

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1. 13.

A Word of Introduction.

CONSCIOUS that God has given to us all things in, and with, the Lord Jesus Christ, we dare not be silent as to His love. Nor can we rightly compromise as to His will. If it is possible to obtain open doors at the price of the pledged silence as to His commandments (e.g. baptism, separation from worldliness and politics, the Lord's Supper) can we rightly seek or enter them? If there are meetings and conventions, where the unity is only possible so long as there is silence as to much of His revealed will, is not much that He has appointed for His people put on one side? Do any readers desire us to please men by an unwillingness to set forth what we feel to be "the whole counsel of God"? If there are sad differences among those who bear the one precious Name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 1. 10), and who are indwelt by the Same Holy Spirit, should we not be humbled, and diligently pray for their removal, that we may not form societies and plans of our own, to cover this departure from His will, but rather, in love and lowliness, seek to go back to the path, and gathering which He has appointed?

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Love—Gave.

"GOD so LOVED the world that He GAVE His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3. 16.

"Christ hath LOVED us and hath GIVEN Himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Ephesians 5. 2.

2 THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE.

"Christ . . LOVED the Church, and GAVE Himself for it." Ephesians 5. 25. (Note John 13. 1 with Luke 22. 19).

"The Son of God . . LOVED me and GAVE Himself for me." Galatians 2. 20.

"God, even our Father, Which hath LOVED us and hath GIVEN us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." 2 Thessalonians 2. 16.

"I have LOVED thee: therefore will I GIVE men for thee, and people for thy life." Isaiah 43. 4.

"But unto Hannah he GAVE a worthy portion; for he LOVED Hannah." 1 Samuel 1. 5.

"And Jonathan LOVED him as his own soul . . and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and GAVE it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle." 1 Samuel 18. 1-4.

"But I say unto you . . GIVE . . LOVE your enemies." Matthew 5. 38-44.

A further response—"God LOVETH a cheerful GIVER." 2 Corinthians 9. 7.

Healing—What for?

"I SHOULD like to be healed, or, at least, like to feel better." How often has a child of God thought this, and possibly prayed, (surely we all have), for our Father's healing hand. This "body of our humiliation" has given us painful reminders of its weakness, and we have sighed.

But then the question has come, "Healing, what for?" Is it that we may glorify God more, or is our own comfort the first thought? Is it that we may render all unto God, or that we may please ourselves. I have found myself praying that I might have certain physical encouragement, because I could thereby do what I wanted to do, and sometimes our Father lovingly withholds that we may not lose the lessons which He has wrapped up in precious trials.

Only when we have the single eye, and a godly motive, can we pray aright. I call to mind the man who justified his sweep-stake ticket because of "the hospital." I suggested that if he gained (if one dare call it "gain"), in this sad pleasure of a pleasure-sick world, he would, of course, give ALL to the hospital, or something on this line. His workmates' incredulous smile impressed me. But what if I profess to desire health for God's glory, and use it for myself? James 4. 3 is very searching. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Ah, dear fellow believers, it is good to ask, but let us seek God's testing of our motives at all times. Even Hezekiah rendered not again for the benefit (2 Chron. 32. 25). Is it not possible that we have made similar omissions. I do not mean that we are to bargain, or to suggest conditions (Gen. 28. 20-22), but it is well to pray from the heart, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my

thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139. 24). What "way" is in me? The word means more than "actions" (Ps. 103. 7). I may be right in my actions, and yet have a wicked way of self pleasing. O that it may not be so. "Healing" is in God's hands, and we rejoice in this. Everything else, too, belongs to His loving care and wisdom. Whatever we seek from Him, let us be honest and frank before Him, and only seek what we would lovingly use for Him.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

This present unveiling of the wondrous fulness of blessing, through the work of the Lord Jesus, needs continual emphasis. Life and incorruption are now brought to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10), and the righteousness of God is now manifested (Rom. 3. 21). The old-time saints were "sheep," even as the Lord's people to-day; but a new experience is now granted. Galatians 4 explains this very clearly. The infant is in the *family*, but he does not realize "sonship." All attempts to divide the people of God are distressing. All the redeemed are united by the work of Christ (Eph. 1. 10). But many things were not revealed before (Matt. 13. 16, 17). How grateful should we be for our present privileges as well as our prospect. The type of baptism, (in contrast with that of circumcision under the law), sets forth the new creation. In like manner the law is written on the heart in the new covenant (2 Cor. 3. 3): the appointed type in the old covenant was with regard to tables of stone,—internal for the Ark alone. Another very remarkable foreshadowing is provided in the Cities of Refuge. The general outline of grace there, and the intense call to the troubled sinner to "flee," because of the reality of wrath, and of the avenger of blood, are ever deeply important in gospel testimony. But we observe a TWO-FOLD deliverance in that wondrous type. The cities gave a certain restraint, as the very word "refuge" signifies. They delivered, and the man was safe, but he must abide therein "unto the death of the high priest which was anointed with the holy oil" (Num. 35. 25). He dare not claim his "possession" till after that death (Num. 35. 28, 32). Afterwards he was entitled to have all, and "his own house" is specially mentioned (Jos. 20. 6). There we see that the old-time saints were preserved with a view to the work that would put away their sins,* but they could not realize the possession

* A leaflet on Romans 3. 25 may help. The Holy Spirit's unveiling of truth is ever in harmony, and this fact is a witness against error, and an evidence of full and verbal inspiration. It has well been said that none who study the types are "Higher Critics," and herein is a striking condemnation of their "criticism." A dispensational parallel with John 10 may also be found with regard to the veil. The priests were in the family before the veil was rent, but they could not have "access" nor realize the glory of God's presence.

belonging to the heir, in accord with the Spirit of sonship. But now, through the death of our adorable Lord, all who are "in Him" are encouraged to enjoy His fulness:—"All things are yours" (1 Cor. 3. 21). So long as the man was in the city of refuge (see Num. 35. 26, 27), there was a conscience of sin (i.e., a legal consciousness); but now believers have boldness to enter into the holiest (Heb. 10. 19, 20, see verse 2). What manner of persons ought we to be! The leading out from the "fold" in John 10 gives the same thought. After that we find the words of freedom, not licence,—“ Shall go in and out, and find pasture ” (cf. Gal. 5. 13).

The one true Shepherd of the sheep in John 10. 2 is clearly the Lord Jesus. Observe His uniqueness. The sheep belonged to Him alone. The porter did not claim them. John rightly said, "He That hath the bride is the Bridegroom" (John 3. 29). All the favoured nation should have recognized the Sent One, but the gospel makes us acquainted with *two* distinct interpretations of "His own" (John 1. 11, 13. 1). The saddening condition of the nation generally could not alter God's purpose. Hence the heart-searching declaration "Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot *hear* My word: ye are of your father the devil" (John 8. 43, 44). And again, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you" (John 10. 26). There is no universalism here. The true sheep heard Him aright: every one of them, as we have seen, was personally called. It is so still (2 Tim. 1. 9). Though we were not found in the fold of Judaism, and though the circumstances to-day seem somewhat distinct, the same principle ever stands. There must be a personal relationship to a personal Saviour. He Himself, and not a religious organization, must be the One to Whom we are gathered. Christendom has blurred the typical teaching, and introduced the theory of a "fold," and often exalted an "ism," instead of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We shall frequently find (as Galatians 4 and Colossians 2 alike indicate) that the human heart craves to introduce "the strengthless and poor rudiments" (Gal. 4. 9), as a substitute for the "fulness" in Him, in Whom are all "riches," and Who is the "Power" of God. This is illustrated by man's stress on "it" and on "a religion." Something "seen" is sought, with elaborate buildings and ceremonies of the flesh, instead of a simple walk by faith, the faith of the Son of God (Gal. 2. 20), Who "goeth before," even our Forerunner (Gal. 2. 20, Heb. 6. 20). Possibly some may think this is explained at too great length, but it is of the deepest importance, not only affecting our appointed dispensational position, but setting forth the purged conscience of a believer, and the heavenly calling, with all the definite separation from the world embraced therein. Ah, beloved reader, how is it with you? Is it that "He goeth before"? His last words in the same gospel, repeated in gracious emphasis, are "Follow thou ME" (John 21. 19, 22).

The sheep are said to follow the Shepherd BECAUSE "they know His voice." The voice includes the word, but also the tone. One may be a "student of theology," and a preacher, with considerable ability, and yet not "hear His voice." Not only is this "hearing" at the commencement of the Christian life. We have seen it as the continued characteristic, and the crown. The substitution of other human ideas, obscuring this Divine standpoint, must ever hinder the witness which God's dear children should be unitedly in the world. "Profession" is easy. "Church-membership," and activity in religious societies, may be a natural inclination. The test, as in John 14. 21-24, is still a spiritual attitude to the words and will of Him Who bought us. When one finds a disregard, for example, of His own words as to baptism, and the lame excuse that baptism is "not necessary to salvation," and the unwillingness to talk over these things, or to allow such ministry in conventions, lest there be controversy, and a hindrance of "the unity," we come to realize how far those who bear the Name of the Lord Jesus have often gone from His standpoint as to unity, and how loud is the call for revival and for simple willingness to hear His voice. The bewildered sheep of to-day are bewildered through those who ought to represent Him. But we are anticipating the second parable. However, as a new "Christendom fold" has been made, there is the need for an undelayed and godly coming out from the organizations of men, that we may reach the true position our loving Lord has appointed. Hence such exhortations may not be in vain, if affectionately repeated, and personally applied by the Holy Spirit.

(1) the Lord will, to be continued

"One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father"

Matthew 10. 29.

MEN are too busy to attend to little things when they have larger responsibilities. It is not so with God. We know the physical impossibility, moreover, for any man to attend to a number of separate items at once. We cannot be in two places at the same time. How utterly different is it with our God. He has no limitations. It is delightful to feel that nothing is by chance; nothing happens without God's permission. "These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season" (Ps. 104. 27). A harvest never fails by an accident. God speaks in everything. Do we hear? How restful this makes a child of God. Yet his heart is searched. And what a blow to carnal reasoning it is, when the flesh says, "God would not do this or that." Two sparrows were "sold for a farthing." They were so little esteemed among men, and on this account five were given for two farthings (Luke 12. 6)—the seller could afford to "throw one in." But the "half-farthing" sparrow, yea, the odd sparrow also, was

remembered before God. If it fell to the ground, it was God Who permitted it. How definitely this challenges, and checks, and silences our fear! "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" (Isa. 40. 27). God is deeply interested in His people. There is a "needs be" for every trial. So long as it was necessary for Paul to live, he was preserved (Phil. 1. 24-25). This does not lead us to carelessness: it is for us to occupy the passing time in obedience to God's revealed will, but such words do comfort when we have trials through the falling asleep of dear fellow believers.

"Without YOUR Father." The sparrows are God's CREATION, and He cares for them. But we do not read "their Father." It is "your Father." The same precious argument is found in Matthew 6. 26, and it strengthens our childlike confidence. God's love to usward is more intimate. If He shows such interest in those who are not His children, but only His creation, how great will be His care for those whom He has made His own family, by the blood of His beloved Son!

Love and Hatred.

"THOU LOVEST righteousness, and HATEST wickedness."

Psalm 45. 7, cf. Hebrews 1. 9.

"Ye that LOVE the Lord, HATE evil." Psalm 97. 10.

"I HATE vain thoughts: but Thy law do I LOVE." Psalm 119. 113.

"I HATE and abhor lying: but Thy law do I LOVE." Psalm 119. 163.

"HATE the evil, and LOVE the good." Amos 5. 15, contrast Micah 3. 2.

"LOVE no false oath: for all these are things that I HATE, saith the Lord. . . Therefore, LOVE the truth and peace." Zechariah 8. 17, 19.

"All they that HATE Me LOVE death." Proverbs 8. 36.

"Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and LOVE them that HATE the Lord?" 2 Chronicles 19. 2.

"Ye shall be HATED of all nations for My Name's sake . . . and because iniquity shall abound, the LOVE of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24. 9-12.

"He that LOVETH his life shall lose it; and he that HATETH his life, in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12. 25.

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world HATE you: we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we LOVE the brethren." 1 John 3. 13, 14.

"If a man say, I LOVE God, and HATETH his brother, he is a liar." 1 John 4. 20.

"Thou hast left thy first LOVE . . . But this thou hast, that thou HATEST the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Revelation 2. 4, 6.

"Contrary to Sound Doctrine"

1 Timothy 1. 10.

MANY fail to realize how definitely all God's truth is **one**. We never find the plural word "doctrines," except for evil. And, in like manner, doctrine and practice are constantly united. Hence the sins enumerated in 1 Timothy 1. 9, 10 conclude with the description "any other thing contrary to the healthy **doctrine**." This expression is very beautiful. God's doctrine is "healthy" food, and, rightly received, leads to godly practice. Accordingly we read, "Speak thou the things which become sound **DOCTRINE**," and at once we have references to godly **CHARACTER**. Again, "The **grace** of God . . . hath appeared . . . **teaching** us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY**" (Tit. 2. 1, 11, 12). It must be ever so. Grace never leads to licence, but ever to loving obedience. Doctrine and practice are hand in hand. Those who urge a catch-phrase, "Deeds, not creeds" misunderstand both and miss God's teaching. Obviously a verbal "creed" is valueless but, when there is a true and living faith, there will be a corresponding walk, for "faith worketh by love." And if there is no root, and no living faith within, the life cannot be godly and fruitful. The goodness of the grass may seem attractive, but nothing is permanent from the flesh, nothing abides without real faith in God and His holy words.

The attempt of the enemy to separate doctrine and practice, aims at a two-fold victory for his evil cause. He delights if any seem to hold truth without godly love, i.e., if they have the knowledge which puffs up (1 Cor. 8. 1) or the orthodoxy that is merely mental. True faith is quite different (Tit. 1. 1) and God uses His **WORDS** to keep us from sin in **ACTIONS** (Ps. 119. 11). Hence when sound doctrine is set on one side, there will be all-round failure. When sound, or healthy, doctrine is rightly received as the food, there will be a loving concern to grow up into Christ in **ALL THINGS** (Eph. 4. 15), and such growth should be our prayerful wish. This thought should be ever before us, since the Holy Spirit has ever emphasized it in Scripture, and, in this sense also, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19. 6). Sound practice is doctrine illustrated and lived out. For example, the turning of "the other cheek" is the gentle pictorial representation of the fact that there must be retribution, but for us it fell on the **ONE AGAINST WHOM WE HAD SINNED** (Matt. 5. 38, 39).^{*} Yet more quickly will this be seen in Matthew 18. 32, 35—"I forgave thee all that debt . . . shouldst not thou **ALSO**?" (cf. Eph. 5. 2). In like manner, the relationship of husband and wife in the home is meant to be a wondrous living picture (of the right kind) of "Christ and the Church." But is it always so? Not when "sound

^{*}A leaflet is available.

doctrine" is denied or ignored. Our homes need an awakening. This holy link is not strange. It is to be expected. For example, a realization of the majesty of God prevents lightness, consciousness of the grace of God should make us gracious, a deep inner feeling of His love should make us loving (1 John 4. 19). Our godliness is a RESPONSE, our experience is through beholding and reflecting our Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18). The application of truth in exhortation is seen clearly in 2 Peter 3. 11, 14, "What manner of persons ought ye to be." In accord with this, the "work of faith" and "labour of love" are together in 1 Thessalonians 1. 3, and where the faith grew exceedingly the love abounded (2 Thess. 1. 3). When, on the other hand, a good conscience was put aside there was shipwreck concerning the faith (1 Tim. 1. 20), albeit God's grace provided a precious, but painful, salvage (verse 21). As, by His mercy, our hearts realize this more and more, we shall see that we cannot be too careful as to what we hear, and how, and as to what we believe, and "hold"; that, in the gracious ministry and leading of the Holy Spirit, our life may have much fruit.

Love—Keep.

"THOUSANDS of them that LOVE Me, and KEEP My commandments." Exodus 20. 6, Deuteronomy 5. 10 (Neh. 1. 5).

"The Faithful God Which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that LOVE Him and KEEP His commandments to a thousand generations." Deuteronomy 7. 9.

"Thou shalt therefore LOVE the Lord thy God, and KEEP His charge." Deuteronomy 11. 1.

"Take diligent heed to do the commandment . . . to LOVE the LORD your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to KEEP His commandments." Joshua 22. 5.

"Keeping the covenant and mercy to them that LOVE Him, and to them that KEEP His commandments." Daniel 9. 4.

"If ye LOVE Me, KEEP My commandments." John 14. 15.

"He that hath My commandments and KEEPETH them, he it is that LOVETH Me." John 14. 21.

"If a man LOVE Me he will KEEP My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." John 14. 23.

"He that LOVETH Me not KEEPETH not My sayings." John 14. 24.

"By this we know that we LOVE the children of God when we LOVE God, and KEEP His commandments." 1 John 5. 2.

We cannot be too thankful, too obedient, too loving, or too humble before God.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain: but I laboured."

"Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15. 10, 58.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

HOW wondrous is grace, and grace always leads to obedience. "I laboured," writes the apostle. We call to mind the words "The grace of God . . . hath appeared teaching us" (Tit. 2. 11, 12), and again, "Faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5. 6). It is our humble desire that such words may be realized, by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and those of God's dear children who read. Hence this magazine is not intended merely to inform the brain, but to help the heart, that those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (wondrous privilege!) may own Him as Lord of the whole life, and grow up into Him in all things (Eph. 4. 15). Is this our desire, or have we any other wish?

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No Contact.

THERE was no doubt as to the supply of electric current. Other lamps were shining brightly, very brightly. Some, it is true, were brighter than others, because of their capacity to receive more. One or two were giving a very poor light, through a layer of dust outside, that ought to have been removed. But one remained quite dark. What was the matter? If the fault was not in the generator, if there was nothing wrong with the current, where could the defect be found? An examination was made, to discover the root of the trouble, for something spoilt everything. And the lamp was one of the

largest. It had capacity for 200 candle power, and yet it did not give the light of a single candle. There was, doubtless, a hidden cause, real though hidden. Something was wrong with the lamp itself, or with its contact. And though the lamp was beautifully made, (no fault could be found in this respect), the utter failure was located, at last, in a tiny "detail,"—a very small "distance" was found, so that there was NO CONTACT. The current was waiting, but the current was not received, and the bulb could do nothing of itself.

Dear reader, is the lesson hard to perceive? You and I, if we are children of God, have been beautifully made, yea, created (2 Cor. 5: 17). There is no defect in God's work. But we have been made with a purpose—to receive continually from our Lord. God does not intend that we should be dependent on ourselves, or on one another, but dependent on Himself (2 Cor. 3: 5). And the Holy Spirit's current of gracious power applying the work of our Lord Jesus, is meant to be seen in our life. But if we are out of touch with our Lord, our testimony is lost, and our daily life is empty. The purpose for which we have been created is temporarily without any fruit. And, instead of helping others, we need time to be spent on ourselves, in order to find out what is wrong. And the distance apart may seem so small, "almost negligible" from a human standpoint. But real living contact with a live wire is absolutely necessary for the bulb, and living contact with our living Lord is absolutely necessary for us, if there is to be the light of testimony, in our life, and glory to His Name. O that we may not only perceive this lesson, but have the experience of "contact" at all times. How blessed to be in fellowship with Him, and without the gap, without the hindrance in-between. How blessed to be "receivers" of His power (John 1: 14) that His light may shine out through those whom He has so graciously redeemed with His own precious blood (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

(A brother, who is an electrician, to whom I submitted this for any correction, &c., helpfully wrote—"The thoughts in the mind of one who attends a fault are two main ones. NON-CONTACT, and breakdown of insulation or EARTH CONNECTION. With a lamp, of course the lamp itself. It is a subject that lends itself to much helpful teaching. I think I should always include the following references—Acts 1: 8, John 15: 5 last clause, Matthew 5: 16." O how much is suggested by the "breakdown of insulation." O that we may be separated unto the Lord. In a further note he added:—"To be more exact, the breakdown of the *Insulation Resistance* usually results in an 'earth' developing. This may be gradual, and unperceived in some cases over a period of years and then suddenly the breakdown! Yes, we need to pray for one another").

"THE HOUR." A BIBLE STUDY FOR THOUGHTFUL BELIEVERS.¹

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I ALSO WILL KEEP THEE FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Revelation 3: 10, 11).

INTRODUCTION.

MANY beloved children of God appear to be in some confusion as to the prophetic Scriptures, through a common and erroneous assumption as to "THE HOUR." Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit has graciously given these Scriptures to be a lamp in a dark place (2 Pet. 1: 19), it is deeply important that all opinions which will not abide the test of "Scripture prayerfully compared with Scripture" should be repentantly put aside by us all, and important also that we should encourage and assist one another, with graciousness of manner,² and so much the more as we see the Day approaching (Heb. 10: 25). There is no warrant for carelessness as to "one another," and no room for wrangling, but much room for love and mutual help.

Not a few infer from Revelation 3: 10 that saints of the present dispensation will escape the "tribulation," (regarding this as "the hour"), and many who see this mistake seek to show that to "keep out of the hour" signifies a coming out after passing through it.³ May not both be unconsciously at fault? But do not both companies desire whatever is Scripturally set forth, and oneness of mind?

Scripture gives no evidence for identifying the 1260 days of tribulation and "the hour." The latter is a very brief period—

- (a) AFTER the tribulation.
- (b) AFTER the Coming of Christ for His people.
- (c) BEFORE the linked Descent of Christ with His people.

¹ By God's grace published some years ago, and now enlarged. The Lord was pleased to use these notes then: may He be pleased to use them more now, to encourage intelligent and intense longing for "that Blessed Hope."

² Unwillingness to ponder, with prayer, and the tendency to attack hastily, or despise a brother as soon as he suggests anything contrary to usual interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures, cannot be viewed as the fruit of the Spirit, but of the flesh.

³ To take out and keep out are quite distinct. The former is illustrated by Col. 2: 14, the latter by Acts 15: 29. 2 John 1: 27 and 2 Timothy 4: 17 will also help. Both are found in John 17: 15, "I ask not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world (in which they were), but that Thou shouldest keep them out of the evil" (in which they were not, see 1 John 5: 19).

(d) **DURING** which the vials, or seven **LAST** plagues full of **WRATH**, are **QUICKLY** poured out.

Let the writer frankly say that he sees a heavenly people (not appointed to wrath, 1 Thess. 5. 9), and separated from Judaism, in "the saints of *the high places*" (Dan. 7. 22, 25), and in the Lord's "elect" of Matthew 24,⁴ and therefore accepts the promises of Matthew 24. 29-31⁵ as now applicable, with regard to believers who are in the body of Christ, passing through the tribulation, though *spiritual* faith leaps over intervening events, and *no* believer is entitled to expect he will die, unless this is specially revealed to him (John 21. 18, 2 Tim. 4. 6, cf. "*We* which are alive," 1 Thess. 4. 15). This attitude of spiritual expectation, and preparation cannot be over-emphasized.

But we would be equally definite as to the believer's sure and certain hope of *entire* preservation from "the hour of the testing," in which the five foolish virgins will be found wanting. When the final events are "beginning to come to pass" (Luke 21. 28) it will be granted unto saints to be caught up to meet their Lord in the air. *This* is, indeed, "that Blessed Hope," and it should have a *daily* effect, in an unworldly life, marked by loving our Lord's Appearing (2 Tim. 4. 8).

The reader is entitled to the evidence for the above statements as to "the hour" succeeding the tribulation. And we only desire his (or her) prayerful perusal, with Scripture, seeking the unbiased mind which glorifies God. That God has a perfect right to use words sovereignly, *just as He pleases*, we would readily acknowledge, but He has deigned to make many things clear by a wondrously *manifest* consistency of meaning, and therefore several occurrences of the word "hour" will quickly render much help to the thoughtful reader in this connexion.

CHAPTER 1.

THE HOUR IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The Revelation has, possibly, been often read. If not, it would be well to read it again before going any further. That final message from our adorable Lord contains, compar-

⁴ Verse 20 may be worded to suggest this. "**Your** flight" implies **willingness** to flee, and actual fleeing, if need be, on the Sabbath, i.e. the hindrance is viewed as from without, (not personal conscience), which is precisely the hindrance the Lord's believing ones would experience in a Jewish land, stirred to orthodoxy by Anti-christ's then recent demands.

⁵ "The Tribulation Distinguished from the Wrath of God" may help. How many unguarded and unkind words 'as to those who are wrongly said to obscure the heavenly calling, because they see a heavenly people in the tribulation, would have been never said, had dear fellow believers sought Scripture for their beliefs instead of repeating from one another. The Holy Spirit makes the thought of wrath quite distinct.

ably with the book of Daniel, several **PARALLEL** sections and visions. It is not possible to interpret, for example, 8. 3 as historically after 6. 17, nor 13. 2 as chronologically after 11. 15, without doing violence to other Scriptures. Most realize that Daniel 7 goes over the same ground as Daniel 2. And thus is it here. Each section leads up to the goal, the Coming, and Kingdom, and Glory of the Lord. And various somewhat parallel visions, from different standpoints, help to elucidate one another, and to enlarge our view. If we find that these sections have alike a climax in connexion with "the hour," this will be a definite aid both in understanding the whole book, and the meaning of "the hour" itself.

The *first* section concerns the seven churches, it is introductory, and contains letters to warn and encourage. But even here the climax is definitely associated with the hour, as chapter 3, verses 3 and 10 show. To be received unto the Lord before the 'hour begins is a very clear and precious promise.⁶ These passages may hint that the hour begins with the Coming of Christ as in Matthew 24. 42-44.

The *second* section is from 4. 1 and ends in 8. 1, not 7. 17. The chapter-division is human, and unsatisfactory, for the prayers of saints, and the events of the trumpets cannot be placed after 6. 17.⁷ Hence the *seventh*, or final, seal finishes with a reference to an HOUR, during half of which there is silence. But the **TRIBULATION** of the *fifth* seal evidently finishes with the *sixth* (ch. 6. 9-17). May we not say that at least the half of some striking "hour" is here before us as subsequent to the tribulation? And this is evidently the climax again.

⁶ The two "angels," or representatives in Smyrna and Philadelphia, are often rightly compared and contrasted. Note ch. 2. 10 with its ten days' tribulation, and **death**, as the opposite of 3. 10.

⁷ We do not adduce fuller evidence here: if any are uncertain, a special leaflet on this subject is readily at their disposal.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

"But a stranger will they in no wise follow; on the contrary, they will flee from him" (5). The word "stranger" denotes "belonging to another," and is found in Matthew 17. 25, 26, Acts 7. 6, Hebrews 9. 25, 11. 9, 34. Those who belong to the Shepherd CAN humbly speak in His Name to the sheep, when in harmony with Him. How important to catch His tone, and to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4. 11). John 10. 5 has often impressed my heart. I have looked around, and "wondered." Why are so many children of God held awlile in many distressing errors? The promise of God cannot be broken. The thought has come, "This passage will be fulfilled finally: they **SHALL** be brought back." This is true,

thanks be unto God (2 Pet. 3. 9). But my heart has been brought to realize that though the same characteristic should NEVER be found among beloved children of God, this statement is in the FIRST PARABLE, and has graciously received a precious fulfilment. The SECOND parable deals primarily with the present time when our Lord is in the glory ever interceding that all His own may be eternally kept in salvation (Heb. 7. 25), but the MINISTRY for the sheep is largely entrusted to His servants, the pastors of the sheep in Ephesians 4. 11-13 (cf. 1 Pet. 5. 1-4), and these have not always represented Him aright. They have sometimes MISrepresented His words, and His voice, and, as we shall see, the hireling has come in among them, and the scattering of John 10. 12 is the sad result.

But the holy principle of the first parable remains, and SHOULD be illustrated, and any contrast is a call to humbling. It is for us to ask ourselves personally, "Do I hear His voice? Do I refuse to follow strangers? Do I FLEE from them?" What holy horror of evil doctrine, and association there should be. The intensity of fleeing for refuge (Heb. 6. 18) should be followed by the fleeing from strangers. And each one who seeks to minister to the sheep should ask himself, "Is my ministry 'belonging to Him,' and do I faithfully hear the word at His mouth, and keep to His word and His tone? Am I a shepherd of His appointment, simply exalting the Chief Shepherd, or am I, in any measure, a hireling?" There is no passage of Scripture which is not heart-searching.

And so the last sentence of the parable emphasizes again, albeit negatively, the same thought, "For they know not the voice of strangers." These priceless words, first fulfilled when the Lord first brought His own out from Judaism, are ever to be before our hearts. We should experience a holy discernment, as with Israel's priests; and, to enjoy this, so much depends on our spiritual food, and abstaining from "attractive" error, that which would please the flesh (cf. Lev. 10. 9, 10). The discernment of 1 John 2. 27 is all-important and associated with a godly walk and a godly growth (Heb. 5. 12-14). This is possible in the Holy Spirit by Whom we are anointed (2 Cor. 1. 21, 22), and if His "leading" is not thus recognized—and "leading" is not a matter of impulses, or a claim "I was led to do this," but a whole-hearted willingness for the will of God, and a perception of that which belongs to our Lord Jesus (John 16. 14, 15)—if His leading of the humble believer is not desired, then is He not grieved (Eph. 4. 30)?

Sorrowfully we should read verse 6. "They understood not." Ignorance of these "things" was the fruit of ignorance of Him. "They knew Him not" (Acts 13. 27). And is there not the same ignorance to-day? But He did not leave them, "He still taught the people knowledge" and He Himself was the "One Shepherd" (Eccl. 12. 9-11). And thus we read, "THEREFORE said Jesus unto them again." His introduction is the doubled "Verily, verily," emphasizing His own

Name, for the word is "Amen" (Rev. 3. 14), and laying impressive stress on the truth, when so many chose a lie (cf. the reiterated "Martha, Martha," etc., of gracious warning). The second parable has the explanation at the very outset. And the repeated words "I am" give us at once the key. Christ is Central: He says "I AM the Door of the sheep," and "I AM the Good Shepherd." Could one, who was created speak thus, and remain humble? Impossible. The language of the Lord Jesus ever unveils His essential Deity (cf. "I am" in 8. 58, "Before Abraham *became*, I am"). And we likewise see the standpoint of the parable. There is no introductory mention of a fold, nor of a door-keeper. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING. There are no sheep HERE till He is mentioned first. They were, in the previous parable, to be found in the fold. But here He is the Cause of all. "He goeth BEFORE THEM" in this sense also: "On this Rock I will build My Church" is a parallel in another striking context.

What is the meaning of "the Door of the Sheep"? Does it signify a Door FOR them? Yes, but much more. He is not only the Door whereby they come, and the One through Whom all going out and coming in, as to food and service, are possible, but He is "the Door OF the sheep," i.e. they, and not a sheepfold, are united to Him, with the will of God written on their very hearts that they may be a separated, living people, not by human expedients, nor by organization, but by vital and inseparable union with Himself. And none except His sheep are **now** united to Him. There were evidently others apart from "His own sheep" in the fold. We shall see afterwards another aspect, even the sheep in the field, and "scattered." But that is not the first thought. Eternal security in living relationship to the Lord Himself, must have the pre-eminent place. Let us ever emphasise this Divine order. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of this parable, and so it begins with "I am" and ends with "One Shepherd."

The Lord Jesus is not only contrasted with the sheep, in that they depend on Him, and He can meet all the need, but also He is again contrasted in verse 8 with "thieves and robbers" (cf. verse 1). "Now Barabbas was a robber" (John 18. 40), and men came out against the Lord of Glory as if He were a robber (Matt. 26. 55). But THEY were the robbers: HE was, indeed, the Giver, and the gift was His life. The contrast will help to explain the startling words: "All that ever came before Me." Any who took the position of the "Door" were usurping the glory of the Lord Jesus. Those who pointed to Him, and told of His coming (Acts 3. 24), were by no means robbers: they were sent (see John 3. 28, note 1. 30 also). All the prophets, and finally, John led to the Lord Jesus. THEY never claimed the sheep for themselves: to do this was robbery (note Ezek. 34. 2, Zech. 11. 5). How blessed is the privilege of claiming a soul FOR THE LORD,

and helping "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1. 17). But the wish of the human heart is ever to attract to self (Acts 5. 36, 37, 20. 30).

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"Weak and Beggarly (Poor) Elements"

Galatians 4. 9.

"The Riches of His Grace"

Ephesians 1. 7.

"THE law made nothing perfect" and brought nothing to the goal (Heb. 7. 19). This was not the fault of the law, but the utter failure of man. Law looks to man, and demands something from him: hence "the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." When the Galatians sought to re-impose the arrangements of law they went to "strengthless and poor rudiments,"—the rendering "poor" is preferable to "beggarly," which would cast a slur on the "rudiments" themselves—instead of turning to Him Who is the Power of God and in Whom are hid ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in Whom dwelleth ALL the fulness of the Godhead bodily. How blessed to realize the appointed contrast between law and Christ because He has satisfied law, and met all its claims. Hence far from disparaging God's holy law we establish it (Rom. 3. 31), since He has magnified it (Isa. 42. 21). One calls to mind the words, "What the law could not do in that it was WEAK through the FLESH" (Rom. 8. 3, see 5. 6). and "the Gospel . . . is the POWER of God unto salvation to everyone that BELIEVETH" (Rom. 1. 16). The law reminds us of the flesh, the gospel is addressed to faith. Hence the promise is sure (Rom. 4. 16) because grace and faith are ever together (Eph. 2. 8). Well may we meditate on the riches of His grace! Here we find fulness for an empty man (Jas. 2. 20), power for a strengthless man, yea, life for one dead in sins, that no flesh should glory in God's presence. Here we do not find "rudiments," "guide posts" or "externals," to improve, but "a new creation," and the law is written WITHIN. The Gospel never leads to lawlessness, but the power is granted that we may love and do the will of God in the Holy Spirit.

"The riches of His grace" in that nothing is demanded from, but everything bestowed upon, the helpless, hopeless sinner. Is it not a wonderful gospel? "The riches of His grace" in that the Lord of glory Himself is the Substitute, and with Him God the Father freely gives us all things (Rom. 8. 32). Where sin abounded, grace overflowed (Rom. 5. 20). "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift" (2 Cor. 9. 15). What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand . . . so will not we go back from Thee: quicken us, and we will call upon Thy Name." Psalm 80. 17, 18.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

ENRICHED with the riches of God's grace, and receiving, with our Lord Jesus, "all things," that we may abound, it is our privilege to make manifest how great things the Lord hath done for us (Mark 5. 19, cf. Ps. 126. 2, 3). It is God's delight to do great things (Joel 2. 21), and we never weary Him by seeking too much from His hand, when we seek in the Name of His Beloved Son. It is with a realization that we are all too "earthly," and too "ordinary," that these pages are sent forth. The MARKED contrast of one who is "a new creation" in Christ Jesus should be manifest: but is not seen as it should be. The need for revival is urgent, a revival of repentance, and of godliness in home and business, that we, as quickened ones, with enlarged hearts, may run the way of His commandments (Ps. 119. 32) and bring Him increasingly all the glory.

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"THE HOUR."

(Continued)

The *third* section contains the seven trumpets, and also leads up to a brief and definite period, which is called "the time of the dead," and linked with God's assertion of His own authority (ch. 11. 17, 18). In this connexion it is very remarkable to see that an hour is specially mentioned in connexion with the resurrection of the two (personal) witnesses, and the end of the tribulation period if we rightly interpret

the 1260 days of 11. 3, and the reference to the kingdom and the Lord's prerogative in 11. 15. The chapter on "Difficulties" has more regarding this.

The *fourth* section presents several detailed solemn views of the 1260 days (12. 6, 14, 13. 5). Not *until* the redeemed are seen *in glory*, have we the mention of God's "hour" of judgment (14. 7 as 11. 18). It is not associated with the earlier 1260 days. This is marked as the same time as the fall of Babylon: this, we shall soon see in ch. 18, is significant, and suggestive. Amid all our study, let believing hearts ever say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (ch. 22. 20). O that all meditation may be earnest, and practical, and affecting our daily work.

The vision of the vials *alone* does *not* lead up to "the hour." Why is this? Because it seems *entirely* in "the hour." With this accord the following facts:—

- (a) the saints are seen *personally* in glory at its beginning (15. 2): this is quite distinct from the view in other sections.⁸
- (b) the saints are praising from the standpoint of victory, contrast 8. 3 at beginning of the trumpets.
- (c) the vials are specially called "last,"
- (d) the word "wrath" is linked with them⁹
- (e) they are viewed as almost simultaneous, in quick pouring out (16. 1).

The *next* section (chapter 17-18) shows the "hour" as the time of an awful confederacy against the Lord Jesus (17. 12-14), and "one hour" is mentioned three times in connexion with the sudden destruction of the rebuilt city of Babylon (18. 10, 17, 19).

The last chapters plainly begin with glory: the holy triumph is made in ch. 19, the power of the dragon is laid low in ch. 20, and ch. 21 commences with the new heavens and the new earth. Hence these also do *not* lead up to "the hour." Thus there is perfect harmony, and wondrous simplicity in the arrangement of this precious book. If we are rejoicing in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and thereby delivered from coming wrath (1 Thess. 1. 10), let us look expectantly for His Coming in the air, and for the Marriage Supper with Him. And then will there be the Judgment Seat of Christ. The searching question comes, Shall we reign

⁸ The twenty-four elders in ch. 5 cannot be viewed as the saints *personally*, for "one" of them comes and speaks to John more than once (5. 5, 7. 13): any explaining away of the literal personal elders is one of the strange misinterpretations of this book: yet many accept the seraphim of Isaiah 6 as real beings, and "one" of them went to the prophet.

⁹ Cf. 14. 10, 19, 19. 15. *Θυμός* is not used, as from God, while a heavenly people are on earth, and thus is *not* applied to the great tribulation, nor to the time while that lasts.

with Him, as joint-heirs (Rom. 8. 17)?¹⁰ Are we preparing for this, ever seeking with meekness to follow His steps (1 Pet. 2. 21)? How prayerful and earnest each redeemed one should be, living, in the Holy Spirit, unto the praise of the glory of God's grace (Eph. 1. 6).

CHAPTER 2.

SOME THOUGHTS ON PARALLELS.

We have seen that Scripture is wondrously arranged, and that many of our difficulties are through chapter-divisions, prejudices, and assumptions. It may be our gracious God will grant yet further light on this solemn and precious subject, through other passages, that, with intelligent joy, we may be more fervently looking for "that Blessed Hope."

It is noteworthy that *five* times in Daniel, in connexion with Babylon, and its kings, the word "hour" is used with regard to a brief crisis (3. 6, 15, 4. 19, 33, 5. 5). Such language is *not* accidental. But, interesting as is *this* illustration of God's will for His people to compare Scripture with Scripture, *another* is yet clearer, and more quickly striking. We are already acquainted with Satan's parodies of the things of God—and even of His *Triune* nature (Rev. 16. 13) and of the resurrection of Christ (Rev. 13. 3). But have we also noticed any *time*-parallels, manifestly appointed by God? Luke 13. 7 would suggest that the public ministry of the Lord was about the same length as the 3½ years of Revelation 13. 5. Judas, the son of perdition, disguised himself during a like period, so Antichrist is partly religious during the *first* half of his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9. 27). During the public ministry of similar length in Christ's earthly life what have we constantly in view? Surely "*the hour!*" John's record is very emphatic,—7. 30, 8. 20, 12. 23, 27, 13. 1, 16, 32, 17. 1. Nor must we forget the sidelight of 16. 21, and, in the light of 12. 23, probably 2. 4 has a closely related thought. This is sufficient to show a stress on the "hour" throughout. This "hour" was, apparently, not a literal 60 minutes but it was a *brief* time, at the *end* of the work given to our beloved Lord to accomplish.¹¹ John 12. 27 shows how

¹⁰ Leaflet gladly sent.

¹¹ Rev. 11. 11 may give a certain parallel, since this is likewise at the close of 3½ years. A beloved brother has impressed that, as human ideas regarding what can be done, in a given time, will not apply when God arises, all events may take place in the "one day" of Zechariah 14. 7, parallel with that of Joshua 10. 14 (cf. Isa. 28. 21). This seems certain as to the display of power at Jerusalem, and *could* also include the catching up of saints, the descent to Edom, and coming thence (Isa. 63. 1), with the journey in the South (Zech. 12. 7), ere the Lord's feet stand on the Mount of Olives. This journey from Edom (cf. Isa. 34) is often overlooked by many who speak as if the Lord descends on Olivet.

definitely He lived with this prospect, and, as we have already seen, His very *first* miracle was not without a mention of it.¹² Fittingly, His other *first* words referred to the things of the Father (Luke 2. 49), of which John 17. 1-4 tells the glorious completion alluding to the "hour." Truly that "hour" manifested His perfection, for in the test He was attested, and in the proving He was approved. If the wickedness of Antichrist is displayed in the hour at the end of his career, the holiness of our precious Lord shines out in His hour. And it is therefore appropriate that the future hour of crisis should be the background for the revelation of His glory over all the earth.

¹² Mary, the Mother of the Lord Jesus, is again seen in connexion with "the hour" in 19. 27—a fresh beginning for her being there linked with it.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

"That Day."

"I KNOW Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against THAT DAY."

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in THAT DAY."

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at THAT DAY, and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing."

In 2 Timothy 1. 12, 18, 4. 8, we find these glorious words. Few believers, possibly, realize the stress on "that Day" in the LAST epistle written by God's servant, linking with the earlier Scriptures. He did not regard the expression as "Jewish." Another verse in the same epistle contains the words "my gospel," and the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle to associate them with "the seed of David." Our translators have strangely altered the order, but 2. 8 reads "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel." How many would have written if this expression had occurred in Peter's epistles, that this was a proof his gospel was the gospel of the kingdom. Are they willing for the same thought here, in accord with the glorious oneness of "the gospel of the grace of God," for Jew and Gentile alike, with "that Blessed Hope" in view?

Apparatus without the electric current gives neither light nor power, yea, the current may be there, but a loose connexion may hinder all: *one* break is sufficient, and it need not be large. How much this means to a believer: O for living communion, and thus light, heat and power ever. So will God be glorified.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

"The sheep did not hear them." Thus are we again reminded that there are many who are NOT His sheep. The characteristic of the sheep is ever the same: they hear the Shepherd's voice. None other can meet their need. Once again would we humbly ask ourselves, and all who read,—“Have we heard the voice of the Son of God (John 5. 25), and are we now seeking ever to hear Him obediently (Matt. 17. 5, John 10. 27)?”

Repetitions in this parable are remarkable. We have noticed "Verily, verily," and we shall soon observe, "I am the Good Shepherd" more than once (verses 11, 14). Likewise we have "I am the Door" in verse 9 as well as 7. Both verses and verb are important. He is the Door as to salvation and the Door as to service (cf. the twofold "rest" of Matt. 11. 28-30). Salvation is the first need. "By (through) Me if any man enter in." Here we are all viewed as "without," at the beginning. This marked contrast with the first parable should have shown believers the distinction. One may be born in the "fold" of a religion as Judaism was, but one must be born again to come INTO the sphere of salvation. And Christ is the only Door. "Any man." The study of "comparative religions" is vain for the needy sinner. There is no competitor with the Lord Jesus. God allows of no alternative. Many tell us that, if any keep to that to which they have been brought up, it will be well. This is a delusion. Christ IS the Door. The present tense "I am" is important. Apart from Him there is no salvation at all. And this is a personal matter: "HE shall be saved." The tense gives us the certainty, for none look to Christ in vain. "And shall go in and out." There is a sphere, though it is not a mere fold. Activity is important, and it is not only in One part of the life "in and out." We need to wait, we need to work: we need pasture, we need service. "Seed to the SOWER" and "bread to the EATER" (Isa. 55. 10) are, alike important. And all who are the Lord's, will, in the way of His will, "find pasture." He never stints them. He Himself found pasture in doing the will of the Father, and finding the lost (John 4. 32-34). There was no selfishness in His perfect life. And He calls His own to find what He gives them (Ps. 23. 2) in their glad accord with His will. At first, all the "finding" is His (Luke 15. 4, 5). He finds us. And then in the response of love, we find Him (John 1. 45), and find what He has provided for us—rest and joy, and food, and all. How graciously our Lord wishes us to enjoy salvation, yea, to enjoy Himself. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." If there were those who came before Him with evil purposes, they are not absent to-day (cf. 2 Pet. 2. 1). Their object is an absolute contrast with that of Christ, as this verse sets forth. He brings life: the thief aims at death. But will the thief succeed? That is the question. We at once call to mind the words, "To seduce, if it were possible, even the

elect" (Mark 13. 22). The Lord Jesus said in John 14, "I go TO prepare a place for you," and, "If I go AND prepare a place for you." "To," "And": little words, but how much they signify when together. He ACCOMPLISHES His PURPOSE. We remember, too, God's plan worked out through Abraham, "They went forth TO go into the land of Canaan; AND into the land of Canaan they came" (Gen. 12. 5). But the enemy often fails in his purpose, and always fails when he seeks to kill Christ's sheep. He cometh TO steal, TO kill, TO destroy. All the three words are answered by verse 28. Destroy? Nay, "they shall never perish." Kill? How can it be? "I give unto them eternal life." Steal? "Neither shall any man pluck them OUT OF MY HAND." The Shepherd-Owner shall never be defeated.

But the aim is a deadly one, and the adversary leaves no scheme untried, his subtlety is described as "all-working" (2 Cor. 11. 3, lit.). The righteous are saved, but it is along a pathway of difficulty (1 Pet. 4. 18, lit.). We can never rightly turn God's grace into a mere dogma. We need to be prayerful, against thief, and wolf, and whatever shall come (Acts 20. 31). These repeated words emphasize the intensity of Satan. He longs to "devour" (1 Pet. 5. 8), and were it not that our Lord ever lives to make intercession (Heb. 7. 25), we might well tremble. It is not written, "Greater are ye than he that is in the world"; but "Greater is He That is in you than he that is in the world."

Tell me, when has a sheep been stolen from the Lord Jesus? John 6. 29 gives the answer: the mightier than David will deliver, if need be out of the lion's mouth (1 Sam. 17. 35). When has eternal life died? Never. Who among those given to Christ has perished? Not one. But there ARE perils, as we shall soon see once more, and to make light of the danger, and of our dependence on Him, is to raise a doubt if we are His sheep at all. Physical life is in God's hands, but He USES the air: spiritual life is in His covenant purpose, but He USES His holy word and prayer. Feed on the Scripture and call on His Name, if you would endure to the end, and enjoy the promises.

"I am come that they might have life." Without Him we have death. This is plain from such verses as John 3. 16, 36, 5. 24, 6. 53. The whole gospel emphasizes such a thought. "Life" is through faith in His Name (20. 31). He came with this object. The Holy Spirit's references to the purpose of Christ and the purpose of His death* must impress us. "The Son of Man is COME to seek and to save that which was lost": "the Son of Man CAME not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many": "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus CAME into the world to save sinners," "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

*A leaflet gladly sent.

The Standpoint of the Lord Jesus.

ONE is ever made conscious of the fundamental contrast between "the Spirit of Christ," and the way of the world. He Who was over all, God blessed for ever, took upon Him the form of a Servant, and made manifest to His disciples that the usual theory of getting on in the world was not to become theirs. The marked difference between a believer and a natural man is seen in such words as "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and again "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so" (Luke 11. 14, 22. 25).

But if we find a number of verses together, emphasizing this contrasted standpoint, in various ways, it may be the Holy Spirit will use this, to awaken the prayerful concern of many of us, not to lose the quickly passing opportunity of a Christ-like life in "this present evil age." Such a collection of verses is found in Luke 21.

First, the Lord Jesus saw those who were casting into the treasury, and (as Mark 12. 41 words it) He saw "how" they gave. The word "how" is ever deeply important (e.g. Luke 1. 18, 1 Thess. 1. 9): the MANNER of an action may spoil it altogether. On this occasion He uttered the remarkable words, "This poor widow hath cast in more than they all." If we ask, "Is this possible?" the explanation is at once added, "For . . . she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." Hence the *outer* value is not the *intrinsic* value. Israel ever misunderstood this, as passages like Psalm 50. 13 give witness. God does not need silver and gold (Hag. 2. 1). Everything becomes "nothing" without love (1 Cor. 13. 1-3). The "innerness" of an action, if we may so speak, is its true value before Him.

How slow were, and are, most of us to learn this. Hence at once in Luke 21, "some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts" (verse 5). These were OUTWARD. Immediately another illustration of the Lord's standpoint is granted. The ABIDING REALITY of anything is its true preciousness. A beautiful bubble is worthless, and the difference between five seconds and a few years is small, when eternity is realised. That which will not abide under God's testing, that which we cannot take with us out of the world, that which is only possessed by men in "the beholding with their eyes" (Eccl. 5. 11), is not true riches. How different is "the city which hath the foundations" from "the cities of the nations," and how different the temple made without hands from that which soon passes away. Oh, dear reader, any building that will not REMAIN is valueless (Matt. 7. 26, 27, 1 Cor. 3. 14, 15). Do not let us be deceived by appearances, and by gaudy bubbles, let us take Christ's standpoint (Col. 1. 5, 1 Tim. 6. 17-19).

Immediately yet another illustration of the contrasted standpoint comes before us. The disciples "naturally" ask "When?" and "What shall be the sign?" The first answer of the Lord Jesus is, "Take heed." So was it ever in His heart-searching wisdom. "Lord, are there few that be saved?"—"Strive to enter in." "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." O, how little we estimate the practical importance of daily life in view of eternity.

And when He continues to speak of the solemn events to come, He draws His trustful disciples to a holy and heavenly standpoint. "Be not terrified." Why? "For these things must come to pass." There is the rest of faith, BECAUSE everything is in God's hand. We call to mind Isaiah 8, "For the Lord spake thus to me with a STRONG hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye THEIR fear, nor be troubled" (verses 11, 12, cf. Ps. 112. 7). God IS; and supernatural people are to act supernaturally. So the very persecution becomes an open door to testify among those not otherwise reached (Luke 21. 13). Hence the normal, fearsome preparation of words, to gain release, is set aside in the next verse, with the reason at once stated ("FOR I will give you"), showing the same heavenliness when there is a promise of God. To generalize these words and claim inspiration, or excuse laziness, would be a grievous sin, but though the 'special' promise was to the apostles then, the same principle still holds good, in like circumstances, for Christ's sake, even to-day. "Death" is seen as a real possibility, outward success is never promised. Was it not true that none could withstand Stephen's words, yet he was cruelly stoned? But what is this from God's standpoint? If He is magnified in our body, all is well (Phil. 1. 20), and the Lord's words ring out, "Whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16. 25): hence, even in death, "There shall not an hair of your head PERISH" (Luke 21. 18). Nothing is wasted that glorifies God.

Nor are the contrasts of this chapter finished. When men's hearts are failing them for fear, God's dear children are encouraged, in view of the very same circumstances boldly to lift up their heads (verse 26 and 28, see the triumphant meaning in Ps. 110. 7). Far from approving the suggestion that the knowledge of intervening events, and of a painful road, and of trials, would prevent looking for Himself, and remove the joyousness, our Lord encourages the glad hopefulness along this very path. O that it may be ours, in the Holy Spirit, to realize more than ever that we are part-takers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3. 1), and to take the attitude which He lovingly appoints.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men."

"Exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

2 Timothy 2. 24, 4. 2.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the great needs of to-day is loving patience. A holy severity against ourselves is right. A holy hatred of sin is Divinely appointed. And if any "progress," and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, but deny His Deity or His personal Coming again (2 John 7, 9), there must be no uncertain sound. But toward the ignorant and those out of the way there should be compassion (Heb. 5. 2), because we also have infirmity, sinful infirmity (verse 3). Toward one another, there must be a holy walk, with "All lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering" and forbearance. If all the hasty words of brother against brother could be obliterated, if all the imputation of motives, and the clever repartee that wounds, could be judged as of the flesh, if there were "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," how different would the history of God's children be. James 3 has not been written in vain. We all need a watch before our mouth (Ps. 141. 3). Let that which one feels to be the truth be firmly held, but let there be a tenderness, a willingness to learn more of God's will, and to be corrected in manner, and, even in statement. Never let our inferences be put on the level of God's words. It is with a humble desire to emphasize this aspect of God's will, while remembering 1 Corinthians 1. 10, that subjects on which believers differ are brought forward in this magazine. May God be glorified in revival.

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Freemasonry and The Lord Jesus Christ.

AN opportunity was given to speak with a Scotch freemason on an American ship. He owned there were those in the craft who had unworthy motives, but felt that if a man only lived up to its principles, what more could be expected? Masonic temples were, in his opinion, religious centres, exalting God.

I had no call from God then to deal with the esoteric character of masonry, and its "Babylonian" origin: God graciously impressed just two or three things on the heart, and a brother present at the conversation thought they might be used to help others. The exact words are not remembered, but we commend the thoughts to all who are truly concerned.

What is the essential relationship of freemasonry to the Lord Jesus Christ? The belief in God, without belief in the way He has marked out, is not sufficient. The devils (demons) "believe" (James 2. 19), but their faith is vain. We cannot come to God as *Father* except by the Lord Jesus (John 14. 6), and if we cannot come thus, we only meet Him as our Judge.

Freemasonry definitely welcomes, into its brotherhood, those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus, neither in His Deity, nor in salvation by His precious blood. Hence, whatever be the private thoughts of members, when a lodge has prayers, its chaplain must not pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus nor plead and rejoice in His atoning blood. If he does so, he violates the principles of freemasonry. The one with whom we spoke said "You cannot know all," but when definitely asked, he did not, and could not, contradict whatever was set forth.

It is not enough to speak of "the Great Architect of the universe," He has *another* building, and, with regard to this, He has said, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, a sure Foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (not be confounded, Isa. 28. 16, 1 Pet. 2. 6). This is the all-important Building of which God is the Architect, and He ever emphasizes His beloved Son. Christ is both the Foundation and the Topstone, and it is written "The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head stone of the corner" (Ps. 118. 22, Matt. 21. 42). This is what the Jewish builders actually did, and remarkably, the masons, who regard themselves as builders, are doing the very same thing. This is crucial. One may ask, what if the passage is a prophecy of such builders, and of God's displeasure in their building, even as in Isaiah 66. 1, 2 He says of some, "Where is the house that ye build unto Me? And where is the place of My rest?" But He adds that He looks to one who is "poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth" at His word. It is noteworthy that both Isaiah 28. 16 and Psalm 118. 22 are alike found in the Old and

New Testaments. Thus God doubly emphasizes these passages concerning the Stone, Which is ever the Lord Jesus. Freemasonry is erecting a building without the Topstone, without the Keystone, without the Lord Jesus. We cannot forget the first builders in Genesis, who thought of a city and a tower, and spoke of heaven, but it was left unfinished, a tower without a headstone. The tower of Babel and its failure have been copied by many since. Since freemasonry leaves out Christ, Who is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 22. 13), it can only bring confusion.

The one who spoke with us urged that all the system was in the Bible. We do not accept such a statement, but if it were partly true this would not prove anything, unless *all* Scripture is accepted. Freemasonry leaves out the parts that tell of salvation by the blood of Christ. It was pointed out that a clock *without* the mainspring would be emptied of value. Judaism has many Scriptural quotations in its services, but leaves out the same vital matter. It is evident that this is, as God Himself says, the Stone of Stumbling (1 Pet. 2. 8), and the marked consensus against the work of the Lord Jesus illustrates His solemn warning contained in such words. We recollect that Mohammedanism speaks well of Christ, but denies His Deity and Atonement. Judaism, as we have seen, falls at the very same Stumbling Stone. And when we find such diverse systems as Freemasonry and Modernism likewise break down here, the importance of God's fore-warning is more fully seen. The Holy Scriptures are written to reveal beforehand where man will try his vain strength against God's own one way of blessing. O that the reader may not continue this dangerous road, but seek the Lord while He may be found (Isa. 55. 6), and rest, as a guilty sinner, on the poured out blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will he himself become a living stone in God's own building, and be included in the temple of which 1 Peter 2. 5 so beautifully speaks.

Somewhat remarkably, we had been speaking earlier with young men trained in Roman Catholicism, and it is worthy of notice that, though that system is poles apart from Masonry, the two unite in taking away from the Lord Jesus the glory of being the One Rock on which God's building is raised up (Matt. 16. 18). This extraordinary coinciding cannot be a mere accident. The adversary (1 Pet. 5. 8) knows that everything depends on relation to the Lord Jesus, and His precious atonement. Ah, dear reader, are you *in Him*?

Freemasonry refers to Solomon's temple, but that, even as the tabernacle which preceded it, was full of sacrificial types of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the method of the enemy in the present dispensation to take part of truth (the fine flour), and to leaven it. Here we see this very attitude, which deceives many. We do not know if the prophesied temple, yet to be rebuilt in unbelief at Jerusalem, according to Isaiah

66, and other at present unfulfilled Scriptures, will be erected by a combination of Judaism and Freemasonry, but this would not be surprising. Their principles alike emphasize God *without* His own appointed way. Now it was this attitude that put the Lord Jesus to death. The Scribes and Pharisees boasted of a belief in *God*, and of knowing His will. Ominous, in like manner, is the fact that the first "worshipper" was Cain, who acknowledged *God*, but came to Him without a sacrifice, without a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know the dread sequel. "The way of Cain" is seen in Jude 11. History will yet repeat itself, and Antichrist will be the fruit.

Any who own Jesus Christ as Lord should be deeply moved by this, in loyalty to Him, and, if they are found, though with a sleeping partnership, in Freemasonry, they should, at all costs and risks, seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and refuse to remain even a few days, in any fellowship except the fellowship of God's Son (1 Cor. 1. 9). Surely those who have been brought to be members of Christ, should cease membership of every mixed society, and indeed of every *secret* association, ill befitting those who thereby cut themselves off from their brothers "in Christ," and approve that which cannot commend itself to "every man's conscience in the sight of God." The Holy Spirit has graciously emphasized in Scripture how much God loved the world, and the *gift*, by the Father, of His Beloved Son is a call to take His standpoint, and to exalt the Name of the *Lord Jesus*. But freemasonry degrades Him by leaving Him out. Its attitude as to *sin* is therefore quite opposed to that of God. His testimony is that sin deserves wrath, and that the only hope is His Own costly gift of the One Who was infinitely dear to Him, to redeem poor, lost souls. So dreadful is the sinner's doom, so full is God's *mercy* and so rich is His *Gift*. But Freemasonry definitely and systematically slights that matchless Gift, and deliberately puts in the background that which God has done to save sinners. Here is effrontery against Him, however the sad, sad fact is concealed.

Surely everything emphasizes the immediate call to children of God to come out from all that does not acknowledge His own way of salvation. Such He tenderly calls, "Ye are the temple of the Living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6. 16-18), and so the words ring out once more where the Lord Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the FATHER, but by Me" (John 14. 6).

If the Lord will, to be reprinted as a leaflet for prayerful use.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Continued.)

"And that they might have it more abundantly." "Abundantly." Our loving Lord delights that His people should have riches. It is out of His fulness that we have received, and grace for grace. Never will the words be forgotten, "He giveth MORE grace." The prayerful reader may have noticed that "it" is here in italics. "That they might have that which is overflowing"—something extra (the same word in Matt. 5. 47, Rom. 3. 1, 2 Cor. 9. 1). Pasture as well as life, righteousness and not only reprieve, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and His anointing, as well as the gift of life. Our Father desires us to enjoy the riches of His grace, and our Lord says, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" (Song 5. 1). Are we possessing our possessions? We are not only "living" in a "fold." We are, like the man-slayer after the death of the high priest, enriched with an inheritance. In the new covenant the law is written on the heart, and the freedom is that of a will coinciding with God's will. His pleasure has become our pleasure, and our Lord came to make this possible.

Everything is for Him and therefore we at once turn to the word "I am." The pronoun is emphatic, the verb likewise is emphatic, and certainly the noun is emphatic, and the adjective also is emphatic; (literally, "The Shepherd, THE GOOD ONE"), and everything exalts the Lord Himself. Is it not so in all the parables? He lovingly brings us to Himself. No created being could thus have made Himself Central, and set forth Himself as both Door and Shepherd. There was, and is, no room for a rival, no opportunity for another.

The thoughtful reader will soon see we are not overstating the case: far otherwise, we are *understating* it. When we rightly say, "I am the Good Shepherd" is twice sounded forth, we have only mentioned a part of the evidence. Look again at verse 11. Why not, "I am the Good Shepherd, and give My life for the sheep"? Why must the word "Shepherd" be here repeated, so that the stressed words are amazingly before our eyes, and before our hearts (verses 11—translated "give"—15, 17, 18 twice). He deliberately placed His own life in believers, His SHEEP, and bore judgment, that they might have life "more abundantly." Thus is He seen as the absolute contrast with the thief, and with the wolf. Yet it is not said that He gives His life when the thief and wolf come. Doubtless the figure implies that such would be against Him, but the silence of Scripture is ever important. And it is well to notice every word. Certainly He met the thief, but this would not have secured our salvation. Far otherwise, if the Shepherd were thus killed, the foe would plunder the sheep. And as to the wolf's intrusion this seems to be after the Shepherd has strangely gone away; one of those remarkable parabolic hints

of the present dispensation, leading up, as we shall see, to the unveiling of our Lord's Return. Blessed be God, our Shepherd did not merely suffer under the enemy's attack. That would have been love to the sheep, but it would not be salvation. He laid down His life voluntarily, this is the point of the Divine emphasis, in the fulfilment of the plan of the Father, as the One obedient unto death in redeeming love to His own. And so the gift of Himself for the sheep not only unveils His love, but, as other Scriptures show, He met the enemy who had the might of death, and despoiled him of his might (Heb. 2. 14), by a work that satisfied God's claims for all the sheep (verse 18). Thus this passage not only shows His suffering (a) as the One attacked, but more (b) as the One Who willingly loved, and (c) as the One Who accomplished whatever was needed for the SALVATION of the sheep (cf. verse 9). The same three-fold thought is found in Isaiah 53.

The more we look at the words, the more we see their futility. The word "thief" implies that those here mentioned do not belong to Satan, they have been blessedly given to Christ (John 6. 37). Yet they are not as ordinary living sheep: they have need of LIFE (John 10. 10) and this life through His death (cf. John 6. 33), Accordingly where the Shepherd is before us in Hebrews 13. 20 His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, and, in the precious blending of figures, He Who is both Priest and Sacrifice, is seen as the LAMB as well as the Shepherd Who leads in Revelations 7. 17. Thus He uses a striking expression as to His own soul, "I have AUTHORITY to lay it down" (John 10. 18). Why "authority"? In general, we behold the Father's purpose; but particularly we realize that, as the Obedient One, He could not take away His own unforfeited life. Yet in voluntary SUBSTITUTION FOR SINNERS He could make manifest the "authority" received to do what was otherwise impossible. Howbeit, inasmuch as His life was not personally forfeited, nay, rather, He was the only One entitled to life (Rom. 10. 5), He had "authority" to TAKE His soul again, and His resurrection displayed His perfection and His finished work (Rom. 4. 25).

"For the sheep": what music there is in these words. A great number are His own, and His work was a DEFINITE covenant work for them. There is no vagueness as to the precious blood of Christ. Salvation is secured. He will not fail, nor be discouraged, nor will His sheep be lost (John 10. 28, 18. 9). Human theories as to a redemption which does not redeem are not to be found here. There is no mere attempt or experiment in the work of Christ. Many sons shall be brought to glory (Heb. 2. 10). Well may we rejoice if we are His. Ah, dear reader, can you thankfully say, you are of His sheep? Then do you not BELONG to Him in every way, and is this manifest in your daily life?

"But the HIRELING." It is very remarkable that as soon as the Shepherd's death is mentioned, we have the sad 'history of man's failure. The Shepherd is sitting between the Cherubim, raised in glory (Ps. 80. 1, 110. 1), but the sheep are still on earth. Israel's shepherds failed of old (Ezek. 34), will there be the unveiling of a like failure? Alas, many parallels are before us. The enemy is not the only hindrance: those who profess to care for the sheep prove unworthy of their trust. How definitely this speaks to our own hearts, whatever responsibility is given to us. Are we "faithful in that which is least"? The hireling here is responsible, or *professedly* responsible, to the Shepherd. As in Luke 15 the sheep are the self-righteous, so here, the description may be according to the hireling's claim, for Scripture does not suggest that the Lord Jesus appoints such: He has given some to be "shepherds" (Eph. 4. 11, 1 Pet. 5. 1-4). Alas, it is sadly possible for a believer to allow something of the hireling-spirit. O that all commercialism, and all self-love, may be laid low in the Lord's work. This passage does not indicate that there will be no true pastors, but it does give Christ's foreshadowing of the present age, with its lack of godly care for the sheep, and with its commercialism, seen in the buildings which are viewed as desirable "places of worship," and in the sad emphasis on salaries. The work of the Lord should ever be a faith work. Everything should be on "faith lines," or shall we say, "on the line of His will, in simple faith"? The scattering of the sheep generally is attributed by our Lord Jesus to the lack of a shepherd's heart. The hireling is not antagonistic, but he thinks of himself first, and what he can "get." This attitude has ruined godly testimony. How contrasted was the standpoint of God's servant Paul when willing to have imparted not the gospel of God only but himself also to the Thessalonian believers (1 Thess. 2. 8, cf. 2 Cor. 12. 15), and when he travelled in pain a second time that "Christ might be formed" in the children of God throughout Galatia (Gal. 4. 19). Herein we see the spirit of a true shepherd.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

"THE HOUR."

(Continued)

But this is not the only thought. From His standpoint "the hour" was associated with perfect obedience, but if we think of Satan, and those who were Satanic instruments against the Lord of glory, the nature of the "hour" becomes more evident, and the connexion with the Book of Revelation. And it is in accord with the distinct characteristics of the four gospel narratives that we find this aspect also prominently before us as in the first three evangelists.

Matthew 26. 40, 45, 55, Mark 14. 35, 37, 41 should now be noticed ("one hour" is particularly named, as in Rev. 18). The "hour" is *not* simply associated with the cross, and the bearing of wrath, but in *each* Gospel is linked with Christ's anguish *before*, i.e. with the solemn lessons of Gethsemane, and with the permission for *men* to lay unholy hands on Him (observe Luke 20. 19. Nor does John's gospel exclude this aspect, see 7. 30 and 8. 20). *Nothing* could be done till the "hour." And with *whom* was the conflict in the garden? Have we forgotten John 14. 30?—"The prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing* in Me." (Satan's judgment is in connexion with the "hour" in John 12. 27-31). How suggestive is Luke 4. 13—"And having ended every *temptation*, the devil stood away from Him until an appointed season" (literally). Then the devil returned, and Gethsemane contained another temptation. Adam had fallen in a garden, and Israel in a wilderness: Christ must be revealed as *standing* in both. The number *three* is stamped on Gethsemane's temptations, just as on Matthew 4. And the very word "temptation" or "testing," which we have found in Luke 4. 13 is repeated in Revelation 3. 10. May we not almost regard this as a quotation? Now we can understand Matthew 26. 41 with John 18. 8, 9. The Lord of Glory would stand *alone*. He would sustain "the hour of the testing," in His own matchless love and power. The prayer of Matthew 6. 13 *now* has added force, not for an *earthly* remnant, but for a heavenly people delivered from the "hour" of Revelation 3. 10.

Another passage seems to impress the writer almost beyond all others, in this connexion—"When I was *daily* with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me: BUT THIS IS YOUR HOUR, AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE DARKNESS" (Luke 22. 53, cf. Matt. 26. 55). This latter expression occurs in Colossians 1. 13, where there is a manifest allusion to Satan (see Acts 26. 18). "Your hour" refers to men: but Satan was there as well. And that *future* corresponding "hour" will be one of a final confederacy of Satan and men against the Lord, and against His Messiah¹³ but how marked is the contrast.

¹³ Rev. 17. 12 may suggest this last unity of ten, as in Ps. 83 (the children of Lot are Moab and Ammon)—plainly after Dan. 11. 41, and evidently at the same time as Dan. 11. 45.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"There shall not be left one stone upon another" (Mark 13. 2): how great was the contrast when God was with His people (Hag. 2. 15).

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MAY, 1935. FREE.

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 15. 58.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

THE above words are very precious, and applicable to those who are first entitled to the name "brethren," because born from above (all by grace), and secondly who are truly stedfast, because humbly in fellowship with God, and with holy willingness for His will. We should not be "tossed to and fro . . . with every wind of doctrine," but be stedfast in the Lord. Only when this is the condition can there be the work OF the Lord and labour IN the Lord. The two descriptions, and the stress on His gracious authority as "Lord," are very impressive, and the wording gives a reminder of verse 10, although none of us are apostles. Thank God, the simple, true-hearted believer can labour "in the Lord," and the word "abounding" suggests "overflowing" (cf. Gen. 49. 22, John 10. 10), and the context shows everything in view of our Lord's coming.

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Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep. (Continued.)

"And not the shepherd." These added words not only state a truism: they remind us that Scriptural undershepherds act in their Lord's Name, and seek to look at things from His standpoint. The hireling thinks of wages: the shepherd loves the sheep. The question is ever before us,—The LORD JESUS AND HIS INTERESTS, or SELF and its interests: which must be called central in our life? It matters not what

the "hire" is: it need not be money: reputation may be an equal snare. To Peter the Lord put the question, "Lovest thou Me?" and then gave the command, "Feed My sheep." This is ever the test of love to Him. The sheep were not given to Peter, and yet the words spoken of the hireling ("Whose OWN the sheep are not") did not apply to him, for he was viewed as fully attached to his Lord, and HIS interests. Are we?

Revival will be marked by ministry that exalts Him. Ephesians 4 is clear as to this. It is important to ponder, in the light of this verse, the thought of "a paid ministry." Is it wrong? Has not the Lord approved that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Cor. 9. 14), and is there not some parallel in the words "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour" (1 Tim. 5. 17)? We are convinced that the one taught in the word should "communicate" unto him that teacheth in all good things (Gal. 6. 6), but let us remember that the present day college arrangements (often "higher critical"), and the idea of an ordination to "administer sacraments," with the usual title of Reverend, or of "Doctor," in theology, are quite an innovation on New Testament order. And should we not return to the simpler will of God, and trust Him on the lines of His own words that there may be "teachers," as His gifts, and that godly recognition may be given to such (1 Thess. 5. 12, 13), including the supply of earthly needs (Phil. 4. 15, 16)? Is it not possible to go back to the Scriptural precedent, with more confidence in the unfailing wisdom of our Lord, and would not this help to remove the whole theory of a "profession," with large "salaries" in SOME cases, and an elaborateness which does not harmonize with pilgrim simplicity, and with a place outside the camp, where our rejected Lord is (Heb. 13. 13)? We do not refer only to episcopal palaces, but to organized nonconformity, and if godly men seem to be found in many positions, their godliness does not justify innovation. Some who, in various denominations, seek after much of God's truth, and who may be reading these pages monthly with prayerful interest, may at first think, "The writer does not know MY small income, nor does he sympathize with my problems." Will such lovingly accept our testimony that we rejoice in love to Christ wherever it is, but we desire for such dear, exercised souls (whom we love), and for ourselves a fuller conformity to the Lord's own will, and a fuller separation from the circumstances and principles that give opportunity to the "hireling" attitude.

It is not easy to be faithful when some who help as to the salary are worldly: there are many fetters. One may seek to be definite and uncompromising, but the position is necessarily a temptation. Should we step *into* it? Should one not seek the way out from it? Is not the Lord "sufficient" for every need?

It is important to see that the power of the wolf is through the "hireling." And the scattering of the saints is seen to be a fact. "The wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep." The thief cometh "TO steal," but cannot. Preservation is dependent on sovereign grace. "The wolf . . . scattereth": this is the sphere of OUR responsibility. No one can "snatch" out of our Lord's HAND (verse 28, 29), but the wolf catcheth or "snatcheth" (the same word) in THE FIELD. Thanks be unto God, we are in His hand, AS WELL AS in the field; but do we not long after love's unity among the sheep as a witness on earth (John 13. 35, note 17. 21, 22)?

Behold our Lord's definite prophecy of the condition of His people while He Himself is in the glory. The Shepherd is not viewed as being WITH His sheep the whole time, in the sense in which He was, and will yet be, among them. The spiritual blessedness of Matthew 18. 20, and 28. 20 must never be forgotten, but the words "TILL He come" have a real meaning. O beloved friends, WE are left here, responsible for our Lord's interests. May we not compare the "taking care" till the Good Samaritan should return (Luke 10. 35), and the stewardship in the parables of the Pounds and Talents? His Coming is ever before us.

True, "we" cannot now unite all the scattered sheep in "the field." This refers to the world (Matt. 13. 38), and the wheat and tares are together TILL the period of harvest, but a local assembly is never viewed as the "field," and the "house" should have fellowship in the truth. Do we seek and expect this? Then let us beware of everything of the hireling spirit. One is "afraid" to stand against the wolf if one's own interests are prominent. We should "stand," not "flee," in the evil day (Eph. 6. 13).

We would plead with children of God not to treat these suggestions lightly, or as a generalization. We grieve over the hasty and harsh words often used against "a hireling ministry." Many a "salaried" believer has shown more love to the Lord than his critics, and than many who have claimed to live by faith. Indeed, it is very important that we should be kept from ALL boasting, and also from a nominal faith that indirectly "advertises and asks." As for ourselves we, too, long to be humbled. If a "self-desire" for reward, even at the Judgment Seat of Christ, lays hold of us, is there not the "hireling-spirit"? and should not the attitude of 2 Corinthians 13. 7 be much more fully felt? Beloved fellow believers; preachers or not preachers, we are ALL responsible to know what 1 John 3. 16 means. Do we love the sheep if we say words that scatter them, or sow discord among brethren (Prov. 6. 19), or if we are careless about the spiritual condition of others who are misled. The attitude of Cain led to a statement which searches us in a very different context (Gen. 4. 9):

children of God are members one of another. Do we help one another, or "flee," and "leave the sheep"?

The enemy would ever hinder that which exalts the Lord Jesus, and we call to mind the words, "I know that after my departing shall grievous WOLVES enter in among you, not sparing the flock: also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20. 29, 30). Nor can we be unmindful of the parallel, with Satan disguised as an angel of light, where we read, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7. 15). The enemy will try in every way to obstruct the Lord's work, and the sheep need all the help possible. Every view of the present dispensation is solemnizing, whether we think of the Holy Spirit's unveiling of the early years in the epistles, or of the general course in the prophecies of Christ, or of the time of the end in the Book of Revelation. The righteous are saved along a path of difficulty (1 Pet. 4. 18), but they ARE saved, and the "many sons" SHALL be brought to glory, but let us be lovingly concerned for His glory in the path thither. There is no statement of the wolf snatching the carefully-shepherded flock. Godly "taking care" for a church of God (1 Tim. 3. 5) is graciously honoured.

The verse ends with the words "scattereth the sheep." Herein is the limit: the wolf can go no further. No wild beast can kill a single one belonging to Christ. Such absolute precision in God's use of language reminds us again of the verbal inspiration of Scripture; and, illustrating the prophetic nature of the parables, lovingly guards us against the common, but erroneous, thought that, "Every point must not be pressed." The tendency to deny inspiration practically, while holding it theoretically, is very harmful. Let the fruit of our study be much more reverence, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, and let it also be, (rather let us say, "therefore be"), more loving concern for the immediate bringing together of the Lord's scattered sheep, in preparation for the fuller revival He has graciously promised to welcome His near Coming.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

The weakness may and may not be taken away, but the Lord Himself says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12. 9). The temptation may not be removed, but will not the word be fulfilled that God will with the temptation make the way out that we may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10. 13)? The burden may be left, but He Himself will sustain us as well (Ps. 55. 22). It may be we shall have to pass through the waters, but He says, "I will be with thee," and so is it with the fire (Isa. 43. 2). God is to be trusted, blessedly trusted.

Jottings on Healing.

"O LORD, heal me" (Ps. 6. 2). "I will heal thee of thy wounds" (Jer. 30. 17). "O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me" (Ps. 30. 2). Such sentences are not merely disjointed verses: they express much to hearts that have the joy of trusting God. The fact of SOUL-illnesses needs a fuller and humbler realization, and then the dependence on God with regard to them. "He healeth the broken in heart" (Ps. 147. 3). But we would not overlook the body. "I am the Lord That healeth thee" was a precious message in connexion therewith (Ex. 15. 26). God has been so largely forgotten in this matter, or His blessing has been sought *after* it has been taken for granted that the world's methods "must" be His path of healing. Surely Hosea 5. 13 and 6. 1 may have a far-reaching reminder of a great danger among believers. "Yet could he not heal you" (King Jareb, cf. 2 Chron. 16. 12). "Come and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us." God speaks in all. Even if Satan works, the Lord can turn the captivity in a moment (Job 42. 10), but let us never forget James 1. 4. "He sent His *word* and healed them" (Ps. 107. 20). "Speak the *word* only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8. 8). Faith always depends on the Lord's *word*. His word is the expression of *His* will, not "self-will." "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my Praise" (Jer. 17. 14). God's work is precious. Concordance study of the word "heal" may be a tonic in the gracious enabling of the Holy Spirit, setting forth God's character and principles, and showing the intimate relation of soul and body, and the blessedness of childlike SIMPLICITY in our dealings with our Heavenly Father. Fuller willingness for His will should be the growing characteristic of our life.

The glory of God and His wisdom shine out in the way Ahasuerus spoke of Mordecai, just before Haman could speak of him, in a very different manner. If the king's sleep had been broken one night later, how different all might have been. Thus GOD'S intervention was at the exactly appointed time, even as Abraham, in quite another connexion, found it at the last minute. NATURAL faith gradually decreases when the crisis draws nearer: how different is spiritual confidence in God. And God's sovereign wisdom was thus manifest in activity *before* Esther's request, a display of His independence of us, though He deigns to use us, as afterwards in her case. A call, moreover, to holy concern lest we delay, for her postponement of one day, at the first banquet, might have been critical. Though we cannot frustrate God's counsel, we must never misuse the revelation of His sovereignty to excuse our hesitation.

"THE HOUR."

(Continued)

We have noticed the "judgment" of the "hour" in Revelation 14. 7, 18, and the reference to a *cup* (14. 8, 10). Nor are these words absent from the "hour" at the time of Christ's temptation in Gethsemane (John 12. 31, Matt. 26. 39); and each hour alike culminates in an earthquake (Matt. 27. 51, 52).¹⁴

Beloved friends, these similarities are not accidental. Have we not a striking illustration of the fact that Antichrist's 3½ years, as those in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, will conclude with one "hour," in which men whose place was not substitutionarily taken by the Lord of Glory will be *tested*, and found wanting—in which, as of old, man's iniquity will reach its height; but, overruling all, our glorious God will manifest His own glorious ways! The "hour" gone by ended with "It has been finished," and our Saviour's death; that which is to come shall be marked by the "It has become" of Revelation 16. 17, and His Kingdom. In the heavenly aspect, there will be the Marriage Supper, as of old there was the Lord's Supper, nigh the beginning of this period. The apparent "conclusion" of John's gospel in 12. 37-50, and the new beginning in 13. 1, with "His own" distinct from the "His own" of 1. 11 may help to impress our hearts. And may the Holy Spirit cause our deeper appreciation of the love so wonderfully revealed, that our lives may be more unto the praise of our Triune God, and *more*, not less, in living, active hope of the soon Coming of our adorable Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER 3.

SOME DIFFICULTIES.

It will be asked, "Are there no *difficulties* if we accept the interpretation that *the hour* of Revelation 3. 10 etc. is distinct from the *tribulation*, and subsequent to it?" Through *our* failures, and ignorance, we find *certain* difficulties in almost everything, and the writer, while rejoicing in Proverbs 8. 8, 9 as God's own encouragement, would not suggest that every believer, graciously released from some error, will at once have every problem removed: we all learn slowly, yet, if we are meek, our Father will teach us *His* way (Ps. 25. 9). Is not this our experience?

¹⁴ The point is so important that believers will not regret a double stress by a more tabular view, going through the Book of Revelation, with words emphasized.

Revelation.	In the life of Christ.
3. 10, Temptation.	Matthew 26, 40, 41.
11. 13, Earthquake.	Matthew 27. 51.
14. 7, Judgment (18. 10).	John 12. 31.
14. 15, Reaping with a sharp sickle.	Swords, Matthew 26. 55, 51 (and 31).
17. 12, Authority.	Luke 22. 53.
18. 16, 19, Desolation.	Matthew 23. 38.

Many objections to the Coming of the Lord Jesus for His bride after the tribulation are somewhat vague, *or* based on Revelation 3. 10. Further evidence against them, is found in the "*last trump*" of 1 Corinthians 15. 52, and in the fact that the *momentary* resurrection of that verse must include those slain under *Antichrist* (Rev. 20. 4). The important argument from *silence* has, moreover, its due weight in this connexion. Since Revelation 3. 10 must now be rightly explained *otherwise*, there remains *no promise at all* of a rapture before the tribulation. Surely dear children of God, who want Scripture for everything, will take this to heart. All the *seeming* corroborations of an interpretation fall, if the *one* promise on which it rested has *another* Divine meaning. "*Probable Types*," based on our "thinking," can *prove* nothing, they can only *support*. And if Scripture does not warrant them, they must be rejected as imaginations. If this were realized, "*theories*" as Anglo-Israelism would disappear. Further, the promise of deliverance from the *hour*, after the *tribulation*, would itself be weakened, if the deliverance were actually 3½ years before! The silence of Scripture as to *any* rapture, or *any* resurrection before the "*first*" (Rev. 20. 5), becomes a wondrous witness in such cases. O that we may be led by the Holy Spirit never to add to God's truth.

But we would not wish to *hide* difficulties. The marvel is they are so few, in connexion with such an important change of current belief. *Truth* alone can stand *prayerful* investigation. It may be that the following lines will bring before some the *strongest apparent objections*. God's glory, not merely temporary and verbal victory, is the object of these meditations, and frankness befits children of God. Moreover, some may *feel* more restful if they see that the greatest difficulties can be quietly pondered before the Lord. Every problem is an invitation to a blessing, and this we humbly expect.

Revelation 17. 12 has, I suppose, the fullest "difficulty," not from what it says, but from what it can be easily made to suggest. Yet we *must* beware of reading anything into the inspired words. The simplest explanation of the passage alone would be that, in the last "hour," Antichrist leads a certain confederacy which makes war with the Lamb. This is strictly in accord with Zechariah 14, and *all* Scripture, and reveals the unimproved nature of fallen man. It is plain this conflict is *not* till the last "hour" has set in. "Where then is the problem?"—may be the thought of not a few. In the fact that in Revelation 13. 1 we seem to have ten kings crowned *with* Antichrist *forty-two* months before the "hour" (5). But let us not be quick to decide. In Daniel 7 we find there are *ten* kings *before* the beast (24): these are distinguished from those of Revelation 17. 12 ("receive authority *with* the beast"), especially as he plucks up *three* of them. Thus there are *at least* two confederacies of *ten*. May there

not be more? We remember the confusion brought through an attempt to *identify* the Lord's addresses on the mount and plain (Matt. 5 and Luke 6), as if they were one and the same. Let us beware of a similar error. Moreover, the Holy Spirit not only omits detailed stress on the horns in Revelation 13, but He leaves out the word "kings."¹⁵ This is not an accident. Moreover in an earlier study (Chapter 1), we saw that the confederacy of Psalm 83, which is *final*, includes Amon, Edom, Moab, who are plainly against Antichrist only a little time before (Dan. 11. 41). Thus here we have a *fresh* unity (Ps. 83. 4, 5), after tidings out of the east and north have troubled the wilful king.¹⁶ Now we can see the force of Revelation 17. 12—"But *receive AUTHORITY as KINGS one hour with the beast.*" the subsequent verses are before Christ comes, and, therefore retrospective. The horns are *not* called kings there: they give their kingdom, not kingdomS, to the beast, and, further, the order of their actions is suggestive. This interpretation may indeed clear up another difficulty. In Psalm 83 we do *not* find the great nations of to-day, and in Revelation 18 some "*kings of the earth,*" at least, are viewed as *away* from Antichrist, and near Babylon, at the same time (verse 9). Satan will have gathered many (Rev. 19. 19), but, it would seem, will be too late with others (Rev. 16. 12-16). Will not Isaiah 10. 8 then have its awful illustration and fulfilment? Let us not forget the solemnizing message of all these verses. Let our "study" be always for the heart, and not only in the head.

¹⁵ That they have subsidiary "kingdoms" seems probable from the term "diadems"; the derivation of which is sadly suggestive of an unholy unity.

¹⁶ At the beginning of his career, he plucks up *three*, at the close adds *three* in another *tenfold* fellowship:—both alike contrasts with Christ's three parabolic ten's, Matthew 25. 1, Luke 15. 8, and especially Luke 19. 12-17. A sad type is seen in Jeremiah 41. 1.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"He hath said," so that we may say (Heb. 13. 6): faith is ever responsive, our gracious God has spoken first, yea, and has loved first (1 John 4. 19): HE IS EVER FIRST.

"We" are to boldly say, "The Lord is OUR Helper": nay, rather, "The Lord is MY Helper," for though we rejoice that others share ("we"), and seek to be with others (2 Tim. 2. 22), our hearts rejoice in the *personal* love of God, and His personal care and interest, "I will never leave THEE, nor forsake THEE" (Heb. 13. 6, cf. Rom. 8. 1, plural, 2 singular).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15. 4.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

BELIEVING definitely in the Lord Jesus Christ we accept implicitly His testimony as to Scripture (Matt. 4. 4, Luke 4. 4, John 10. 35), and recognizing His own testimony as to the link of the earlier Scriptures with His own words (John 5. 46, 47, cf. 2. 22), we rejoice to study and emphasize every part of the Old Testament, and would earnestly ask each believer if he (or she) has read all God's testimony there. "WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime" were written for us, and we cannot omit any without spiritual loss. Not only do we lose knowledge of God's gracious will and work, but also we lose "patience" and "comfort." The Holy Spirit is graciously willing to use "all Scripture" for our profit (2 Tim. 3. 15-17). With this thankful realization are these pages sent forth.

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A Comparison of the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Song of Songs.

ch. ver.	The Song of Songs.	ch. ver.	Ephesians.
1. 14.	My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire.	1. 6.	The Beloved.
5. 10.	The Chiefest among ten thousand.	1. 21.	Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.

- ch. ver. The Song of Songs.
 1. 3. Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy Name is as ointment poured forth.
 5. 11. His head is as the most fine gold.
 7. 1-5. Thy feet . . . thine head.
 5. 13. His lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.
 5. 16. His mouth is most sweet.
 2. 8. The voice of my Beloved.
 8. 6. Love is strong as death.
 8. 7. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.
 2. 6. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me.
 1. 2. Thy love is better than wine.
 1. 4. We will remember Thy love more than wine.
 1. 1. Solomon (also in six other places, seven times mentioned in all).
 6. 13. Shulamith (meaning—like Solomon—Peace).
 1. 4. The King hath brought me into His (inner) chambers.
 2. 4. He brought me into the house of wine (margin).
 2. 12. The time of the singing is come.
 7. 1. The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
 2. 10, 13. My Love, my Fair One.
 6. 9. My dove, my undefiled is but **one**. She is the only **one** of her mother. She is the choice **one** of her that bare her.
 6. 13. As it were the company (or chorus) of two armies.
 6. 4. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem.

- ch. ver. Ephesians.
 5. 2. Christ . . . A Sweet Smelling Saviour.
 1. 22. Head over all things to the church.
 1. 23. The church, which is His body, the fulness of Him.
 2. 17. And came and preached peace.
 2. 17. Came and preached peace.
 3. 19. The love of Christ which passeth knowledge.
 5. 29. Nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.
 5. 18. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.
 2. 14. He is our Peace, Who hath made both one.
 1. 3. In heavenly places in Christ.
 2. 6. In heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
 5. 19. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.
 2. 10. For we are His workmanship.
 1. 10. In one.
 4. 3. The unity of the Spirit.
 4. 13. The unity of the faith.
 2. 15. For to make in Himself of **twain one** new man so making peace (see vv. 16 and 18).
 2. 19. Fellowcitizens with the saints.

- ch. ver. The Song of Songs.
 1. 17. Our house.
 4. 9, 10, 12. My sister, My spouse.
 5. 1.
 4. 15. Believers said to be—A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.
 4. 12. A garden . . . Thy plants
 14. an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits . . . with all trees of frankincense.
 7. 7. This thy stature is like to a palm tree . . . clusters.
 2. 3. I sat down under His shadow with great delight.
 8. 5. I **raised** thee up under the apple tree.
 4. 7. Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.
 6. 10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?
 1. 15. Thou hast doves' eyes.
 4. 9. Thou hast ravished My heart with one of thine eyes.
 7. 4. Thine eyes like the fishpools of Heshbon.
 4. 11. Thy lips, O My spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue.
 4. 3. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet and thy speech is comely.
 7. 1. The joints of thy thighs are like jewels.
 ch. ver. Ephesians.
 2. 19. Of the household of God.
 5. 31, 32. Joined unto his wife . . . This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
 3. 8. The unsearchable riches of Christ. ("Christ in you, the Hope of glory" Col. 1. 27.)
 3. 19. Filled into all the fulness of God.
 3. 17. Rooted and grounded in love.
 4. 15. May grow up into Him in all things.
 5. 9. For the fruit of the Light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.
 4. 13. Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.
 2. 6. Raised us up together and made us sit together.
 5. 25, 27. Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.
 1. 18. The eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know.
 4. 15. Speaking the truth in love.
 4. 25. Speak every man truth with his neighbour.
 4. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.
 4. 16. The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.
 1. 22, 23. The church which is His body.

ch. ver.	The Song of Songs.	ch. ver.	Ephesians.
7. 1.	How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter.	6. 15.	Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
4. 4.	Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury.	2. 20-22.	Built . . . building . . . builded together.
8. 10.	I am a wall.	4. 12.	The building up of the body of Christ.
4. 4.	The tower of David . . . an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.	6. 11, 13, 16.	The whole armour of God . . . The shield of faith.
3. 1.	By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him but I found Him not.	5. 14.	Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
5. 2.	I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my Beloved That knocketh, saying, Open to Me.	1. 13.	Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.
8. 6.	Set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm.	4. 30.	The Holy Spirit of God, Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

"Thou Therefore." "But Thou."

"THOU THEREFORE, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

"THOU THEREFORE, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

"BUT THOU hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions."

"But continue THOU in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of."

"BUT watch THOU in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim. 2. 1, 3, 3. 10, 14, 4. 5.

The holy principle of personal definiteness, and uncompromising contrast with this age, applies to us all, even though the Holy Spirit gave the message first to Timothy, and the last verse (4. 5) shows its peculiar application to brethren whom the Lord raises up for His work in days after "the foundation of apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2. 20), in fulfilment of the gracious promise that some of the gifts of Ephesians 4. 11, 12 will remain "till we all come in(to) the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 13).

God delights in fulness, and associates this word with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Continued.)

Verse 13 continues in connexion with "the hireling." It is very evident how deeply the Lord felt concerning this. The earlier Scriptures (Ezek. 34) have already shown the same attitude, and the fullest recorded example of imitating the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 11. 1) in the New Testament presents the exact contrast with the spirit of the hireling (1 Cor. 9. 18. 1 Thess. 2. 5-9, &c., &c.). "But the HIRELING fleeth because he is an HIRELING": the repetition of the descriptive word is impressive, and the language used states an important principle. What we "do" is the fruit of what we "are." In like manner, "Out of the abundance of THE HEART the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12. 34), and as a man "thinketh in his HEART, so is he" (Prov. 23. 7). It is well to be searched. What "are" WE in reality? The question is not only "What are our actions on special occasions?" "Being" includes more than "doing." If one "IS" a hireling, the hireling-attitude comes out. God IS love, and His love must appear. He gave and gives. The Lord Jesus said, "I AM the Good Shepherd," and was not His shepherding love graciously displayed? Nor has He changed. His sheep can depend on Him.

Of the hireling we read "And careth not for the sheep." Yet more forcibly, "There is not a care to him concerning the sheep." The same expression is found in a very blessed contrast in 1 Peter 5. 7 "For there is a care belonging to Him concerning you."* Yes, the unforced love of our gracious Father, and of our tender Shepherd should awaken our confidence, and love. And next we should ask ourselves, Have those of us who know Him learnt to feel the same innate "care" for His own? Paul said of Timothy, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally (genuinely) care for your state: for all seek their own (the attitude of the hireling), not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2. 20, 21).

Every emphasis on the failure of men leads up to the contrasted glory of Christ, so this passage continues "I am the Shepherd, the Good One, and know My sheep, and Mine know Me" (literally). The word "know" means far more than acquaintance (see 2 Tim. 2. 19), but it does include a personal intimate acquaintance with each one, so that the Lord Jesus will not allow any to be missing. To the hireling the sheep are simply "a flock": to the Shepherd each one is precious. Ah, dear troubled believer, the Lord Himself knows you and takes an interest in you, and the driven away, and broken and sick are the very ones for whom He specially cares (Ezek. 34. 16, cf. 1 Cor. 12. 22, 23). How real is His

* The same word is helpfully, and searchingly, used in John 12. 6, note also Luke 10. 40.

love. Have you and I the right response to it?—"AND MINE KNOW ME." As with love, so with knowledge, His is first (1 John 4. 19), but ours should be second.

Absence of fruit dishonours the root. Do we KNOW Him—not to boast of this (Gal. 4. 9), but with the love that fears to grieve Him (1 Cor. 8. 3, 2 Pet. 3. 18)?

"As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father" (verse 15). "According as" would be a precious study in the gospel according to John, and the epistles (e.g. 14. 31, 15. 9, 10, 12, 17. 2, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23; 1 John 3. 2, 3, 7, 4. 17). The mutual love and knowledge of the Father and the Son are here strikingly before us. The inner and intimate knowledge is seen as perfect, and we call to mind such words as "in the bosom of the Father," and, with regard to the blessed unity in the days of His flesh, "the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth" (John 5. 20). Into the intimacy of this knowledge none can intrude. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 27). It is a mercy that we have a privilege by revelation (see also Matt. 16. 17, Gal. 1. 16). And the two thoughts of John 6. 45, 14. 6 are precious "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father *cometh unto Me*," "No man *cometh unto the Father* but by Me." The added words in John 10. 15 associate the death of the Lord Jesus with this perfect knowledge. This was the will of the Father, but it was equally the joy of the Son, and thus was there no difference of love or purpose. A created being could not have presented the sacrifice, without making the love and gift of God the lesser, and without diminishing our wholehearted gratitude to God, but the Deity of our beloved Lord shines out in all His voluntary covenant obligations, and we behold the inseparable oneness of His love with the Father's. It is all so wonderful. KNOWING absolutely, and KNOWN absolutely, He laid down His life for the sheep, and thus our redemption is absolutely secured. There can be no uncertainty: there were no unknown factors: contingency cannot come in to mar grace.

But may we not also link verse 15 with 14? "According as" does not only mean the degree, but it can, in certain contexts, indicate the ground and character of the knowledge. Thus we have the Shepherd knowing the sheep, and the sheep knowing Him, in accord with the Father's knowledge of Him, and His knowledge of the Father:—a beautiful fourfold knowing, and ours is through His. Is it not ever so? Ah, we should never have been brought to know Him, had there not been His own work. Our knowledge, moreover, takes its character from His: it is marked by love, and nearness. We may know a man by sight, but we know our Shepherd's heart. Do

we not wish to know Him more, with the spontaneous confidence of a timid sheep?

"I lay down My life for the sheep." We have already thought of these words, but cannot think too much of them. Verses 11, 15, 17, 18 have been read, all having the same message. The Son of God loved, and gave HIMSELF (Gal. 2. 20). Twice in Ephesians 5 is this Divinely emphasized (verses 2 and 25). Do we show forth the fruit of His work? "Who gave *Himself* for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto *Himself* a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2. 14). What manner of persons ought we to be!

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

"THE HOUR."

(Continued)

Secondly a reader will suggest that the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years can after all be viewed as one *hour*, because there are twelve hours in the day (John 11. 9), and the day of temptation in the wilderness was 40 years (Heb. 3. 8). We would not argue as to $3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{1}{2}$, but would at once suggest prayerful thought before grasping at such "illustrations." These have no weight against direct Scriptural exposition. On the other hand, we gladly acknowledge that the Holy Spirit by use of certain similar words will help us in study of the passages together. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ years will be a time of temptation as the twelve times longer testing period between Christ's death and the destruction of Jerusalem.—An hour of temptation, indeed, but not "the hour of temptation" of prophecy. There are many preparatory parallels. Strikingly during "the hour" they will be dealt with in a new way, and differently as Revelation 7. 1-8 blessedly shows. The "hour" is for those who "dwell on the earth."¹⁷ To make the hour a period of years, or to identify it with the tribulation is impossible in the sections concerning the seals and trumpets and signs, as well as in Revelation 18. To oppose these clear indications from God, and give a forced interpretation to ch. 3. 10 would be out of harmony with the whole book.

It is somewhat interesting to see the appointed parallel with Israel's 40 years of temptation in the 40 *days* of Matthew 4. 2. Thus the Lord Jesus had a contrast with Israel's day, as well as His "hour." It is noteworthy that we do find $3\frac{1}{2}$ literal days in close connexion with the ending of Antichrist's rule (Rev. 11. 11). We would not say, "The hour will reach this length," but it is interesting to compare Scripture with

¹⁷ These heart-searching words, as to Antichrist's followers, the contrast of a heavenly people, may be traced through Revelation 6. 10, 8. 13, 11. 10, 12. 12, 13. 8, 12. 14, 17. 2, 8. See the opposite in 13. 6.

Scripture the more so as Revelation 11. 13 contains a third "difficulty." Is the hour here a distinct one, and before the seventh trumpet? We would suggest that this difficulty too, though a minor one, may be helpfully met. Revelation 10. 1-11. 13 is plainly *parenthetic*, its beginning plainly preceding the *sixth* trumpet, as 11. 1-3 indicates, though in the record inserted after 9. 14. Elsewhere we are shown that the "hour" begins with a great earthquake (Rev. 6. 12-17), and terminates with one yet greater (Rev. 16. 18). Hence 11. 14 may look back before the parenthesis to 9. 21 (cf. 9. 12), and lead on to the climax of 11. 15. If this is not the solution, and if the hour of 11. 13 is distinct, it would not invalidate the interpretation of other passages, yet it would somewhat obscure the harmony of the book as a whole, and I rather think any other explanation would cause more difficulties in chapter 11 itself. Parentheses are common in Scripture.

Another fourth difficulty may be found by some in 1 John 2. 18. "Little children, it is the last time," literally "hour." Probably most believers, however, will be helped by this passage. The Holy Spirit always uses or omits the article with perfect wisdom, and here it is *not* "THE hour." "A last hour" was granted, and the "wrath came anticipatively" (*φθάνω*) in 1 Thessalonians 2. 16. Many types of future judgment were granted in the period which reached its climax at the destruction of Jerusalem. So "a last hour" is here linked with "many Antichrists," but "the last hour" with the Antichrist himself. Thus God gave a definite warning, and His mercy shines out. Seeing that we know these things are surely coming, what manner of persons ought we to be: and how grateful our hearts should feel for so great a salvation from so great a death in our beloved Lord and Saviour, for *Whom* we wait, and to Whom our longing, loving prayer should ever be "Come, Lord Jesus."

(1) *the Lord will, to be continued*).

"Thou hast left thy first love." How searching are such words, personally searching. One notices the tendency to quote or allude to them with an alteration. Many of us have spoken of "losing" the first love. Thanks be unto God, this is not the statement. There is the opportunity, there is the gracious invitation to go back to the place where one was at the first (Gen. 13. 4), and to return to that which has been "left." "Left" but not destroyed, "left" but still to be found. O fellow believers, let us claim reviving humbly and reverently, and let us thank our Heavenly Father for the tender gentleness of the Lord's word "left."

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

*"He sent Redemption unto His people:
He hath commanded His Covenant for ever:
Holy and Reverend is His Name.
The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of wisdom:
A Good Understanding have all they that do them:
His praise endureth for ever."* Psalm 111. 9, 10.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

HOW good and how pleasant are the above words. God's infinite grace shines out. Redemption was needed, and plentiful redemption is granted (Psalm 130. 7, Eph. 1. 7), and God's holiness is in no way diminished. It is our privilege to honour Him: the words "Reverend" and "Fear" are from the same root. In view of His everlasting covenant (Heb. 13. 20, 21) should not His children ardently desire to do His will, and that which is well pleasing in His sight? It is remarkable how much of these verses is before us in Hebrews 13. That God may be glorified in the realization of this standpoint, by the gracious, and continued, inworking of the Holy Spirit are these pages sent forth. What shall be the fruit in our lives?

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Illness and a Fall.

EVERYTHING physical seems intended by God to instruct us spiritually. If we enjoy natural eyesight, let us not forget the eyes of our heart (Eph. 1. 18). The healing miracles of the Lord Jesus were surely pictures of His gracious and mighty works for the souls of men, and truly those who are brought to Him have their eyes opened (Acts 26. 18), and their ears opened to hear the voice of the Son of God. No longer are they lame, but can run the way of God's commandments. Indeed, the very word for "healing" is that which is used for "saving." We remember the Divine link in Mark 2. 1-12, and the message

of Mark 5. 34, "Thy faith hath made thee whole (saved thee); go in peace." In accord with this, we are made conscious that the **various** diseases of that body which is fearfully and wonderfully made, have, each and all, spiritual parallels. Thus we learn more of the diversities of sins, and of the need for growing up into Christ in all things, for spiritual health. We do not wish to be onesided in our inner health. It is blessed to run as well as to see, and to talk as well as to hear. And God has given the food and medicine of His Own words of truth with this purpose. How dangerous is a spiritual "cold," and how real is heart weakness in many a Christian experience. And this reminds us that some believers seem always weak, and not a few bed-ridden. In other cases, there is a more sudden attack, and unexpected disease; although the preparations leading up to it may have been longer than we realize. How definitely also these things cast us on the Great Physician, although we are grateful for His gracious use of the care and "nursing" of one another, even as the Chief Shepherd uses under-shepherds on whom He has bestowed gifts.

This meditation leads us up to the impressive thought that there are two main divisions of physical affliction, an illness and an accident. The former may be more or less chronic or quite exceptional, and sometimes there is a suddenness as with an epidemic. But, as we have seen, often there is a period, whereas a fall is definitely in a moment, amid normal strength. Is there a parallel as to this also? Possibly not altogether. It is probable that when we seem to behold a sudden crisis of spiritual failure, there has been a preparation, unseen but real, as with many a business firm or with an electric light that fails to shine. Peter's denial was preceded by pride. Hence the parallel with a disease and its incubation, seems more common. O how often there is a cause, and we need to pray the prayer of Psalm 19, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" **immediately followed** by "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins" (verses 12. 13). But even if the parallel is not complete, there is much to search our hearts in this enquiry. When we notice that some dear children of God are weak, and always ailing spiritually, whereas others seem robust, and then a sad change take place, and they err sadly in doctrine, or grieve God's Holy Spirit much by some action, whereby dishonour is grievously done to His Holy Name, what is God's message to our hearts? Is it not a call to deep humility, to remind us that however long we have known the Lord and however much we have grown in grace, there is a danger of a fall, as soon as our eyes are off the Lord? It is only by constant and consistent faith we stand. These words do not suggest that sin should be excused because we are all liable to it. Far otherwise, they indicate the need for true exercise of soul that we may not self-righteously condemn others, and then fail in like manner, but that we may be kept lowly, in the only safe place, at the feet of our beloved Lord.

"The Sum of all the Congregation,"

In Numbers 26.

"**A**LL Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and there is no unnecessary word, God is the God of order. The repetitions of Numbers 7, and of this chapter, we should "naturally" have avoided. Let us realize, therefore, God's emphasis on little things, and on regularity. But the passage has other thoughts, which cut deeply, in our experience of ourselves and of His work. We compare with Numbers 1 and 2: the total is very similar (1. 46, 26. 51), and yet in some cases there is marked increase (e.g., 1. 29 with 26. 25, and 1. 35 with 26. 34). On the other hand, the "double fruitfulness" of Ephraim, in blessing, was not manifested till later (1. 33 with 26. 37): let us not be discouraged as to "waiting" times, concerning God's promise, but let us search our ways to see if sin is a hindrance as to our receiving to-day. But a still greater decline is seen in one tribe, namely Simeon, from 59,300 to 22,200. Is there a key? We remember a judgment in Exodus 32. 28, and blessing to Levi: so that afterwards God caused this tribe to be used in blessing: but the one associated in Genesis 49. 5 is here still laid low. Was there some special judgment reminding of Exodus 32, with this effect? Certainly the prince who defied, in Numbers 25. 6, was "a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites" (verse 14). "Fellowship" in the tribe often ran strong: we think of Benjamin in Judges 20, and learn the danger of following one another, to do evil. This is searching. And the spared number of Simeon is striking: is it not a third part of 666 multiplied by a hundred? God speaks,—yes, in everything. Have we noticed that all the individual cases of **death**, before us in Numbers 26, remind of sin? Somewhat differently in the overruling of grace, and its overflowing, we find Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah, as the women mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew 1. No "historical" details are bare records: God speaks to our consciences. In Numbers 26 we see Dathan and Abiram (verses 9 and 10), Er and Onan (verse 19), and Nadab and Abihu (verse 60). Remarkably the firstborn, the kingly tribe, and the priestly, and these in the case of firstborn (as Cain) are in front of us, that no "flesh" should glory in God's presence. But again we realize that, though sin abounded, grace overflowed, in God's sovereignty for "the children (sons) of Korah died not," and the **only** heading in the psalms which is found for "sons" is the oft-repeated one, "For the sons of Korah,"—11 times, a number linked with worship. One family was spared in the flood, and one in Jericho, and one family is before us here. The enemy cannot destroy praise, nor could he cut off the kingly tribe, whence our Lord Jesus, in love's condescension, sprang, nor the priestly family. There are ever the two classes, as we have seen in the division of Simeon and Levi, though together in Genesis 49, and we think of the **two** malefactors in Luke 23 and the line of demarcation, and then

we rejoice in the mercy to Eleazar and Ithamar, when Nadab and Abihu "died." Death throughout the book of Numbers is searching. At once passages like 16. 49 and 21. 6 come to mind, nor can we forget 33. 38. Scripture is searching, but everything leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ, even as chapter 16 is followed by the resurrection-budding of one Rod, and Aaron, "not suffered to continue" reminds us of the "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." O that He may become dear to our hearts!

"THE HOUR."

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER 4.

THE PRACTICAL POWER OF A RIGHT INTERPRETATION, AND A CONCLUDING APPEAL.

In the grace of our God, we have seen that "the hour of the testing" of Revelation 3 is *after* the tribulation, and that, if we are "in Christ Jesus," we shall not even enter that gloomy and solemn season of wrath and judgment, but shall have been already caught up to meet our Lord in the air. We have thought of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and, in passing, of the glorious reigning with Christ, which are held out as prospects for the redeemed, whom He has purchased with His precious blood. We have seen that an erroneous interpretation, often entwined around good intentions, *adds* to God's promises, and so really takes from them, and hinders the true perception of His teaching. I believe we may go further: though from the loving hearts of those who have, alas, embraced this error, there has been *much* devotion to the Lord, *in spite* of the error, it has, nevertheless, considerably weakened the usefulness unto Him of not a few.

Are there not believers, living with *some* worldliness, who yet proclaim the return of the Lord Jesus, *before* the tribulation? Are there not others, who settle down, either in Christendom's ruin, or in a measure of disorganization, because of thinking that Christ's any-moment Coming is the only reviving to be sought? But 2 Peter 3. 9, as to wandering believers ("usward," or "you-ward"), is so clear otherwise. Truth sanctifies, and the absence of parts of truth involves a certain absence of spiritual experience. And, further, there has been a tendency to speak lightly, or even unkindly, of those who have differed as to the order of prophecy, and to say, "Ah, you expect signs, not Christ." Such a manner has held back many from the study of God's will, and has produced "camps" of opposite opinions, instead of encouraging a disciple-like gathering together, and a humbling before God, to come to oneness of mind.

We would not say that the perception of God's truth in this matter ensures an all-round, spiritual unworldliness, but,

realized in the Holy Spirit, it *should* have this effect more and more. All *realization* of God's instruction is partial:—we know in part. Nevertheless, truth, because it is truth, is precious and resultful, not only on the lines on which it primarily leads, but throughout the believing life, even as food nourishes the *whole* body, though bone, and flesh, and energy be so distinct, in appearance, from materials used to build them up. Beloved friends, if we see the Lord's own teaching about the hour, do we not feel anew the fulness of His work for us? His life closed with the "hour," and He endured wrath: this dispensation shall close in like manner, but from wrath we are graciously freed. Tribulation is our portion, but *not* wrath (1 Thess. 3. 3, 5, 9). We do not come into judgment, being in Christ Jesus (John 5. 24). Grace is, indeed, wondrous.

But there are many around us who wrongly conceive that this view of "the Blessed Hope" prevents true watching. Is it not our privilege to answer their objection by our *lives*? Faith, we say, is not *mere calculation*. We do not look for intervening events, we do not really "look" for events at all, but for Christ. We would be looking *off* unto Him. Doubtless we fail in this simplicity toward Himself, but would earnestly desire it. Spiritual hope should be, and is, independent of circumstances. It is blessed to realize that God has so arranged that only true believers, walking in the Holy Spirit, can *truly* watch for Christ. Ordinary hope *could* anticipate that which is immediate in the way in which we are asked to anticipate; but for this, with affection toward those who ask us, we must say we find *no* warrant in the revelation of God.

The practical power of a right interpretation may be felt the more when we see that any other belief, though more naturally enjoyable, is apt to lead us away from suffering, and away from exactness in Scripture study to "seeming" types and "possible" hints. Grace often counteracts these influences, but they are existent nevertheless. O that we may be kept back from sin in these matters, and live as saved ones should, unto the praise of God's grace.

Possibly some children of God to whom these thoughts are partly new may be willing to re-read these notes, almost immediately, as ever with *an open Bible*. They are asked to observe that the interpretation takes account of *all* references to "the hour" in the Book of Revelation. Can any other interpretation be said so to do? Further, they are asked to ponder why, if the usual identification of the tribulation and the "hour" is a fact, no Scripture can be found to prove or suggest this. The more generally held view as to the order of prophetic events seems to rest very largely on three things.—

- (i) The assumption that the tribulation is the time of God's wrath, and cannot therefore be fitting for a heavenly people.

- (ii) The supposition that the Holy Spirit will be taken away before the man of sin is revealed.
- (iii) The thought that believers are promised deliverance from the tribulation because they will not be left for "the hour" of Revelation 3. 10.

But strikingly the Holy Spirit uses more than one word for "wrath," and expressly omits these very words when speaking of the tribulation: i.e. omits with regard to *God's* wrath. Hence the true inference is very different from that of most.

As to the *second* point there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in 2 Thessalonians 2. 7, nor are the words "taken" and "out of the way" found in the simple statement of the Original. "Taken" is "become," and "out of the way" is "out of the midst," a rising up of Antichrist being before us.¹⁸ As to the *third* opinion, we have seen that this, too, is without a Scripture foundation. Should we not be deeply concerned when any interpretation depends primarily on assumptions which are directly against the Scripture use of words, and on an erroneous translation? Every thoughtful believer should feel how important this is, and the remarkable similarity of all these insecure props would seem to suggest that the true interpretation, which is obscured thereby, is something very precious for the life and witness of believers, and therefore the enemy would keep us from realizing it, if he can. And surely this is so, for if we see God's emphasis on true revival in view of the Lord's Coming, how precious it will be to His glory, and for our spiritual profit (2 Pet. 3. 9). The devil hates repentance and hates revival.

It is not expected that the exposition, humbly and hopefully sent forth, will meet with immediate *general* acceptance. Indeed Matthew 24. 26, shows that a belief in a secret coming, and presumably before the tribulation has run its course, may remain among *some* till near the end. Far be it from us to link dear children of God with those whose sins are found in Matthew 24. 26, but the thought is this—The error *THERE* may well be Satan's development from certain errors *NOW*. Surely believers do not wish to hold anything that is against God's Revelation, and to be made a basis for such an evil development. Tenderly, yet earnestly, would the writer ask for prayerful pondering of the Scripture *once more*, and if any belief does not stand this test, however many godly men have held it, let there be a definite setting aside, that "the Blessed Hope," in its primitive glory, may have a right hold on our hearts and spiritual affections, and that, in the Holy Spirit, we may pray with ever increasing love, "Come, Lord Jesus,"—and likewise make known, by life and lip, that "the Coming of the Lord draweth *nigh*" (Jas. 5. 8).

¹⁸ A booklet giving other passages where God uses the same words gladly sent.

See note on page 56 as to these articles.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Continued)

Observe the language used by the Holy Spirit, "I *place* My soul." "Covenant" is from the same root, and in 1 Peter 2. 6 we have the firmly *placed* Foundation Stone. There was a definiteness, and there is a certainty, in the work of Christ. He Who set His face like a flint (Isa. 50. 7, cf. Luke 9. 51) will not fail (John 6. 29, 40). The word "soul" reminds of Leviticus 17. 11, "The *soul* of the flesh is in the *blood*, and I have *given* it to you upon the altar to make an atonement upon your *souls*." Praise be unto God, His soul was given for ours, and in the precious symbolism of the Lord's Supper, we see the two tokens of His sinless body and of His precious blood, in the soul (Deut. 12. 23). He withheld nothing. He *would* do everything for the sheep, even for those "given" to Him.

The practical bearing of such love is seen in 1 John 3. 16. "We ought to lay down our souls for the brethren" (cf. Rom. 16. 4). Not that we bear God's judgment. Our sphere is not on the altar (Lev. 2. 12), but outside the camp, *bearing* His reproach (Heb. 13. 12, 13). The Holy Spirit definitely distinguishes. In atonement He was alone. But the life of a believer is to be transfigured. The twofoldness of our Lord's work is seen in 1 Peter 2. 21-25, and our privilege to "follow His steps," and to be rejected is set forth: but He alone "*bare* our sins in His own body." Onesidedness is ever the attempt of the enemy: full orb'd truth shows our full redemption, but ever has a practical note. The current denial of atonement is the setting aside of the only way whereby we, as redeemed ones, can follow His precious example.

"And other sheep I have." The loving interest, the intense interest of the Lord Jesus in His people, saved from all nations, ever shines out. He delighted to speak of them. And the many "anticipations" of Gentile believers, in the Old Testament, are before us—in the Gentile brides of Isaac, Joseph and Moses, in the deliverance of Rahab, and the inclusion of "Ruth the Moabitess," and the promise to Ebed-Melech, in the references to the "stranger," in such verses as Zechariah 6. 15, and in the blessing to the Gibeonites "the Nethinim" especially. "I have": the Lord's possession is marked out, yea, even before they are brought (John 6. 45, 17. 9, 10). Ephesians 1. 3 stands sure. "Which are not (out) of this fold": no relation to Judaism, and not brought, via Judaism, as the proselytes of old (Ex. 12. 43-45). Thus the term "sheep" is not limited to Israel, nor to Israelite believers. "Them also I must bring." The word "those" comes from the root of "there": it sometimes emphasizes distance, as in verse 6 where it may suggest the moral distance of those in spiritual darkness. But we rejoice in verse 16: we were far off, but are made near by the blood of Christ. The "must's"

of redemption in this gospel are very precious, e.g. 3. 7, 14. And how beautiful are the two which suggest the salvation of Gentiles (4. 4, and 10. 16). The Lord Jesus will not fail, nor be discouraged. Hence there is the Divine "bringing," and we call to mind Luke 15. 5, 6, and also Hebrews 2. 16. Redeemed ones shall not be left halfway. There is no room for boasting: we "came" because we were "brought" (1 Pet. 2. 25). "And they shall hear My voice." God's grace ever works within: we were not dragged in our state of death, but were caused to love the Shepherd. The beginning is ever linked with hearing His Voice (John 5. 25), and the continuance in the same (John 10. 27).

O that our daily attitude may illustrate this. The true sheep in Israel's fold recognized the Shepherd's "voice," and the same characteristic is to be found in His people from the Gentiles. Such are attracted to Him, not to a fold, a religion, or a system. Here is a helpful principle, and test for our love, "And there shall *become* one flock." This is the precious assured goal: but faith should ever seek to enjoy miniature anticipations (Eph. 4. 3). The enemy hates the unity of God's children, but our Father delights in it (Ps. 133. 1-3). The enemy would seek to substitute a Babylonian unity and friendship with the world (James 4. 4). May we be separated to the Lord, in the work of the Holy Spirit. It is very strange that the A.V. renders "one fold." The word is quite distinct, and is never so rendered elsewhere, and can only mean a flock, a living unity—a precious collective singular noun, containing the very same letters as the next word "Shepherd." Nor is this strange, we live because He lives, and all we have is from Him.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

Acts 3. 6 is striking. "Silver and gold have I none." Almsgiving left a man a beggar: "religion" cannot go beyond almsgiving, but the gospel of the grace of God does not merely give an external thing, and leave a man where he is: the Lord puts new power within to rise, yea, to walk, nor is leaping without its spiritual parallel of glad praise.

When we remember the love (Song 1. 4, 8. 6) of the Lord how small is our love. It is so precious to know that He sees our love, and makes it grow.

The articles on "The Hour" can be obtained in booklet form. The Lord graciously used the study to help the writer much in the prayerful perusal of the prophetic Scriptures, and the importance of the subject as to the reviving which God has promised has been emphasized. May the fruit be more earnest watching. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O Lord endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands."
Psalm 138. 8.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN, thankful for mercy we send forth a little help to God's children—not only in knowledge (may it be the knowledge of Himself, John 17. 3, 2 Pet. 3. 18) but in a daily walk of love, separation and obedience to please Him. It is so important to be concerned as to revival and testimony, in order that those who are in Christ may grow up into Him in all things. All-round spiritual growth, and deliverance from disproportion and oneness should be our humble prayer. The Holy Spirit never leads to disproportion. And how precious is the emphasis in Scripture on His work as to concord: an enemy sows discord among brethren. Is it impossible for children of God to come together, recognizing His will and seeking Scriptural assemblies, with their Lord Jesus exalted in the midst and human traditions denied, and with simple, glad obedience, according to the pattern?

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"Thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal" (Deut. 11. 29).

"In mount Ebal ... and there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 27. 4, 5).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a Curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"

(Gal. 3. 13, with Deut. 21. 23).

OUR hearts adore when we meditate upon the foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus. It is deeply interesting that all the above verses come in Deuteronomy, a book thrice quoted in the

temptation in the wilderness, and consequently attacked, and characterized as a forgery by the so-called "Higher Criticism." Joshua fulfilled the Divine appointment:—"Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal," and the solemn reading of the law followed. We should have naturally put the altar on mount Gerizim . . . the mount of blessing, but "as for God, His way is perfect."

A Sinless One *must* bear our sins, or we cannot be saved. That is the point. He Who knew no sin was made sin, a Sin-offering, for us (2 Cor. 5. 21). It is deeply important to see that the Holy Spirit emphasized everything here by a *double* record. The statements that no man dare lift up any tool on the altar stones, and that the laws of God are written upon them, are found both in Deuteronomy 27 and Joshua 8. And it is remarkable that the words for "whole stones," and for "peace offerings," are from the same root, and denote "completeness." The iron *must* reach the sacrifice, but must *not* reach the altar. An entire contrast is seen. The Lord Jesus came as the Perfect One to the place of the curse. Not a single flaw could be found in His character. Nothing could be hewn off His life. His actions needed no modification. We go a step further. If any one thing had been missing from His life the whole would have been polluted. Exodus 20. 25 is clear as to this. How profane is the suggestion that He made some mistakes through ignorance, or untruthfully suited His words to the condition of the people. Not a single action of His life could be bettered. God the Father was "well pleased" throughout. And the writing of the law on the unbroken and unhewn stones, on mount Ebal, was a striking testimony that the Holy One would come to the very place of the curse, and, blessed be God, there be made a curse. The stones were not piled there with a view to throwing in judgment against the sinner, but with a view to a substitutionary sacrifice. The *altar* would have been unnecessary had there not been the purpose of a *sacrifice*: and the sacrifice needed this altar. The two are inseparable, and thus we see *when* it was the Lord Jesus was made a curse, even when He died. But He remained still the personally Holy One. So substitution is a fact, a glorious fact! O how great is the love that shines out, He came to be a Curse, that we might be blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph. 1. 3). The types ever lead to praise and thanksgiving. How glorious is the message, "Thou . . . shalt eat *there*, and rejoice before the Lord thy God." The word "there" is repeated from verse 5. Who would have thought of rejoicing on mount Ebal? But it is here that grace shines out. The work of the Lord Jesus is so complete, that we rejoice on the ground of the curse removed. Sin is never excused, but there is the full execution, and accordingly the Ark was lifted up on the very waters of judgment. And there was all food that might be eaten in the Ark, and thus was it in Egypt. When the blood of the lamb was

on the door, there was the eating joyfully of the *same* lamb within. Thus the joy to which God calls is on the basis of a finished work. The eating is not on mount Gerizim, as if *we* had attained to a blessing. It is a blessing *through a curse*, through the substitutionary work of our adorable Lord Jesus, and Ebal is on the north (Lev. 1. 11). How fully should redeemed ones, who have felt the burden of their sin, and grieved over the agony through which their Loving Saviour passed, find their present and constant joy in Him. Yes, it is rejoice "there."

And the thought that law is established is seen throughout (Rom 3. 31). Written upon the altar—with its precious typical meaning—were all the words of the law. We remember the two tables of stone preserved in the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Ps. 40. 6-8). And thus we think of the Righteous One. He did not deserve to be on Mount Ebal, but He was there. There for us, and, redeemed in Him, we rejoice there, with God's holy words before us, that we may henceforth walk in love's obedience to "the law of Christ." Everything was to be plainly before the eyes, and in Joshua 8 we have also the reading for the ears to hear. O that we may have a deeper spiritual concern to fulfil the will of God.

It is impressive that in Joshua 8 the immediately preceding context shows us another pile of stones, a heap, over one hanged on a tree, dying in his own sins (verse 29). Thus the two positions are made known. The king of Ai shows the doom of those who go their own way. How great the contrast between the dead body *under* the stones and the accepted sacrifice *upon* the altar stones, with our acceptance in Him. But apart from Christ there is no hope. No universalism is found in Scripture, and so in Deuteronomy 27 the passage goes on to speak of the curses, and the climax is reached in verse 26. Salvation is only for those who have a living faith in the Lord Jesus. There are ever two mountains, two classes, two ways, and two futures.

We have a graciously given type of blessing in John 4. Jacob's well at the side of Gerizim could not supply the living water. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (verse 13), and it is now choked up, but One was there Who could deal with the need of her who came from Sychar on the side of *Ebal with its curse*, because He became a *Curse* that He might give a well of water (verse 14), even as the water came from the Smitten Rock in "Horeb" (the very letters of the word suggesting a sword). And we too come to Him, and find all in Him. Gerizim had its imitation temple, with Samaritan compromise worship (verse 20), but this was razed to the ground, and so will every religion fail that expects the blessings apart from Him Who bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2. 24). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Centre of Scripture: may He be the Centre of our lives, by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit.

"Under His Shadow."

HE Lord Jesus delights to receive His people, and delights in their delight in Him. He gives both shadow and rest, amid the strain, and fruit to refresh those dear unto Him. And these two thoughts are very precious. We call to mind the words, "And a Man shall be an Hiding Place from the wind, and a Covert from the tempest; as Rivers of Water in a dry place, as the Shadow of a Great Rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32. 2). Observe how definitely we see the Lord Jesus in all these pictures. Truly He is Central in all Scripture.

The wording in Song of Songs 2. 3 is more impressive than our translation suggests. Literally it reads, "In His shadow I delighted and I sat down." The margin partly gives this, but "in His shadow" is first. Thus we see that the believing heart delights because of what He is, and then the experience that His love causes leads to sitting down. There is a wish for something more, and a longer rest. "Abiding" is ever emphasized in Scripture. If we have not time to "sit down" we shall not have time to enjoy His fruit. Mary is a helpful encouragement (Luke 10. 39). God does not train His people in a hurry (Mal. 3. 3), and we cannot grow in grace in a hurry. Delighting without sitting is the result of allowing other things to intrude: sitting without delighting would be a merely external interest. But delighting and sitting, joined together, and in this order are indeed blessed. Hence the added words, "And His fruit was sweet to my taste." In the physical sphere God has given us a taste as well as a mouth. And so is it spiritually (Ps. 119. 103). He wills that His people should enjoy His truth. We should have a taste for the plentiful fruit of the Lord Jesus. There is no possibility of finding a tree having "leaves only" in Him. Nay, there is ever a rich supply of fruit, every month, in summer and in winter. But are we too much occupied with the things of earth to sit under His shadow, or are we "too busy," even with work for Him, it may be, to experience abiding in Him, and in this precious resting place? The Holy Spirit never leads us to neglect the shadow of our precious Lord Jesus Christ.

Not—But.

"IT is NOT of him that willeth, NOR of him that canneeth, BUT of God That sheweth mercy." Rom. 9. 16.

"Which were born, NOT of blood, NOR of the will of the flesh, NOR of the will of man, BUT of God." John 1. 13.

"NOT by might, NOR by power, BUT by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Zech. 4. 6.

"Ye have NOT chosen Me, BUT I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you." John 15. 16.

"NOT that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; BUT our sufficiency is of God." 2 Corinthians 3. 5.

"In Like Manner"

THE word so rendered in 1 Timothy 2. 9 only comes 8 times in the epistles which the Holy Spirit has given us through Paul, and 4 occurrences are in this letter. The other passages are Romans 8. 26, 1 Corinthians 11. 25, Titus 2. 3, 6.

The harmony that there should be among dear children of God, and their likeness of character and witness, unto God's glory, is very precious. 1 Timothy 3. 8 emphasizes this. A "deacon" was not called to the same service, or prominence, as an elder, but his godly solemnity was to be "in like manner," and the same thought is reiterated in verse 11. Chapter 5. 25 is impressive in another context. Actions that please God, and actions that displease Him, must "in like manner" come to the light, sooner or later (2 Cor. 5. 10, Gal. 6. 7, 8). "Thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee" is one aspect: "he shall suffer loss" is the other, if there is not the "manifestation" earlier than the judgment Seat of Christ.

But chapter 2. 9 seems parallel with 3. 8, 11 (and Titus 2. 3, 10) in dealing with persons. Some dear children of God have thought that the reference is to prayer of brethren and sisters in a gathering. Need we say how heartily we rejoice in the prayer of sisters, as set forth in 1 Corinthians 11. 1-16 (where the assembly is not before us, as in chp. 14, 34), and in 1 Peter 3. 7. Praise God for every Mary and Elizabeth and Anna, yea, and every Hannah, and for the godly wives who pray fervently with their husbands, and the godly mothers still praying over, and with, their beloved children to-day. Never would we put in the background the power of Christian women as to the assembly. It is not without intense meaning that the Holy Spirit tells us the names of the **mothers** of the Kings of Judah. And when the Lord Jesus was commissioning brethren, in Matthew 28, He sent the invitation through sisters, and godly women occupy the first two places in Romans 16. It is evident that as Satan worked on Adam, through Eve, God blesses His people, and stirs up brethren to missionary labour through women. If our sisters in their sphere are not very godly, the assembly will be affected and often become a failure. They have more influence than they realize, and we praise God for all we, like Paul, have received through such succourers of many (Rom. 16. 2).

But remembering this, we cannot here link the word "in like manner," with the verb "to pray," for the Holy Spirit has attached another verb in exactly the same grammatical form (the so-called "infinitive"). This seems to indicate that the two **actions** are parallel, and not that the two persons do the same action. The order of words chosen by the Holy Spirit is not quite the same as in our translation. Literally, "(I will) in like manner also women in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety to adorn themselves." It thus becomes clear that "and" would have been needed after "apparel," or the word "to adorn" would be "adorning," if the thought were that the prayer "in every place" were "in like manner."

The context impresses this thought, since the term used for men is not the generic word, but "males," and the subsequent references to believing women teach an appointed distinction to God's glory (verses 11-15). The tendency to interpret this as derogatory to our sisters in Christ is altogether wrong. Difference of sphere is in God's perfect wisdom. Is an angel jealous because he is not the archangel: would the latter despise one less prominent? The danger is when we forget Luke 22. 26. The principles of a ruined world have no place among us. An apostle did not look down on another child of God, nor can I be envious because I am not an apostle. 1 Corinthians 11. 7-12 is decisive. The suggestion that Galatians 3. 28 implies the same sphere would be met by the simple question as to brethren, "Are all apostles?" And the Holy Spirit has emphasized the thought particularly as to the very unity, and the different members in the one body (Rom. 12. 4). A prayerful pondering of 1 Corinthians 12 should remove many difficulties. Let us never "exalt" one part of service, to the glory of man.

What then is the often-overlooked bearing of 1 Timothy 2. 9 in prayer? Why does the apostle bring in reference to clothing as well as godly works, here? Is it not because the enemy still seeks to use the clothing of sisters against power in prayer, and since this comes in a chapter which specially emphasizes his first subtle temptation, is there not an earnest call to loving willingness in this matter? Why are sisters sometimes so unwilling to give up the world's fashions **altogether**? Is it not plain that an enemy is restraining? Is not the reference to clothing in both 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Peter 3 remarkably confirmatory of this peril? God has graciously shown by the words "in like manner" how sisters can aid (or hinder) when brethren lead in prayer in the assembly. Unseen help is very wonderful: we remember Moses on the mountain while Joshua fought. And how often in a work of God we find the beginnings quite in the background, a praying believer in an attic, or on a sick bed, it may be. O will not our sisters realize the value of "little things" and the power they have "in like manner" by getting rid of the apparel which suggests, at least in measure, a "Babylonish garment" (Jos. 7. 21), rather than the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims? God will be glorified in such simplicity, and united gatherings will pray in the Spirit with united power.

We shall be glad to send leaflets on this, and similar subjects, showing from Scripture the value of little things unto Him we love, **not** as a mere duty, and **not** with pride, but for His sake.

Esau had tears (Heb. 12. 17), even as Israel in Numbers 14. Do not let us flatter ourselves unless there is the right object in tears. "I have sinned" with self-interest—"yet honour me now"—belonged to Saul. Is our sorrow self-seeking, or because of love to God, and with a concern for His glory?

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Continued)

This glorious future is not uncertain: the "One Shepherd" is the Cause and Guarantee, if we may so express it. This thought is before us in the Old Testament (Eccl. 12. 11). Various passages Psalm 23. 1, 80. 1, Jeremiah 49. 19 come to mind, and Zechariah 13. 7 reminds us of His atoning work. Yes, the prophecy of Jacob is clear. Every blessing is "by reason of the Name of the Shepherd" Who is also "The Stone of Israel" (Gen. 49. 24). And it is deeply interesting to see that as there will be the united blessedness of the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem, in the day when both the saints of the high places, and the people of the saints of the high places are exalted, the unity will be manifested throughout, and David too, raised from the dead, shall be the shepherd of a united people (Ezek. 34. 23, 24), under the One Who is essentially David's Lord (Ps. 110. 1), though He became his Son (Matt. 22. 45). Nothing of disunity among the risen saints, or among Israel (Isa. 11. 13) will mar "that Day."

And thus the climax in John 10 is the Lord Himself, and with His Name the parable ends. Yet the thought of the sheep is resumed in verse 27 "My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me." We have already felt the force of these words, but it is well to hear them again and again, and ever in union with verse 28. "The sheep of His hand" are never to be plucked thence, and such are also the obedient "people of His pasture" (Ps. 95. 7), who "follow" Him. So the stones *in* the house itself are also the priesthood in 1 Peter 2, and those who become the "habitation" which Ephesians beautifully unveils are responsible, as the members of "the household of God." This twofoldness is emphasized throughout.

Life in the body is not viewed apart from the responsibilities of its "members," and the branches in the True Vine, engrafted by grace, are bidden to "go and bring forth fruit" (John 15. 16). Have we not already seen that the Door of "the sheep" implies their inseparable and living relationship to Him? But they also "go in and out." If I am deeply grateful that none shall snatch me from His hand, I must not misuse grace to forget "following" Him. Have I not two positions: in His hand and at His feet (Deut. 33. 3)? As soon as my "following" becomes the ground of confidence, I am misusing it, and failing to "follow." The precious blending is again seen in Hebrews 5. 9 ("the *Author of eternal salvation* unto all them that obey Him"), and Isaiah 40. 11 speaks of His bosom AND His leading, though the thought is slightly different there. Grace never makes responsibility less important, nor does obedience make grace less necessary. The Holy Spirit reveals all in perfect proportion.

And thus those who were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd, and Bishop of their souls (1 Pet. 2. 25), utterly unlike the washed sow of 2 Peter 2, are

called to rejoice in Him, and to manifest their true character at all times. Alas, there are still wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7. 15), and the fruitful life is the test (Matt. 10. 16). Moreover, till the Great Shepherd comes back (Heb. 13. 20, 21), even the Chief Shepherd, He has given under-shepherds to feed the flock of God (1 Pet. 5. 2), and this thought is precious throughout, nor is it omitted from the ministry of Paul, as some have imagined. Acts 20. 28 leads us to Ephesians 4. 11 where "Shepherds and teachers" are given because the members of the body are their Lord's sheep. And thereby this beautiful figure shows us once more the importance of right relationship and food, and spiritual quietness (Ps. 23. 2), and the love and gentleness which should be manifested among the children of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And now we come to Matthew 25. 31-46. The *parable* itself is very brief, and the unveiling of the *King* is entwined. Ezekiel 34 seems to be brought before us by the Lord Jesus, though the twofold emphasis there on false shepherds who were actually no shepherds at all (cf. Zech. 11), and on a separation between cattle and cattle, and between strong and weak, seems somewhat distinct. The *principle* of separation is ever prominent in the Holy Scriptures. As in so many parables, two classes are found here, and only two. There are, in like manner, the wheat and the tares, and the two sons—not more—and the two, not three, classes of virgins. The good and corrupt fish are severed, and the two ways of Matthew 7, with their two goals, may also be remembered. From the time of Cain and Abel do not we see this at all times, and is not its solemn message to unsaved souls of the deepest importance? Upon those who are "in Christ" is there not the responsibility to make known His one salvation?

The fulfilment of Matthew 25. 31 is "when the Son of man shall have come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him" (cf. Mark 8. 38). The contrast with His present sitting in heaven is seen by means of Revelation 3. 21 (cf. Ps. 110. 1). Our Lord will come in holy and righteous judgment. Who then are the "nations" to be gathered before Him?

There is no suggestion of godly *nations* as such: the address, in verses 34 and 41 alike, is definitely personal, and all the actions recorded illustrate this. The first saved nation is Israel (Isa. 60. 22): we say "the first," but is there another? Where we read of "all the nation blessed in Abraham" (Gen. 22. 18) there is a precious promise, for fulfilment as Revelation 5. 9 shows. In like manner "Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all the nations" in Matthew 28. 19 at once passes to the baptism of believing individuals (cf. Mark 16. 16). Romans 1. 5, 4. 17, 18, 16. 26 will illustrate this. The contrast (cf. the word "world"), is often with Israel. But who then are these persons? What does the Lord Jesus say concerning them?

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."
1 Corinthians 2. 12.

A Word of Introduction.

[It is a blessed privilege to be born of God. There is a new life, and that new life is a present privilege. And "the Spirit . . . beareth witness with our spirit" (Rom. 8. 16): indeed, this relationship is so definite that we cannot always tell whether to spell "Spirit" with a small or capital letter (e.g. Gal. 5. 22). Having received the Spirit of God, and feeling the message of John 3. 6 in our hearts, should we not be very different from the world? Those among whom we live and work, have a right to expect something very remarkable from children of God. And our Father has a right to look for the heavenly life of His children. Moreover, the verse before us shows that our privilege of knowledge is great. The treasures of wisdom in Christ are opened to us (Col. 2. 3), and the manifold gifts of God, freely given, now and in the future, are set before us, that we may possess our possessions, and live to His glory. Shall it not be so? And shall not the object of these pages be His praise in such a reviving among His children?

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"That Your Prayers be not Hindered"

1 Peter 3. 7.

WHEN we realize the emphasis of the Lord Jesus on faith and on prayer and the emphasis of the whole Scripture on the prayer of faith, we suddenly feel that many prayers are being "hindered" to-day. Can we find the cause? Can it be removed? Should this not be an earnest concern

to us all? Do we not sometimes see in our own lives a parallel with Haggai 1. 6, "Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." And the explanation is Divinely given, "Because of Mine house that is waste." God's interests and God's glory are in the background to-day. Often we seem to toil all night and take nothing (Luke 5. 5, John 21. 3), because we act on our own initiative, and is it not so with prayer? Do we not need to ask according to the will of God (1 John 5. 14, 15), and must we not therefore seek to know His will?

The great contrast between James 4 and 5 is deeply emphasized. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon YOUR PLEASURES" (4. 3); "Let him pray," "the prayer of faith," "pray one for another," "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," "he prayed in his prayer" (margin), "he prayed again" (5. 13-18). God is ready to do mighty things in response to simple and holy prayer (1 Tim. 2. 8). Our beloved Lord Who did ALWAYS those things that pleased the Father (John 8. 29) could say, "I know that Thou hearest Me ALWAYS" (John 11. 42). Disobedience is the cause of our failure. Our lives and prayers must be in the line of God's will, and seeking His glory.

1 Peter 3 specially brings before us the preciousness of HOME prayer, and the power of a united husband and wife. It is sad to find some homes where such supplication is not possible, though both profess the Name of the Lord Jesus. We do not now refer to cases where both were unsaved, when married, and one has been brought to the Lord since. 1 Peter 3. 1, 2 is very encouraging in this connexion, and we recognize that "your prayers" may still apply to the *believing* partner. But when both are "in Christ," there should be deep concern for a united spiritual growth. It is so saddening if one of those thus "joined" looks back, and longs for something of Egypt. When, by grace, there is full harmony, and a true dwelling "together," and a recognition of "grace linked with life," there is POWER in prayer. Verses 5 and 6 show the holy realization by the wife that she is a "help": there is no self-assertiveness. And the husband exercises his privileges, with tender love (Eph. 5. 25), "honouring" the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3. 7 with 1 Cor. 12. 22, 23), and thus there becomes prevailing prayer; and children, too, are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: the same word "hindered" seems used in Acts 24. 4, Romans 15. 22, 1 Thessalonians 2. 18, to help us. Satan would ever try to hinder the home life, and to IMPEDE PRAYER. Though a sister is silent in the

assembly (1 Cor. 14), her important privilege in home-prayer, with the graciously appointed covering, is seen in 1 Corinthians 11. 1-16. The important bearing of the condition of believing women on the prayers of brethren in meetings is seen by the first words after 1 Timothy 2. 8. Quite a different sphere is there given to the sister, but "in like manner" implies how the brethren can be impeded. And so is it in the home. Let there be power in home prayer, in the Holy Spirit, and there will be power in assembly prayer. Let there be the mutual loving tactfulness of husband and wife, and there will be unimpeded prayers that will bring striking and often immediate answers. Delay is through "impeded" prayer. We are not ready to receive.

Dogs and Swine.

The Repulsiveness of Sin before God.

"He that sacrificeth a lamb, he cut off a DOG'S neck: he that offereth an oblation—SWINE'S blood." Isaiah 66. 3.

"Give not that which is holy unto the DOGS, neither cast ye your pearls before SWINE, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Matthew 7. 6.

"He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the SWINE did eat: and no man gave unto him."

"The DOGS came and licked his sores."

Luke 15. 16, 16. 21.

"It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The DOG is turned to his own vomit again; and the SOW that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

2 Peter 2. 22.

Whereas the ASS is a picture of the unclean sinner (children of wrath by nature, Eph. 2. 3), needing redemption (Ex. 13. 13), the dog, with the swine, sets forth the determined sinner going on his own way, whose end is judgment (Matt. 8. 22, Rev. 22. 15).

"I will come unto him, and sup with him and he with Me" (Rev. 3. 20). The thought here is graciously personal. We call to mind also Matthew 18. 20, 28. 20, John 14. 23, unveilings of grace, all of which are precious, in distinct beauty, and all of which are distinguished from the breaking of bread where we "show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11. 26). Faith realizes the varied thoughts, and finds no contradiction. Luke 24. 30, 31 gives, in a typical historical incident, a yet further "contrast," and all combine to help our consciousness of His love. O that we may know more of our Lord's interest in us, and His presence in heaven for us, and His gracious dwelling in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3. 17).

“According To.”

WHEN I was a child the remark was made, “ ‘According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 4. 19), not only ‘out of His riches,’ but ‘according to His riches’: a King could give a penny out of his wealth, but this would not be according to his wealth.” I forget the exact words, but, whereas many other thoughts have faded from memory, this remains, and it is well. God delights to encourage His people’s faith. A concordance is ever stimulating. We observe the word before us, and enjoy such expressions as “According to His promise” (Acts 13. 23), “According to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph. 1. 5, see 9, 11) “According to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1. 7, 2 Thess. 1. 12) “According to the working of His mighty power” (Eph. 1. 19), “According to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1. 8), “According to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1. 9), “According to His mercy” (Tit. 3. 5), “According to His abundant mercy” (1 Pet. 1. 3), “According to His will” (1 John 5. 14).

It is important to remember that God reveals Himself not only in what He does, but in the way in which He does it. “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things” (Ps. 72. 18). If an earthly king gave earthly wine “according to the state of the king” (Est. 1. 7) with sad results, One infinitely greater gives that love which is better than wine (Song 1. 2), with blessed results.

The word “according” not only speaks of the ground, and stability of the supply, and, if I may so put it, the reserves He ever has, but also of the glorious way in which our gracious God encourages our confidence in Himself. There is a dignity in the display of the gospel. There is no stint, no suggestion that the supply may run short as the brook Cherith. Its hidden fulness is guaranteed by God Himself. When the Lord Jesus wrought miracles regarding earthly food, He ever gave a fulness. Everything was according to His riches. The 5,000 eat and were filled, and there were 12 baskets over. Nor are the spiritual supplies less. How foolish then is a believer’s unbelief. How unwise is any hesitation through doubt. If God supplies the trustful saint according to His riches in glory, there is no limitation, no room for fear. Bankruptcy is impossible as to heavenly fulness. Faith should ever grow, and the child of God has only one concern, namely to be in an obedient and humble condition to receive, and to glorify God in both the reception and the use, of everything for the “need.” Let us not expect according to natural wishes, nor according to unbelief, but according to His own grace, and let us live according to His will, and we shall never find that He fails.

There is a vast difference between looking to the Lord through your circumstances, and looking at them with the Lord in between.

Numbers 16.

ONE of the most remarkable backgrounds for other portions of Scripture is found here. The prayerful Bible reader knows something of the narrative. Korah is mentioned first, and On is named last. It appears that Korah had a sadly prominent position, and Moses deals with his sad effrontery at the outset. Privileged among the Levites, how grateful he should have been. Yea, more, was he not of the Kohathites who were privileged to carry the sacred vessels (Num. 4. 17-20). Exodus 6. 18 shows us that Amram and Izhar were brothers, hence Korah was a cousin of Aaron. Did he resent the privilege of another in the same family? Was there jealousy? The thought is searching, for his language would seem to imply this, “Too much upon YOU” is the complaint of Numbers 16. 3. As Judas covered his self-seeking with a plea for the poor (John 12. 5) so was it here:—“All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” The mention of the Lord’s Name is not sufficient to prove holiness (Luke 6. 46): Saul could say, “Blessed be ye of the Lord” (1 Sam. 23. 21) when far from His will. How important it is that we should not be deceived, even in ourselves. The attitude is the more remarkable after God’s dealing with Miriam in chapter 12, and after the holy witness of chapter 14 against men’s waywardness at the very time they were uttering the Name of the Lord, (verse 40). How slowly the holiness of God is learnt. The contrasted attitude of Moses is encouraging. The one who was said to lift up himself fell on his face, and only then did he speak to Korah and all his company. Nor did he vindicate himself, nor take matters into his own hands. “Even to-morrow the Lord will show”: it is well to commit oneself to Him Who judgeth righteously. God chooses (cf. Num. 17. 5, Heb. 5. 5). The words “Too much upon you” are shown to apply to those who complained (ver. 7). So is it often. Then came the definite expostulation, reminding of God’s favour, “The God of Israel hath separated you,” and when we recollect the time of this severance (Ex. 32), the sin here is seen as the more daring. “Seek ye the priesthood also?” Let us beware lest we misuse privileges. “What is Aaron that ye murmur against him?” What have we that we have not received? (1 Cor. 4. 7). There is no room for pride. The members of a body have a care for one another. O that it may be yet more so among children of God.

The special stress on Aaron has a further aspect. Numbers 17 shows that he was a type of the Lord Jesus, and Korah’s self-choosing therefore prefigures the defiance of all who claim a caste-priesthood to-day, whether in Rome or in her daughters. They take upon themselves that which is against the Lord Jesus. It is deeply important to see in the case of

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Cain, of Nadab and Abihu, of Uzziah, and here of Korah—throughout—the fearful sin (disregarded to-day) of approaching God in one's own way. How blessed to draw near, in the way He has appointed (Heb. 10. 19-22), resting upon the one High Priest, enabled to “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2. 5).

Dathan and Abiram were, as Numbers 26. 5-9 too emphasizes, of the family of Reuben, the firstborn in one sense, but “unstable as water,” and not God's choice. They seem to aim differently from Korah, though the standpoint is the same. They do not seek incense and priesthood, but authority. The setting aside of God's governmental arrangement is here seen, and prefigured, an attack on the Kingship and Lordship of the Lord Jesus. The position of Moses was hateful to them rather than Aaron's: hence their evil words, “Except thou make thyself altogether a *prince* over us.” But this was the same setting aside of *God's* choice, and the language is similarly defiant and insulting. It lacks the hypocritical reference to the Lord. Observe “We will not come up,” both at the beginning and the ending, and the pleading words of verse 9 “A small thing” are cast back in derision (verse 13). The cruel retort “Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?” shows us the painful experiences God's servant underwent. It is no light thing to have responsibility. Privileges in God's service are not only “enjoyments” (2 Cor. 11. 28, 29). It is hard to be misjudged and misrepresented. Joseph knew what this meant, but above all, there was One Who “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself” (Heb. 12. 3), even among “His own” (John 1. 11), yet “when he was reviled, reviled not again” (1 Pet. 2. 23), though He was the Creator, and will be the Judge. How patient *we* should be.

One other was found among the leaders of discontent. His name may suggest “vanity,” and his sin is recorded, yet he is not mentioned with Korah, nor in the solemn judgment on Dathan and Abiram. The Psalm (106) is silent as to him. We cannot say “why,” but, at least, the encouraging hint is before us that he may have repented. We leave all in God's hand, but the silence is to lead us to pray for repentance of those who “oppose themselves” (2 Tim. 2. 25, 26). As we shall see, the context of these words is full of allusion to Numbers 16.

The dread manifestation of God's wrath soon came. Just previously “the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation,” a reminder of Exodus 33. 9. Numbers 12. 5 and 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9. There is all too little realization of God's majesty to-day. The attitude of Moses and Aaron shows what God approves (Num. 16. 22, cf. verses 46, 47, Deut. 9. 18). We are not intense in our prayer as we should be. “One man” (verse 22)—observe the power of evil influence: of Achan we read, “That man perished not alone in his iniquity”

(Jos. 22. 20, Eccl. 9. 18). The godly power of one man is seen in the life of a Hezekiah or a Josiah, an Ezra or a Nehemiah. On which scale is our influence? Is it to God's glory, or not?

The nature of the judgment gave striking evidence as to the locality of Sheol, and witnesses definitely against those who confuse it with the shallow grave for the body. The fire that came forth reminds of Leviticus 10. 2 (in contrast with 9. 24). Blessed be God, if the fire was upon the Spotless Sacrifice for us, “an Offering made by fire of a savour of *rest* unto the Lord.” But it must be one or the other: there is no third alternative. So if we are not at peace, through the sword of Zechariah 13. 7, the message of Revelation 19. 15 speaks loudly.

The broad plates for the altar (Num. 16. 38) were to be a lasting memorial, “a sign” or token, even as the rod in chapter 17. 10.* It is so perilous to come to God one's own way: it is so blessed to come to Him His own way. We repeat that from the time of Cain onwards, this is all-important.

* So that Israel were separated, as it were, from the altar, and did not see it. Cf. the thought in Lev. 16. 2, 12, 13, Num. 4. 20.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Continued.)

The sheep (in Matthew 25. 31-46)

- (a) “have been blessed”—this is fundamental;
- (b) are to inherit a long-prepared kingdom;
- (c) have shown love to those characterized as His “brethren”;
- (d) do not seem to understand the revealed principle of Matthew 11. 4 and Acts 9. 4;
- (e) have apparently lived through a time of persecution for God's dear children;
- (f) are not reckoned as particularly sharers in suffering that persecution.

There is no mention of *believers* here, before the Judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5. 10), nor do we find the *dead* raised up as in Revelation 20. 12 before the great white throne. It is not for us, therefore, to confuse these distinct subjects.

That there will be a time of special persecution for God's dear people just before, (and at), the ending of this age is clear, and the special attempt to hinder eating and drinking by the mandate of Revelation 13. 17 would emphasize the words “I was an hungered” (cf. Rev. 7. 16). Who will be found on earth in the time of that great tribulation? Does not Daniel 7 speak of (a) the saints of the Most High, and (b) the people of the saints of the Most High (verses 21, 25, 27)? Are there not, moreover, (c) Gentiles from all nations who at the beginning of the Lord's kingdom will serve Him (Zech. 8. 20-

23), and (d) some far off, who have not heard His fame, nor seen His glory (Isa. 66. 19), as well as (e) the army of Antichrist (Rev. 19. 19), and (f) others who have received the mark of the beast?

Hence we can understand the emphasis on God's sovereign grace. Neither Revelation 13. 8 nor 17. 8 suggest that only believers will be preserved from worshipping the Beast. Election rather than "faith" is here especially emphasized. This would seem absolutely fitting, if there are those included who do not yet know the Lord, and yet are held back from doing that which *must* be punished eternally (Rev. 14. 9, 10), though unconscious "why," till afterwards. Thus all Scriptures agree, and we see how Satan's plan is frustrated, and the glory of God's grace shines out once more, emphasizing anew the precious, undying words, of One Who shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, "that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me I should lose none" (John 18. 9, cf. 6. 37). Glory be to God!

This key fits the lock. It explains the beautiful words "having been blessed." The "for" of Matthew 25. 35 is evidential, not causal, just as in Luke 7. 47 where the whole point is love because of forgiveness, not forgiveness because of love (verse 42). The power of restraining grace is glorious. We call to mind Romans 11. 4, "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal": this does not suggest that Elijah was ignorant of many witnesses for God's truth, but that there was "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11. 5), who had been kept back from idolatry. God's restraining hand is seen in Genesis 20. 6, and may we not see it in the mercy that watched over Saul of Tarsus (1 Tim. 1. 16)? The language of John 10. 16 is helpful ("sheep" before they are brought), and there is much hidden in the order of the words in Jude 1 "preserved, called."

Now we realize why these "sheep," who have manifested kindness to God's people, and refused the mark of the beast, are quite ignorant of the intimate relation of the Lord Jesus to His members. Everything harmonizes, and we thank God that He can use whom He pleases, as in Acts 28 (note Prov. 22. 1). Everything is before His eyes, subject to His power, and within His knowledge. Those who are graciously called "His brethren" are evidently those of whom Matthew 12. 50 speaks (cf. Heb. 2. 11). Thus we see believers, in living relationship to Him, suffering under Antichrist, yet some preserved, for the period has been made short (Matt. 24. 22, *not* shortened from the revealed 1260 days), albeit others are slain (Rev. 6. 11, 12. 16, 17, 20. 4). "As for God, His way is perfect," and our times are in His hand.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Isaiah 30. 15.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD has hidden resources for His people, and they never run dry. It is a marvellous privilege to be accepted in the Lord Jesus, to be made the righteousness of God in Him, to receive out of Christ's perennial fulness, to have the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, to hear the delightful words, "All things are yours," to know that God the Father will with Him freely give us all things (Rom. 8. 32), to be encouraged and invited to enjoy restfulness, to be forbidden anxiety, to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Himself as the Earnest of the inheritance, when body with soul and spirit, shall be completely blessed (1 Thess. 5. 23). Do those of us who are God's children realize our riches? Do we live up to our wondrous "income"? Do we claim that which is ours? Or do we act as if the promises were only human words, and as if our wealth was only theoretical? What witness as to the truthfulness of our glorious Lord is our life giving? It is with a view to His honour in the daily walk, of both writer and readers, that these pages are humbly sent forth. Mere head-knowledge, or accuracy, is not the aim, but His glory in the all-round growth of those whom He has so graciously redeemed.

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"Be" and "Become."

AS soon as we realize the Holy Spirit's perfect use of words, with a deep heart-realization, the study of the Scripture takes an aspect which is impossible otherwise. Every word is Divinely chosen, and we can depend upon it. The thought of

mere "synonyms" is removed, and we come as learners, and as worshippers.

As this prayerful study continues, the very experience deepens our consciousness of its firm foundation and its value. Erring hypotheses show their failure when they are applied sufficiently: truth is only the more established in our heart. The repeated words of Scripture have a striking force, and when two are together several times in relation or contrast,* the helpfulness is ever increasing.

The doctrine of Christ (2 John 9) is assailed to-day, and many leaven the Divine unveiling of His person. In holy jealousy for His glory, the Holy Spirit has provided everything to guard us against such mistakes, and the consistent use of the two words "be" and "become" is deeply instructive, the more impressive because in different books, and through His use of different writers.

John 1 comes first before us, "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God; the Same *was* in the beginning with God: all things *became* through Him, and without Him there *became* not one thing which hath *become*" (verses 1-3). Even the uninstructed believer must surely see that this is not a small point. Here are the *first seven verbs* of the book, and the verb "to be" occurs emphatically four times, before we have "become," three times. Nor is this all: the verb "to be" immediately follows twice in verse 4 concerning the Lord Jesus, and the first occurrence of "become" definitely with regard to a living being is in verse 6. "There became a *man*, having been sent from God" (lit.); we know how this earnest servant of God contrasted himself with the Lord Jesus, for example, "After me cometh a Man Who hath *become* before me: because He *was* 'most before' me" (1. 30). Here we see again the same two verbs. Going back we read "He (John) *was not* that Light" (8, see also 9). But is not the word "become" also used of the Lord Jesus? It is:—"And the Word *became* flesh" (14): but here is a Divine contrast with "the Word *was* God." We behold both the essential glory of the Lord Jesus and what He "became" for our sakes (note also verse 17). The translation "*was made* flesh" almost sounds irreverent in modern English, and certainly obscures, unintentionally, the Holy Spirit's meaning.

In this same gospel the Lord Himself emphasizes His glory in exactly the same way, "Before Abraham *became*, I *am*" (8. 58). The context shows how important it is to render accurately. He Who was Greater than Jacob, Who was David's Lord as well as his Son, *was* before Abraham *became*, and "is" the Living One beyond all thought of mere time. The precious

* E.g. "grace" and "glory," "tohu" and "bohu" ("without form and void").

examples of "I am" (e.g. The Way, the Resurrection, the Life, etc.) confirm this thought, and likewise the language, mysterious to an unbeliever, found in 3. 13, "The Son of man Which IS (the One Being) in heaven." But our believing hearts can say, "My Lord and my God." Everything leads to praise.

We pass to the epistles. Hebrews 1, as John 1, commences with the glory of the Son of God, and we read, "Who, *being* the Brightness of His glory, and the Express Image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power," and then, *after* the mention of His precious atonement in the body of His flesh through death, we read, "Having *become* by so much 'better' than the angels, by how much He hath inherited a name more excellent than they" (verses 3, 4). The word translated "better" is often found in Hebrews. There is no suggestion of One Who was worse becoming better, but, as the derivation implies, a position of *strength* (see 7. 17, 19, 22, 8. 6, 9. 23, &c.). The contrast is sometimes with that which is typical, and so could not avail. Our beloved Lord in becoming Man took a condition of weakness, and hence, as to His humanity, and likewise after He took the place of judgment and the curse (Gal. 3. 13) there must be a "becoming" (see also 2 Cor. 13. 4). Hence we behold His "surpassing" glory in resurrection.†

The Name "Son" is evidently before us in Hebrews 1, and we find that the use of the two verbs is not confined to one passage in this epistle. "Thou *art* My Son" in ch. 1. 5 is followed by "Thou *art* the Same" in 1. 12, both in the section emphasizing His Deity. "Become" is before us elsewhere, "That He might *become* a merciful and faithful High Priest" (2. 17): "Christ glorified not Himself to have *become* High Priest" (5. 5): "Having been brought to the end, He *became* Cause of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (5. 9): "Having *become* High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (6. 20): "By so much hath Jesus *become* Surety of a better covenant" (7. 22), "Having *become* higher than the heavens" (7. 26). The full meaning is obscured, as in John, by the strange translation "made," which is quite inappropriate: indeed, the verb has no thought of this, and an altogether different word is regularly in use with such a meaning. We cannot be too simple in our translating what God has given. The prayerful reader may have already noticed that in 5. 5 also we have "be" and "become" together, "He That said to Him, Thou *art* My Son" being mentioned exactly as in ch. 1. There are no accidents, nor mere coincidences, in the words of God.

In other epistles there are confirmations of the same Divine teaching. In some cases only one verb may be used, but the

† Matthew 16. 16, "Thou *art*," and 21. 42, "The Same is *become* the Head of the corner" illustrates the essential Deity, and the raising up of our Lord Jesus, in the first gospel.

context shows the force, e.g. Galatians 4. 4, "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth *His Son*" (the name as in Hebrews), "having *become* from a woman, having *become* under law." It is plain that He *was* before He *became*. The passages may be in different parts of the same letter as in Romans, "Concerning His Son Who *became* of the seed of David according to the flesh. Who hath been marked out Son of God in power" (1. 3, 4), "out from whom Christ, as to that which is according to the flesh, *the One being* over all, God blessed for ever, Amen" (9. 4). Thus the Deity of Christ and then His gracious and condescending humanity are constantly before us.

The practical context in Philippians 2 does not hinder the deepest doctrinal teaching:—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being (a special word, *υπαρχων*) in the form of God, thought not to *be* equal with God a matter of grasping, but emptied Himself, having taken the form of a servant, having *become* in the likeness of men, and having been found in fashion as Man, He humbled Himself, having *become* obedient until death, even death of a cross" (Phil. 2. 5-8). Here again we thankfully see what He *was*, and what He, in love to our souls, *became*. In Colossians 1. 17, 18 there are several precious thoughts, but this is surely included. "And He *is* before all things, and all things stand together (held in control) in Him: and He *is* the Head of the body, the church, Who *is* the Beginning, Firstborn out from the dead, that He might *become*, among all, He Himself pre-eminent." We call to mind Revelation 1. 17, 18, "I *am* the First and the Last, and the Living One, and I *became* dead, and behold, I *am* a Living One for ever and ever." Thus we come to realize the continual reminder of the Holy Spirit, and hear anew the prayer of John 17. 5, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory *which I had with Thee before the world was*." And the end of Revelation reminds us of the majesty of God, in the last use of the two words together. This is in ch. 21. 6, "And He said to me, They have *become*! I *am* the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending." And on this glorious background of His personal glory beyond His creation (just as in John 1. 1-3, and Heb. 3. 3, 4), with its testimony that all the passages combine to exalt the Deity of our Lord Jesus, we have the gracious invitation which may well close our prayerful study, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." How blessed it will be if some are brought to this blessed experience through the reading of these pages. Such a change will be their joy, and ours, but, beyond all, it will be His.

Further passages, illustrating the Holy Spirit's contrast of "be" and "become," which have helped any reader, will be welcomed.

Numbers 16.

(Concluded)

But now let us meditate on some allusions to this chapter elsewhere. Direct references are important (Num. 26. 9-11, Deut. 11. 6, Ps. 106. 17). Then, on the background of grace ("notwithstanding the sons of Korah died not"), the eleven psalms "for the sons of Korah" (42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, 88) remind us that grace ever leads to temple-gratitude. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee" (Isa. 38. 19, 1 Pet. 2. 9). Nor must we forget Psalm 65. 4 with Numbers 16. 7.

The opening of the earth and the fire speak of the time of the end, the former is linked then with God's protection (Rev. 12. 16), and the latter, for a season, with the devil's travesty (Rev. 13. 13). The thought that past judgments are warnings of the future may lead us to see a reference to God's *strange* work here in Isaiah 28. 21, as well as to His judgment on the Philistines and Canaanites. Isaiah 5. 14 seems to show that this solemn event had impressed the prophet deeply. The contrasted "New thing" of Jeremiah 31. 22 in the incarnation of Christ is refreshing, and also the newness of resurrection life in the opening of the earth, for them "in Christ Jesus" when He comes again, though even now their souls are no longer associated with Hades (Phil. 1. 23, Heb. 12. 23).

But one or two passages as to godly separation in the later Scriptures show the Holy Spirit's application to us. It is so easy to be led away by murmurers (see 2 Pet. 3. 17). Believers cannot be too careful as to companionship. The compromising laxity of to-day must hinder perception of God's will, and grieve God's Holy Spirit. Let us see the passages, and be sure the allusion is God's own witness,—quite "unforced," by us, a definite message from Himself.

In the pre-New Testament translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint) Numbers 16. 5 contains the words of 2 Timothy 2. 19 except the designed change in *name*, "The Lord knew them that are His."‡ And in verse 27 we have the very word "to depart" or "stand away" from which the Holy Spirit uses "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord *depart* from iniquity." This reminds us that the separation in this epistle is not only from open infidelity, but from unrighteousness among those who claim to be God's people. The usurping of priesthood by Korah will help many to see the coming out at the time of the Reformation as the responsibility of God's people, but how much further the Scripture applies. There are many who use the Name of the Lord who are quite unwilling for the words of the Lord. Nonconformity is infected with denial of the inspired Scrip-

‡ Moreover "sanctified" is the same as "holy."

tures. Yet how few realize the "perilous times" to-day. There is much that "provokes" the Lord (verse 30), and yet how absent is the attitude of which Ezekiel 9. 4 speaks.

This emphasis on separation from the setting aside of God's appointments among His people is seen yet more to be the mind of the Holy Spirit when we observe that 2 Corinthians 6. 17 ("Touch not the unclean thing") looks back to Numbers 16. 26 ("Touch nothing of theirs"). Years intervened between the epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy, but the apostle had the same thought impressed on his heart, even the application of Numbers 16. And should not we be more concerned in these matters?

True, the wheat and tares are together after the first failure of sleep, in the *field*, but that is explained as "the world": there is no Scripture for the broadening of a local assembly. We need more jealousy for God's Holy Name. And this seems to illustrate once more that Numbers 16 was a power in the life and experience of Isaiah, for chapter 52. 11 is the link between this, and 2 Corinthians 6. There is more danger by "contact" than many recognize, but Numbers 19 has given this warning (verses 11, 13, 16, &c.). How important to keep oneself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1. 27). The separation which 2 Timothy appoints is thus seen to be from persons as well as from actions, not in pride, but with a consciousness of our own need and danger (Jude 23), and with a concern for God's glory. The solemn statement "Lest ye be consumed in all their sins" reminds us of Revelation 18. 4, "That ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." And again we learn how deeply was this passage implanted in the heart of God's servant Paul, "Neither be partakers of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5. 22). Should it not be in our hearts more definitely? We risk spiritual infection too lightly, and deal with spiritual illness in a way that we should not act as to that which is physical. May there be a holy realization of the awful sin of tampering with God's plan for His people as to "access," and His arrangements both in worship and in the godly oversight and care of His children. Words like the "must" or "oughtest" of 1 Timothy 3. 15 make clear that human variation is a sin of greater pride and impertinence than we have hitherto thought. O that we may henceforth have a reverence for "our Father," and for His revealed will, under the gracious instruction of the Holy Spirit.

Parables of the Shepherd and His Sheep.

(Concluded)

It is enjoyable to realize that the same word is used for those redeemed in Matthew 25 and John 10. We are quite conscious that the Holy Spirit can use similar figures with different meaning, but He condescends to make this clear,

and when the same picture, or type, is employed for those who are alike blessed, we may be sure there is a definite purpose, and that we shall find a helpful parallel. And are not those who will be preserved from identifying themselves with Antichrist, even though they know Him not, nor His gracious restraining at the outset, loved with the same love that led our Lord to Calvary for us, and will not the exceeding riches of God's grace be seen in a united people to all eternity?

Meanwhile, we wait the return of the 'Great Shepherd of the sheep' (Heb. 13. 20), and long that, instead of the hireling spirit, there may be more pastoral love of under-shepherds, subject to the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5. 4) in our own hearts, and in the hearts of others. The intensely practical meaning of these parables, and all Scripture, both as to our gratitude to the Lord, and our relation to one another, can never be overlooked. How precious should be the unity of saints, and how real our use of the Lord's pasture day by day. Psalm 23 is not only for childhood's learning but for sainthood's experience. The Holy Spirit makes Holy Scripture living.

The believer's path is not easy. Children of God are still sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves (Matt. 10. 16), and thus are very dependent on continual miracles of grace, the more so as Matthew 7. 15 is not without saddening illustrations. But Hebrews 1. 14 reminds us of our Father's watchful care. Everything needful is provided, and have we not proved the constant faithfulness of "the Shepherd and Bishop" (or Overseer) of our souls (1 Pet. 2. 25)? But He, Who graciously uses many "means," condescends to employ "one another." Hence the important threefold restoration of Peter in John 21, with its various words for sheep and lambs, indicates the deep and loving interest we should have in the different temperaments and conditions of different children of God, that all may be helped forward, and shepherded and fed aright. How real is the emphasis on the supply of the true *food*: there is no pasture to compare with the words of God. Do we feed aright, and lead others to the same precious supplies?

In the Book of Revelation our beloved Lord is revealed rather as the *Lamb*, and His death is prominently before us, as the One Sacrifice for His covenant people; but the Lamb Himself has there the ministry of the Shepherd, and feeds, and leads, in chapter 7. 17 (cf. Ps. 28. 9). Thus His sheep will not cease to look to Him, nor will His shepherding love vary, though their need, and the valley of the shadow of death, and the wild beasts of earth will no more be found. Glory be to God that nothing will change our relationship to Him though earth's trials will be past. Eternity will illustrate His love, but will never exhaust it. Praise and joy and readiness to do His will, without one flaw, will be our blessed response. May these meditations on Scripture be used by the Holy Spirit to bring more into this attitude to-day.

"A Chosen Vessel Unto Me to Bear My Name."

Acts 9. 15.

WHAT am I? A vessel. Then what does the vessel contain? The important point is that a vessel is made with a purpose, and if it is empty it is not true to its name, whatever external beauty it may possess.

In 2 Corinthians 4. 7 the Holy Spirit speaks very definitely to our hearts, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." O how choice is the treasure:—"The light of the knowledge of the glory of God." Think what such words mean. This treasure is entrusted to us. Do we hide it, or show it? When God, in His lovingkindness, laid hold of Saul, he meant to put something within him. No longer was he to be Saul a Pharisee, but Paul a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and bearing His name. "To me to live is Christ": who can say all that this implies?

Whose name do you and I bear? Do men see the Lord Jesus Christ in us? Do we attract attention to Him or to ourselves? Wherever we go do we bear HIS name, and glorify Him? The psalmist said, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only" (Ps. 71. 16). How contrasted is the attitude of a natural man. Gamaliel spoke of a Theudas, to whom men joined themselves, and of a Judas "who drew away much people after him" (Acts 5. 37). But John the Baptist rejoiced that Christ should increase, and himself decrease (John 3. 30). Paul grieved to think that in the assembly at Ephesus men would arise "speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20.30). It was this that his whole life hated. He wished Christ to be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death (Phil. 1. 20). How he would have mourned over any calling themselves "Paulicians," or a building being named "Saint Paul's." The name of Christ was dear to him beyond measure and we hear the precious words "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the NAME of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you," followed by "Lest any should say I had baptized in (to) mine own name" (1 Cor. 1. 10, 15).* All personal glory, all names of other men, all sectarian names, and all other possibilities are set aside, and we are simply to bear the Lord's Name, as to our acceptance before God, and in our ministry alike. We can never think too much of Him. O that "other things" may be cast out, and that there may be room in the cleansed "vessel" for His Name!

* This is deeply important. If baptism were not MEANT for all children of God, he would have been wrong to associate his not baptizing with SUCH a reason. Baptism is Divinely intended to exalt the Lord Jesus alone.

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"As is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Corinthians 15. 48, 49.

A Word of Introduction.

HOW wondrous is the change that God's grace has wrought for believers. "We were in Adam," we are, "in Christ." And the new relationship involves an entirely new prospect. Believers will be like unto their Lord (Phil. 3. 20, Ps. 17, 15, Rom. 6. 5). The result of sin, seen in our body, and in its death, will no more be felt or seen. "We shall be changed," "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." What manner of persons ought we to be, and how definitely should our life make manifest the heavenly calling, and being with Him, and being like Him for ever (1 John 3. 2, 3). With this object of His glory are these pages sent forth. May He have all the glory.

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Trust.

"I have TRUSTED in Thy mercy" (Ps. 13. 5).

"I TRUST in the mercy of God for ever and ever" (Ps. 52. 8).

"He that TRUSTETH in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about" (Ps. 32. 10).

"What time I am afraid, I will TRUST in Thee" (Ps. 56. 3).

"In God I have put my TRUST: I will not fear" (Ps. 56. 4, 11).

"I will TRUST, and not be afraid" (Isa. 12: 2).

"His heart is fixed, TRUSTING in the Lord" (Ps. 112: 7).

"They that TRUST in the Lord shall be as mount Zion which cannot be moved" (Ps. 125: 1).

"They that TRUST in their wealth . . . none of them can by any means redeem" (Ps. 49: 6, 7).

"TRUST not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery" (Ps. 62: 10).

"Because ye despise this word, and TRUST in oppression . . . therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall" (Isa. 30: 12, 13).

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt, . . . and TRUST in charlots" (Isa. 31: 1).

"TRUST ye not in lying words" (Jer. 7: 4).

"Because thou hast TRUSTED in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken" (Jer. 48: 7).

"Thou didst TRUST in thine own beauty" (Ezek. 16: 15).

"Ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst TRUST in thy way" (Hos. 10: 13).

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and TRUST in the mountain of Samaria" (Amos 6: 1).

"If he TRUST to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity . . . for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it" (Ezek. 33: 13).

"He that TRUSTETH in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28: 26).

"TRUST in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3: 5).

"Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in Thee do I TRUST" (Ps. 143: 8).

"Cursed be the man that TRUSTETH in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that TRUSTETH in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the water and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and she shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. 17: 5-8).

The repentance of believers is quite as prominent in the Scriptures as the repentance of sinners. Is it so in our lives, and our ministry?

Faith is not creative, but receptive: it does not make a promise, but takes it. If we imagine that we can have faith for what we "like," as we like, we are putting presumption and sentiment in the place of loving response to God's will.

Mistakes Through Misreading Genesis 4.

HOW many times has this chapter been brought up in the open air, when we tell of the gospel of Christ. And the objector professes to be concerned about what he calls a mistake, while all the time he is unconcerned about his own condition,—a dying man in a dying race. And the *source* of the objection is soon revealed by its *nature*. The enemy who misquoted God's words in Genesis 3: 1 is discovered, working on the fertile soil of a sinful heart to bring forth spiritual "thorns and thistles." When we get to the root of the question raised, it is not against what is written but against what is *not* written. This is a poor objection. The opposer first *alters* one word, (thereby changing the whole meaning), and then asks why we are *not* told whom Cain married. The *always*-altered word of verses 16, 17 ("took" instead of "knew") shows how every one quotes from others, and this is called independent thought. Alas, if schoolboys make the same mistake, we suspect copying, but infidels glory in their shame. The identical word in verse 1 shows that Cain's *marriage* is never associated in Scripture with the land of Nod.

A similar attitude as to the silence of Scripture is found in the adding of a thought which is not implied by a single verse in the chapter. The opposer speaks of *only* two sons. Apart from the testimony of Genesis 5: 4, (related to 1: 28), the whole of the fourth chapter indicates the contrary. It shows throughout that it mentions but a small part of the history, and a few of the names.

Again the objector quite misreads verse 14. "Every one that *findeth* me" does not allude to distant newly-met inhabitants of another land. *They* would have no reason to kill *because* of Abel's death. Such judgment was associated solely with the avenger of blood pursuing (cf. Num. 35: 27 "find"). The point is that Cain would be a fugitive, and he feared his own relatives who (he thus implies) were living in the family of Adam when he committed the crime. Hence his words suggest the very point which men deny, and refer to no one else.

Yet again, the passage claims to deal with many years: it has no suggestion of brief lives: it gives no date for the building of the city. The objector's theory that the murder took place *soon* after birth, and that the city was built almost *immediately*, is based on the most unfitting assumptions. O that men may realize the testimony of this chapter against their sin also, and concerning the one way of salvation, and not suffer the enemy of souls to blind them to its message, with such baseless and sinful opposition!

The coming of the Lord Jesus is the bright hope for His redeemed, but it has "no brightness in it" for those who do not love Him.

Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

“AN epistle of Christ” surely contains His words of which He Himself said, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15. 7, cf. John 14. 15, 23, Mark 8. 38, &c.). An epistle without words is the work of a baby: all our Lord’s words should be dear to us, inscribed upon our very hearts. The new covenant is not less literal than the old, but the place of writing is internal, not external, and the material is different, even a tender heart, not a stone. Legalism rather belongs to stone, and he who alters this word glibly may betray that his heart is becoming strong rather than softened. An individual believer and an assembly, not receiving the words of Christ have alike failed in the appointed mission. A fleshy (not fleshly) table is gladly receptive (Jas. 1. 21): thus will there be fruit, and testimony, and glory to His Name in the manifestation of Himself.

It is worthy of notice that the believers were not an epistle of Paul, but of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 4. 5); his was only the privilege of ministry (verse 6, cf. 1 Cor. 3. 5). And they were only a recommendation for him if they had the words of Christ on their hearts. Any other teaching is a dishonour (Matt. 5. 19, and more manifestly still 2 John 10). The stress on the heart and on knowing God is not alone in Jeremiah 31. 31-34. It is throughout the New Testament. And what have *we* in our hearts, and written upon our affections? 1 Chronicles 29. 3 is deeply impressive, leading up to verses 17-19, with the “heart” five times. Romans 2. 15, if rightly punctuated, would seem to show the children of God in contrast with those whose thoughts will accuse or excuse in the day when God shall judge.* Have we the work of the law, even righteousness, written in our hearts, so that we delight in the law of God according to the inward man (Rom. 7. 22)? Ink is black, and without life: it is material, and is not identified with the paper on which it is written. How different is the Spirit of the Living God. Alas that many misunderstand His stress on the words and glory of Christ, and seek fresh revelations, and imagine these are from the Spirit of God. Hence, too, the sadly glib use of the words “I was led.” O, dear believing reader, if you and I are truly led, we shall be “led” to the words and ways of the Lord Jesus. Do you not see God’s object, of which the silver coin in Matthew 22. 20 is a picture? That coin had an “image and superscription.” All believers, “not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19), are to be “changed into the same

*The parenthesis seems to finish in the middle and the latter part. linked with verse 16, reads on from verse 12.

image” (2 Cor. 3. 18). This is the object of the Spirit of God, of which an exact travesty is found in Revelation 13. 14. Christ is to be “formed” in us (Gal. 4. 19, see also Col. 1. 27). But you and I cannot have Him without His words (John 15. 7), we cannot have the image without the superscription, and the Holy Spirit still writes and impresses those words. Errors in “dispensationalism” would sometimes seem to veil this. Matthew 28. 19, with John 15. 14, shows the importance of Christ’s commandments (John 14. 15). It is not *spirituality* to omit Baptism, nor to alter the symbols in the Lord’s Supper, nor to ignore Matthew 5. 7. It is not a mere literality to have the Lord’s words in our heart-affections: it is sin to suggest anything else. Let this be realized, and the misuse of the expression “The letter killeth” will be humbly confessed.

The tables of stone were beautiful, they were written with the finger of God (Ex. 31. 18). But law cannot save, it cannot make alive (Gal. 3. 21), it can only work wrath against the sinner. If it “gave,” or compromised, it would cease to be a righteous law. Its very holiness makes it strengthless, not in itself, but through the flesh of man (Rom. 8. 3). The principle of Romans 11. 6 stands firmly: we cannot mingle law and grace: law must be used “lawfully” (1 Tim. 1. 8). Admixture has ever brought confusion, and thus detracted from the glory of God. The holy law of God (Rom. 7. 12) in *two* tables of stone was, and must be, unyielding. It could not become the food and life of sinners, it must remain as the witness against man, and the principle of *two* witnesses, at least, and their *two* stones first (Deut. 17. 5-7), would, by the *two* tables, suggest God’s own judgment ready for the guilty. Longsuffering may wait (“First,” John 8. 7, “Neither do I condemn thee,” verse 10), but judgment must fall. The breaking of the tables in Exodus 32 made a background for longsuffering (Ex. 32. 19). Moses was permitted thus to act in the forbearance of God, but he could not make *atonement* (Ex. 32. 30-33). Nor can longsuffering be indefinitely continued. It is limited to “days” (cf. 1 Pet. 3. 20). The *same* law must be re-written, this time on stone associated with the earth, telling of One Who would become Man, and on Whose whole life God’s will would be written (Ps. 40. 6-8), and provision was made for the law not to be given to the people on the second occasion. Grace reigning through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21) must be manifested after longsuffering, and thus the unbroken tables are kept, and for all united with the Mercy Seat, even the Lord’s people united with Christ, there are no longer the stones to judge. The cherubim cannot become the *other* side of the Mercy Seat: the Lord Jesus is ever between and His redeemed rest on Him. But the tables of stone, for those who have no Mercy Seat, remain, even as the Lord Jesus will return with the sword of His mouth (Rev. 19. 15), for

all who do not know Him by faith as the One against Whom the sword of Zechariah 13. 7 awoke. O the blessedness of His substitution! O the glory of the gospel!

(1) *the Lord will, to be continued*.

How Old was Terah when Abram was Born?

THE Scripture stress on younger sons in Genesis, (electing grace, not nature), must never be forgotten (Abel and Seth, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim). The order in Genesis 11. 26 would not prove that Abram was the firstborn. If he was *not*, we have a striking help to prayerful care as to inferences regarding Scriptural numbers and chronology. Does the Holy Spirit indicate? Genesis 11. 26 implies that Terah's eldest son was 135 when he died, but ch. 12. 4 shows Abram was only 75 after this period (note Acts 7. 4). If we realize Abram was much younger, we can understand more impressively his language to Lot in ch. 13. Let us look at some other verses. How many have spoken against Scripture, and have said, "Adam and Eve had only two sons." We have referred them to Genesis 5. 3, 4. It is deeply interesting to see also that Seth was not the eldest son, but a careless perusal of this chapter might lead some to think he was. Scripture is not written for carelessness but that we may compare Scripture with Scripture. We compare Genesis 5. 32 and 8. 13, and realize in the light of 11. 10 that Shem was *not* the eldest son, though his name is first. Chapter 10. 21 confirms, and it is noteworthy that Shem is last in that passage. Genesis 25. 9 comes before us to confirm. This may lead us to the possibility that the remarkably divergent ages at birth in chapter 5 are because the line of Messiah, through Noah, and not of the eldest son, is here given. Anything else remarkably would have veiled the chronology data of that chapter, the *only* chronology for the period, involving much of deep importance to the child of God. Surely the wisdom of God shines out in little things, and we would worship. These hints as to the history remind us how small a portion is given, and how vain are the inferences of many when they ignore God's silence, and perfect selection. O that the result of our prayerful study may always be reverence and thanksgiving, that He may be glorified.

Observe the *twofold* thought of heavenliness and the coming glory in the three following verses:—

"NOW is My kingdom not FROM HENCE" ("not of this world," John 18. 36).

"HERE have we no continuing city, but we seek (the) one TO COME" ("about to be," Heb. 13. 14).

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for (future), the evidence of things not seen" (heavenly, Heb. 11. 1).

Parables Associated With Feasts.

THE emphasis on hospitality was ever to the front in the East: we notice this as soon as Abraham received the heavenly Visitors, nor was it otherwise with Lot. Moreover God has always given instruction by means of the body which He has created, and He has appointed the way in which we receive its nourishment, in order to afford many typical lessons as to the taking, enjoying, and assimilating of His precious truth, which thereby becomes part of ourselves. Accordingly from Genesis 1 onward He mentions food; for example, immediately after the fall and the flood instructing both Adam and Noah concerning it, and linking it, moreover, with Israel's exodus, and with the new covenant alike. We may be sure there are deep spiritual lessons. O that we, while pondering the Scripture, may partake with joy thereof, and receive His teaching into our very being.

The Lord Jesus was pleased to speak of eating in various parables. Some have been already considered, as those of the contrasted old and new wine in Luke 5, and the friend at midnight in Luke 11. 5-8, and a feast was prepared for the welcomed son, the prodigal, or rather the lost one who was found. Shall we now meditate on the Lord's message regarding *places* at a wedding (Luke 14. 7-11), and the parallel, yet contrasted, feasts of Matthew 22. 1-14 and Luke 14. 12-24? Afterwards the lessons of Matthew 24. 45-51 and of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25. 1-13) may be used to God's glory in our lives.

In accord with the Lord's order, we would ponder Luke 14. 7-11 before the later "invitation" parable. Naturally we should be inclined to reverse. But only as the condition of humility here before us is illustrated can we rightly understand the following Scriptures. How definitely our Lord gives a similar message in Luke 18. 14, which should be read with 16. 15. Do we think anything of ourselves, either as to the first welcome, or as to our service after salvation? O that it may not be so. The Lord Jesus always searchingly beheld "*how*" men acted (Luke 14. 7). We cannot be too lowly in manner, because of lowliness in heart. So much literature to-day tends to another standpoint, and one is painfully conscious of the constant need for God's inner reproofs against self being lifted up. It is not for us to say what "place" is ours. The lowest or last, room, or place, should be the one taken. Paul knew something of this as he wrote "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3. 8). This was not mock-modesty. He knew he had received instruction and responsibilities beyond many, but he also knew that, to whom men commit much, of him they will ask the more. Hence he could not even begin to commend himself. Only the Lord can analyze and weigh up His people and their service: "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (1 Cor. 4. 5). If only we could realize our unworthiness more without excusing our

failures, there would be richer blessing. The spirit of pride is stronger than we are aware.

There is a "threefoldness" in Luke 14, as in chapter 15, so we must not overlook the message of verses 12-14. How definitely is the peril of self-seeking set forth a second time, and thus we reach the record of the great *supper*, which has so often provided a gospel message. Thanks be unto God for the precious words "Come; for all things are now ready." But do they not remind us of Matthew 22. 4 where we have a *breakfast* or early *dinner*? May not this come before us first, and the *supper* after? We can be sure that the Lord Jesus indicates some distinction. Let our prayerful study be deep, but let it be full of that love to our Lord, and to souls, which buys up the opportunity to "bid to the marriage."

The King made the feast for His Son. This was His object: He had none other. No one also was joined with His Son. How many parables set forth the uniqueness of the Lord Jesus. The previous context (in ch. 21: there are no chapter breaks in Scripture) leads up to this the more emphatically—the Heir and the Headstone. The first invitations here are with a view to His glory. There are not two dinners. Our joy (and there is joy) is ever wrapped up in His exaltation. The servants were first sent to *call* those who had been *called*: the same word is repeated: this would seem to refer to Israel, to whom the law (and the prophets) had given a preparatory message, and thus we see that this also was with a view to Christ (John 15. 46). The servants of verse 3 are distinguished from those before and after. We were not told the time of their ministry: if the singular were used we should think of John the Baptist inasmuch as from his ministry the definite and open invitation began (Matt. 3. 2, 11. 13, Luke 16. 16), although the prophets led up to this (Acts 3. 24, 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11). It is true that in one parable there is often a two-foldness, and He Who was Son took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and Himself witnessed, confirming and amplifying the testimony of John (Matt. 4. 17, see John 3. 11 with 32). This might make the words "Again He sent *other* servants" of verse 4 easier to understand, interpreting with regard to the apostles' message, *after* the sacrifice was killed, and all things were made ready, which we observe is not stated in verse 3. But if the testimony of those whom the Lord sent out before His death (Matt. 10. 7) is included in verse 3, the "other servants" would seem to refer to the ministry of such as Stephen and Paul and those who were rejected among Israel till the very judgment of verse 7 came upon Jerusalem (1 Thess. 2. 16). We put both thoughts before God's dear children: He may grant us further help, as we wait: it is so important not to hasten to conclusions.

(If the Lord will, to be continued.)

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Edited by Percy W. Heward

"I am sought of them that asked not; I am found of them that sought Me not: I said, Behold Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My Name." Isaiah 65. 1.

A Word of Introduction.

GRACE is to the undeserving. It is not of him that runneth, for we turned every one to his own way. It is not of him that willeth, for we willed not to come. The Shepherd found the lost sheep. When we were dead, God loved us, and caused us to live. We did not seek Him with natural goodness and natural seeking: there is no room for pride. Our mind cannot grasp all this means. We cannot explain (nor would we attempt to explain), with "words of man's wisdom." We own that we deserved judgment. We know that God has saved apart from works, yea in spite of our "wicked works," and reconciled us to Himself by His beloved Son, that our hearts may be grateful and full of worship. But is it so? Do we realize the privilege of praise as we should?

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Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued.)

Let us observe that a difference of interpretation in such a matter is quite distinct from a difference of doctrine. Both thoughts *may* be included here: both are in harmony with Scripture truth: there is no antagonism between them: the only point is "What is the special application of this verse?"

It is well to be kept humble before God as to every detail.* But whoever the servants were in verse 3 they were sent to Israel (note Matt. 10. 5, 15. 24), and the twice-called ones still refused. "They were not willing to have come." The verbs used, and the tenses also, emphasize a sad condition of heart. There was an attitude of "will," and it continued fixedly against the tender words of welcome. Such is man, even amid religious ceremonies, and though outwardly earnest. How much we need God's work on, and in, our "wills" (Ps. 110. 3, note John 5. 40).

"Again He sent forth other servants."

This was plainly a further definite witness. We are slow to realize the mercy whereby God sent especially to Israel after the rejection of His beloved Son. This is before us in Acts even in more distant parts (13. 46, 28. 28), and Romans 1. 16 illustrates. The message here recorded was addressed to those bidden. We are not to draw hurried inferences, and assume the Gentiles were forgotten, or that the message of Matthew 28. 18-20 is different. The Lord Jesus was speaking to Israel, and showing the tenderness that would be long-suffering to Israel. The taking away of the kingdom (Matt. 21. 43), and stewardship (Luke 16. 2), and of God's house (Matt. 23. 38), long preceded the actual scattering and burning. We remember how the Shekinah glory of the Lord waited in the visions of Ezekiel. "Behold, I have prepared My dinner: My oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready." The words "prepared" and "ready" are from the same root: this emphasis is important: all is God's work. When He makes aught ready it *is* ready. We call to mind, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed" (Jer. 17. 14, contrast 51. 9). How blessed is His perfect work. As the many sacrifices in the types pictured but one Saviour, may it not be so here? Is it strange that when the personal appreciation of His work is before us, as *that* varies, there are different sacrifices? The work *before* God and in its fulfilment of His claims is one. But when a type is employed, that must fail, and why not indicate this in number as well as character? "Come unto the marriage." A renewed word of invitation, and an emphasis on the purpose. That remains unchanged: the Son must, as ever, be exalted. The "other servants" had the one message (see Acts 19. 4, 26. 22, 23), but the testimony to Israel first (Acts 3. 26) could

*It is helpful to ponder with Matthew 21. 34-37. Thereby we see God's long-suffering and continued witness (Jer. 25. 3). The parable of the householder does not begin with "The Kingdom of heaven is like." It is earlier in fulfilment, for the coming of the Lord is viewed as *last* here (hence the wider term "Kingdom of God" in verse 43: how exact is the language of Scripture). The two detachments of servants here may indicate the former and latter prophets (Zech. 1. 4): in this way chapter 22 follows very searchingly. O that we may respond to all God's testimony, and that we may not have the hardness of heart here unveiled.

now include the fact that everything was finished and prepared. Yet Luke 16. 31 was solemnly illustrated.

But there was a remnant (Rom. 9. 6, 11. 5), and it is important to see that God's purpose stands, and the last verse of this very parable indicates this (Matt. 22. 14). But how clearly the failure of man as to all outward "calling" makes evident the need for the inner call of sovereign power (Rom. 8. 30), and how grateful we should be that this has reached unto us. Yet the rejection by man does not make our preaching unnecessary. God keeps on sending (Jer. 25. 4). Those who hold back from gospel responsibilities because of man's ruined condition, or by misusing the grace of God in election, are quite out of harmony with the Lord Jesus. Those called to preach the gospel of peace must go, whether men hear or forbear. And observe the character of their message. God Himself indicates this. It begins with "Behold": there is a dignity and a definiteness. Men *ought* to give attention. "I have prepared" shows authority, in sounding forth the message from God and His words. The blessedness of the gospel must be declared, and its sacrificial basis. We are not merely to preach law and judgment, but ever to emphasize the work of Christ on Calvary. And then a definite invitation, yea, a command is given in His Name. Nor is the mode of ministry changed in approaching the Gentiles (9). We do not preach to the elect as elect, but to sinners as sinners. The hearers are accountable to "come." But it is not for us to modify the gospel entrusted to us, in another way. The "pearl-promises" of the gospel are not to be scattered. The fact of the sacrifice is asserted but we do not add, "It is for you, whether you come or not." The Holy Spirit will apply. We are to say "Come," and we have no doubt that all who come will find the feast is for them, but if we affirm that all who hear are within the substitutionary work of Christ, we deny that it is really substitutionary for any. Though the desire in adding may be to glorify and enforce His work, (cf. those who did not obey His instructions, Matt. 9. 31), we dishonour Him when we lean to our own understanding. Is it not sufficient to proclaim that God's appointed sacrificial work has been fully done, and that all is ready, and to say "Come"? This is definite, and our manner should be one of love and earnestness, but let us never degrade the work of Him for Whom the marriage is made. The guests are His. All is for His glory and joy, and He shall yet see of "the travail of His soul."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

It is easier to point out the mistakes of others than to have victory over one's own failures. The flesh can do the first well, but we need the Holy Spirit's enabling for the second.

"If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine" (Luke 4. 7).

THE daring effrontery of the devil is seen in these wicked words. And the demand of *one* act of worship, rather than a necessary continuance, shows, as in Eden, the deadly nature of one sin, and also the devil's object. When we ponder our beloved Lord's consistent attitude, in *receiving* worship (e.g. John 9. 38, Matt. 28. 17), the character of Satan's sin is still more manifested. And John 4. 23 shows this yet again.

Further, we have a key to much saddening history. The request of the devil here, and the climax in Revelation 13. 4 remind us that

- (a) The enemy is not always working to secure mere negatives or atheistic irreligion.
- (b) Man is naturally "religious."
- (c) Satan wishes somehow to put himself in the place of God (Isa. 14. 14, cf. 2 Thess. 2. 4).

Hence the expression "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4. 4) is deeply impressive, and the sowing of tares, awhile *like wheat*, in Matthew 13 reveals yet again the devil's plan. He wishes to obtain worship, with a religiousness and a counterfeit "church," *made to appear* like that which God has appointed. Where can we find this? Those who laud Constantine, and who find joy in the religious history of Europe, miss the true answer. Nominal Christendom is the devil's counterfeit of the church: the harlot is the travesty of the bride: a religious organization established on the earth, and without a pilgrim attitude, and without the purifying Hope of our Lord's near Coming, is the work of the enemy. Yes, "an enemy hath done this." Swiftly the inference comes to a disciple:—separation unto the Lord from all such organizations. O for opened, anointed eyes to see, and devoted hearts to obey, in the Holy Spirit.

Antichrist will accept the devil's offer (Dan. 11. 38), and will have the rule of the world till the times be changed (Dan. 7. 22). This is solemnizing. But long before the lawless one comes there is "the mystery of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2. 7): and how did professing Christians obtain of old a world power? How did the "little flock" cease to be little and despised? How was persecution removed, and another position of worldly influence substituted in many lands? "The birds of the air" were brought into the branches of the changed mustard "tree," no longer a "herb." Now we understand why "images of saints," &c., were made, and pictures exalted. "Worship" is the enemy's desire. And one wonders who is the "Universal Father" whom many to-day acknowledge. He is not the God and Father revealed in Scripture.

The principle is deeply heart-searching. It is still easy to procure earthly advantages by compromise: it may be "only

once." But a conscience belonging to God has no hesitation. A definite refusal, in faith, is the only Scriptural path. But there must be a personal exercise of soul. Naaman asked to be "pardoned" in doing that which troubled him. When he was told to "Go in peace," this was no permission to do what he had suggested, but a call to renounce that which he could not do "in peace"; but Elisha would not be his conscience. He needed *personal* resolution. Never let us trifle with our own tender consciences, or dull them. Do we choose the things of earth at the cost of disobedience, or the things of God at the cost of earthly loss? How blessedly contrasted is Philippians 3. 7, 8 with Hebrews 12. 16. May we be enabled to detect the wiles of the devil, and to be devoted unto the Lord alone, in these "perilous times." It is a privilege to know that the Holy Spirit indwells, in order that we may discern the will of God (Heb. 4. 12). True worship is very precious: emphasize the privilege: ever let it be "in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4. 23).

Descriptions in Romans 16.

- "Our sister" (1). "A servant (deaconess) of the church" (1).
- "A succourer of many." (Root "standing in front," and so, leading onward, 1).
- "My helpers (fellow-workers) in Christ Jesus" (3).
- "My beloved" (5). "Firstfruits" (5).
- "Who bestowed much labour on us" (6).
- "My kinsmen" (born together, 7). "My fellow-prisoners" (7).
- "Of note among the apostles" (7). "In Christ" (7).
- "My beloved in the Lord" (8).
- "Our helper (fellow-worker) in Christ" (9).
- "My beloved" (9).
- "(The) approved in Christ" (10).
- "My kinsman" (11). "In the Lord" (11).
- "Who laboured in the Lord" (12).
- "Which laboured much in the Lord" (12).
- "(The) chosen in the Lord" (13).
- "The brethren" (14).
- "The saints" (15).

Observe the *different* descriptions Divinely given. Which by grace do we illustrate? Sometimes there is the emphasis on spiritual relationship, sometimes on activity, sometimes rather on suffering. Note the sphere, "in Christ," "in the Lord." Observe "my" and "our": with wondrous wisdom, though sisters have the first two places, the apostle never uses "my" of an individual sister. The Holy Spirit Himself guides us thereby. How blessed it is to give children of God a personal encouragement, and to "greet the friends by name" (3 John 14). Romans 16 will ever live, with its rich effect on our spiritual life, in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

(Continued.)

The letter still "killeth," apart from salvation. The gospel has not modified the law, nor weakened it. Its holy claims have not faded away. "Confidence" is only through Christ (2 Cor. 3. 4), the apostle rejoiced to be a minister of the new covenant, (verse 6), not making light of the letter that kills, for we establish law (Rom. 3. 31), but telling of a righteousness of God, and not of men. "The LETTER killeth" sinful men, but the SPIRIT, the new covenant graciously applied by the Spirit of God, giveth life to such, or, as we might more forcibly render it, "maketh alive" (the same word as Galatians 3. 21). There is no fault in the "letter," but it is a "ministration of death" to sinners (Rom. 7. 10). It was "written and engraven in stones," and stones *could* not "give life." How any prayerful reader can think this is an argument against love's literal obedience, from a grateful heart, delighting in the Lord's commandments, is amazing. Such a theory only shows how errors can be made, and quoted, and perpetuated, even among children of God, who should, by *the law written in their heart*, illustrate the exact opposite, and detect the error, if walking in the power of the Spirit.

There is one further point, however, which should ever be impressed on the heart. The new covenant is *within*. All walking according to the sinful flesh makes "the new covenant" *external*, in the experience, and thus renders it parallel with "the law." Hence if we become carnal we either become careless, or legalistic. But the remedy is to seek grace that we may walk in the Spirit.

"The ministration of death" was glorious, but we read of a glory to be "done away." Does this mean that God's law is to be done away? Observe that the glory brought before us here is not said to be of the law, but on the *face* of Moses, the mediator. The glory of God (Ex. 34. 29) remains unchanged. The holy law still "stands," as we have seen, and the unsaved will yet realize this, and this very passage speaks both before and after of those that are lost (2 Cor. 2. 15, 4. 3). Anything else would be the very universalism that Scripture denies. What was the temporary glory of Moses? It was contrasted with the glory over the ark. It was the temporary glory of *ministration*, until the Lord Jesus came, as Galatians 3. 24 shows. Only for those for whom there is the *new* covenant is the condemnatory law removed. Outside Christ there is nothing but judgment. Let us never fail to emphasize God's truth in this matter.

The ministration of the SPIRIT giving LIFE (the two words are ever connected) is the ministration of RIGHTEOUS-

NESS (2 Cor. 3. 9), as distinct from that of condemnation. We might arrange all in parallels:—

"Tables of stone"	"Tables of the heart"
"The letter"	"The Spirit"
"Killeth"	"Giveth life"
"Ministration of death"	"Ministration of the Spirit"
"Became in glory" (7)	"Shall be in glory" (8)
"Ministration of condemnation"	"Ministration of righteousness"
"Glory"	"Exceed (overflow) with glory"
"No glory in this respect"	"The glory that excelleth"
"Through glory" (11)	"In glory" (11)
"A veil"	"With unveiled face"

How wondrous is the Divine arrangement: In every word, every small preposition, every tense, God's grace shines out. Verbal inspiration is a fact.

Is it not probable that the most frequently quoted sentence from these chapters is "The letter killeth"? But it seems to be very often misinterpreted. Nor is this strange, for many of us have often quoted from one another's quotations rather than directly from Scripture, and how few could give the completed *context* of the words so lightly used. It is deeply important to see that the last verse of chapter 2 earnestly warns against corrupting the Word of God, and may it not be helpful for us all to take this warning to heart, and to *compare* spiritual things with spiritual more diligently?

The apostle had been unkindly misrepresented by many at Corinth. May we ever hate such sin! Some spoke disparagingly of his bodily presence (2 Cor. 10. 10). And there were those who cruelly complained that he was fickle (2 Cor. 1. 17), and even that he was crafty (2 Cor. 12. 16), when all the while he loved abundantly (2 Cor. 12. 15), and could truthfully write, "I seek not yours, but you." There were others who travelled about, and yet they were false apostles and ministers of Satan (2 Cor. 11. 13-15), and such sowed discord and, as in Galatia, endeavoured to set the believers against the servant of God through whose loving care they had received so much. In recording his loving, tearful, anguished concern for the children of God in chapter 2 he wrote by inspiration, but none the less from an overflowing heart of personal affection, and was conscious that some would say he was commending himself. This suggested the contrast with those who were coming in, and causing diversity. The right use of letters of commendation (Acts 18. 27, Apollos), and the misuse are alike hinted. And from this the Holy Spirit leads on to the contrast, in that Paul was well known at Corinth, for had he not been used to bring to the Lord and to instruct in His ways (1 Cor. 4. 15-17)? A beautiful letter of commendation had therefore *been* already written. How precious are the words, "written in *our* hearts." This does not seem to be only a reference to the heart-love when the letter was first written. It suggests that as the one bearing a commendation kept it with him, so the apostle ever had the dear children of God in his heart (cf. Phil. 1. 7). The

law was written in stones, as we shall see, to condemn, but fellow believers were inscribed on Paul's heart, that he might ever pray for them. And his heart-love would *show* itself, even as an epistle of commendation was to be manifest.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

The Deliverance of the Creation.

WHEN we look around on the animal and vegetable world we see many and sad results of sin. Death is ever in front of us. Was it always so? Is death essentially natural, or has it come about through sin? There can be only one answer. "Death" is a memorial of sin.

Now we can understand the language of Romans 8. 20, "The creation itself was made subject to vanity, not *willingly*." There was no action on the part of creation. Man's will was against God, and this has brought thorns, etc., into the world, and all the other heart-searching reminders of the fall. Adam is the one who occasioned this subjecting. It is a sad story.

But is that all? Nay, the Lord Jesus, the Second man, and the Last Adam, will bring blessings to earth: hence we read "in hope" and join these words closely with verse 21. And we read them also with verse 19. There is a parenthesis, as often in the epistles.* "The earnest expectation of the creation *waiteth* for the manifestation of the sons of God... *in hope*," etc. God has set before us a hope for the fields,— "the earth shall yield her increase." There is a hope for the animals—Isaiah 11. 6-9. But it is remarkable that, even as to nature, God will give man a millennial warning against universalism, "Dust shall be the serpent's meat" (Isa. 65. 25), "The miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed" (Ezek. 47. 11).

Deeply important then is this subject. We see how God Himself speaks through nature, and how willing we should be even for weariness and stress to-day, and the hindrances as to earth's prosperity, though beholding God's longsuffering in "seedtime and harvest" (Gen. 8. 22). How grievously would fallen men misuse a delivered creation to-day, even as they "began" a climax of iniquity in Genesis 11. 6. All scattering and limitations are a Divine message and restraint. O that some may be warned, and seek our precious Lord and Saviour to-day.

* E.g. Rom. 2. 13-15 (preferably, I think, to the middle of the verse: reading "their conscience also bearing witness" with verse 12: those who show the work of the law written in their hearts are blessedly contrasted with those who will feel mingled accusation and excusing "in that Day"). Rom. 9. 3, sorrow in my heart—for my brethren: "I used to wish" is past—leaflet available, 2 Thess. 1. 10, 2 Pet. 1. 19 ("take heed—in your hearts").