peacemaker of sinners with God" find NO example in God's book. Such names ARE given to the Lord Jesus Christ and none other. There must be a reason for this. Christ was certainly GOD, yet SHE IS NOT CALLED "THE MOTHER OF GOD," but "THE MOTHER OF JESUS," for He WAS God before He was born. Should we not keep to the names which are found in Scripture, since that is God's testimony? Search and see, dear reader; do not let anyone or anything keep you from GOD'S OWN BOOK.* From the Scripture we find that a title NOW commonly given to "the mother of Jesus" was a HEATHEN name, belonging rather to an idol. I refer [to] the name, "Queen of Heaven." Jeremiah 44. 17 is clear as to this. Is it not dishonouring to the mother of the Lord Jesus to take this name, and use it for her? Is it not necessary to keep to the Scriptures? Everything else is MAN'S will instead of God's will.

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Saviour, so He is the ONE MEDIATOR (1 Tim. 2. 5). And He lives to make intercession for His people (Heb. 7. 25). This is NEVER said of Mary. No one can take HIS place. He is Unique. Search and see, for you will not find in the Holy Scriptures anywhere that Mary is a mediator or intercessor. She is now resting, as other believers who have died, in God's loving care, but that is all. In this matter let the Book of GOD be decisive. The Holy Spirit never contradicts His own teaching. Mary would not wish us to claim for her that which is not claimed in the Book of truth. The inspired warning is definite,—“Add not thou unto HIS WORDS lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30. 6).

If we try to honour anyone in the wrong way, we do wrong. Have you ever heard a remarkable Bible story of Peter the apostle? He was sent by God to a man called Cornelius. “As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped. But Peter took him up saying, Stand up; I MYSELF ALSO AM A MAN” (Acts 10. 25, 27). Observe the reason, “I AM A MAN.” He was a holy man, but on THAT account he refused this honour. And Mary was a holy woman, and on this very account would have refused in the same way. Ought we not to remember this? We have already seen how she spoke of God her Saviour, and never said one word to suggest that she could help to save. Two remarkable narratives concerning the words of the Lord Jesus to her are before us. Have you heard of them? In the first, after she had mentioned her ignorance as to where He was, on one occasion, He replied, “How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about MY Father's business” (Luke 1. 49), and we read, “His mother kept all these sayings in her heart” (Luke 1. 51). Her attitude was right. Should not those who really love God do this also? SHE delighted in His sayings; will not YOU read His precious sayings in the Holy Scriptures? Do not remain without that priceless Book.

* A copy of the New Testament will be gladly sent freely to Roman Catholics who ask, that they may read what God has caused to be written. And, after reading, questions will be welcomed.

Another narrative is found in the gospel according to John. In the second chapter the Lord Jesus is seen at a simple marriage in Cana of Galilee. Sufficient supply for the guests has not been provided, and His mother tells Him. His reply is, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come” (John 2. 4). There was nothing inappropriate in the word “woman” then, but the ANSWER shows Christ's wisdom beyond the wisdom of even a holy woman. Is Mary offended? No, on the contrary, she says to the servants, “WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU, DO.” Let us hear these words. There are many who speak much about the virgin-mother of the Lord Jesus, yet do not listen to HIS voice. But she rightly directed ALL TO HIM. So John the Baptist, among the greatest men before God, as Christ said, did not say anything to exalt himself, but made clear he was not worthy even to unloose the latchet of Christ's shoe (John 1. 27). All who have become holy servants of God confess their own sin, and SHOW CHRIST'S GLORY. And if we agree with these beautiful words of His mother we listen to whatever HE says.

And what does He say? Ah, dear reader, this is all-important. He speaks plainly of the sins of men, and shows their need for salvation. And it is that God may be glorified in the salvation of souls that these pages are sent forth. The Lord Jesus Christ said that He came to seek and to save that which was LOST (Luke 19. 10), and to give His life a Ransom for many (Matthew 20. 28). The power of His precious blood to save the guilty is set forth so clearly in the Holy Scriptures. NO holy servant of God claimed to save. Christ alone is the Saviour. As the Holy Spirit says, He has made “one Sacrifice for sins for ever” (Hebrews 10. 12); and if I, as a poor guilty sinner, rest on this finished work, I have “PEACE with GOD” (Romans 5. 1). Is it not wonderful? And therefore God shows that His children may EVEN NOW have the knowledge of eternal life (1 John 5. 13), and live to please Him.

Possibly you have thought it impossible for such as you are to have this joy of the FORGIVENESS of sins, but THAT is freely given in Christ, as it is written, “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1. 7). It may be, you have regarded the high favour vouchsafed to such as Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus, and to Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, as too high for you. BUT IT IS NOT SO. Any poor, trembling, heart-broken sinner who comes to God by the BLOOD of the Lord Jesus, is BLESSED with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” and graced in the Beloved One (the VERY two words used of the mother of the Lord Jesus in Luke 1. 28, 42 are applied to all humble believers by the Holy Spirit Himself in Ephesians 1. 3 and 6. It is wonderful). And Peter the apostle, (built on the ROCK-FOUNDATION Christ), named a stone, by Christ Himself, speaks to lowly children of God in EXACTLY THE SAME WAY, “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2. 5). So that a sinner, saved by grace TO-DAY, can enter into the VERY words of joy that the favoured virgin used when

she exclaimed:—"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God MY SAVIOUR,
 For He hath regarded THE LOW ESTATE OF HIS HANDMAIDEN;
 For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Dear reader, is this YOUR rejoicing, or is it not? Have YOU the precious Saviour she NEEDED and FOUND, or have you NOT?

If the Lord will, as a Leaflet. Copies gladly sent. Also "Hail, Thou That Art Highly Favoured." "Christ Or Mary?" "A Solemn Question Addressed to a Romanist."

HEART SEARCHING.

HAVE we sought to see ourselves in the light of the Lord? How SMALL our devotion seems. How MUCH dross is mixed with gold. How little DEEP love there is. I wonder if we can quietly test ourselves, when free from merely emotional excitement or "hymn promises," that overestimate our love. For instance, if we had the alternatives of (a) a life of physical pain and blessing to ONE SOUL MORE, or (b) the absence of the physical pain, and the loss of this blessing, how many of us would readily choose the pain FOR HIS SAKE? Naturally we should not SAY "NO" out-right, but our hearts would so fervently wish for a THIRD alternative, or hope for some escape. If we realize what PAIN IS, we still shrink from this, even when it means spiritual profit to ANOTHER. Or, again, if we had the alternative of (a) heavy bodily trials or (b) lack of spiritual discipline, should we readily respond and be thrilled with the thought, "Thank God for the trial, if it brings me to please my Lord more."—or would there be a feeling, "I wish I could be brought to spiritual growth in some other simpler way?" A complaining spirit is commoner than we think: an undercurrent of regret is often displeasing to Him. O for grace to be concerned, that He may be exalted. Before we are aware of it, we value the physical more than the spiritual. A prison dungeon for Christ, with the agonies of old-times saints, is not an enjoyable prospect. Should we welcome it, IF IT MEANT GLORY TO HIM? True no chastisement is IN ITSELF joyous (Heb. 12. 11), but the question comes, "Is not this linked with the 'seeming,' and should we view it in itself, or with the JOY set before us, associated with Himself?"

Resignation as to trials is QUITE different from gratitude. God calls us to JOYFULNESS in our suffering for His sake, however painful (Matt. 5. 12). The underlying thought is that we value His honour more than our own feelings, not only "theologically" as a theory, but practically as an experience. May our hearts respond, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to His lovingly revealed will.

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