

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Jas. 5. 8.

A Word of Introduction.

THANKFUL for God's continued lovingkindness, we rejoice to send forth a further message. Our heart's longing is that He may be glorified. When we remember what we were, and what He has graciously made us to be "in Christ Jesus," and what He will do, perfecting that which concerns us, we cannot but be grateful, and our hearts wonder why we do not overflow more with loving and obedient thanksgiving. Thankfulness without a desire for the will of God seems very defective, and we need to be more concerned for the attitude of our Lord Jesus Who thus characterized His own wondrous love, "I delight to do Thy will" (Ps. 40. 8). We compare the words, "Thou hast LOVED righteousness" (Heb. 1. 8). May our hearts rejoice more in God's joy, and may these pages be used to encourage all believing readers on this path, and to bring others to the Lord Jesus.

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Living and Walking.

"Ye shall WALK in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may LIVE." Deuteronomy 5. 33.

"I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to WALK in His ways . . . that thou mayest LIVE and multiply." Deuteronomy 30. 16.

But men have ever failed, and sinned:—

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience: in the which ye also WALKED

some time when ye LIVED in them." Colossians 3. 6, 7.
But grace has abounded:—

"Even when we were dead in sins He hath quickened us (MADE US ALIVE) together with Christ. . . . We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto (upon) good works, which God hath before ordained that we should WALK in them." Ephesians 2. 5, 10.

"Even so we also should WALK in newness of LIFE."

Romans 6. 4.

"If we LIVE in the Spirit, let us also WALK in the Spirit." Galatians 5. 25.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not WALK in darkness, but shall have the light of LIFE." John 8. 12.

"For Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt Thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may WALK before God in the light of the LIVING?" Psalm 56. 13.

"Though I WALK in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me (MAKE ME ALIVE)." Psalm 138. 7.

The gracious ministry of the Lord Jesus, and His enabling power are seen in the words:—

"I am He That LIVETH and became dead; and behold, I am ALIVE for evermore. . . . These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who WALKETH in the midst of the seven golden lampstands."

Revelation 1. 18, 2. 1.

"Worthily."

"That ye would walk worthily of God, Who hath called (calleth) you into His kingdom and glory." 1 Thessalonians 2. 12.

"Whom if thou bring forward on their journey, worthily of God, thou shalt do well." 3 John 6 (margin).

"That ye might walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing." Colossians 1. 10.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh (behave as citizens worthily of) the gospel of Christ." Philippians 1. 27.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called." Ephesians 4. 1.

"That ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of saints." Romans 16. 2.

Contrast eating and drinking "*unworthily*" in 1 Corinthians 11. 27, 29. How important it is to live *correspondingly* with the grace of God manifested to us, and to show the great lovingkindness received, and to adorn the doctrine of God. If a prince dresses in rags he does not act worthily of the king: if we, although children of God, are worldly, or self-willed, we fail as to correspondence with our Father.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued.)

"But they made light of it, and went their ways." This is emphasized by Christ in Luke 14 also. A man does not need to be an atheist to be against the Lord. The awful sin of indifference must never be overlooked. And this has a further thought for our own hearts. Where is our fervency regarding the gospel? It is sad if the hearers make light, but they are unsaved. Is it not still sadder if saved ones make light, and neglect the giving of the invitation. I do not refer only to public preaching and special occasions. Are we putting aside the feast which has cost our Heavenly Father so dear, and are earthly home ties and business and pleasures forcing the gospel into a secondary place? It is so easy to see this sin in "broader" so-called churches, with concerts and social evenings, but this passage shows merchandise and farm may hinder those who hear, and is it not sadly possible that necessary things, right in their place, are not always subordinate to the will of God? Are we not often too comfortable? Do we not run to our own houses, and is not God's house lying waste (Hag. 1. 4, 10). O beloved fellow believers, do we not need revival, with its intensity? I feel it as I write, and you will feel it as you read, but let us pray for grace to do more than feel. Making light is easier than we think: a partial disregard: a making of first things second (Matt. 6. 33) is robbing God (Mal. 3. 8). The peril of right things in the wrong place is very real. Observe the difference between Zechariah 7. 6 and 1 Corinthians 10. 31. The farm is beautiful: it is a reminder of faith in God for daily food. But it may stand in between us and the Lord. The word "his" here is important: it denotes "our own," and we see the holy contrast in Acts 4. 32. Every part of our life comes up for *review*. This not only concerns gospel testimony, but our own prayer life, worship, the assembly, and its privileges, weekday meetings, etc., etc. O that we may not spurn our Lord's delight in His people. The harlot cares nothing for the Bridegroom: the bride should love Him intensely. But in Song 5. 2 she kept Him outside, and so is it in Revelation 3. 20. May we never cruelly undervalue what is dear to Him.

The "remnant" were outwardly opposed. They "took His servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." We think of Stephen, and the pleasure of Jews in the death of James. "I was outrageous" says Paul (1 Tim. 1. 13), using the noun from the same root. Here we see what the Lord's servants must be willing to expect, in the present dispensation. Do men of Israel sometimes make an attack on any who read these lines? Do not feel embittered. Remember the words, "Father, forgive them," and how Stephen prayed. The marvellous thing is that we are not suffering more. Is it partly

our own fault through compromise? Are we willing to die for Christ? There is no thought of a saved nation, till the Lord Jesus thus blesses the remnant on His return (Rom. 11. 26). There was no thought of uncertainty, and a presentation to Israel, with the thought all *might* repent. But yet the message was given, and is to be given. 1 Corinthians 15. 30, 31, 2 Corinthians 11. 24, and 1 Thessalonians 2. 14-16 should speak to our hearts.

Now the King acts. It is important to see His patience. But sin cannot be excused. A holy wrath of One Who is inflexibly holy is not to be likened to human temper. Retribution is righteous. The King "sent forth His armies": observe He did not send the servants of verse 3, nor even those who ministered (another word) in verse 13. Armies were under His control. But did not the Romans burn Jerusalem? Undoubtedly. Here we see God's controlling authority, "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1). We call to mind, "O Assyrian, the rod of *Mine* anger, and the staff in their hand is *Mine* indignation: *I will send* him against an hypocritical nation." How important is this that believers may have simple confidence in God: earth's history is not mere chance. The theory that God is not acting at all, in the present time, confuses two thoughts. Luke 21. 22 is quite clear that there can be "days of vengeance" even in the dispensation when grace is so strikingly manifested. This corrects many errors in prophetic interpretation, and helps us regarding God's manifest dealings with Israel. But the King's *Son* did not act: He sits. "The wrath of the Lamb" does not come till "that Day." Scriptural language is perfect.

The murderers were destroyed. The Son of God had been slain earlier (Acts 3. 15, 7. 52). Would the nation repent? Alas, when prophets and apostles were sent, some of them also were slain (Luke 11. 49, 50). And so, after *forty* years' waiting, the city where many were murderers (Isa. 1. 21) must be laid low, and over a million perished therein. Who could write the horrors of that siege? "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "Their city": no longer *His* city. Compare "Your house is left unto you desolate." Before, it was "My Father's house." But Zion *shall* be redeemed, and become the city of truth. Yet now it is still trodden down by the nations: the redemption will be when the Redeemer comes to Zion. "The times of the Gentiles" or "nations" will fully run out. There is no failure nor haste in God's plan, in God's chronology. Meanwhile, the King's *Son* still sits "until" (Ps. 110. 1), He takes no action, and it is His people's privilege to stand outside all earth's politics and vengeance. They were the slain, not slaying, messengers of verse 6, and no resistance came from them. And they continue their testimony, as verse 8 shows. Verse 7 does not belong to them. They have the gospel of peace, and the gospel of peace alone.

"Then saith He to His servants, The wedding is ready." It is delightful to realize that the wedding was not destroyed. Even as "the way of the tree of life," when Adam sinned, it was "kept." There was no defect on the King's part. No usual wedding breakfast is held waiting for years! This thought, full of encouragement, should be first on our hearts before the difficulty. The word "then" looks as if verse 8 historically succeeds the burning. Is it so? This word does not always mean "after that": it may denote "at that time." Is then the time that of the war, or that of verse 6, the seventh being parenthetical? When we realize that some years elapsed after the death of such as Stephen and James, and the *breakfast* was still spread, we are conscious that time is *not* reckoned here as we count it, but rather from God's standpoint. The open rejection by Israel *led up* to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. But the armies were not despatched at once, while the principle of Acts 13. 46, 51 was evidently soon applied. This would show that we have here the *two* results of Israel's refusal in different spheres, one brief, the other for a long time. Moreover, the present tense in verse 8 must not be overlooked. It is not found in verse 7: it may denote the quick action of the King after verse 6, or its continuance still. "He keeps on saying." Both thoughts are helpful. Certainly the historical fulfilment did *not* leave the proclamation to the Gentiles till after the solemn year "70," though, blessed be God, the awful events then, (prophesied even in Deuteronomy 28), did not hinder the *continued* gospel to all nations. Thus this passage illustrates Acts 3. 26 and 28. 28. And the holy wrath of the King was shown in warning (1 Thess. 2. 16) before the consummation in the destruction of the city and of the house left to Israel "desolate." Neither verse 7 nor verse 8 can be possibly taken as a matter of a few days, but they describe two parallel lines, the first one as Luke 11. 49-51 sadly foretold. But the message of the King to His servants emphasizes His invitation still going forth to-day. O that we may hear His voice, and fulfil our loving responsibility.

"The wedding on the one hand *is* ready, on the other hand they which were bidden (have been called) *were* not worthy." How striking the contrast and the tenses: no fault in the marriage, all the fault is in men. Called, called, called—but not ready, nor "worthy." Again Acts 13. 46 comes before us. Can we congratulate ourselves that we were worthy? Nay. "Worthy is the Lamb That was slain." The principle of Deuteronomy 9. 5 applies to us when we read these lines (see Rom. 11. 19, 20). We cannot be too humble.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

The coming of our Lord Jesus is not primarily a subject to be worked out, but the longed for arrival of One Whom we love and Whom we cannot forget.

Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

(Continued.)

But ought not the Corinthians to have written commending him, with their joy in his love to the Lord? Let us observe that the *two* kinds of letters of verse 1 are both before us, each with a striking contrast,—“To you,” “from you.” “To you” would signify the epistles *at* Corinth, the believers who were his ministry in the Lord (verse 3). “From you,”—what does this suggest? Instead of giving him a loving letter, many spoke evil of him, but he said that he still carried something better *from them*, better than what they failed to give, even *themselves*, though verily they had not thus “given themselves” (2 Cor. 8. 5), rather his unforgetting love had commandeered them. This tender, affectionate, yet powerful reproof reveals the deep feeling of the apostle (2 Cor. 11. 2). And the love he felt was unchanged and always evident, “known and read of all men” (cf. 9. 3).

And now we pass to the letters *at* Corinth, the “recommendation” *there*. “Ye are manifestly declared to be (a) the epistle of Christ (b) ministered by us, (c) written not with ink, but (d) with the Spirit of the Living God; (e) not in tables of stone, but (f) in fleshy tables of the heart.” Here are six striking thoughts, and the “manifestation” adds a seventh. O beloved readers, are we epistles of Christ? We have a privilege, a great privilege,—even to represent Him. Do we show that we belong to Him? Each individual had, and has, this privilege, but the plural with the singular “epistle” emphasizes the testimony of the apostle in the assembly divinely gathered. Rather, the testimony to Christ. The epistle was His, Paul, who used amanuenses, was himself the Lord’s amanuensis. When we read “I Tertius, who wrote this epistle” (Rom. 16. 22), we do not say “The letter of Tertius to the Romans,” though we thank God for his privilege. And the apostle rightly rejoices that he was in the Lord’s hand, and the glory was the Lord’s. Thus we learn the appointed testimony of united children of God, *scripturally gathered*. This is often overlooked.

How helpfully, too, are the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit entwined, and we behold the purpose of the Spirit Who glorifies the Lord Jesus (John 16. 14), and corresponding, in the figure used, with the ink is interested in every word of the Lord Jesus, and identified therewith. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” may well come to mind. “Ministered by us” delightfully reveals that though the work is of God, He condescends to use human instrumentality. But let us never forget we cannot write anything on the heart except by the Holy Spirit. Our work is vain without Him. Nor should we *wish* to write, or teach, anything except the words of the Lord. The characteristic of the

new covenant is an inwardness even as we read, “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts” (Jer. 31. 33). And this is not “incidental.” Our whole character is to be “a letter of Christ,” ever setting forth His words. How many have glibly contrasted “letter” and “spirit,” and maintained “the letter kills” when disciplelike hearts have emphasized the very words of the Lord Jesus. How serious is such a perversion of this passage, and denial of His holy Authority. But the unwisdom of their misinterpretation, as well as its sin, is strikingly on the surface. Is not an *epistle* written with words, and is not each word composed of letters, and is not the whole here said to be written with the Spirit, Who thus emphasizes and is, as we have seen, Himself identified with every word?

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

“Thy Birthright,” “This Birthright,” “His Birthright,” “The Birthright.”

Genesis 25. 31-34.

EVERY word recorded by the Holy Spirit gives a special emphasis. Jacob acknowledged the birthright was Esau’s. This shows that he was not acting in any harmony with God in seeking to obtain. God had appointed that Jacob should receive the blessing, but as he sought it wrongly he sinned. This must ever be realized. Nothing can justify a wrong motive and action even though overruled to work out God’s will.

As Israel afterwards said, “This manna” (Num. 11. 6), and “this light bread” (Num. 21. 5), and spoke of the Lord Jesus Himself derogatorily, as “This One” (John 9. 29), so Esau despised “this birthright.” He was occupied with the present, and merely with his natural feelings and appetite. Here we see the natural man (1 Cor. 2. 14), and then contrast the attitude of Deuteronomy 8. 3, revealed so beautifully in the Lord Jesus (Matt. 4. 4). Nor can we forget another contrast in Abraham’s long waiting (Acts 7. 5). God’s promise was sufficient: hence the willingness to sojourn (Heb. 11. 9). God’s time was, and is ever, best.

Next we have the statement, “He sold his birthright unto Jacob.” Solemn words from his standpoint. He craved for one morsel of meat (Heb. 12. 16). The Holy Spirit in quoting emphasizes the word “his own.” Men are accountable for their attitude, and are treated according to their profession and claim. He viewed it as his, and held it lightly. Ah, dear fellow believer, this speaks even to us. How are we esteeming the Kingdom, and the recompense of the reward? Are we willing to suffer with our beloved Lord that we may reign with Him or not? It is easier than we think to give up the reward for “the things that are seen.” “Buy the truth, and sell it not” is a searching command.

Lastly, we have God's own comment, "Thus Esau despised the birthright." The word "his" is rightly in italics. "The" is God's emphasized point here. He had ordained that Jacob should receive this: hence "the birthright," from His standpoint was not Esau's, but, nevertheless, that "profane person" despised what God viewed as precious. Thus his action showed the whole attitude of his heart, and it is still possible thus to "despise." Our beloved Lord Himself was "despised and rejected of men," and how many to-day despise the treasures of His grace and truth. But is it not sadly possible for us, too, to undervalue His Coming and His Kingdom? And is not this **despising**? To hand all these solemn passages to the unsaved, and not to be impressed in our own hearts, and humbled, is one of the gravest perils of to-day. O that those of us who love the Lord Jesus may truly go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, and esteem "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

Prepared Places.

"Behold I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee unto the PLACE which I have PREPARED." Exodus 23. 20.

"David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his PLACE, which he had PREPARED for it." 1 Chronicles 15. 3.

"Solomon began to build the HOUSE of the Lord . . . in the PLACE that David had PREPARED." 2 Chronicles 3. 1.

"All things are now ready (PREPARED) . . . and yet there is a PLACE . . . Go out . . . and compel . . . that My HOUSE may be filled." Luke 14. 17-23.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a PLACE PREPARED of God, that they should feed her there." Revelation 12. 6.

"In My Father's HOUSE are many mansions. . . . I go to PREPARE a PLACE for you. And if I go and PREPARE a PLACE for you I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14. 2, 3.

Three times the Lord forbade healed ones to make known the miracle. He rightly claimed authority to decide, and gave no reason. In each case, whether from impulse ("I must"), or sentiment (of joy), or reasoning (It will bring blessing), or some other cause, there was departure from His revealed will (Matt. 9. 30, 31, Mark 1. 44, 45, 7. 36, 37).

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"I the Lord have spoken, and performed, saith the Lord."
Ezekiel 37. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

A FEW verses earlier we read, "*I the Lord have spoken, and I will do.*" Thank God for this constant emphasis. "*He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast*" (Ps. 34. 9). "*God said, Let there be light: and there was light*" (Gen. 1. 3). *Man often speaks and fails to do, through weakness, forgetfulness, or a change of will: but "God is not a man that He should lie . . . hath He said, and shall He not do?"* The reader will notice how often the word "*it*" is inserted by translators (in italics). The emphasis on His "*doing*" seems greater, if we add nothing. God's words and works are in perfect harmony. There is no failure, nor faultiness with Him. We cannot realize His glory too much. This magazine is sent forth with the object of praising Him, and that His dear people may realize more fully the faithfulness of His words, whether in promise or precept. Faith is simple, restful, unquestioning. Are we growing in faith?

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Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued.)

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." Those who have "Come" (Matt. 11. 28) are to go. The message is to all nations (Matt. 28. 20). Wherever there is a "tongue" there is a gospel (Rev. 5. 9). The expression "highways" has been rendered

"thoroughfares of the highways," "partings of the highways," and "crossings of the highways," i.e. wherever there is a way out, or across,—a holy encouragement to go everywhere, for every available road is to be sought. And "as many as ye shall find" implies every available person is to be approached and invited. There is no question as to race, religion, respectability, or antecedents. The "colour" question does not come in here. The gospel is world wide, and we are to "bid," or "call," for it is the same word. It is not for us to give, not for us to "offer," not for us to promise, not for us to decide, not for us to reason; we are simply to call and invite, yea, and command (for such is the call), in God's Name. Are we doing this? Do we "find" or do we wait till *men* come. Do we invite to *our* meetings, to hear us, to exalt man, or is the marriage feast dear to our hearts? The glory of Christ is all-important. The feast is for Him.

"*Those* servants went out." They were obedient. They had, as we have seen, nothing to do with the war, theirs was the message of mercy to all,—any of Israel met are still to be invited as part of "*all nations*." There is still one feast, one gospel, one invitation and, thanks be unto God, one welcome.

"They gathered,"—the invitation brought many together. The "finding" did not make them acceptable, the fact they were thus "found" was sufficient for the messenger. A different finding was that of the Shepherd when He placed on His shoulders. "Both bad and good." These words are simple, in connexion with an earthly feast, but in the light of casting out of one who came in his own robe, and of Luke 14. 21, may not the bad be the ones who knew their need, and the "good" those who thought themselves rich? Certainly before God there is "none righteous, no not one," and Luke 14. 13 confirms this thought.

Does an unsaved soul read these lines? There is no hindrance in sinnership, but there is a deadly peril in pride. Do not think you are "good": the one who regarded himself as possessed of something was thrust out. How blessed is grace to a lost sinner. We cannot discriminate, we are to invite all, but do not ignore the message "All things are ready." You have nothing, and can bring nothing. God sees the heart, we do not, but we would, in love's faithfulness, seek to warn against all deceiving of oneself. None can deceive God.

"And the wedding was furnished with guests." There is the thought of a great number. And, blessed be God, He has provided for many. The wedding was *filled*, literally. We think of the further filling of Luke 14. 23 from which none are cast out! But it is marvellous to think that now the gospel feast, the breakfast, leading up to the Supper of "that Day," with its rich food because of *the Sacrifice*, remains spread. It is not yet finished. The first century and the twentieth are

alike in the welcome. The gospel is to be partaken: it is to refresh: it is to become part of the very lives of those who receive, and who receive in fellowship one with another, and in love to the King's Son, and to His glory, as this parable shows.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"They went their way, and found even as He had said unto them."

"They went, and found even as He had said unto them."

Luke 19. 32, 22. 13.

THE Holy Spirit's emphasis, by twofold use of expressions, has long been dear to the hearts of God's children. And it is so refreshing to notice the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and the exact fitting together of everything as to time and place and manner. No detail was incorrect. How sad is the sin which questions His perfection! Moreover, our hearts realize that our gracious Lord is the Same to-day. Why should we be alarmed? Can anything come by chance, or surprise Him? What a new meaning "faith" brings to the word "prayer," or, rather, we ought never to have lost, or left, the blessedness therein Divinely implanted. How rich are the privileges of believers.

But a further thought has been impressing me to-day. "They went!" If we would now find, we must seek. True, when we were first brought to the Lord it was because He sought, and the precious prophecy and promise was illustrated, "I am found of them that sought Me not" (Isa. 65. 1). But after that we have been saved we have the precious encouragement and exhortation, "Seek, and ye shall find," and the promise, "He that seeketh findeth" (Matt. 7. 7, 8, cf. Prov. 2. 4, 5). We must not sit still, and wait idly, and then say, "When will the words be fulfilled?" We should *go our way*, we should be earnest and expectant. God saves those who can do nothing, but He gives a new life to His beloved people with the purpose that they may live in its power. Hence the thought after we are born again is "The Spirit beareth witness with our Spirit," "The Lord working with them." May this be our joyous realization, and may we encourage one another to possess our possessions, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

"The hour" in Mark 14. 35 is very strikingly connected not with $3\frac{1}{2}$ years but with the climax, and wrath. So is it in Revelation 3. 10. And the word "temptation" is employed in each context (Mark 14. 38). It is strange that many children of God have not seen this.

Isaiah 53.

THE people of Israel say that we take "isolated" passages to apply to the Messiah. But is it so? Far otherwise. From Genesis 3. 15 onwards Scripture emphasises ONE,—a Prophet like Man (Deut. 18. 15-18), a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. 110. 4), and a God's King on Zion's hill (Ps. 2. 6). The Shepherd of Israel in Zechariah 13, 7, and "the Lord our Righteousness" in Jeremiah 23. 6, can be no ordinary "man." And these are but a few passages out of many, which are inexplicable apart from a suffering Messiah Who fully meets the sinner's needs. The fulness of evidence is too great to allow the plea of mere "co-incidence." Indeed it is impossible to "magnify the law," and "establish" it, without a sacrifice, for its **whole** framework implies this. God has ever emphasized the **blood**, but yet he does not drink the blood of goats (Ps. 50. 13). The far greater Antitype is a **necessity**.

When our eyes are once opened to see the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to know Him personally by living faith, and when we compare the Old and New Testaments, we are deeply impressed that He is the true Centre of Law and Prophets and Psalms (Luke 24. 44). The fulness of His work makes everything clear. We can then sadly understand the meaning of Isaiah 29. 11, 12 with regard to the blindness in part which has happened to Israel (Rom. 11, 25). "In part," for blessed be God there is a remnant according to the election of grace, even as there were two who had faith when the other ten spies, the large majority, went wrong!

It is deeply impressive to see that we not only have reference to One Who can be none other than the Messiah, in many, many verses, but larger portions are given, which a Jew would regard as "the New Testament," if he heard read for the first time. Isaiah 53, omitted strangely, yet not strangely, from the portions used in the synagogue (although those around are included in the Haphtoras or selections from the prophets), is full of the glories of one unique person, who is He?

To accommodate it to apply to Hezekiah or any other is to twist its meaning. Such an one was not bearing the sins of many, nor is there a mystery about Hezekiah's generation (verse 8). Moreover, it is not possible to see the suffering nation of Israel here. A greater contrast could hardly be imagined between this passage and Leviticus 26 with this climax, "If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity" (verse 41). Nor can the uncomplaining, silent One of Isaiah 53. 7, without guile in His mouth (verse 9) be a "people." No such nation has ever been found. Nor must we overlook the fact that He suffers **for** the people of Israel (verse 8), and the "we" of this passage is contrasted with the "they" of the linked chapter 52. 15. The words "our" and "many" emphasize the same thought.

We are brought to one conclusion, and one only. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?" (Acts 8. 34). There can be but one answer. We see a perfect One, rejected by those among whom He walks, yet, as their gracious Substitute, He makes Himself an offering for their guilt, and in Him is a true justification, which elsewhere we read to be by faith. His death and resurrection (verse 10, "He shall prolong days"), and ultimate glory, are all clearly set forth. This cannot honestly be gainsaid, and the parallels with Psalm 22, where also we have a Person rejected (verse 6) to Whom a "seed" is accounted for a "generation," and in Whom there is "righteousness" (verses 30, 31), cannot be overlooked.

Isaiah was evidently inspired to refer to the testimony of David very explicitly.

"Who hath believed our report?" may well remind us that truth is not popular. But, thanks be unto God, there is a believing remnant even now (Rom. 11. 5), and our hearts rejoice that "He bare the sin of many" (Isa. 53. 12, Matt. 20. 28). As the purpose of man to make His grave with the wicked was overruled, and he became literally with a rich man in His death (the letters are remarkably **inverted** as in Isaiah 61. 3), so shall all the purposes of man be laid low, and our adorable Lord shall be exalted (Isa. 46. 10). Meanwhile let it be our joy, in the Holy Spirit, to love and honour Him, and to make known His glories, more and more, that we may be privileged instruments and witnesses, sinners being converted unto Him (Ps. 51. 13) Who is "The Way and the Truth and the Life" (John 14. 6).

"Thou Sufferest."

(Allowest, Rev. 2. 20).

WHAT do I allow? This is a deeply important question. There are some who would not themselves lead in anything wrong, but they dare to smile when others speak lightly. We have seen this again and again at open-air meetings, and have emphasised the sin of sharing in the sin of others. The striking words of Romans 1. 32 as to any who have pleasure in those that do iniquity must never be erased or forgotten, and the command, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5. 22) has many applications. But just now are we not thinking of failures,—rather let us say "sins,"—that may be less easy to detect? We read of Eli that "his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3. 13). The margin is impressive. "He frowned not upon them." Chapter 2. 29 says that such an attitude honoured his sons above God,—again a most remarkable, and searching expression. True, we cannot and should not deal with **everything**. We are not made judges and dividers, among men. It is deeply important that children of God should not seek unappointed posi-

tions of authority, in ruling others, where they will be unable to fulfil the responsibilities involved. But there **are** some appointed positions, as of a parent in the home, and of godly rule in a house of God, and **whatever** else is rightly entrusted to our care. So is there the need for much grace, lest we "allow" that which should be hindered and restrained. Not all have the same degree of responsibility. The "angels" of the seven churches were responsible for those whom they "had" in the gatherings (Rev. 2. 14, 15), and to prevent the teaching that seduced. "The rest in Thyatira" were not responsible in the same way, though it was for them to "sigh and cry for all the abominations" (Ezek. 9. 4), even as we read in 1 Corinthians 5. 2, "Ye . . . have not rather **mourned**, that he that hath done this thing might be taken away from among you." God would have honoured true sorrow of heart, and acted on behalf of such, if they had not the authority, personally.

So the message comes with its penetrating message:—What do we allow? It is possible to allow by a sleeping partnership, by a lack of prayer as to the right action, by indifference, by undue silence, by indirect participation. I do not write thus to bring a burden of fear and bondage upon dear children of God. Our Father is not a taskmaster. But I long for myself, and for them, an awakened conscience that we may alike be more concerned for His glory, and particularly that we may not "allow" things in our own life, but seek grace to fulfil Romans 6. 13 and have more control (Prov. 25. 28).

"In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you"—such words at first strike us with surprise. Was it not natural, yea, and right, for the disciples so to rejoice in their great encouragement? Was there not a real victory? How much is wrapped up in the added words of our Lord, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10. 20). Think more of grace than of what you have done, and be afraid to speak too much of the latter, even when conscious that God has graciously enabled. The apostle seemed to realize this very much in Romans 15. 18 (cf. Acts 15. 4), and the same godly and helpful standpoint underlies so much of Scripture (e.g. 2 Cor. 12. 1-7, Gal. 4. 9). Let our rejoicing be *in the Lord* (Phil. 4. 4), in what He is and in what He has done. True, there can and should be this joy in one another (Phil. 2. 1, 2), and in the privilege of suffering for Christ's sake (Phil. 2. 17, 18). But we would ever emphasize Himself, our gracious glorious Lord (Isa. 61. 10), that we may not be misguided by Satan to boast of ourselves while thinking we are emphasizing "Christian work." The enemy is more subtle than we realize, but our Heavenly Father has given us in Scripture an antidote for all his poison.

How.

We can hear, read or speak words. The Lord Jesus connects the searching word "how" with each expression. "Take heed therefore *How* ye hear" (Luke 8. 18): it is possible, to hear carelessly, and fruitlessly (note Rev. 1. 3). "*How* readeest thou?" is the message of Luke 10. 26. 'Tis not only "What is written?" The one questioned was a scribe: he knew the words well and the words were perfect. But it is possible to read thoughtlessly, disobediently, proudly, unspiritually, etc., and to misapply. "Be not anxious *how* or *what* ye shall speak" (Matt. 10. 19). This gracious provision in persecution reminds us that at all times the *manner* of speaking may hinder much even when the right words are used. This is tenderly set before us again in Colossians 4. 6. Only when the speech is **ALWAY** with grace can we know *how* we ought to answer each one.

The Holy Spirit's constant interest in the fulness of an action, and His help as to the right manner, are alike seen in Holy Scripture, both in speaking with God and with man. He emphasizes with the "how" as well as the "what." We notice this in Romans 8. 26. "We know not *what* we should pray for, *as* we ought: *but the Spirit*," and in Matthew 10. 19, "*How* or *what* ye shall speak." This searching thought encourages us much, for we realize how fully He is ready to help our "infirmities," and our hearts come to feel how needful is a God-glorifying tone and manner.

The power of self-deceit is seen in the fact that one may use Godly words with a wrong context, and a stress on self. At Corinth some said, "I am of *Christ*." Was not this precious? Nay, with the "big I," it was sectarian. The Pharisee prayed, "God, I thank thee." Is not thanksgiving good? Not when it is used to bring in "I am not as other men." If an appointed action is made a pedestal for self, grace is turned to sin. So if we pray for others in order to speak against them, or to contrast ourselves, is it not evil? May we be kept from such dross, and from the blindness which does not detect it.

THREE SEARCHING TEXTS, WITH SIX SOLEMN "NOTS."

"If any man come to Me and *hate* NOT . . . his own life also, he *cannot be MY disciple*."

"Whosoever does NOT BEAR HIS cross, and come after Me, *cannot be MY disciple*" (observe coming *after* the Lord Jesus follows from coming *to* Him. This is very helpful).

"Whosoever he be of you that *forsaketh* NOT all that he hath, he *cannot be MY disciple*." Luke 11. 26, 27, 33.

May we not be found wanting.

Some Contrasts:

Showing the Glory of the Lord Jesus in relation to His Unworthy but Redeemed People.

He that is of the earth
(John 3. 31).

I was as a beast before Thee
(Ps. 73. 22).

Dead in trespasses and sins
(Eph. 2. 1).

Behold I was shapen in iniquity
(Ps. 51. 5).

Children of wrath (Eph. 2. 3).

We were . . . foolish (Tit. 3. 3).

Without strength (Rom. 5. 6).

The ungodly (Rom. 5. 6).

We . . . have turned every one to his own way (Isa. 53. 6).

In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing
(Rom. 7. 18).

If we confess our sins
(1 John 1. 7).

We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17. 10).

He That cometh from above
(John 3. 31).

The Second Man (1 Cor. 15. 47).

The Prince of Life (Acts 3. 15).

That holy (Child) being born
(Luke 1. 35).

The Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2. 8).

The Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1. 24).

The Power of God (1 Cor. 1. 24).

The Righteous (1 John 2. 1).

I came down from heaven . . . to do the will of Him That sent Me (John 6. 38).

In Him is no sin (1 John 3. 5).

Which of you convinceth Me of sin? (John 7. 46).

I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do: and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was (John 17. 5).

The above passages are, manifestly, a small selection. The prayerful Bible reader can find many, many more. But if it pleases God to use such outlines to help some of His children in the "starting" of lines of prayerful thought in Scriptural meditation, we shall rejoice. And the goal is always *adoration*. Study without worship, even as study without obedience, becomes sin.

Nor can we omit the precious thought that the above verses give one part of God's truth. It is also blessedly true that, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21), and that the Spirit of God indwells the children of God that they may be strengthened with all might (Col. 1. 11), to do that which is well pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13. 20, 21). How wonderful is salvation!

Spirituality is not merely expressive in words of affection. When there is life, there should be godly living. Onesidedness is never an evidence of appointed spiritual growth, however enthusiastic it may appear.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." 1 Peter 5. 6.

A Word of Introduction.

WE have a wonderful Saviour. Sometimes we feel our needs very much, but they are small, compared with Himself. He is able to meet all. This magazine is not a theoretical or idealist publication. We seek thereby, from the standpoint of humble needy, believers, to bring before others the truth which we need for ourselves in its practical power, during our wilderness walk and warfare. The future is assured. The Lord will come. But at present we have real trials and problems. It is for us simply to wait, and to be humbled under God's mighty hand, knowing that He will not fail nor be discouraged. The troubles are not for ever: the "way out" is certain (1 Cor. 10. 13). Head knowledge will not satisfy the heart. We need a personal Saviour and Lord, and spiritual food for our hearts that we may go in the strength of this meat. And we have what we need, and the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ out of Whose fulness we receive (John 1. 14, 16). This is the object of these pages, to God's glory.

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"He Said,—If."

Matthew 4. 3, cf. verses 6, 9.

THE devil's threefold emphasis on the word "if" is remarkable. The first two occurrences seem to suggest a challenge, and also to imply, "Act as Son of God, without thought of obedience to the will of the Father." In other words the enemy shows an utter disregard of the harmony between the Father and the Son, and a complete rejection of

the wondrous place of perfect service which the Lord Jesus had taken (Phil. 2. 7). The devil would set the Deity of Christ against His perfect Humanity; and how many have illustrated this sin, in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Moreover, in a different sphere, a similar temptation is brought before believers. Those at Corinth used their "gifts" for self-exaltation (ch. 14).

How important to learn that our privileges in Christ Jesus, and our blessings, are only to be emphasized in humble harmony with the revealed will of God.

The third "if" is distinct. It is an offer, an invitation, not "if Thou art," but "if Thou wilt." Here is the suggestion of doing something that was quite contrary to the whole character of the Lord Jesus. Then there is the devil's vain "promise." How different is the unveiling of Daniel 7. 13, 14, and Matthew 28. 19.

To us too, in measure, comes a similar temptation. The enemy would have us compromise. His invitation is with a promise of knowledge, as in Genesis, or of power, as here. Are we willing to obey the Lord and "lose" outward opportunities, or do we hesitate when the devil hides himself, and disguises his real purpose? Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. There are temporary offers of the devil, but faith is willing for a contrast with 1 Corinthians 4. 8 (see Hebrews 11. 24, 25, 26).

"This I Had" (Psalm 119. 56).

"THIS" is often emphasized in Scripture, "This Temple," "This Rock," "This is my Beloved, and This is my Friend," "This gate of the Lord," "This is the day which the Lord hath made," "I will yet for this be enquired of." The Holy Spirit points out, and leads to great definiteness.

But as a rule we are told **what** is before us. The context explains. Psalm 119. 56 seems a designed exception. The verses are sometimes linked, but usually we have in each section a cluster of pearls. Here we may associate with "Thy Name" and the "remembrance" of verse 55 (cf. Isa. 26. 8). Yet it would seem that the thought goes much further. The psalmist is speaking with God, "Thy precepts," and as the secret of the Lord is with His people, so they do not tell others all that they show to Him. There is the joy of personal communion, and, as it were, God is brought into the private life. Our Father seeth in secret. The happy, prayerful psalmist shows what he has received. He is not left desolate. The blessings are not afar. Every need is supplied and all brought so near as to be "this." The key to our problems is found in keeping the Lord's precepts. May our experience glorify God in the enjoyment of His love and His will.

Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

(Continued)

We thus realize that law, because it is law, can give nothing to, and do nothing for, a sinner. It can only kill, and work wrath (Rom. 4. 15). The experience of Paul is that of each sinner brought to the Lord Jesus (Rom. 7. 10). But the Spirit of God, Who gives life, is seen in 2 Corinthians 3 in His gracious ministry, as the wondrous and contrasted Antitype of the "ink." We should have thought of a graving tool, as stone is mentioned, but that only operates in the material itself. "Ink" adds, and, in giving life, the Spirit of God adds. But He does not add life as an isolated entity, our hearts become united therewith, and, blessed be God, the life is in the character of "words," the words of Christ (John 6. 63); and thus the unholy objection that when one is saved he can act as he "likes," (in the old, and judged, sense of that expression), is Divinely contradicted. Life is not given without the words of truth: the believer has the law written upon his heart, and so, made alive, he is shown to be alive, by doing the will of God. Does not this search us, tenderly but definitely? And do we not thereby see how many have profession without reality? But this is not to alarm the humbled, and yet somewhat troubled soul. It is the Lord's invitation to praise for the wishes to please Him, and to expect their growth and fulfilment.

Verse 7 continues with a very evident reference to the holy law given on Sinai; and let us observe that the allusion is not to the first time (Ex. 32), with the broken tables, a token of longsuffering, but to the second giving, when the law was kept by the ark prepared for that very purpose. Yes, the law of God must be "kept": longsuffering belongs to "days" (cf. 1 Pet. 3. 20); it cannot be *eternal*. Death to the sinner is necessarily implied by the holy law: hence the solemn event at Bethshemesh (1 Sam. 6. 19). The *glory* of the type was transitory. This is deeply important. It is not that the righteous law and judgment of God pass away. Far otherwise. The Holy Spirit adds the words "written and engraven in stones": it is the type that passes. The ministration of condemnation abides, not in a type but in a solemn and eternal reality. The shadow was not to modify this but to emphasize it. Moses, as mediator, had a fading glory: but God's glory was not fading. That is to say, the law in its dispensational bearing had a temporary aspect in the hands of Moses. It is this which is before us here. The law brought nothing to the goal, it became a "child leader" (Gal. 3. 24) to bring to *Christ*. Moses and Christ are contrasted in John 1, 17, Galatians 3. 19-22 and Hebrews 3. 3. It is not that the law is against the promises of God. Moses rejoiced in the Coming One. But he could give nothing: his *glory* was fading (cf. John 3. 30); his glory could only terrify. No one can come to the Father but by Christ. Here is a living power. The

ministration of the Spirit is the ministration of righteousness (2 Cor. 3. 9), for grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21), and we are made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5. 21), and this glory excelleth, for it is everlasting. The word "exceed" suggests "overflowing," and our hearts rejoice in the many superlatives of grace (cf. Eph. 2. 7). Moses was "made glorious" (2 Cor. 3. 10), but in Christ we see the Glorious One, ever glorious.

We praise God for the words "that which remaineth." Nothing can change His covenant purpose "This is the record that God hath given unto us *eternal* life": "Whom He justified them He also glorified." Ah, dear believing reader, yours is a privilege beyond expression. Rejoice in Christ, and make known what He is. Ah, dear unsaved reader, are you content to remain without Him? The glory of God's law in the type reminds that He has a glory in judgment, and that if you do not receive "the ministration of righteousness" the Lord Jesus will yet carry out judgment. The "great white throne" is not a myth. Will you not seek the Lord to-day?

Here then is a believer's resting place. "Having therefore such hope," says verse 12, "we use great plainness of speech." This word is elsewhere rendered "boldness" (e.g. Eph. 3. 12, Heb. 10. 19) and "confidence" (e.g. Heb. 3. 6, 1 John 2. 28). Our fear is taken away. The fact that the glory of the law on Moses' face was fading implied that a dispensation of law could give nothing permanently: but the ministration of grace and life is absolutely permanent. Hence all veils are taken away. The very height and fulness of the blessedness makes the redeemed confident. Humbled in themselves, they can boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1. 31). The fact that the law is now written in their hearts, and that they are thus brought into the Holiest, and have themselves become God's dwelling place, must take away fear and separation. Judgment is removed. How can a veil remain when the law is in our very hearts? It is all so wonderful beyond words. And "plainness" denotes a contrast with parabolic utterance (John 16. 29). There is a reality in Christ, and the testimony of Christ is to be manifest. To Israel everything was done in types. They were not to see the gradual fading of Moses' glory. The veil was to cover up the incompleteness of the *dispensation* of law, however great its introductory majesty. But, alas, Israel perceived not the lesson. The veil is no longer on *Moses*, nor by Divine appointment. God is not now directing to a prophet, but to the Son of His love (Matt. 17. 5, Heb. 1. 1, 2). Yet a veil remains:—Israel have taken that which belonged to the old dispensation and put it upon their very *hearts* (2 Cor. 3. 15): it is not only on the face; they are inwardly away from God. And thus, though the gospel of Christ now shines forth through the law and the prophets (Rom. 3. 21, Luke 24. 27, 44), Israel see Him not, even though the Scriptures are read every sabbath, both law (Acts 15. 21) and prophets (Acts 13. 27). But, thanks

be to God, the veil is done away "in Christ"! That is to say, it no longer works or operates. "In Christ": precious words: He is the Light, He is the Alpha and Omega, to give the very vowels and meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures. He has no temporary glory, but eternal. It is good to read the Scriptures, but we need, beyond this, to see our Lord Jesus there (Heb. 2. 9). Moses and all Scripture can be "read," and the veil remain, or we can have the true blessedness of which Revelation 1. 1-3 speaks, when we receive everything from His hand, and concerning Himself. Do we only read or do we perceive? Does the living, spoken ministry of Revelation 2. 7, apply the things of Christ (John 16. 14) with living power to our hearts?

The nation, as a nation, is blinded (Rom. 11. 25), but the purpose of God cannot fail or falter. The spared remnant (Jer. 50. 20) shall become the "all Israel" (Rom. 11. 26): "When it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3. 16). It is not possible to separate the unveiling of the Lord Jesus from the Holy Spirit. Did not the Holy Spirit come to represent Him? And is not the writing "with the Spirit of the living God" associated with the blessed thought of Christ being formed in us (Gal. 4. 19)? We call to mind the question, "Whose image *and* superscription?", and, if we are God's coins, the superscription of the words which the Holy Spirit writes is inseparable from the image of Christ. The name "Lord" is emphasized in Exodus 6. 3, and *thrice* repeated in Isaiah 6. 3. This is before us in Matthew 28. 19 (not "the names" but "the Name"). The one glory of our Triune God is more than human philosophy can comprehend. We have the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8. 9), and the context speaks of "freedom" or "liberty" from "the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8. 2). The law cannot condemn where the Spirit maketh alive. Can the law condemn Christ? How can there be judgment when the glorious conditions of Jeremiah 31. 33 are fulfilled? The law would then war against itself! And the veil is gone, and with open (lit. unveiled) face we are called to behold the glory of the Lord, and, instead of fearfully drawing back, as Aaron and Israel of old, we are being changed into the same image; for this is God's purpose. When we were saved, we received the image of God. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We are being saved and being changed: hence the renewal in knowledge according to the image of Him That created the new man: this is a present experience. Grace operates on our soul and personal inner life. Ephesians 4. 23, 24, and Colossians 3. 10, speak to our hearts to-day. And what of the future? We shall bear the image of the Heavenly (1 Cor. 15. 40): that is the future salvation. Glory be to God. "Being changed" (in 2 Cor. 3. 18) is a process, but suddenly we shall be transformed in that Day (Phil. 3. 20, Ps. 17. 15). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

"And when the King came in." Yes, He came in: He was not unmindful. He came in with a purpose, not to see the feast, (He knew that was rightly prepared), but to see the guests, and to behold the attitude of each one. Observe that we have the King throughout. He made the feast, He sent the servants, He was angry, He sent His armies, He came in. The King's Son is awhile not mentioned. Why? The Lord Jesus is now acting in a special way, seated on the heavenly throne to intercede for His own. He is not sending armies, nor is He "casting out" in judgment. He will soon arise, but at the present He waits. This, we remark once more, does not hinder God the Father's continual exercise of supreme authority. Hence there can be definite acts of holy wrath in a day of salvation without changing the *character* of that day. God's silence (Ps. 50. 3) does not mean that He has abdicated. This helps very definitely when some believers cannot understand the events of Revelation 5 and 6 until the 6th seal, in man's day. Yet they must acknowledge, as we have seen, the days of vengeance of Luke 21. 22 were permitted in this dispensation (cf. 1 Thess. 2. 16). And so the King came in. The King's Son *will* come, but at present He waits. When His bride is prepared, He will come. The feast is ready for a completed number of ready guests. How perfect the unveiling of Scripture.

The guests were seen. They could not escape His searching eyes (Ps. 11. 4). One man is singled out. Why? Has he opposed the invitation as those who made light of it? At first we answer readily, "Quite the reverse: he has come." What then is his guilt? O how definite is God's emphasis on the *commission* of sin linked with, and contained in, *omission*. He has *not* been clothed with a wedding garment. The Holy Spirit's wording implies that he never had this robe. The thought is deeply solemn. He was "there," He wished to be "there," but in his own way. The wedding garment was provided: all were to be alike. No one was to come, like Adam and Eve, in fig leaves of self-righteousness. There was to be no patchwork: God allows of no mixture, no compromise. The robe of Isaiah 61. 10 must be possessed, or it is impossible to partake of the feast. *All* things are ready, not only the food. It is not necessary to commit robbery or murder to be lost. The omission of entrance into the ark meant judgment in the days of Noah: the omission of coming to Christ means judgment to-day. The garment is a gift, but it must be possessed and it must be worn. It is worthy of notice that he who had not "*on*" (the tense implies it was never on) had not the garment at all (cf. verses 11 and 12). How blessed it is to be "sitting and clothed," and in our right mind (Mark 5. 15).

The question is plain, as in Genesis 3. 9, 11. God gave space for a repentant answer, even to Cain on the second occa-

sion (Gen. 4. 9 after verse 6). "Friend": not the word of John 15. 14, James 2, 23, but rather of Matthew 20. 13; 26. 50, and only in this gospel. It is a courteous mode of address, and remarkable from the King, but not indicative of the intimacy which the Lord Jesus has graciously associated with the other word (John 15. 15). There was an opportunity to confess pride or wilfulness, carelessness or neglect. "*How* camest thou in hither?" We should have expected the question "Why?" But the distinction is important. "How?" might at first appear to imply, "How couldst thou have so despised the gift?" But it seems rather to suggest that he had entered apart from the door. We at once call to mind John 10. 1. Those who acknowledge "the Way" must recognize "the Righteousness of God." There are many unappointed ways into the Marriage Breakfast, but only one appointed Way into the Supper. Not all are brought to realize their danger and guilt now: not all are unmasked. But the King *can* act even here, and give a warning. May it not be that this is recorded to deter others, that they may not presume? How blessed is the contrast of Philippians 3, "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by (on) faith." Reader, is this gift yours? You cannot enjoy the gospel feast unless you have a complete Saviour. And God Himself has appointed the figure of a robe, with its unity and beautiful texture, with a purpose. And a robe is to be seen, even more than we ourselves are seen. O how perfect is the Divine wisdom in the choice of every type and symbol.

"And (rather, *but*) he was speechless." No word of repentance. And no word of excuse was possible. Here we have a striking anticipation of the future, when every mouth will be stopped, and all the world be brought in guilty before God (Rom. 3. 19, Rev. 20. 12). In humbling, yet refreshing, contrast we read of boldness in the day of judgment (1 John 4. 17), and the words of the psalmist ring out, "My tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness," "My tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long" (Ps. 51. 14, 71. 15, 16, 24). If the Lord Himself has thus opened our lips, our gratitude may well resound here and now. We dare not be silent. Speechless or praiseful—which are we?

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

The Heart and the Hand.

IT is a blessed thing to compare Scripture with Scripture. The Holy Spirit has caused a wondrous unity (2 Pet. 1. 21). Our hearts expect this, and we are not disappointed. In prayerful study we have often seen how certain words are frequently coupled together (e.g., "grace" and "peace," "grace" and "glory," "life" and "light," "way" and "life," "see" and "hear," "righteousness" and "rejoicing," "mercy" and

"truth," "kingdom" and "glory," etc.). It has often been mentioned that a concordance showing many of these connected (or in some cases, contrasted) words would help believing students. A brother suggested he had been profited by the linked words, the "heart" and the "hand," and it is ever blessed to remember that the outer life of witness depends on the inner fellowship with God. I soon mentioned that I would welcome his list. He has included some where the context is rather more distant, but I do not feel free to omit any, though such passages as Exodus 35. 25, with the heart and hand prepared for God's tabernacle, and as Deuteronomy 6. 4-9, with His words first in the heart, and then bound on the hands, will give the quickest impressiveness to most. It would be possible to add other aspects of the context, e.g., Psalm 69 and 22, and to behold the love of Him Who said, "They pierced My hands and My feet," and "reproach hath broken My heart," and likewise the descriptions of prayer pouring out the heart and lifting up holy hands:—Eph. 5. 19, 20, 1 Tim. 2. 8, (or such as Ps. 141. 2). But if the Holy Spirit graciously uses the list, not only in itself, but also to encourage others to expect graciously given blessing in similar studies, we shall rejoice with them, and be thankful to see their "lists" also, as well as additions to the subject now before us. A word of loving caution:—It is easy to omit many: it is good to revise again and again, although even then one will be conscious how much fuller is God's truth than our knowledge of it. And let all be with heart-application, in daily life, to the glory and praise of God.

Exodus 35. 25.

Deuteronomy 6. 4-9, 11. 18, 15. 1-11, 28. 28-32, 30. 6-10.

1 Samuel 10. 7-9 (marg.), 24. 4-11, 25. 31-33.

1 Kings 8. 22-66.

2 Kings 10. 15.

1 Chronicles 29. 5-9 (marg.).

2 Chronicles 6. 12-12, 7. 6-10 (marg.), 15. 1-15, 16. 7-9,

29. 31 (marg.).

Job 11. 11-14, 31. 4-8.

Psalms 7. 1-10, 24. 4, 26. 1-7, 28. 1-9, 44. 17-21, 58. 2,

73. 13, 76. 5, 77. 1-6 (marg.), 78. 70-72, 90.

11-17, 119, 109-111, 125. 3, 4, 140. 1-4, 141.

1-4, 143. 1-6.

Proverbs 6. 16-19, 11. 20, 21, 16. 5, 17. 16-18.

Songs of Songs 5. 2-6.

Isaiah 10. 5-14, 13. 6, 7, 35. 3, 4.

Lamentations 2. 19, 3. 41.

Ezekiel 21. 7, 22, 14.

Daniel 8. 25, 10. 9-12.

Zephaniah 3. 14-16.

Zechariah 8. 9-17.

James 4. 8.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

*"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power,
in the beauties of holiness."* Psalms 110. 3.

A Word of Introduction.

THE principles of God's precious truth go throughout the whole Scripture. "Love" belongs to the Old Testament, and the New. "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God," "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," "Love one another." And, in like manner, God has His own people throughout. "Thou art Mine." He sought a sanctuary of old to dwell among Israel (Ex. 25. 8), and has a spiritual sanctuary now, and His sanctuary will be in the midst of Israel (Ezek. 37. 28). And "holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. 93. 5) is true at all times. Hence the prophecy of Psalm 110 as to willing Israel in "that Day" has its constant illustration. If we believe, we cannot boast, it is according to the working of His mighty power (Eph. 1. 19) and we are caused to be willing: there is no mere constraint. With the heart we believe, and the will is brought into line with His will (John 7. 17). How blessed is the display of grace in its fruits, in the life of those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. To emphasize this unto His glory are these pages sent forth.

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"One thing have I desired (asked) of the Lord, that will I seek after"

(Psalm 27. 4).

IT is evident that all the psalmists were men who loved God, and loved to be in His presence. The personal note too is seen throughout: eastern religions may believe the theory of an impersonal God, but Scripture is entirely different.

The confidence in God, which this psalm breathes, must refresh us. "The Lord is my Light, and my Salvation: whom shall I fear?" leading up to "Wait on the Lord" in verse 14. Everything depends on Him. We remember "Fear not, I am," and again "I will trust, and not be afraid." There is a restfulness in God's will. "The time of trouble" is present, "mine enemies" are real, those near and dear in the flesh may forsake, but **God is!**

And the longing is for God's house, as a dwelling place. This attitude is ever before us (e.g. Ps. 23. 6, 84. 3, 4, 134. 1). Beholding and enquiring are alike precious: beholding is appropriately first, with the blessedness of worship. "That they may behold My glory" (John 17. 24): "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). How contrasted was Israel's attitude of old, "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53. 2). Nor are the Gentiles different (2 Cor. 4. 3, 4).

And now let us notice the "one thing" of our title, which, as Mary's "one thing" (Luke 10. 42), and Paul's (Phil. 3. 13), must show as the intensity of a right relationship to the Lord, with the blessing of a united heart (Ps. 86. 11), and the peril of one, divided (Hos. 10. 2). And we observe what the psalmists asking implied. "That will I seek after." We are reminded of Matthew 7. 7, and the order there. How precious it is if we become more intense. God welcomes urgency in prayer. The only two parables of importunity (in Luke 11 and 18) concern prayer. We shall not be blamed for reverent intensity, so long as we keep lovingly willing for God's will. Prayer should not be like a runaway knock, nor should we ask one thing, and act contrary to our prayers. If we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," let us seek grace to avoid carelessness, or running into it. If we pray and act quite differently, can we be surprised if God does not hear (Mal. 2. 13)? Let us seek what we ask, with a loving and true expectation. God can bless us so far beyond our petitions that we may almost say He **overrules** all our attitude. But it is blessed when we are in the path of His will, and not only overruled. Unsaved ones can be overruled to be His servants, even as a Nebuchadnezzar. If I pray this morning, let me seek to be prepared for God's answer all day. By such godly seeking we shall please Him. I do **not** mean to seek to fulfil our prayers in our own way. This seems to have been David's mistake in 2 Samuel 15. 34 after the trustful prayer of 131. We must be willing to wait God's way, and time, as Jeremiah ten days and Daniel three full weeks, but we must be on the watchtower, and seek with love's realization of His unchanging interest and power and wisdom. O for a quiet confidence in our Father!

Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

(Concluded)

How is the *present* experience going forward? As we behold "in a glass the glory of the Lord." And what is the glass? James 1. 23-25 gives the answer: This is not the dispensation of a shadow (Heb. 10. 1), but it is the dispensation of the glass. We need the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit leads us ever to see the glory of Christ there. If we fail to use the glass, we fail to know Him. The Spirit of God does not work without the glass. His gracious ministry never ignores the glass. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13. 12). Ah, there is a blessed climax to come, and we shall know even as we were known.

Thus we appreciate the immediate sequence of chapter 4, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." "This ministry" is a call to joy and praise. It is a ministry of righteousness, not of condemnation. How can we faint? Circumstances may be perplexing, but how can we be in despair (2 Cor. 4. 8)? There is a lasting glory in the gospel of the grace of God, and our hearts are encouraged against all hindrances. There were those who corrupted the word of God (2 Cor. 2. 17), there were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 13), but the Lord's servant would not be deterred thereby, nor copy their methods. The contrast with a previous dispensation was followed by a further contrast with false teachers: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, could not walk in craftiness, nor modify the message, nor misuse the gospel of Christ. Conscientiously and openly he would keep to the one message of Christ, not trimming his testimony to suit circumstances.

The third verse reminds us that not only the Jew but the Gentile is veiled. Blindness covers the earth. The gospel is not universalism. There are those who are "lost." Sin is in them: the glory of the gospel is not defective. "The god of this age," even Satan, the enemy of souls, hates that which exalts Christ. But the one true gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of God." Christ and Christ alone must be the Centre of the gospel message.

It is precious to notice the added words. We were once darkness even as others (2 Cor. 4. 6, Eph. 5. 8), but God Himself hath shined in our hearts. His commanding word of old said "Let there be light," and there was light, and now we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (not of the type), in the face of Jesus Christ" (not on the face of Moses).

The treasure of the tabernacle was the law in the ark of the covenant. We have our treasure (2 Cor. 4. 7), but it is still in an earthen vessel. Wonder of wonders, the treasure is committed to such a casket, and it is not a condemnatory law, but "the law of Christ," and "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16), and Christ is in us "the Hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27).

And then at once this passage is made a background for the explanation of our strain and stress, while bearing "the dying of Jesus" (2 Cor. 4. 10 lit.) and "the light affliction," until we receive "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1).

Hence this portion of Scripture is seen in its precious setting, not as an excuse for objection to the letter of Christ's words, or as an argument against their verbal inspiration and full authority, but the exact reverse, showing how the true believer is an epistle of Christ, to bear His *words* and *image*, and to represent Him, amid all the suffering and rejection, until we see Him face to face and are glorified together with Him. Is this our prospect, and are we willing for the path thither? We have seen that the Holy Spirit offers no alternative. The suggestion that His leading makes us independent of the written Scriptures, or indifferent to the words of the Lord Jesus, is realized to be a grave delusion. May we, delivered from so dangerous a snare, show henceforth our Lord's will and words are not held mentally or mechanically but with love's devotion and devotedness, because written in the very heart of the new creation. So will God be glorified in us, and the revival and oneness of mind of the redeemed will be reached more and more fully, as we wait for our Lord from heaven and love His Appearing.

"He Halted" (Genesis 32. 31).

A REMINDER—like to Paul's thorn in the flesh,—and a needed reminder. How many things we fail to learn without pain. How often we need the refining knife of the gracious Husbandman and the refining fire of Him Who sits "as a Refiner and Purifier of silver" (Mal. 3. 3). While Jacob wrestled he had no power: when he wept and made supplication there was power with God (Hos. 12. 3, 4). How often we try our methods, and they fail. We are feverish, and impatient, or we scheme and plan: but God's strength is made perfect in weakness. "The flesh profiteth nothing," and sometimes we need to be brought low even in our physical frame, and caused to "halt" that we may truly go forward. When conscious of pain and strain, we are cast upon the Lord. We cannot, **but He can**. We come to an end of ourselves: we are made conscious of our personal insufficiency, and our hearts cry, "Undertake for me." We should not **need** the thigh to be put out of joint. We should learn the Divine lesson more quickly. But how graciously does the Lord deal with us and how patiently: He does not wound to kill, but to heal. He does not willingly afflict, but removes our self-reliance, with the object that in quietness and confidence **in Himself** may be our strength. So we come to look away from self to Him. We halt physically, but run spiritually: when we run physically, too oft we halt spiritually. O that we may be willing for God's will, and quicker to perceive His hints.

"But have not Love."

1 Corinthians 13. 1-3.

THESE thrice repeated words are deeply impressive. We notice the "threes" of verse 11 and 13 also. All the "great things" of this chapter, from man's standpoint, seem to be in the first three verses: true love does **little** things beautifully to God's glory: it is livingly expressed in **all** things of daily life. This is important:—what is the value of a well-spread table if a little poison is in each dish? Do we grow up into Christ in all things? What **are** we—within? What **are** we in God's sight? What are our motives? Each thought is searching.

The **three** descriptions of utter worthlessness are striking (verses 1-3). They are evidently distinct with a Divine purpose:—

- (a) "I am **become** as sounding brass or a tinkling (clanging) cymbal" (1).
- (b) "I **am** nothing" (2).
- (c) "It **profiteth** me nothing" (3).

In each case we see how the **person**, in himself, is utterly without the Lord's blessing. Mere possessions are **nothing**. How important is the **inner** life. The language of the Holy Spirit has in each verse, a fulness of special appropriateness by way of contrast. First, we have much speaking (1), but there is no "**fruit** of the lips" (Heb. 13. 15). Does not this epistle also speak of "things without life giving sound" (1 Cor. 14. 7), mentioning pipe and harp? If there is no love, one becomes a mere machine, a **mere** musical instrument, however grandly the words sound. O that we may ever speak fruitfully from the heart. The clanging cymbal is only a great noise: there is no life, no feeling, no experience. True love is **personal**, and **living**, and it affects all.

So in the second verse. I may **have** much but I **am** nothing, —unless love sanctifies all. Again there is the thought of a **personal** need. "Things" are vain, unless they are the manifestation of a **person** in communion with God. It is not "What have I before men?" but "What **am** I before God?"

So in the third. At first we are surprised. "It **profiteth** me nothing." Does love seek profit? Not financially, not with regard to reputation, but everything must be viewed with regard to the person. If he is not blessed, all is void. All the **goods** are given, and the **body** as well, but there is no **heart**, no living **soul** that is **giving**, because it loves the Lord (Deut. 6. 5), what is there from **me** or for **me**, in God's sight? There is no "personal" experience to enjoy God's approval: everything is formal and dead. There should be "profit," for God has emphasized the principle of sowing and reaping,—spiritual profit indeed, to His joy also. But the loveless one reaps nought. He is spiritually but a carcase.

In holy contrast we realize that love is God's own sweet music, and the loving one "IS" in His presence and receives

the precious profit of His gracious delight and fellowship. O how blessed it is to have a real personal "life" that is manifested in all that is done, and to enjoy the blessedness of unchanging harmony with His will. Love seeks HIS joy, but a loving one cannot be joyless in himself. Pleasing the Lord, we are truly blest, and thus we see the gracious instruction of our loving Heavenly Father as to a life flowing out in the **whole** of the daily "path," in the attitude toward all circumstances, and in the interpretation and enduring of all trials. We are not surprised that the Holy Spirit describes it at the end of chapter 12 as "a more excellent WAY."

The Contribution of the Women to the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

GOD in grace uses all His people. We cannot all do the same things, but we can all do something. The great thing is to be gladly within His will. We have a striking view of this in the Tabernacle. The rulers brought onyx stones. Others possibly did not possess these, but God did not desire all the work to be with onyx stones. The privilege was to bring what He commanded (Ex. 36. 5), and to bring it quickly. Some were too late (Ex. 36. 6).

In accord therewith, the women, as "helps" (Gen. 2. 18), had a precious share. We particularly read of God's description of the willing **hearted** and wise **hearted**, that He might make room for all who were in the right **condition**. Hence Exodus 35 says, "They came, both men and women" (cf. verse 29). Here was a **parallel** service for both sexes. But in the labour there were different functions. "All the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands" (Ex. 35. 25. 26). There was a special privilege for the women. And, in like manner, the laver was made of the looking brasses which the women gave up for God's work (Ex. 38. 8). The tendency to personal adornment was thus graciously checked, and instead of occupation of mind with oneself, and looking into the glass, there was a desire for the Lord's work. And remarkably, the laver reflected the **sacrifice**, and was used to contain the water which told of cleansing, and thus the reverse of our pride, for the priests also. How suggestive is all God's typical teaching. And as the laver pictures the **assembly** filled with God's purifying words, and resting alone on the foundation of the Lord Jesus, it was fitting that the women should provide it, since God gave marriage and the relation of men and women as a type of Christ and the Church.

We cannot be "Paul," we cannot all "preach," but we can all live, and give, and pray, and please the Lord, if we are His redeemed ones, and it is the privilege of each believer to be willing and wise hearted, and to put aside his "looking brass," or whatever ministers to the flesh, for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

"Then said the King to the servants." The word "then" is impressive. The critical moment was now past. The opportunity of confession did not remain indefinitely. As with Cain, and with Jezebel in Revelation 2, it was not taken. We can well realize how some tender soul will misconstrue this, and conceive that his, or her, time has passed. Ah, dear reader, the fact that you are still here to mourn, and that you are concerned as to whether your time is over, is a refreshing proof otherwise. The devil would seek to torment those whom he cannot lull to indifference and sleep. But God's tender mercy spares you, and He does not send these tormenting thoughts.

"The servants" are distinguished from those of verses 3 and 4 (and from the armies of verse 7). A different word is used. As in Matthew 13. 20 (distinguished from 27), there may be a reference to angelic ministration. Discipline is indeed entrusted to an assembly of God (1 Cor. 5), but not the binding of hand and foot. Of old the priests of Israel were dedicated to God on ear, hand and foot (Ex. 29. 30), and the laver was then used to cleanse the hands and feet that followed an obedient ear. The cleansed leper was likewise anointed (Lev. 14. 14, 17), and the ear was always first. We can neither *do* nor *walk* to God's glory till we *hear* His voice. This man had refused to hear. Hence the binding of hand and foot. The hand had chosen his own clothing, the foot had come his own way. Both were bound. And the removal was complete. The true light is ever in God's presence. In contrast is the outer darkness, found also in Matthew 8. 12, 25. 30. 2 Peter 2. 17 and Jude 13 come to mind. Our beloved Lord does not overlook sin, nor veil realities. It is cruel to modify truth, or extenuate sin. The two ways and two goals are ever set plainly before us. How frequently is the great antitheses seen in the parables. There is no *via media*: no third alternative is possible. Men are either saved, or lost. Though there are distinctions in glory, and in judgment, there are only two places.

And then occur words which show clearly the unchanged character of those who are condemned. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Once are they found in Luke (13. 28), and six times in Matthew. Apart from the two passages already mentioned (8. 12, 25. 30), we observe 13. 42, 50. 24. 51. Thus a sevenfold witness gives a sevenfold warning. The reality of pain and consciousness, and the fact of continued opposition are all emphasized. There is no hint of repentance, and the same word "shall be" bears its definite testimony. "There" reminds us of a real place in contrast with the same word in verse 11. The attempt of the enemy to hide these certainties is only part of his plan to "deceive" the whole world. It is our responsibility to give a trumpet call, that some, awakened by God's grace,

may seek Him while He may be found. "Universalism" is a delusive snare of the devil.

"For many are called, but few are chosen" is the impressive conclusion, looking back to verse 9 as well as verses 3 and 4. The invitation is world-wide. Some utterly disregard the call. But now we see it is not enough to heed the outward message, and give a respectful attention to the gospel. How many are "apparently" impressed. The stony ground hearers are still numerous. Many, yes, many indeed are called, but this does not prove they are saved. In an earlier chapter "many" and "few" are seen in the broad way and the narrow. It is easy to remain in the broad way, though called. A parallel passage in Luke (13. 23, 24) reminds us that "many" will speak of the Lord's presence and teaching (verse 26), and yet will be outside the closed door in that Day. O that the word "many" may ring in our ears. *Nominal* "Christian countries" are before us, and the wealth of Christendom's profession, but where is the humble and contrite heart which God does not despise? It is possible to be among the "many" and to come, expecting the feast, but with something of one's own, some "robe" of self, some confidence in the flesh. The sinner *must* take the position where God places him, and own he is utterly lost, and can give nothing, do nothing, bring nothing. It is not enough to hear the voice of a man. God's voice must be acknowledged in the heart, and when, in mercy, this humble attitude is taken, we own our unworthiness, and ascribe all glory to Him, even for the fact that our eyes are opened to see our filthiness and need (Rom. 11. 7). We may not understand all His way, but we cannot omit unqualified praise for *absolute* grace. And, thanks be unto God, if we are reminded of the large number whose profession is only outward, there are some who are truly saved. "Few" tells of grace reigning, and the little flock is a reality. And, gathered from all lands, they will be, all together, a great multitude that no man can number. And those who are "called and chosen" show the fruit of God's gracious work, with the precious effect set forth in Revelation 17. 14, "called, and chosen, and faithful." May this, by mercy, be our characteristic, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, day by day.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

Have you read through the Scriptures? When? Have you read them through again? Are you still reading them through? It is so natural to study only a part, and to become one sided. Reading without the Holy Spirit's guidance is vain, but it is blessed when in communion with God (Rev. 1. 3). And can you **think through** a book of Scripture, without opening it, remembering helpfully a fair proportion in each chapter?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Ephesians 3. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

EVERY believer should be a worshipper. Knees have been graciously given us to bend them. If we do not bow our knees oftentimes, how much we miss. The emphasis on prayer unto the FATHER in the Name of the Lord Jesus is here before us as in Ephesians 2. 18. Yet how little is the word "Father" realized. "For this cause" in the verse before us looks back, over a long and precious parenthesis, to verse 1, and this in turn to Ephesians 2. And the literal rendering is "with reference to the grace of this." Yes, grace ever leads us to thanksgiving (a word from the same root), and to adoration. When our hearts realize "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22) we must bow the knees. It is all so wonderful. And our expectations are quickened, as the latter verses of Ephesians 3 show. The prayer of verses 16-21, as other prayers of the apostle, is a wondrous incentive to mighty prayer in its immense and heavenly longings. May our prayer be such in the Holy Spirit. Then shall we study Scripture aright.

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Filled.

"The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Exodus 40. 34, 35.
"The glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." 2 Chronicles 5. 14 (cf. 7. 2).
"I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2. 7.

"Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mightily wind, and it filled all the house, . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2. 4.

"That ye might be filled with (into) all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3. 19.

"The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." Ezekiel 44. 4.

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." Habakkuk 2. 14.

(Contrast, "the earth is filled with violence." Gen. 6. 13).

"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Isaiah 6. 3.

(Also "filled," verses 1 & 4, see Ps. 33. 5, 104. 24, 119. 64).

"Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna." Exodus 16. 33.

"The river of God . . . is full of water." Psalm 65. 9.

"Full of grace and truth." John 1. 14.

"Out of His fulness have all we received." John 1. 16.

"Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them to the brim." John 2. 7.

"And ye are complete (have been filled) in Him." Colossians 2. 10.

* * * *

"His offering was one silver charger, . . . one silver bowl, . . . both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: one spoon . . . full of incense." Numbers 7. 13, 14, 19, 20, 25, 26, etc.

("None shall appear before Me empty." Ex. 23. 15).

"Thou shalt consecrate (fill the hand of, margin) Aaron and his sons." Exodus 29. 9. See too Joshua 14. 8, 9. 14 ("filled after the Lord").

* * * *

"They did all eat and were filled." Matthew 14. 20.

"For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Psalm 107. 9.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things." Luke 1. 53.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered together, and filled twelve baskets." John 6. 12, 13.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matthew 5. 6.

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Romans 15. 13.

The first man whose "way" is mentioned is Cain (Jude 11), but thanks be to God, He had a "way" yet before, and this was "kept" (Gen. 3. 24), with a view to the very sacrifice (Zech. 13. 7) that Cain despised.

God's grace is not an experiment; but sovereign and victorious in its working. How grateful should we be for invincible grace.

Unexpected Grammar in the Holy Scriptures.

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." We know this, and observe that the added four words, "doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness" lay much emphasis on the "practical" application of truth. May this ever be on our hearts!

In a recent journey one who had definitely acknowledged the Scriptures, but who had, alas, been weakened and damaged by training in England, spoke of grammatical mistakes in "The Revelation" as an argument against verbal inspiration. I replied that it had been my privilege to read through, and humbly translate through, the New Testament, and I had **not** found them, but that the most striking "irregularity" illustrated, without doubt, Divine **purpose**, and was rich in meaning (and blessing). In other words it is not an accident but, as miracles in nature, a special message from God to our hearts. I feel that other believers will rejoice to share this blessing, and to praise God accordingly.

It is found in Revelation 1. 4 "From Him Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come." Now the word "from" is a preposition, and a preposition is invariably followed by a modified form of the word, if the word is capable of this. So is it in English also. "I" can be modified, so we dare not say "from I" but "from me," and, likewise, not "from he" but "from him." Now of the six words here in Greek dependent on "from," five are subject to modification, but **not one is modified**. No writer would think of making a "mistake" thus. There must be a reason. Can we reverently discover it? I feel we can.

Our hearts remember Exodus 3. 14 and Exodus 6. 3. The Hebrew student will have been impressed by the way that the Name rendered LORD, (printed in capitals), allows of no alteration in its Hebrew letters. No "construct" or plural forms can be made, and no pronoun can be affixed, as with other words. The LORD stands unchanged. Remarkably, the very pronunciation has been veiled, though the usual older vocalization, "Alpha" and "Omega," truly suggests our Lord Jesus is the Key and Revealer of the Father (Matt. 11. 27). We need to realize, in these irreverent days, that the LORD stands, unaltered and unalterable. "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. 3. 6).

How can this fact be brought out in Greek, and in the very passage where the Holy Spirit alludes to "the Name above every name" (cf. Phil. 2. 9)? Exactly as John has done in the verse before us. Every modifiable word is unmodified. Whatever comes "from" us leaves us impoverished or changed, in some measure, but **He** remains the Same (Heb. 1. 12). Greetings and grace are "from" Him, but His fulness is fulness still (cf. John 1. 16). It is a precious thought, and, moreover, shows the link of the New Testament with the Old. And may not we further say that, as prepositions are "standing around" in a sentence, so no "circumstances" can affect God's unchanging power and glory? Cherubim and seraphim, and angels ten thousand times

ten thousand are before Him, and there is the veiling in due reverence. Shall we alone be irreverent? Nay we will learn, and love to worship.

If then this is definitely designed to emphasize the glory of God, how awful is the misuse, by human criticism, to cast aspersions on the very book which He has thus inspired to lead us to greater awe, and holy humiliation before Himself. May the sad sin be forgiven, and may those who are ensnared thereby realize the source of such deadly errors. The arch enemy hates THE GLORY OF GOD.

But we would go further. Other unusual language may have so manifest a testimony, that God will speak to us thereby. A few examples may be given.*

In Psalm 2. 12 we have a restful climax, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Psalm 1. 1 has specially brought before us the Perfect One, and now we see how sinners saved are brought to have the same description "blessed," with the happiness of eternity. The word "put their trust" is a Hebrew form that suggests a noun will follow, e.g., "Trusting ones of the Lord." This would denote that they belonged to Him. But here we have "in Him." A different ending to the Hebrew word would have been expected, but **that** would have omitted to emphasize His possession. So the Holy Spirit combines **two** grammatical forms to remind our thankful hearts that our Lord Jesus **owns** us, and that we are also **in** Him, as if to suggest that language can only partly express the union and fulness of relationship which grace has accomplished. Grammar is, as it were, full to overflowing, and the richness bursts through, to display His glories. Is this a little thing to one redeemed?

In 2 Corinthians 4. 17, 18, we have what has been called "a genitive absolute," i.e., a parallel with "God willing" which comes in the middle of a sentence without affecting its grammar. But normally this only exists when it refers to a person or thing not already included in the ordinary grammar of the sentence. Here it is, "we not looking at the things being beheld." But "we" have been already mentioned in the words "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (O that, while we read, our hearts may be occupied with the gracious purpose and overflowing love of God!) Hence, as "for us" has a **dative** ending we should expect the same,—"(for) us not looking at the things being beheld." But would not the Holy Spirit, by the variation, prevent any pride of "merit." It is so precious not to make our attitude the ground of our confidence, but rather the blessedly accompanying character, and deeply important when speaking of the Lord's "rewards" to be kept humble. If we are faithful, it is in that which is **least**: if we "labour," our hearts must add "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "Of Thine own have we given Thee."

*We should be very grateful if children of God would send particulars of any they have found. A complete list would be full of blessing, and a witness. God never makes a mistake.

A well-known example of an unexpected form is in Ephesians 3. 8, "Less than the least of all saints." The first word is a comparative superlative **united** as if the apostle's love and humility found the need for a special experience; not in mock modesty, but indicative of a lowly heart-attitude which we, too, need more and more.

"Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander" in 1 Timothy 1. 20 sounds strange, and the Greek is the same in 2 Timothy 1. 15, 2. 17. Is there not a deep underlying thought? We rejoice in the **fellowship** of believers, but here we have fellowship and "unity" in error. How sadly Satan counterfeits all. May ours be the unity in the truth, because in the Holy Spirit.

If these few examples show beloved children of God that there is no mere accident in unexpected wording of the Holy Scripture, but a message from our Father, Himself, there will be true profit, and increasing reverence, unto His praise and glory. The tendency to judge hastily is not wise: it is often ruinous. But when dealing with God's inspired book, it not only robs us of much blessing, but denies God Himself. Let us have time to hear His voice, to see His treasures, and to rejoice in His will.

The Mouth and the Feet united: The Words and the Walk:—

"He . . . set my **feet** upon a rock, and established my goings, and He hath put a new song in my **mouth**, praise unto our God." Psalm 40. 2, 3.

"Every place that the **sole** of your foot shall tread upon, that I have given unto you as I said unto Moses . . . This book of the law shall not depart out of **thy mouth**." Joshua 1. 3, 8.

"How beautiful are the **feet** of them that **preach the gospel** of peace." Romans 10. 15.

"Let us **go forth** therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach . . . by Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our **lips**, giving thanks to His Name." Hebrews 13. 13, 15.

"**Run, speak** to this young man." Zechariah 2. 4.

"**Walking**, and leaping, and **praising** God." Acts 3. 8, 9.

Observe—"My sheep hear My **voice**, and I know them and they **follow** Me." John 10. 27; and "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow **His steps**: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in **His mouth**." 1 Peter 2. 21, 22.

"I have pardoned according to thy word"; "as ye have spoken in Mine ears so will I do unto you: your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness." In each verse—and they are in the same chapter (Num. 14. 20, 28)—see God's action according to **the words spoken**. And, in each case, He gives the impressive declaration, "I live." He hears our prayers to answer: He hears words of unbelief and mumbling and they bring a bitter harvest. Let us be prayerfully careful what we say.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

And now, with the Lord's enabling, we are more prepared to meditate on the feast of Luke 14. 16-24. There are many parallels with Matthew but also contrasts, and we may be sure each distinction has a Divine message for us. Shall we notice some?—

- (1) The thought of a King and of judgment is not specially before us in Luke 14 ("a certain man").
- (2) Different servants are not sent, but ONE throughout.
- (3) The attitude of defiance is not recorded: only "polite" indifference, and the sad, sad emphasis of other things first. (Let the practical application and searching in our own life be ever felt).
- (4) Those **led in**, (not only led together), are "the poor and maimed and lame and blind"; none others.
- (5) Instead of one seat being emptied, **one** place, till then empty, must be finally occupied. (There is no plural "them" in verse 23, but the italicized type shows a human addition).
- (6) A gracious "compulsion" is here mentioned.
- (7) The "house" is then seen as "filled."

Though the King is not mentioned, the background is, "Happy is he who shall eat bread in the **kingdom** of God." Omission and a different relative emphasis do not imply necessarily an entire contrast. Holy authority and anger are seen in this parable also (verse 21). But the thought here is the blessedness of being in the "house," and thus "the Master of the house" is the Divine description. The expression "gospel of the kingdom" tells of grace, and "the gospel of the grace of God" never excludes the kingdom (Acts 20. 24, 28, 31), nor are there two gospels (Rom. 1. 16), but each word is Divinely chosen in each context.

Corresponding here we have in the first verse, and the last also, the word "supper," and this suggests "the marriage *supper* of the Lamb" though the wedding is not mentioned. A sad contrast therewith is seen in "I have married a wife." It is important never to misuse the silence of Scripture. "His Son" is before us in Matthew 22, not here, but surely the gospel feast is ever with reference to our beloved Lord Jesus. In Matthew He draws our attention to our responsibility in the ministry of truth exalting Himself: here the emphasis, we shall see, is particularly on the Holy Spirit's secret and mighty work, in drawing, bringing, and compelling poor, lost sinners. This deeply encouraging aspect, found in John 3, is more rarely explained. And observe that our acceptability and acceptance "in Christ" and our bridal relationship to Him are not primarily our meditation here, but rather our utter unworthiness and unfitness, and the fulness of constraining grace that brings us within, according to

the purpose and power of covenant love. And how sweet is this to the heart, when we have seen something of our ruin and nothingness. And it is blessed to realize that though from the *breakfast* one is seen to be cast out, none are cast out from the SUPPER, nor does the work of the Holy Spirit permit of any failure or undoing. It is a treasure of grace to find in one parable one view, and in another something distinct, yet related. All parts of truth are needed. Even so Luke 15 shows us the found sheep, and the found son, but does not contain the bride, nor the virgins. Our Lord Jesus has many names for His many glories, and His redeemed are the body, the bride, the branches, and so forth,—every figure of nearness being graciously claimed, that we might have a strong consolation and joy.

In all our prayerful study it is important that the experimental and practical aspects should be prominent. All the unveiling of grace is to lead us to devotion. When we see what God has done for us, how grateful our hearts should be, and how concerned for others, who are still outside, and see no beauty in Him Who is altogether lovely, and desire not to partake of that which His finished work has so fully provided. There is thus a blending of joy and sorrow in our study, for there are myriads still who with one consent begin to make excuse.

Myriads?—Ah, "all" are seen as doing this here, although "many" were invited. Only three are mentioned, but they are sad samples. Not one of the "many" who were "called" really came (verse 24). Yet, thanks be unto God, the supper, said to be great, shall not be lost to all. There was, (rather let us say), there is room for **many**, and, as the house **shall** be filled, "many" will yet partake. Thus we behold at once the two "many's," and God's witness against universalism which is ever before our hearts.

Many were called. How definitely the Lord Jesus emphasizes this in both parables. And let us ever remember, that, though men refuse, they must be called. Accordingly at the outset God preached the gospel to Cain (Gen. 4. 7 lit.), and we read that it was His Spirit which was "judging" among men in the days of Noah (see Gen. 6. 3, with John 16. 8-11, Heb. 11. 7 and 2 Peter 2. 5). This gives light on 1 Peter 1. 11 with 1 Peter 3. 18, 19, and we realize that the witness in the power of the Spirit of Christ was rejected. So is it in Luke 14, where the One Who is able to "compel" gives the message. This invitation, yea, command ("Come," see Matt. 28. 18), must be distinguished from the inner, quickening work of the Holy Spirit. This is strong evidence that we must not confuse the different parts of His ministry, nor must we hold back the message because men do not hear (Exek. 2. 5). We are not sent to preach to the elect, but to sinners. God's grace in "bringing," when men despise, does not release us from our privilege and responsibility of testimony. It is important to see Romans 9 is joined with Romans 10, and in the latter we find not only the privilege of fervent prayer

for souls, but also, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Yea, the same chapter reminds us that God Himself says, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10. 21). O that we may never use human logic against tenderness or against obedient service.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

BRIEF THOUGHTS ON GIVING.

(In 2 Corinthians 9).

It is a bounty, a blessing, or it should be (verse 5).
No covetousness should be intermingled (verse 5).
It is a sowing: there is a **living seed**: the gift is **spiritual** from those born again (verse 6).
It should not be done sparingly (verse 6).
It should be bountiful, i.e., "**on blessings**" (how many blessings have we received): It should not be grudging, i.e., out of grief (verse 7, see Deut. 15. 10).
It should not be of necessity, or impelled by others (verse 7).
It should be the expression of cheerful gladness, because of God's mercy, filling the **whole being** (verse 7 says not only "cheerfully," i.e., in manner, but speaks of "a cheerful giver,"—the complete person delighted—cf. 8. 5).
It is an abounding (overflowing), because of God's abounding (overflowing) grace (verse 8).
Note chapter 8. 6, "This **grace** also."
Is this "Giving" ours? or
Do we sow sparingly?

I thought of the Holy Scriptures, **written** by God's inspiration that no error may be there (2 Tim. 3. 16). But though this is deeply important as a touchstone, (or "I" might mistake another leading for that of the Lord, and might follow my impulses), yet is it deeply important that the written words should become the spoken words **to me** (Matt. 4. 4, Heb. 3. 7, Rev. 2. 7), that I may experience the words in the power of the living **Teacher** and with His **tone**. But even then I may lack the realization of His standpoint, His joy, and His purpose. Hence I need, through communion with Himself, to do His **Will** in accord with His **Words** (Matt. 12. 50, 1 John 2. 17).

We can do nothing that is fruitful without the Lord Jesus; but, when we have been saved, by grace, we have a fulness of supply in Him, and are called to "abide," that we may bring forth fruit, aye, and much fruit. Hence to speak ever of our inability now is to deny His fulness and His provision, and so to dishonour His holy Name.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

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

A Word of Introduction.

THESE pages are to the glory of Him Who is "counted worthy of more glory than Moses" (Heb. 3. 3). Yes, everything must be to His glory, or it is vain. "All ye are brethren": no man is to assume "Headship." The Lord has given various gifts, and they are to be recognized, and there should be blessing and help through "one another." But Christ is the Head, and He has the glory. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake" must ever be our humble prayer. The bare "study" of Scripture, mentally, is not our aim: we seek fruit,—fruit for His joy. "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits" (Song 4. 16). This is our heart's desire, for His delight, and the praise of His Name. We trust that all who, equally redeemed by His precious blood, have the same purpose in life, will find blessing by these pages.

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The Serpent Lifted Up in the Wilderness.

OFTEN have I thought, and you, too, have thought, of this precious type of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can see His strength typified in the copper; and in the one plan, for the whole congregation, see that He is the only Saviour. We realize that faith looks to Him, and the needy, burdened one never looks in vain. True, the type was incomplete, since it availed only once (see 2 Kings 18. 4), and for a few of one nation. Yet it was precious, to direct to Him.

Possibly we have all asked, "But why in the form of a serpent?" We may have understood, in grateful measure, the "pole," typifying Christ lifted up on the tree (John 3. 14, 12. 32); for there is no **salvation** by His wondrous life, miracles, teaching or example, "it is **the blood** that maketh an atonement." Many have rejoiced, possibly, in the view of Himself **exalted** when thus lifted up, and His glory, for the copper was shining (cf. the laver, made of the "looking brasses"), and may have noticed also that whereas a death by sickness was **lying down**, and by accident oft accompanied by **falling down**, and likewise death by stoning, this judgment-death, on the cross, was the only one linked with **uprightness**. The very word "cross," moreover, has **no** reference to a cross beam, but is from the root "to stand." Thus, further, we behold Him, (as the ark in Genesis 7), between heaven and earth, and the One Who, as Jacob's ladder, unites, coming from heaven to earth, to take poor, guilty sinners from earth to heaven by His precious blood.

But why a serpent? The original word may suggest "shining," and this is helpful. Moreover, the serpents were here employed in judgment, and they moved about. In the type, then, we see judgment **removed** from the people, and stilled; settled and satisfied. The sinner must look, and see **what he deserved**. Yet Genesis 3 still comes to our mind, and we feel a difficulty remains. We may be sure there is a blessing, a deep, real, rich blessing.

There is a designedly great contrast. Where man failed, we behold the Perfect Man. And, likewise, Christ is the perfect contrast with Satan, who exalted himself, as Isaiah 14 illustrates. Our blessed Lord was absolutely perfect throughout. Now, is not the serpent the only animal that, at first, was unfallen, and now is, physically and visibly, fallen (Gen. 3. 14)? The serpent was created **glorious**, in its form and stature, but now we read of "serpents of the dust" (Deut. 32. 24). The serpent on the pole, was thus an entire and unique **opposite**. Hence we see, it would seem, the only type in nature of One unfallen when all others are fallen. This would plainly emphasize a **further** precious lesson, for our knowledge, and our joy, alike. Shall we not praise our Heavenly Father for it? Should not praise ever be our response as the Holy Spirit shows us more, and more, and yet more, of the beauties and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ?

"They spake against God; they said, Can God?" "They turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 78. 10, 41). We see the danger of this sin, even in Moses at the beginning (Ex. 4. 10-14), and after "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? . . . Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" (Num. 11. 22, 23). We can never trust God too much, but how "natural" it is to trust Him too little.

Thoughts Suggested by a Vacuum Flask.

GOD gives us lessons in and from everything. Certainly nature has been made rich with precious messages, as the references of the Lord Jesus to ravens, and lilies (crimson anemones) beautifully show. And He also taught from the utensils in daily home use, by the lampstand, which was not put under the bed, and by the net cast into the sea. O that our eyes may be opened, to learn from sun and seed and field.

When man utilizes God's works in nature, his "inventions" are only discoveries, not creations, they are applications not originations. How blessedly dependent we are on God. But often God's gifts are misused, even as Adam misused the fig leaves. And how little is the gratitude of men, yea, even of God's people. Everything should awaken our praise, our very food speaking of the Bread of Life, of the Water of Life, and meat, without the blood, telling of the priceless sacrifice of the Son of God.

A vacuum flask is a very simple contrivance, but it spoke to me. It retains hot liquid for many hours, even in cold surroundings. Why? There is no "conducting"—there is an isolation from the influences that would cool. Hot water may remain in a freezing room. Our beloved Lord was the Perfect One, Holy, Harmless, Undefiled, and Separate from sinners. Nothing could change His personal perfection. My flask loses a little heat in six hours, and more in the winter than the summer. Why? The separation is not perfect. The cork comes specially before us. So with us. Though, by grace, there is a tremendous difference from what we once were, there is still a loss, through some "contact" with evil. How we need continual spiritual warming by the unchanging love of the Lord Jesus. It is well to be humbled, and to feel how we are ever affected somewhat by circumstances. We remember the typical lessons of uncleanness by a dead body, or even being in a tent. It was no wonder that the priests were caused to wash whenever they passed the laver, in whatever direction they were serving, and not only when they saw the defilement. The Holy Spirit speaks to us thereby. How we need the Lord's gracious work, and how graciously He grants it. May we avail ourselves of His cleansing, thus will He be glorified.

What we shall reap: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6. 7).

Whence we shall reap: "Of the flesh," or "of the Spirit" (verse 8). Into which ground are we sowing?

When we shall reap: "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (verse 9).

The inference of love is seen in verse 10, "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

The "hour" of the supper seems to remind us of John 5. 25. It is a mercifully prolonged hour. How definitely the longsuffering of God "waits." The previous invitations are not described: we do not know who gave them: we think of God's many messengers, and the way such were treated. But here there is the emphasis on the One Servant. Must not this remind of the Holy Spirit? His perfect fulfilling of a covenant plan is marked, and His unfailing power. Thus the *two* parables would seem to suggest together our Triune God. How tenderly the Holy Spirit becomes One serving. This is implied by John 14. 26, 16. 7. A striking type with a different aspect, even the finding of the Bride, is found in Genesis 24. Is it not blessedly true that our ministry of inviting should be in the Holy Spirit, and likewise that when the guilty are brought in, He is the One Who has worked? Herein we see our privilege, but the victory is His, and thus the glory is never ours, but the joy is ours too (Luke 15. 6). How definite and impressive is the simple word "Come." How different will soon be the utterance "Depart." "Come": we cannot use the word too often. "Come": it is as music to our own hearts. There is a place, there is a Person to Whom we have "come." The gospel is not vague and indefinite. "Come," not to do, but because "all things are now ready." We could not prepare the things, nor ourselves. How graciously complete is the gospel. The message of Matthew 22 through the servants is like to the message of Luke 14 from One Servant. But in both the attitude of men is saddening. In contrast with the "all things" of love we see the "all men" of self will. "They all with one consent began to make excuse," "All we like sheep have gone astray." How solemnizing is the unveiling of Scripture, and how true. Were not we by nature even as others? How blessed is the contrasted unity of Acts 4. 32, and the promised blessing of Zephaniah 3. 9. But neither passage is universal.

They "began." Here is man's beginning (Gen. 11. 6), and how sad is his goal. They began by "asking" that they might be let off, "asking themselves aside,"* as the word is. Adam at the first "heard aside" (Rom. 5. 19), and "fell aside" ("offence" Rom. 5. 18), and thus sin is ever "aside" from God's way. But there is nothing in "excuse" to suggest outward rebellion: politeness, yet equally guilt. Something else preferred to God's invitation. This speaks to our own hearts, for even we, as believers, sometimes neglect prayer and God's words, and other things enter in (Mark 4. 29). O that we may respond to the voice of our Beloved, and be ever ready for that which God has graciously made ready. Let us not *ask* for ourselves, but *answer* to that which is both from, and for, Himself, and our real joy will be in His joy. We rob ourselves when He

*The same word is found in Hebrew 12. 19, 25.

is not first: but let our object not become our happiness alone "in that Day." O that we may have the love united with gratitude, to delight His heart.

And what are the three excuses which our Lord has singled out that we too may be warned of the unchanging tactics of the enemy? Remarkably they concern merely ordinary things, business and the home. Nor is this strange. Satan's first attack was on the home. And are we not reminded of the words, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all"? And yet more striking is the parallel when the next verse is added, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they builded, they planted" (Luke 17. 26-28). Everything may be made the enemy's opportunity. Let us beware as to ordinary things that they are in the right position, and proportion, and with the right purpose.

"The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground." A usual action, in Palestine, and for an agricultural people. But the lessons are many. The ground was earthy, and earthly things must never hinder the heavenly. Esau's morsel of meat has many parallels. The contrast of Acts 4. 34-37 is very impressive. But what about ourselves? Have we never bought a book, a newspaper or something for worldly adornment that has taken us away from the Lord's call? It is easy to judge others, but do we judge ourselves? We realize how blessed it is to seek a heavenly country, (but are we ever seeking?), and the "ground" that has been bought for us (Heb. 11. 16, Matt. 13. 44)? In Luke 14, the purchaser adds, "I have need to go out, and see it." Observe the emphasis on "a need," and going "out" (contrast Matt. 25. 1). "Seeing" is often a peril. Dinah "went out to see the daughters of the land" (Gen. 34. 1). It is refreshing to think of Moses, who "endured, as seeing Him Who is Invisible." "Seeing it":—ah, no, let us, like Jacob, be concerned to "go and see Him" Who is the Greater than Joseph (Gen. 45. 28, 1 John 3. 2). May there not be a further thought either that the purchaser had bought without seeing, in worldly *speculation*, or that the answer was a paltry excuse? Do we not also feel that when we have once set our eyes on that which is not, we easily continue to seek earthly things (Prov. 23. 5)? Let every word awaken our glad, spiritual contrast.

"And another said." The word implies, "another of another kind." There were differences in character, but before God there was the oneness of indifference. A "thing" instead of the Lord Jesus! Some treasure of earth instead of the treasure of the gospel. The enemy does not deceive all in the same way: he has many baits, but one object.

"I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them." again an ordinary thing, but again we observe the peril of money.

And in each case goods were increased. Gain was an attraction (Jas. 4. 13), oxen were sacrificial animals: there was nothing like the possession of the two thousand swine, but there was "something" instead of the Lord. Job had five hundred yoke of oxen, yet God was Central in his thoughts. In the present dispensation of "strangers and pilgrims," however, we need to be peculiarly on our guard lest we "prosper" and become world-like. What have we bought to-day? this week? this year? Will it help us spiritually? What have we *given*? The yoke of oxen were for ploughing, and there was no unequal yoke (Deut. 22. 10), but the Call of God was not heard. The very number "ten" is suggestive: O that our "fellowship" may be spiritual. "I request thee, have me excused." Exactly the same words, as if to indicate that this was the formal and conventional language of courtesy, or to show us how one imitated the other. Nothing of antagonism: nothing of outward sin: but the great sin that puts God's will aside. The *first* commandment was "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and He must ever be first, and that which is of Him can never rightly be put in the second place. All else must depend on Him, or everything becomes in confusion.

The personal "I request *thee*" shows that the gracious ministry of the One Who comes to call is definitely rejected. In *this* way the Spirit of God can be resisted. We observe more-over the literal rendering, "Have me, one having been excused." "Having" usually implies possession. Here it is, "Have me, as one *not* possessed," and the tense implies a sad permanency: "having been excused, and *remaining* so." And thus it became (verse 24). How solemn was the cold and deliberate action. But have we no parallels in our own lives? How blessed is a contrasted willing response to His will. O that our souls may not fail when our Lord speaks (Song 5. 6). "Excused"—"*asked* aside": we remember Luke 22. 31, "Satan *asked* you out" (lit.), and those here mentioned choose the "asking" that is against God. Blessed be His Name for those who are in His hand, and whom Satan shall not obtain.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us."

2 Corinthians 2. 11.

SATAN is a person, and he has a vast organization with ministers and messengers (2 Cor. 11. 15, 12. 7), and he tempts (1 Thess. 3. 5), deceives (Rev. 12. 9), and binds (Luke 13. 16), and also is unveiled to as us "asking" to have believers (Luke 22. 31), and as accusing them day and night (Rev. 12. 10). What a mercy that the Lord Jesus ever liveth to make intercession, and that the words stand true, "Greater is He That is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4).

Among the many passages which give light on this solemnizing subject we find Matthew 16. 23, where the Lord employs the very words found in Matthew 4. 10, and also shows how the

enemy emphasizes the things "that be of *men*." Thus he often pleases the natural man, and leads him on, further and further, in the path of unconscious slavery to self. But the "accusing" of believers before God has a different aspect. We remember the slander against Job (1. 10, 11), but how often the tempter has some ground for his charges against the redeemed. Hence the precious power of the words, "They overcame him by the *blood of the Lamb*" (Rev. 12. 11).

We are not surprised that the devil employs a change of methods. He suddenly tries apparent opposites to catch by surprise, and to tempt us on the line of our temperament, or our obedience, or our "strong points," or our present experiences. "Subtilty" in 2 Corinthians 11. 3 denotes "all manner" of working. If a believer is somewhat discouraged Satan would seek to cause despondency; but if refreshed, the enemy would plan to foster pride. Thus when there is a measure of victory over one temptation, the devil often brings an entirely contrasted one. No military commander has more strategy, but God is Greater and Almighty, and faith is real. Blessed be His Name, for grace sufficient.

It is evident that the Corinthians had previously boasted of a "liberty," which was "licence," and the apostle had written with many tears, and without excusing them because of the circumstances of their upbringing in evil Corinth. God had graciously used the letter to "many." "For behold this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" (2 Cor. 7. 11). And at once the enemy's tactics were quite changed: he wished to produce a harshness rejecting the repentance, the heart-broken repentance, which God had caused in the open offender. "Sufficient to such a man," wrote the apostle then, "is this punishment, which was inflicted of many; so that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. 2. 6, 7). He for ever plots to get an "advantage." The same word is found in 2 Corinthians 7. 2 ("defrauded"), and 12. 17 ("make a gain"), and "covetousness" (e.g. Luke 12. 15, Eph. 5. 3, Col. 3. 5) is from the same root. It denotes "to have more," and suggests the seeking of a fulness. Thus we have a parallel with Luke 22. 31. The devil wants to take away those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. He cannot take from eternal life, but would ever aim at hindering fellowship. Shall we be turned aside after Satan (1 Tim. 5. 15)? O that there may be fixity of heart, and an intense hatred of sin, coupled with deep humility (Gal. 6. 1). As soon as we begin to think highly of ourselves, and to despise others, there is the gravest peril. The attitude may appear to be godly at first, as with the Corinthians. They seemed to be stern against sin: but it was the sternness that lacked self-judgment,

and that is one of Satan's "devices" or "thoughts in the mind," as the word signifies. We call to mind Leviticus 19. 15, with the danger of oneness toward the poor as well as toward the mighty. How subtle is the enemy. How thankful we are that Scripture brings this guile before us, that we may seek God's protection, and always judge ourselves, whenever dealing with the sad failures of others. Yes, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

The Continuance of True Praise.

"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 34. 1.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee." Psalm 84. 4.

"Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever." Psalm 30. 11, 12.

"I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever: every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever." Psalm 145. 1, 2.

"Daily shall He be praised." Psalm 72. 15, (cf. 119. 164).

"To stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even." 1 Chronicles 23. 30.

"My praise shall continually be of Thee." Psalm 71. 6.

"We will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore." Psalm 115. 18.

"While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being." Psalm 142. 2, see 119. 175.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5. 20.

"They . . . were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Luke 24. 53.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Colossians 4. 2.

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thessalonians 5. 18.

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His Name." Hebrews 13. 15.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers." 1 Thessalonians 1. 2.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when we received the Word of God which ye heard of us, we received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1 Thessalonians 2. 13.

Thus should we praise God! Do we?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."
Psalm 37. 4.

A Word of Introduction.

THE early verses of Psalm 37 are well known. It is, in Hebrew, an acrostic psalm, thus emphasizing the memory. But it is one thing to learn the words "Trust in the Lord," and another thing to illustrate them. It is blessed to read the message, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." But how we need the practical enjoyment of that which is graciously set before us. Faith can never become a theory, nor love a philosophy: they must be an experience in the gracious enabling of the Holy Spirit. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" is not to be merely a motto on the wall: it is to be the characteristic of the life. Is it not our heart's desire to experience that which our Father has shown us to be His will. He is speaking to us, to His children; and men of like feelings with us in days gone by had this blessedness. And the words abide. Let us lay hold of His promises. It is with this object, and His glory therein, that these pages are sent forth, and we welcome the prayer of God's people that we, too, may partake of the rich fulness increasingly, remembering the words of the verse in between, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart." He has said so, and He will not fail.

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GOD AND HIS WORD ABIDING.

(In 1 John).

"The word of God abideth in you" (2. 14).

"The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (2. 27).

"His (God's) seed abideth in him" (3. 9).

"We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (3. 24).

"If we love one another, God abideth in us" (4. 12).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus in the Son of God, God abideth in him" (4. 15).

"He that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him" (4. 16).

(The same word—abide, dwell, remain, continue—throughout. May this be our blessed experience).

The PRECIOUS Blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1. 18, 19.

"This cup is the new covenant in **My blood**, which is shed for you" (Luke 22. 20, cf. 1 Cor. 11. 25).

"Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation (mercy seat) through faith in **His blood**" (Rom. 3. 25).

"Being now justified by (in) **His blood**" (Rom. 5. 9).

"In whom we have redemption **through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1. 7).

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by (in) **the blood of Christ**" (Eph. 2. 13).

"Having made peace **through the blood of His cross**" (Col. 1. 20).

"By (through) **His own blood** He entered in once into the holy place (the holiest), having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9. 12).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by (in) **the blood of Jesus**" (Heb. 10. 19).

"The God of peace, That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, **through (in) the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect**" (Heb. 13. 20, 21).

"Unto Him That loveth us and washed (loosed) us from our sins in **His own blood**" (Rev. 1. 5).

"Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by (in) **Thy blood**" (Rev. 5. 9).

"They washed their robes, and made them white in **the blood of the Lamb**" (Rev. 7. 14).

Truly "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22), but it must be **His blood**. No other blood is precious, all else is corrupt and corruptible. It has been observed how the Holy Spirit leads us to speak reverently. We do not read simply "in the blood," but "in **His blood**," "in the blood of **the Lamb**." O that He may ever be before our heart's affection!

Spirituality is not measured by singing in a meeting, but by living in the home and business.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

"And another (of another kind) said, I married a wife, and because of this I am not able to have come." Marriage is honourable in all (Heb. 13. 4), and this relationship should be a picture of Christ and the church. But, alas, how easily may privileges be misused. A wife instead of the Lord's call. Such an one is not "an help, meet for" a man. Adam, alas, chose his wife instead of God's commandment. Earthly relationships must always be secondary (Matt. 10. 37). Abraham had to learn this: he hesitated in Haran till his father was dead (Acts 7. 4, see Luke 9. 59), but, later, there was no hesitation as to his only son whom he loved. He made haste, and delayed not (Ps. 119. 60). The reference to the wife here may suggest Deuteronomy 20. 7, and 24. 5, and the intense urgency of the gospel. How important too that marriage should ever be in the Lord, and the godly wife have delight to be where a godly husband is, in obedience to the Lord's "call." Never think of marriage unless there is closest union of heart, in love to the Lord. It is beautiful to see that when God called Abraham "alone," Sarah was evidently included (Isa. 51. 2). "Because of this (fact, not this person), I cannot come." Strong words are used in each case, "must needs" and "cannot." Hereby we learn how easy it is to persuade oneself there is a real hindrance. Our Lord's solemn answer to the "cannot" is the threefold "cannot" of verses 26, 27, 33. "I come" or "I cannot," dear reader, what is it with you? First, with regard to coming to Christ, and secondly, with respect to time for Him, His will, His work? We "can" do much more for Him when we love Him much.

"And the Servant came, and showed His Lord these things." Observe there was no bringing at first, no compelling on this occasion. The refusers were told of the feast, the command, the invitation: that was all. And everything was recorded. Do we bring everything to God? All our trials, our joys or sorrows? How much we should be blest if this were our continual practice, and godly habit. "Then the Master of the house being angry said to His Servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and maimed and blind and lame." Sin cannot be excused. Here is God's holy anger against sin: and how great is the sin of despising His love, and belittling the gospel message.

The going out was to bring in. There was a holy quickness: thanks be unto God, there was no delay: how important that our feet too should be shod with the alacrity of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6. 15). Broadways and narrow ways alike were to be visited.

But how marked is the distinction from Matthew 22. None are viewed here as "good" or "fit." Indeed the Holy Spirit uses

the definite article "the" only once for the four descriptions, and this may suggest even more than the likeness of all, in one class, as unworthy. It seems to imply that all four disabilities are regarded as together in one person, and possibly in every one. And this is so, spiritually. It is not that some are blind, yet they can carry others, who see; nor is it that some who are maimed are nevertheless able to pay for another to assist them. Eyes, hands and feet are all affected, and the sinner has "nothing, to pay." But on such a dark background, much darker than that of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9), the kindness of God shines forth, for a **Greater**-than-Jonathan's sake. Our adorable Lord claims poor unworthy ones for His own guests (cf. Luke 14. 13, 14), there is no **personal** recommendation in us. But **He** healeth all our **soul** diseases, and thus, in that Day there will not be the added words of 2 Samuel 9. 13, "lame on both his feet!" Yea, our hearts rejoice, for even now are we a new creation, and the good work has been begun in us (Phil. 1. 6). But when we were brought, we had nothing; God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4. 5), and gives everything in and with His beloved Son (Rom. 8. 32).

It is a joy to observe that these brought to see they had nothing were like the one on Jericho's road: they had no excuses. We do not read of their activities or help. They are not said even to speak. The silence is impressive. Grace is manifested in its fulness. As we have before noticed, a parable does not show the whole of the truth. As the parallel visions of Daniel and Revelation give different aspects, so it is here. We remember Luke 15: we see the Shepherd's work at first, but the inworking of repentance in the lost son is not forgotten. Our will does not save us, nor is it "of him that willeth," but God does not work against our will. He never works **upon** without working **within**. "Drawing" is not "dragging."

The Servant was willing to go quickly, willing to do everything exactly as the words of verse 21 set forth. He had no antipathy to the despised ones, who were so lovingly welcomed for the feast that others had ungratefully despised. "Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded." "It has become"—a beautiful word (as in Rev. 16. 17, 21. 6), implying that the result remained. And is not this our joy, if we are among those thus brought within? We rejoice in the power that drew us, and made us willing. Nor would we overlook the manner of address. Do we not learn reverence? Service is in blessed dependence. It is our privilege, and responsibility, to bring everything to God for his gracious guidance and appointment. The harmony with His will which is befitting, and the unwillingness to act without His word, must surely be recorded for a pattern.

"And yet there is room." The word signifies "a place," as in verses 8 and 9. Thus we see the definite concern that there should not be even one empty seat. The Lord Jesus shall see of

the travail of His soul, and be satisfied (Isa. 53. 11). His work shall not be in vain. This wondrous "Servant" was interested in "one" as well as many. The two aspects are very precious, and we need to learn and illustrate the same attitude. Luke 15, and the **one** lost sheep must come to mind, and our beloved Lord's personal dealing (e.g. in John 3 and 4). The Holy Spirit never despises one soul. Do we? O for more love.

And so the one place **must** be occupied. It must be given to yet another, brought by the same Servant. None come of themselves: none were fetched by another. Various servants shared the earnest labour in Matthew 22; but it is not the aspect unveiled here. And **how** will this last one be brought? In wondrous wisdom and grace, our beloved Lord has outlined thereby another part of truth. "And the Lord said unto the Servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel to come in, that **My** house may be filled." We can naturally understand the usual translation, inserting the word "them," but in italics, indicating that the Holy Spirit has not given it in the original. He had, and has, a purpose. The stress on "highways and hedges" would, at first, **seem** to suggest several persons at least. But the second word occurs in Matthew 21. 33, Mark 12. 1, and Ephesians 2. 14 ("partition"), and this indicates "a fence." It occurs in the Septuagint of Numbers 22. 24, and the root-verb is found in Romans 3. 19 and Hebrews 11. 33, for "stopping" the mouth. Now we see the solemnizing, yet encouraging, witness. The one sought out on this occasion evidently fled away from the road, yea, entrenched himself, but grace conquered. The **two** parts of God's truth are, as ever, deeply important. In the experience of some, the sense of need and helplessness seen in verse 21 may appear the more prominent, though they sorrowfully own that, as no parable or type gives the whole unveiling, they also were active in their sins. The unsaved soul is not only "dead in trespasses and sins," he is also terribly alive in evil, with an unholy will and character. In the salvation of others, the **victory** of grace over natural rebelliousness is most marked. It is evident that the sinner fights hard, but must be laid low. The kicking is vain (Acts 26. 14). The Stronger than the strong takes possession in love and might (Luke 11. 21, 22). And this part of God's truth is much needed to-day. The highways were left, a barrier was sought, or raised, yea, barriers; but fences could not, and cannot, hinder God's election (John 6. 37, 10. 16). Now we understand the word "compel," and why it is the **One** Servant here Who employs His gracious compulsion. We can preach, and pray, and live, and take away stones from the tomb, but we cannot thus constrain and quicken. Blessed be God, He works thus; for our beloved Lord shall not fail, nor be discouraged, and thus "the grace of our Lord" is "exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The sinner is led in a blessed triumph:—

Compelled by grace,—each fence destroyed,—
To fill the empty place,
We know free mercy unalloyed,
And only sing of **grace**.

Yes, there is no room for boasting. It is shut out (Rom. 3. 27). Election is not a dead letter: the covenant is not broken: the Lamb's Book of Life is not mutilated (Rev. 17. 8:—in ch. 22. 19 it is "the **tree of life**").

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

The Longsuffering of God.

IN His longsuffering God "waits" (1 Pet. 3. 20), but men refuse to hear. "I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded" (Prov. 1. 24). So hard is the human heart. "Ye **will** not come unto Me, that ye might have life" (John 5. 40). "They all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14. 18). The longsuffering of God "endures" so much (Rom. 9. 22), yet men despise "the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering" (Rom. 2. 4). Does the Word of God fail to take effect (Rom. 9. 6)? No, in no wise; blessed be God. In Luke 14, when all excuse themselves, the poor, blind, lame and maimed are brought. When the longsuffering of God **waited** in the days of Noah, he found "**grace**" in the sight of the Lord (Gen. 6. 8). And so it is in Romans 9: verse 22, with reference to God's longsuffering, man's callousness is **immediately** followed by verse 23 in which we behold **mighty mercy**. Hence, whereas the holy law is strengthless **through the flesh** (Rom. 8. 3), God's longsuffering is a solemn reminder that everything depending partly on man is ineffectual, but **grace reigns** (Rom. 5. 21). The sin and failure are on man's side. God manifests His perfection in law, and providence, and all. And so He manifests even now the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. 2. 7, 8). Not only does He stretch out His hands all day long unto a disobedient and gainsaying people, but He lays hold of **His people** whom He foreknew (Rom. 10. 21, 11. 2). Accordingly we read, "the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11. 21). "Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice" (John 10. 16). We see a remarkable illustration in "Saul who also is called Paul." God showed forth **all longsuffering** in him (1 Tim. 1. 16). But that was not all. "The **grace** of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (verse 14). **Longsuffering** bore with his ignorance and unbelief (verse 13): **grace** gave him "faith" (see Gal. 1. 15). It is all so wonderful, and we read this was "for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him," namely, the remnant of Israel, who will, as Saul of Tarsus, look upon Him Whom they pierced, and be born again. And there is also a parallel in the salvation of a sinner to-day. Salvation is a miracle of grace.

These precious facts are to hold us back from all undue discouragement when men oppose, or remain indifferent. They emphasize, moreover, that we are to testify in the days of God's longsuffering, and not misuse His grace to omit or delay this urgent service, in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4. 2). We come to see, furthermore, the longsuffering we are to exhibit in our daily walk. An impatient Christian disgraces the Name of the Lord.

"According to."

THIS word has been prayerfully pondered (by many children of God) before, and it would be helpful to notice, and feed upon, many passages, e.g., according to the **grace** of God (1 Cor. 3. 10, 2 Thess. 1. 12), according to the **gospel** (1 Tim. 1. 11, 2 Tim. 2. 8), according to the **power** of God (Eph. 3. 20, 2 Tim. 1. 8, cf. Col. 1. 11). And such a Bible Study as "according to the flesh" would have much to search us, and thereby to help, unto God's glory.

Our first thought now, however, is the simple expression "**according to God**," which is not always rendered in this simple way. It occurs in Romans 8. 27, for the gracious and prevailing work of the Holy Spirit. Absolute harmony characterizes the Persons of our Triune God, and thus as to the position of covenant and dispensational intercession which the Holy Spirit has taken we realize the comforting power of these precious words. Three times in 2 Corinthians 7. 9-11 we have "**according to God**," rendered "after a godly manner," "godly" and "after a godly sort." But surely the literal translation helps us more definitely as to Himself. How much grief is only natural (Num. 14. 1, Mal. 2. 13, Heb. 12. 17). How blessed it is to be in harmony with God in our hatred of sin. We call to mind other Scriptures where the simple words of the Holy Spirit are most expressive. We think of "the faith of God" in Mark 11. 22 (margin), "a conscience of God" (belonging to God, 1 Pet. 2. 19).

Ephesians 4. 24 refreshes us with the thought of the new man created "**according to God**." How contrasted with the mind of the flesh, which is enmity against God! Graciously, indeed, has God brought in the new **creation**, not an improvement, nor mere development. We bow the head and worship, and long to live in the power of this new life, as the Holy Spirit will enable.

In 1 Peter 5. 2 it seems we should read, "Feed the flock of God, . . . taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly, **according to God**." The link with our other verses is helpful. All manifest service is to be as the "new man" really is,—foreground and background are to be combined in blessed harmony with God. There is no "unwillingness" when according to God (cf. 2 Cor. 9. 7).

The dear believers of 1 Peter 4. 6 who were judged according to men in the flesh, (and to whom, indeed, the gospel which they

received was preached with this object and result, namely, their pilgrim life and suffering as His faithful martyrs, cf. Rev. 12. 11*), are said to "live according to God in the spirit." This helpful description of their position and consciousness, and attitude in the unseen "intermediate state" must encourage (2 Cor. 5. 9).

The similar language, "according to Christ Jesus" in Romans 15. 5 should be noticed. How important are all our dealings with "one another." Verse 7 gives its further testimony. We cannot be too gracious. Colossians 2. 8 has a sad-denying contrast, regarding that which is in accord with men, and "not according to Christ." "Philosophy and vain deceit" are still to be found, and the enemy has still many devices. The only safety and security will ever be when we, in doctrine and practice, are "according to Christ." As soon as we get away from Him, and His work, and His words, everything "goes wrong."

"According to the will of God" may be before our hearts in this connexion. Galatians 1. 4 shows our deliverance from this present evil age, according to His will, and 1 John 5. 14 our corresponding prayer life, and 1 Peter 4. 19 adds a reference to the equally appointed suffering of believers according to the same will (Eph. 1. 5, 11 may be helpfully noticed). When we embark on such a theme, we remember other prepositions, as "in" and "through," with regard to God's will, and the whole subject leads us to feel the intense harmony and correspondence, with Himself and His purpose, which should characterize all His redeemed, and ourselves personally, in our daily walk, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

* The exact contrast with those mentioned in 1 Peter 3. 19: yet in both cases the preaching preceded the death, but they were "dead" when the epistle was written. There could not be judgment according to men, i.e. in men's law courts, after death (Matt. 10. 28).

"Having" Strength.

IN Galatians 6. 15 we see what "availeth" nothing, and Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, are set aside. Why? They are "in Adam"; and only in Christ Jesus is there strength (cf. Rom. 8. 3). So we read on, "But a new creation"; and the verb understood is "availeth" or "hath strength." Then, blessedly, Philippians 4. 13 comes to mind, "I have strength as to all things in Him Who empowereth me." And next, James 5. 16, "The supplication of a righteous one hath strength for much, being inwrought." May this be our happy experience, in the Holy Spirit, even as David "found in his heart to pray this prayer" (2 Sam. 7. 27), even a prayer according to the mind of God, and exalting Him.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
2 Corinthians 13. 11.

A Word of Introduction.

WE remember the link of Philippians 4. 7 and 9, "the peace of God" and "the God of peace." He delights to be with His people. How often we are excited and perturbed. We need to be "silent" unto Him. How blessed it is to be restful. God calls His children to a quietness to which the world has no right, and which the worldling cannot know. "Be anxious for nothing," "fret not thyself," "fear not"—such commands are striking encouragements. If we are cowardly, if we have the fear of man that bringeth a snare, or if we are irritated with others, and self-assertive, we cannot expect "the peace of God." We rob ourselves when we try to look after ourselves. It is blessed to believe God, and to commit ourselves, and our way, to Him. He is neither weak, nor forgetful. Faith grows in quiet patience, amid strains and storms. Circumstances are small compared with His love and power. Nothing is too hard for Him. To help God's children (including ourselves), along the path of simple faith, and unworldly obedience, are these pages issued. May there be fruit to His glory.

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Disproportion.

FOOD is appointed by God, but we dare not spend a disproportionate time over it. So is it with sleep, and with all things. How blessed it is to see absolute proportion in the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, and in the words of Scripture. Everything has been arranged by God in nature in His fitting together, and so will it be in glory. Shall we not seek more "proportion," in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, with regard to our lives to-day?

Disproportion is distortion. "If the whole body were an

eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12. 17, 18). If I wish to do **your** work, or you to do **mine**, there is rivalry, there is discord. True, whenever one member in our physical body is ill, others seek temporarily to aid, but that is not the desirable or permanent condition. Likewise with regard to our use of time spiritually. There is a danger of occupation of mind with **some part** of Bible Study, and becoming one-sided. It is, undoubtedly, the Lord's will that some of His people should, in this matter, have special spheres and privileges. **You** may be blessed to show God's use of number in Scripture, for the help of fellow believers, another may be enabled as to the Holy Spirit's use of certain grammatical forms, but let us beware of self's specializing, beware of mental theorizing, beware of forgetting the practical needs,—spiritual food, spiritual worship, and spiritual witness to dying men around. Let us be earnest, and devoted, at all times.

Moreover, Luke 11. 42, with Matthew 23. 23, has a deeply important message. It is precious to realize that "every word of God is pure," and that often a "least" commandment (Matt. 5. 19) is a fuller test of simple love to Him Who gave it. But in our ministry, we should be all-round. We should not continually refer to one point of assembly order, or bring every subject round to one aspect of the prophesied future. Judgment, mercy, faith, the love of God:—how definitely should we have these ever in view. If many children of God break the Holy Spirit's command as to revealed order in the gathering of saints, we should be pained, but our answer must not be a determination to dwell on that theme continually, to the exclusion of others. It is so necessary to emphasize Christ and His finished work, and His Coming, in order that by the exaltation of Himself, in love, His word may be the more exalted. One swing of the pendulum does not appoint my opposite swing. Rather, let us all seek to grow up into Christ in all things, and to remember that if there is an unveiled face, truly beholding in the mirror of Scripture His glory, there will be a changing into the same image (2 Cor. 3. 18). This is the promised work of the Holy Spirit.

Again, we cannot always understand ourselves regarding the tendency to worry. A "little" trial or loss is sometimes magnified. Our minds perpetually revert to it, and we become unfit for, or, at least, delayed in many parts of service unto the Lord. We can lose much time thereby, and may almost defend ourselves with the thought that we wish to be exercised as to "why" it is permitted. Such godly exercise, lowliness, and confession of sin are good, but the enemy will ever try to alter them into remorse, and so to hinder our godly use of all experiences, that we may be humbled thereby. Surely it is well for all believers to pray much more to God for godly proportion in all things, and at all times, and will not the Holy Spirit always lead and enable in this direction?

"They bowed their heads, and worshipped"

(Exodus 4. 31, 12. 27).

THUS was it at the beginning when Moses came, and thus was it at the end of the sojourn in Egypt, when they went forth redeemed by the blood of the Passover. And it is indeed good to worship. But how we all need godly continuance. In the next chapter after 4. 31, we read, "They met Moses and Aaron who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh, and they said unto them, The Lord look upon you and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us" (5. 21), and in chapter 14. 12 they showed how soon they had forgotten, "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians, it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness"? And it was so again, for after they had sung His praise at the Red Sea, "they soon forgot His works, they waited not for His counsel" (Ps. 106. 13, 14).

Well might David pray in 1 Chronicles 29. 18, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, **keep this for ever** in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare (stablish, fix), their heart unto Thee;" and have not we the same need to-day for ourselves, beloved readers?

"Of Thine Own."

"Of Thine own have we given Thee . . . all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own."

1 Chronicles 29. 14, 16.

"And now behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me." Deuteronomy 26. 10.

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

1 Corinthians 4. 7.

"Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." Romans 11. 35, 36.

"We love Him because He first loved us." 1 John 4. 19.

"God is able to make all grace abound (overflow) toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound (overflow) to every good work." 2 Corinthians 9. 8.

"They had on their heads crowns of gold . . . (They) cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord." Revelation 4. 10, 11.

Some Repeated Sentences.

IT has pleased God to give us in the Holy Scriptures many repeated words, e.g., "Grace and peace," "be strong," and the most frequent command "Fear not." Sometimes the repetitions are in the same context, as the precious chorus "in Christ Jesus our Lord" in Romans. Thus we observe in Isaiah, "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" (5. 25, 9. 12, 17, 21, 10. 4). In like manner Amos 1 and 2 contain the words "For three transgressions and for four," and chapter 4 repeats "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord," five times. And we hear the striking and searching refrain of Luke 14 "He cannot be My disciple."

Among these impressive repetitions we should surely place "As the Lord commanded Moses" in Exodus 40, aptly following ch. 25. 40, 35. 29, 36. 1, 5 and 39. 42, 43. It occurs seven times, in addition to the introduction "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he" (16). The verses may be carefully noticed. First we have the tabernacle (19), then the holiest of all (21), next the holy place (23, 25, 27), and afterwards the court (29, 32). What was the result? "The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (34).

It would be very profitable to collect many more "repetitions." Every believing reader may help with spiritual profit, and post cards will be a real assistance, if lovingly sent in. But more is needed. Does God's emphasis find no response in our lives? The Lord Jesus was ever the Obedient One, the One Who said "I delight to do Thy will." How important that we should be awakened to do what is graciously commanded (Matt. 28. 19, 20, John 14. 15, 21, 23, 15. 14). O that we may be saved from almost "unconscious" self-will, and walk in the Spirit.

"CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY"

(Col. 1. 27).

"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15. 5).

"I in them" (John 17. 23, 26).

"Where . . . Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3. 11).

"Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20).

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3. 17).

"Until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4. 19).

"When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that Day" (2 Thess. 1. 10).

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

Are we sufficiently grateful for the mighty mercy which snatched us as brands plucked out of the fire (Zech. 3. 2), and proved once again that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1. 16)? Are we tired of showing forth His praises (1 Pet. 2. 9)? O that it may never be so. There is no music to compare with the music of the "new song" of redemption!

We have seen that the language used implies that the sinner may go from one fence to another: he may fight and fight on awhile, but there is a definite contrast here with the Holy Spirit's declarative work in verse 17, and with the general call of the gospel. Are we not thereby encouraged to continue in prayer, and loving earnestness for those who seem defiant? We are not forbidden to pray: let us pray on. But one may answer: "Here we see only the work of God: we cannot accomplish anything." Dear believing reader, have we not realized in all the types that God gives one part of truth. The Passover lamb did not love, but did not "the Lamb of God" love exceedingly? The priest, altar and sacrifice were all needed together to show something of His fulness. In like manner Noah AND the ark, Isaac AND the ram, and the Manna AND the Water from the Rock in the next chapter, were united to reveal more of our precious Saviour, and His salvation. And we must not read Luke 14 without Matthew 22. The Holy Spirit has written both. True, the work of bringing is His, but He works much through us, even as we see Christ preached through Noah (1 Pet. 3. 19, 20, 2 Pet. 2. 5). And thus, though we ascribe all the glory to God, it is our privilege to be in harmony, and to seek "the poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind," and to be in loving earnestness for those who resist, never despairing. "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6. 9).

"My house": precious words. The order of nouns and pronouns in Greek gives a special emphasis. The house belonged to God: He has joy in the gathering of His redeemed: here we have "the hope of His calling." Do we not remember, too, how the King made a feast for His Son, and that the Master of the house will say, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"? "All things were created by Him, and for Him" (Col. 1. 16, cf. Rom. 11. 36). And how delightful it is for us to have this bright expectation. We, the unworthy, shall be in His house. We who deserved to be in His prison shall dwell in His glory. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee" (Ps. 84. 4). "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple" (Ps. 27. 4). How

much it meant to Mephibosheth to hear the repeated words; "Mephibosheth . . . shall eat bread alway at my table" (2 Sam. 9. 7, 10, 11, 13); but to us there is a fuller, far fuller richness, "in Christ Jesus." And the same emphasis (by position) is found in the added words "My supper." Ah, dear, believing reader, this is not merely a commentary to help you to give an address. God has entrusted us with more than brains and a tongue. We have a heart, and long to love Him more. Think of His love to Thee, O my soul. Thou art brought into His banqueting house, and His banner over thee is love. Canst thou doubt His? Canst thou have any misgiving as to the final issue? Nay. He Who has begun such a work will finish it. Rejoice in Him, and let thy wishes for the world's feasts and friendships be set aside, since it has pleased Him to make thee His. Thou wast poor and wretched, yea, didst thou not seek to hide behind fence after fence? But His love would not be disappointed, and His covenant could not be broken; and now has He sweetly compelled thy love, so that thou joyest in that which thou wishedst not, and that which thou wishedst has become to thee unsavoury. He has made thee His, and made thine inner affection to respond to Him. Is He not worthy of all thy love?

"For I say unto you, that **none** of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper." The "for" is very impressive. No seat is left for them: if they "repent," and call, it will be too late: "the sorrow of the world worketh death." Behold, the covenant plan: every seat shall be filled, but there shall be none in excess, standing and unable to find a place. There will be no unexpected ones in the glory. There is no mere chance: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." "Those men"—they are now far off. They were "bidden" or "called,"—but they responded not. We have been more than bidden. O the wickedness of men: **none** that were called came (Isa. 53. 1). O, the grace of God: the house is filled. Why have I come? I was more than called: I was brought: boasting is shut out. These words are among the many strong utterances of our Lord Jesus to shut out all dependence on man. Any preaching of the gospel that tones down the message to cause a natural acceptance is an utter failure (1 Cor. 2. 5). Grace is grace, both free and mighty. But some one will say (cf. 1 Cor. 15. 35), Why then preach? God has appointed. It is not fitting for men to argue against God's words. True, He could bring without us, but "it pleased God by the foolishness (in man's esteem) of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21). Keep to the gospel—God will use it: but never trust to the preacher, or the preaching, or to those who hear: let there be full confidence in Him.

"Shall taste My supper." Not only shall we eat, but we shall taste. There will be an appetite, and we shall enjoy His marriage supper. Ah, do we not even now enjoy grace? Yes, but the banquet will be yet sweeter then, when our spiritual

senses will have nothing around to hinder their blessed participation. He "tasted death" (Heb. 2. 9), that we might taste the supper, and eat and drink with Him at His table in His Father's and His kingdom (Matt. 26. 29, Luke 22. 30). There will be no lack then (John 2. 3), and truly the best has been "kept," for the half has not been told us. The riches of His grace excel all words. The provision will verily be "according to the state of the king" (Est. 1. 7). And do not we even now have blessed anticipations, and is not His fruit sweet to our taste to-day (Song 2. 3)?

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"In Christ."

EVERYTHING is "IN Christ," for God's beloved children. We cannot love the things "IN the world," which lieth "IN the wicked one," and "IN me, (that is, IN my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." So we rejoice to find all "IN Christ,"—"IN Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete IN Him." "Chosen IN Him before the foundation of the world," we, who have believed into Him, are now "accepted IN the Beloved," and "made the righteousness of God IN Him," being "blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN Christ." "Our privilege now is to hear His word, "Abide IN Me, and I in you," for having been "created IN Christ Jesus," and having received Christ Jesus the Lord, we remember the searching message, "Walk ye in Him." Indeed, if we gathered all the verses which tell of our privileges and portion in Him, and of our responsibilities to act in Him, and in His name, in prayer and daily life and all, how rich would the collection of verses be. And the precious figures of the Vine and the Olive alike come before us, for, He Himself is the True Vine, and the Olive of Whose root and fatness we partake, and thus our blessedness is again seen to be **in Him**. Thus it is with members of the body: their power is because they are **in Him**, and in vital union with Him. May it be our joy in the Holy Spirit Who ever exalts Him, to possess our possessions more fully, and to praise overflowing for the exceeding riches of God's grace.

Faith is wondrously emphasized by our Lord Jesus. He marvelled because of faith, and because of lack of faith (Matt. 8. 10, Mark 6. 6.). When He was with the disciples in the storm He emphasized faith, and likewise when they enquired concerning the unclean spirit whom they could not cast out. "Have the faith of God" was His command when they were surprised at a miracle. And to Jairus, and to others who sought mighty works, His emphasis was ever on faith. And when He prayed for Peter it was that his faith should not fail. Faith takes God at His Word.

FORGIVENESS IN NUMBERS 14. 17—20.

1. A manifestation of God's great power (17).
2. According to His Own Word (17).
3. In harmony with His revealed character and attributes (18).
4. Because His longsuffering (passive,—waiting), and mercy (active,—to provide a salvation) and the bearing of iniquity Himself ("forgive"—"bear," as "pardon" in Mic. 7. 18, a precious prophecy of the work of Christ, an unveiling of His Deity and His Atonement in **one word**)—verses 18, 19.
5. "As Thou hast forgiven": the precedent proved His power so to do, without contradicting His Name or His words (19).
6. According to the prayer of a righteous man, on the line of God's will (20).
7. Without excusing sin at all (18, 21); but to God's glory (21).

SOME REPEATED WORDS OF NUMBERS 22.

"The angel of the Lord stood in **the way** for an adversary against him" (22).

"The ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in **the way**" (23).

"The ass turned aside out of **the way**" (23).

"Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into **the way**" (23).

"The angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where there was **no way** to turn" (26).

"The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in **the way**" (31).

"Thy (lit. **the**) way is perverse before Me" (32).

"I knew not that thou stoodest in **the way** against Me" (34).

Moreover "stood" (22), "standing" (23), "stood" (24), "standing" (31), "stoodest" (34): and another word (parallel) in 26.

Observe also, "His sword" (23), "I would there were a sword in mine hand" (29), "His sword drawn in His hand" (31).

Further "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass" (28), "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam" (31).

How solemn are the Repetitions in this chapter.

"They brought him to Jesus": the appointed ass, reminding at passover time of redemption, and Exodus 13. 13. "Why have ye not brought Him?" is the contrasted picture of those who sought the Redeemer (John 7. 45). How blessedly they could do nothing till His hour was come.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent."
Psalm 30. 11, 12.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD is gracious and faithful. He hath done great and wondrous things, and wondrous things for us (Ps. 126. 3. Jer. 33. 3). We deserved sackcloth: but He gave and gives gladness (Isa. 61. 10). And we ever behold the garment of praise, that it may "cover," completely and be seen (Isa. 61. 3). 'Tis a precious adornment, God delights to cause praise in heart, and mouth, and life; and He is worthy to be praised at all times. Abraham rightly said, "Dust (in Adam) and ashes" (deserving judgment). But he realized much of grace, and are we not made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2. 6)? O that we may continue praise, and never become "silent." Isaiah 43. 21 leads to 1 Peter 2. 9, and more than an "echo" in our daily life.

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Humbling Oneself.

"Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 32. 26).

"And when he (Manasseh) was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him" (2 Chron. 33. 12, 13).

"Amon . . . humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more" (2 Chron. 33. 23).

"As for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him . . . Because thine heart was tender and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou heardest His words . . . and humbledst thyself before Me . . .

I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord" (2 Chron. 34. 26, 27).

"Zedekiah did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and **humbled not himself** before Jeremiah the prophet from the mouth of the Lord" (2 Chron. 36. 12).

Thus it is written concerning **five** out of the last eight kings of Judah, that the test was found in true humility before God. How awful is **pride**. Our **real** condition is known by pride or humility of heart as to God's words, which are specially mentioned.

"To make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel." 1 Samuel 2. 29.

Adonijah, David's son, went his own way, and we read, "His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" (1 Kings 1. 6). Eli had reproved his sons: "Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for this is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress" (1 Sam. 2. 23, 24). Wherein then had he too failed? Chapter 3. 13 says, "He restrained them not," and the margin, "He frowned not upon them." How real is loving, but firm **parental authority**. How many start too late, and are not sufficiently **plain** when the children, as in Hophni and Phinehas, are grown up.

But our verse goes further. "Wherefore kick ye at My sacrifice and at **Mine** offering, which I have commanded in My habitation; and honourest thy sons above ME?" God must be first. Let us emphasize Him. Alas, "to make yourselves fat" seems to indicate a share (to what extent we know not) in the fruit of the sins Eli hated. If we witness against evil, we must be willing to "lose" in a **material** way. If we share the results of other's sins, we cannot truly testify against them. The fat was the Lord's (Lev. 3. 16). The priest's servant had demanded flesh for the priest **first** (1 Sam. 2. 15). The food had been used in Eli's house. How important it is that we should abstain as well as witness.

What was the further result? Death—first to Hophni and Phinehas (2. 34), and then to Eli (ch. 4. 18, see 1 Cor. 11. 30). And long after were the effects seen (ch. 2. 36). The self-seeking had made self fat, but leanness and hunger were prophesied. "Every one that is left in **thine** house shall come and crouch to him for . . . a morsel of bread . . . that I may eat a piece of bread." O that we may never make ourselves fat. "Them that honour Me, I will honour": "if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (1 Sam. 2. 30, John 12. 26).

The Holy Spirit brings to **remembrance** (John 14. 26). Many would prefer a fresh revelation. He uses our barley loaves of love's memory.

"Ye Believed Me not, to Sanctify Me"

Numbers 20. 12.

WHAT is God's message for us in this passage to-day? "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Take the rod'" (7, 8)—"and Moses took the rod" (9). The beginning of obedience is good, but not sufficient. "Believing" is concerned with the Lord's "whatsoever" (John 15. 14). "Gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother" (8). "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together" (10). Continuance is blessed, but not sufficient. Nor are we safe from temptation even when we have acted twice on the path of obedience. "Speak ye unto the (exalted) Rock before their eyes" (8). "And he said **unto them**, Hear now, ye rebels" (10). "He spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Ps. 106. 33). The psalm reminds us, "They provoked his spirit." We should listen to God's voice alone, and be unmoved by circumstances. Yet were the people not rebellious? Yes, (Num. 17. 10). But we must not always say what God says.* We are compassed about with (sinful) infirmity (Heb. 5. 1-3). Moreover, it is not for us to reason, or to vary God's command, or to add, or subtract.†

What was the result? (a) The **type** was spoiled. The Rock was smitten in Exodus, but the **Exalted** Rock is not to be smitten. Christ "dieth no more." Let us not vary the appointed types in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (b) Moses and Aaron were hindered from privileges, and kept out of the land. God's overruling is seen. (a) The water came out; blessing was granted, although the servant had failed. (b) The Lord "was sanctified in them" (passive 13), although the **active** "to sanctify Me" was not the joy of Moses, and his brother.

We observe God's perfect ways. Blessings do not prove any are right. The water in Exodus 17, and here also was given to **complainers**. Israel were against the Lord, but Moses (more highly privileged, Luke 12. 48) experienced loving severity (Heb. 12. 6).

The gracious, yet searching, words of verse 12 mean so much to us. "Because ye believed Me not." Moses **spoke** wrongly. The root was unbelief. The cause is always in the heart; "Keep

* It is deeply impressive that God mentions the failure of Moses and Aaron themselves, using this expression. "Ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah" (verse 24). Does not this search us? There is no excusing or extenuating of sin. Moses might easily have thought, Why take the rod if I am not to use? And again, Did I not use it before? How many "argue" thus to-day, and defend themselves. Do we? As soon as the eyes are opened to see God's gracious teaching, we realize that the rod was a wondrous reminder that wrath had fallen and that the two chapters must be taken together (Ex. 17 and Num. 20), to picture our one Lord Jesus Christ. Every blessing is because He bore wrath once for all.

† Observe how Moses erred in all these three directions. Sins are often entwined. The same three errors are found in altering the Lord's appointment in the breaking of bread.

thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4. 23). It is unbelief to vary from God's will. Faith is not only mental: it is spiritual, and always "works." Faith does not reason, nor take "good opportunities," even to reprove or to witness (Mark 1. 45), against the will of the Lord. Faith is simple and hears His voice. Possibly, it appeared to Moses that such disobedient ones should not be blessed **without a word**. But God would do His work His own way, and He can be **sanctified** before men by our very silence. It is easy to be disobedient in our very indignation against the disobedience of others (Rom. 2. 1). Believe God the whole way through, and leave results with Him. Believe God, and leave out, "shall (must) we?" (10). Yes, the winning may be without a word (1 Pet. 3. 1). Let us believe, and we shall honour and sanctify Him. And is not this our humble desire in the Spirit? No past knowledge of Him, no length of experience, no privileges, no special responsibilities can make us wise above what is written, or put our thinking and feeling in the place of His own words.

Paul's Tears.

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears . . . I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts 20. 19, 31.

"Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears." 2 Corinthians 2. 4.

"Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Philippians 3. 18.

The fruit may also be seen in Timothy who was likeminded (Phil. 2. 20) to whom the apostle wrote, "Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears" (2 Tim. 1. 4).

What God's beloved servant practised he could lovingly urge on others, "Weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12. 15). Ah, how he sorrowed for some, **until** they sorrowed (2 Cor. 7. 8-11). How Paul followed his Lord (1 Cor. 11. 1), Who beheld the city and wept over it (Luke 19. 41), and wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11. 35).

How little we realize the words, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves" (Ps. 126. 6). May our hearts be more intense in the things of the Lord, that He "in all things may be glorified" (1 Pet. 4. 11).

It is easy to profess to be a Christian, but it is a miracle to **be** one. But as miracles in nature are linked, and so continual that men no longer regard them as miracles, thus is it in grace. When one is born from above he can do what it is **impossible** to do before. A Christian life should be a standing testimony to the power of Christ.

A Foreword and Review.*

61, Upton Lane,
Forest Gate, London, E.7.
16/3/1936.

Dear Believing Readers,

It is written, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee" (Deut. 8. 2 and 3), and the writer looks back with praise for undeserved grace from "our Father," and His gracious keeping power (1 Pet. 1. 5). How tender has He been to me since writing this book. How many "unoccupied" moments, and fallings short too, in nearly **one-third** of a century. "The God of all grace!"

I feel the unbound sheets should be used for Him. It would be strange if the Lord had not granted definite encouragements, and further light, and instruction in the interval, and so would grieve over some expressions then introduced.

For example, no longer could one personally speak of a college, or take a title as "Principal." The Lord's path is simpler, though with love for all His own, and joy in all who rejoice in the full inspiration of Scripture, and in "the precious blood of Christ." And one would wish that even the language were simpler. References to "Calvinism," and "Dr." Adam Clarke, and to "St. John" (in a quotation), etc., I should now quite omit.

I feel I should also mention that a later leaflet on 1 Corinthians 15. 29, is available. This passage contains a fulness yet to be learnt, but the lesson of baptism as a step to willing rejectedness and suffering for our Lord's sake is clear, and this spiritual encouragement is unaffected by different translations.

Some may think the transliteration of the Hebrew "Name" of the Lord (Ex. 6. 3) a small point. I intended it to His glory, but have since felt that the Holy Spirit's rendering by "Lord," (even in James 5. 4, where "sabaoth" is transliterated), shows **His** deciding will:—a call to reverence and a willingness to **wait** for the knowledge of the "vowels" to pronounce it possibly till our Lord comes.

* In 1904 a book of 92 pages was issued, "God's Letters to His Church"—An Introduction to the Epistles. I realize God graciously enabled much therein, and feel it is wrong to let the sheets lie unused. Hence we humbly look to Him to bless sending forth many remaining copies, but we would (usually) await **personal requests**. The following "Preface" will be included with each, to prevent, by God's grace any spiritual hindrance. If you desire it, ASK. There is also a book of "Scriptural Portions and Spiritual Poems," not only in my hands, but on my heart, that can be obtained likewise. Pray, and write, if it is God's will. There is no "selling": I do not want any poor believer to be hindered. The Lord will supply, and the expenses are quite small, because there is **only** paper, binding, &c. All was **printed** long ago. I desire all to be used **for Him**; and soon.

The latter part of the note on 1 Peter 1, 2 as to "obedience" (page 62), does not seem proved from the words there used. God's emphasis in this context on personal obedience seems important (Rom. 16. 25, 26), and the enjoyment of 1 John 1. 7.

If the reader notices any other expressions out of harmony with the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2. 13), let him refuse them. I hope the **continued** monthly magazines may be more and more in love's full accord with God's truth, even in details. We cannot be too humble, nor too close to the "pattern" (Ex. 25, 40), nor too willing for His further instruction.

In conclusion, valuing much prayer, I do feel grateful to our Father for the acceptance still of the same standpoint, and that, for example, the "Handful of Bible Difficulties" were lovingly kept from plausible errors that might have drawn aside in these perilous times, and misled, some of His beloved children. For restraining mercy we praise! Those of us who write (or speak) should humbly seek grace that we may be still guarded. Hence I would add, "and for me" (Eph. 6. 19). The enemy does not sleep. I am unworthy and fallible, though now much older. How dependent we all need to be. Thank you for prayer, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, "till He come."

PERCY W. HEWARD.

This book is not sold. All fellowship of those desiring copies, beyond postage expenses, is used, by grace, for God's work.

Forwardness and Fulfilling.

"THE spirit indeed is willing (forward) but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26. 41). Forwardness and zeal are precious, but without watching and praying they will not be sustained. "I know the **forwardness** of your mind" (2 Cor. 9. 2) contains the same word, and here the apostle emphasizes the need for carrying out that for which the Corinthians were "ready" long before. We recollect the earlier exhortation "Now therefore perform the doing; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance" (Ch. 8. 10, 11). We little realize the intense need for encouragement of "one another" (and stirring up of ourselves) in this matter. "Continuance" is so important, and the enemy ever seeks to make it only "for a season," "for a while" (John 5. 35, Matt. 13. 21). Hence the attitude of Barnabas. He "was glad, and exhorted them all that **with purpose of heart** they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11. 23). And David prayed, "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, **keep** this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee" (1 Chron. 29. 18). May we, by grace, have the fruit of this meditation before the Lord, in our daily life.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

Partaking, by grace, of the gospel feast even now, and looking forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, let us now seek grace to meditate on Matthew 24. 45—51. We know what it is to "eat" spiritually (Ps. 119. 103, Jer. 15. 16). the body does not partake of "words," but the heart cannot live aright without a joy in "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Believers, too, are to minister wholesome food to one another. How impressive is the statement of Proverbs 10. 21, "The lips of the righteous feed **many**." Is this, by grace, our privilege? Again, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4. 6) has the same message, and Ephesians 4. 29 might be rendered "to the building up of the need." Men often talk of foods that "build up the constitution." Are we concerned EVER to help one another thus, and **not only** in meetings (1 Pet. 4. 11)?

Herein we see the privilege of ALL children of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, but it is undoubtedly true that God calls some to special responsibilities. "Feed My sheep" was a gracious command (cf. 1 Pet. 5. 2). In like manner, we have in Matthew 24, the "faithful and wise servant," entrusted with the care of other believers. Such guidance and direction must specially include the provision of suitable spiritual food. How important this is. If a mother gave her children no food, but only sought a "home" that was "spick and span," it would be no home at all. What would be the value of elaborate apparel, without food? And the children of God need nourishment. They cannot be energetic, nor grow, without food. Shall we offer them stones (Matt 7. 9), or husks (Luke 15. 16)? How empty and unsatisfying is the "diet" which Higher Criticism and worldliness offer. And how much poison is often presented as if it were food, or mingled therewith. Let us remember, moreover, rhetoric is not food, and argument is not food, the need is God's own truth. That which is precious nourishment, (as at Israel's passover time), must be full of reminders of the Lord Jesus. A servant who does not give that which is pure and rightly prepared, at the suited season, is unfit. The Holy Spirit's emphasis on "stewardship" is parallel. Do we expect and pray for this, and that the Lord may raise up such equipped brethren?

Verse 46 shows that loving service is in view of the Lord's Coming. This is always important as to a believer's attitude, but in such a context does it not also encourage us with the thought of revival, and that there will be "households" spiritually, and brethren (somewhat parallel with the "angels" of assemblies in Revelation 2 and 3), lovingly ministering among saints, in the last days? May it be ours to expect this revival, leading up to the Coming of our Lord, and to "continue in prayer" for this token.

The added context shows a solemnizing contrast. An "evil servant" is possible, and sin has an abiding place in his heart. Like to the evil shepherds of Ezekiel 34, and Zechariah 11, he feeds himself, not spiritually, but carnally, and indulgently. O that we may hate selfishness, and be afraid of the flesh. How solemn will be the unmasking of a hypocrite. The judgment is so worded that it speaks deeply to **all**, even believers, without denying the eternal salvation of God's dear children. Hypocrites will be lost, but must we not also ask ourselves, "Am I in any measure hypocritical?" Let us never "eat and drink with the drunken." Let us ever look for our Lord, and enter into the happiness of verse 46, desiring the reward, to His joy, which is at once described, "Verily I say unto you, That He shall make him ruler over all His goods" (cf. Luke 16. 10-12). Our gracious Lord is preparing and training His redeemed for His kingdom. Luke 22. 28, 29 and 2 Thessalonians 1. 4, 5 are among the many passages that impress this. And as the Lord's Day is a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord, and the Lord's Supper of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and each little Scriptural gathering an anticipation of the great gathering together unto Him, so the present feeding on His truth through the ministry of any of His gifts (Eph. 4. 10, 11), and through those who by reason of time in God's family are able to be teachers (Heb. 5. 12), is an appointed preparation for the holy and spiritual feasting "in that Day." Here is a call to a godly condition, that the responsibility of speaking as the oracles of God may be felt, and that there may not be an admixture of that which will please the flesh, or show off ourselves, or manifest carelessness as to "the finest of the wheat." Those for whom Christ poured out His blood are worthy of our fullest love and attention. It is sadly noticeable that the one who indulges self smites: how tender are those who are called of God (Heb. 5. 2), although they will not gratify the unhealthy taste which may sometimes loathe the manna, and seek, alas, the dainties of Egypt, and the sweetmeats of human doctrines.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"Gather the people together, and I will give them water" (Num. 21. 16). The words are very simple, but how much they mean, after Israel's grumbling (verse 5), AND after Moses' failure in chapter 20. The Lord would act Himself in a different way (verses 17, 18). How much He teaches by everything. And the intense beauty of the passage shines out through one extra letter in Hebrew implying a desire, "I would give,—I wish to give them water." And has not our Father dealt thus in our experience, making us ashamed of our complaining and unbelief?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Isaiah 61. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD'S children have a wondrous call to joy. The world knows nothing of a permanent peace. How blessed is the assurance of one redeemed, and made to sit together in heavenly places! When we have become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5. 21) our hearts can only partly tell of His fulness, but we dare not be silent. A new song is given in our mouths:—there is no "old song," the old life has no true singing. The holy delight of believers is meant to be a witness. Is our life full of praise? These pages are sent forth to tell of the glories of Christ, and to encourage His redeemed in the joy of His will, and of pleasing Him.

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The Holy Spirit's Order in Words.

HOW often we should, and would, praise God for the full inspiration of Scripture. Our present theme seems endless, for almost every sentence is capable of a different order of words, and the appointed emphasis is perfect. A few examples may help prayerful study: "The word was GOD," has the name "God" first in Greek for unusual emphasis on the true Deity of our Lord. So "God is SPIRIT" emphasizes the word "Spirit," in contrast with the sinful beliefs of the heathen, and ritualism to-day.

"GRACE be unto you, and PEACE." It is not "peace and grace." In like manner the work of RIGHTEOUSNESS is PEACE, and this is the REGULAR order, even in connexion

with the meaning of the name "Melchisedec" (Heb. 7. 1, 2). "The wisdom that is from above is first PURE, then PEACE-ABLE" (Jas 3. 17), and "How GOOD, and how PLEASANT (not 'how pleasant and how good') it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133. 1, cf. 147. 1.). "All the promises of God in Him (Christ) are YEA, and in Him AMEN" (2 Cor. 1. 20) would emphasize the Greek word first, for we understand the Old Testament in the light of the New. So we read, "the righteousness of God is MANIFESTED," and then at once "being WITNESSED by the law and the prophets."

"SACRIFICE and OFFERING Thou didst not desire" in Psalm 40. 6 and Hebrews 40. 5 must impress our hearts. God approved of offering first (from the Perfect One) and then sacrifice; only the Holy One and the Just could render this. Blessed be His Name. The failing priests of Aaron's line needed the blood of atonement FIRST, ere they could draw nigh to God. Cain tried to bring an "offering," and we see his sin.

In the NAMES of God's children we observe a perfect order. "If children, then heirs," "the disciples were called Christians," "A spiritual house, an holy priesthood," "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." In Hebrews 11. 13 and 1 Peter 2. 11 the word rendered "pilgrims" is last. God has some wise purpose. We may also compare "He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTISED," and again "make DISCIPLES of all nations, BAPTISING." Gods words are EVER in perfect order for our spiritual blessing. May we, by grace, possess possessions more and more, and all in living fellowship with our Lord Jesus, as He said, "Me and My words" (Mark 8. 38, cf. John 14. 15), not "My words and Me." O that we may not separate, or alter, what He has graciously united and given.

ASHAMED.

"I am not ashamed" (2 Tim. 1. 12).

"Be not **thou** ashamed" (2 Tim. 1. 8).

"He . . . was not ashamed" (2 Tim. 1. 16).

"I am not ashamed of the gospel . . . for it is the power of God" (Rom. 1. 16).

"I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1. 12).

"Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. 5. 5).

"Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee" (Ps. 25. 20).

"They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps. 34. 5).

"The Lord God will help me . . . and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isa. 50. 7).

Contrasts in Scripture.

MANY contrasts exist, and all are helpful. For example, "In Adam" and "in Christ," the broad way and the narrow, "lost" and "found." Ah, the reader says, "We know these already." But do we SUFFICIENTLY know, and SPIRITUALLY know, what we "know"? This is all-important. Then there are contrast-parables, e.g., the unfriendly sleeping friend, and God giving freely to His children (Luke 11. 5-9), the unjust judge, and God giving to his people who are never widowed (Luke 18. 1-8), the robber in the message of the Good Samaritan contrasted with God's holy law taking away our self-righteousness. The travesties of Revelation also come before us—the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, the beast and the harlot, the deadly wound healed, and many more. Continually we see that the glory of Christ shines out in every description of Antichrist, by a Divinely appointed contrast. Thus everything magnifies His Name, and we ever learn more of His glory. The idol shepherd of Zechariah 11. 17, has the sword upon his arm and his right eye. How different from the holy judgment substitutionarily on the True Shepherd in Zechariah 13. 7, and also in opposition to His glory in Revelation 2 and 3. There we see our Lord's eyes as a flame of fire, and the stars in His right hand, which He also laid upon His servant, John. It is so throughout. The death of the king of Jerusalem in Johsua 10. 27 (and of other kings), of Absalom and Haman—are remarkably contrasted with the precious death, once for all, of Him Who loved us. We think of the stone rolled away, in His glorious resurrection. Moreover, there are contrasts to emphasize the imperfection of the type, and to emphasize how much the Antitype ever excels. None of the animal sacrifices were raised, and Israel's priests could not come near, even with a sacrifice, unless the cloud of incense covered them. How different is the glory of the finished work of Christ. Every type was meant to fall short. And why so manifestly? Is it not all to glorify Christ?

PURIFYING.

"God . . . put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING their hearts by FAITH." Acts 15. 8, 9.

"Seeing ye have PURIFIED your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye LOVE one another, with a pure heart fervently." 1 Peter 1. 22.

"And every man that hath this HOPE in (on) Him PURIFIETH himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3. 3.

"The prayer of God," i.e., belonging to God (Luke 6. 12).

"The faith of God" (Mark 11. 22).

"A conscience of God" (1 Pet. 2. 19).

Showing What The Lord Has Done.

“**T**HEN said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them” (Ps. 126. 2). And why should it not be so. Should not our whole life and manner manifest how great His mercy is? Have we not been brought out of darkness into His marvellous light, that we should show forth His praises (1 Pet. 2. 9)? “Show forth”—not only by what we say, though that is important. Never would we forget the privilege of speaking of the glorious majesty of God’s kingdom and of His mighty works, and of abundantly uttering the memory of His great goodness, and singing of His righteousness (Ps. 145. 5, 7). A new song has been put into our mouth that many may see and fear and trust in the Lord (Ps. 40. 3, cf. also Isa. 12. 4). But all that is within us is to bless His holy Name (Ps. 103. 1), and all our bones are to say, “Lord, who is like unto Thee?” (Ps. 35. 10). Has He not become the Salvation of our face (Ps. 42. 11, 43. 5), that we may adorn His doctrine by a contrast with a worrying, fretful or murmuring countenance? In the temple of our body (1 Cor. 6. 19) should not every whit of it utter “Glory” (Ps. 29. 9), should not there be a spiritual parallel with Moses in Exodus 33? What a thankful, praiseful people the redeemed of the Lord should be! Are we so?

NATURE—GRACE.

How wondrous is God’s work in nature. Its heights and depths, its variety and colours, its harmonies, and yet withal contrasts—show “the glory of God.” The Lord’s service has brought me into trains where the outlook is amazing (South Germany, etc.). I would only praise. The hills and valleys tell of Him. How often Scripture refers to the “mountains of God” (Ps. 36. 6, marg. 95, 4, 125. 2). The Lord Jesus was oft, it seems, on the mountains. The stars above and mountains around seem to impress me most, and to encourage my faith, I hope. Did not God tell Abraham to behold the stars? And Psalm 121. 1 calls us to learn from the hills a confidence in One Who is infinitely Greater. A fellow passenger yesterday questioned my WRITING my letters while passing through such exquisite beauty, and I feel that I must to God’s glory do part of this brief message in the tunnels. As one beholds what he may never see again, the heart feels—If God is so glorious in nature, how much more glorious is His grace. If that which soon has its winter is so pleasant and fragrant, how much more beautiful are His words in Scripture! “He spake and it was done,” but who can tell what redemption cost Him? And if our lives are the fruit of His saving work, how lovely they should be, to His glory.

Observe the emphasis on obedience and holiness in Numbers 15. 40, 41. Four times we read, “Your God.” How deeply significant is this, and how wondrous is relationship to God.

“The Lord Repented.”

HOW often we read such words. We are at once conscious that translations are not the original. But it is plain God has a wondrous message here FOR US. 1 Samuel 15. 11, contains the very same word as 29 (see also 35). And God emphasizes this attitude as HIS GLORY, it is no defect (Jer. 26. 3). Jonah 3. 10, with 4. 2, must thus impress us: God’s CHARACTER is thus unveiled, contrasted with Jonah’s. Amos 7. 3-6, may give us some help on the subject, with Joel 2. 13. Certainly God is NOT changeable (Mal. 3. 10). But He reveals Himself in this way with a very definite purpose. The English word “repent” suggests confession of failure: that is not the Hebrew meaning at all. But the word does denote deep feeling. It is from the same root as the word “comfort,” and again we see a stress on feeling. So when we read of God’s opened EYES AND EARS, do we not realize that He FEELS? Heathendom has a very different idea of its “gods” from that which He lovingly unveils concerning Himself. And philosophy is intensely cold. And we are all inclined to become cold, cold, it may be in our “orthodoxy.” Our Heavenly Father calls US TO FEEL. The Lord Jesus beheld the city, and wept over it. As to the verb “repent,” we know that Hebrew poetry has frequently two lines balanced. When “repent” suggests a going back from one’s word, it is never used of God.

“God is not a man, that He should LIE:

Neither the Son of man, that He should REPENT”

(Num. 23. 19). But when it denotes deep feeling the word is applicable to Him

“It REPENTED the Lord that he had made man on earth,
And it GRIEVED Him at His heart”

(Gen. 6. 6). The reference to “comfort” may suggest an attitude that cannot “rest” till the One Who feels has done something further. So we are encouraged to remember Our Father’s intense feeling, and to be concerned lest we become feelingless. How easy it is to talk of past and future judgments quite COLDLY. The intensely PRACTICAL bearing of this subject is now before us. Here we have not merely a Bible difficulty. God has not allowed this problem merely for our mental solution. He has chosen these difficult words (may we not reverently say?) because we are so unfeeling, and we need some surprising revelation of Himself that will break down our cold logic, and our formal inferences, and lead us to see, unless we are blind, our need for more harmony with Himself and His character. The PERSONAL notes in Scripture are deeply important: “religion” is occupied with ourselves, our actions, and our ceremonies. The gospel brings us to God, and a personal fellowship with Him. Ephesians 5. 1, 2, in another context, may impress upon our responsive hearts the same message. Scripture is not only for our heads, but for our hearts. O that our attitude may please our gracious and loving Father.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Continued)

Thus we find that all these parables have a message for our hearts, and not only a passage for interpretation. And it is well that we should ever read Scripture with this realization. And strikingly we find in most of them a contrast,—the two sons, the two ways, the wheat and tares, and, here, those in the feast and those without. The solemnity of truth is often forgotten. There is always a reminder of judgment. Many forget this, and the indifference of this age is reflected among the children of God. We speak and act as if God will not do what He has said He will do. And this may well be our meditation as we approach another passage which has spoken searchingly to many of our hearts. I refer to Matthew 25.

There were no chapter breaks in the original Scriptures, except in the Psalms, and, for example, implied in the acrostics of Lamentations. We often lose much through not reading on,—for example Isaiah 52. 15 to 53. 1 and John 7. 53 to 8. 1. So Matthew 25. 1 at once follows 24. 42-51, and here are the nuptials, which may suggest to us a feast, even the feast of that Day. It is true that this is not the special point mentioned, and we ever realize the relative emphasis and silence of the Lord Jesus. But as our subject is "Parables connected with feasts," and the Holy Spirit emphasizes elsewhere what will take place when the Bridegroom comes, we may, with this preface, ponder the searching message of these verses in their context. "Then" (Matt. 25. 1) seems to indicate a special time, and may it not refer to a contrast with the general history of Christendom, and with the sad unveiling of the harlot in Revelation 17 and elsewhere? There must be a revival: and must there not be a going forth to meet the Bridegroom? But—solemn thought—even then all will not be truly children of God. O dear reader, how this speaks to you, and to me,—yet not to terrify, but to search and purify us, and our motives. All here are characterized as virgins, and there is evidently a similarity in their profession. All have lamps, and all go out. The position and profession are not distinguished. But, alas, some have no oil. A lamp without oil! It seems so "foolish" to be without oil. And that is the very word the Lord Jesus uses. Every part of the preparation except the oil. So strange to overlook this, and yet have not we sometimes, in earthly things, overlooked that which is all-important? Something else has occupied us, or we have been in a rush and flurry, and have started on a journey, it may be, without money, or without that which we need. But such errors are small compared with the one before us. And the five foolish made the same mistake. This is the one and only matter mentioned. How deep is the meaning. From a human standpoint, we might say, "Oil is not absolutely necessary: it is possible to grope in the dark: the Bridegroom will bring light when He comes: and, indeed,

one lamp will do for two, and five lamps will surely suffice for the whole party."

Such natural reasoning is Divinely set aside. Each one must have oil. Without oil there is no readiness. We think of oil in the tabernacle, and in anointing with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1. 21, Ps. 92. 10). We remember the emphasis on the lit lamp in Matthew 5. 15, and call to mind Zechariah 4 with the explanation of verse 6, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Thus the message comes, with a searching force and fulness, to our own hearts. Have WE experienced the work of the Holy Spirit, and have WE the oil?

We observe the number "ten": it suggests fellowship, as with the ten strings (Ps. 33. 2), and the ten servants of Luke 19. 13. But the TWO classes are found here, albeit the special emphasis is not on OUTWARD wickedness, but on manifest FOOLISHNESS. The saddening fact that the foolish were with the wise, neither conscious of their own need, nor detected by the others, gives one needful aspect. The equally saddening fact is that the wise slept awhile, as if they too were foolish. Surely the Holy Spirit's record is to speak to our hearts. The tendency to assume that the foolish had SOME oil, but not enough, is Divinely answered. We do not read "they took no oil in their vessels," but "took no oil WITH THEM." Even in their lamps, there was none. Some will ask, "How then could there be a temporary lighting?" It was evidently temporary in the extreme sense, the flickering of an oil-less wick (verse 8). That was all. That alone fulfils Christ's words.

We may not understand the expression, "Go ye rather to them that sell." It may contain the "contrast" message of the parable, and intensify the thought of despair in such a case. An error in earthly things may often be rectified in a shop, but a spiritual omission will be then too late for remedy. We read "they went to buy," but not "they went and bought." They returned, but Scripture is silent as to their possessions. Ready ones had already gone in: all who were ready went in, and all who went in were ready. Can we find a single Scripture for the theory that Christ will come again to an unready people? Revival is promised. This "intervening event" is often forgotten, and it is not true love to the Lord, and His Coming, to put it aside. The marriage reminds of Revelation 19. 7, 8. "The door was shut" brings Luke 13. 24, 25 before us. The preaching of Christ's Coming to professing Christians must ever be with this deeply solemn message. The other virgins came. They said, "Lord, Lord," even as those found in Matthew 7. How they will come, and where, I do not know. There is much that awaits knowledge, but this does not hinder heart-application. As soon as desire to "know" the fulfilment of each word side-tracks the realization of our Lord's loving warning we are in peril. "I know you not" suggests again Matthew 7. 23 "The Lord knew them that are His," "My sheep hear My voice, and I know

them." It is blessed indeed to be known to Him. And the proof is found in the added words, "and they FOLLOW Me." Yes, this is the test. And in view of the danger of deceiving our own selves, the Lord Jesus said, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." Does not this come to our hearts in His word to us still? "Watch therefore" is found in 24. 42 also, and we behold the climax in Mark 13. 34, 35, 37, "He commandeth the porter to watch," "watch ye therefore," "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Do we long for the Lord's Coming? Do we sing about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? Do we speak of this theme to one another? Let us be sure that by grace we have THE OIL, and that we are among those who FOLLOW Him, and who are, as His sheep, known to Him, that we may never hear the amazing and anguish-awakening words, "I know you not."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

A NOTE ON 1 PETER 3. 19, 20*.

This verse is often before us in Question Meetings abroad, and I have noticed more fully than before that the word "which" in 20, **not in the Greek**, misleads many. There is one "place" description ("in prison"): there are **four** "time" descriptions (1, "disobedient once," 2, when the longsuffering of God waited, 3, in the days of Noah, 4, while the ark was "preparing"). Many link the **one** place-description with preached, whereas the Greek "encloses" it between the article and its noun ("the in-prison spirits"): but all the four time-descriptions are free to be linked with the verb ("preached"), and show **WHEN** the Spirit of Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 1. 11) in Noah (2 Pet. 2. 5) preached to men,—who were spirits in prison, still conscious, when this epistle was written. There is **no suggestion** of preaching in prison, and no thought of any other time than the one which is indicated and emphasized **four** times. O that God may use this to witness against the deadly error of a hope after death.

* Leaflets available gladly.

"When he (Elijah) saw, he arose, and went for his life" (1 Kings 19. 3): "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid" (Matt. 14. 30). Contrast, "Looking (off) unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12. 2).

How did Adam, created in the image of God and glorious, become unlike Him, and like the beasts (Ps. 49. 12)? He hearkened to another voice. How did Moses become glorious, so that His face shone with the glory of God? Was it not by fellowship, and hearing His voice (Ex. 34. 29)? And is not the message of 2 Corinthians 3. 18 His loving word to us in this very matter?

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"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

Daniel 6. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the enabling grace of God Daniel was constant. We have far easier circumstances but are we as definite? Is God FIRST in our lives? Are His words ever emphasized, and is the privilege of prayer always taken? And do we give thanks before God, before OUR God, even when trials are permitted, and uncertainties surround? It is very blessed to realize that God hears prayer and that He is willing to deal with all details of His children's lives. If rejoicing in salvation by the precious blood of His beloved Son, our attitude should be that of His ever trustful children. These pages are sent forth to His glory, in this object: may the blessing attend reader and writer alike.

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How Not to Speak.

A Plea for Love's Humility and Tact.

"THE tongue is a fire" (James 3. 6). How much mischief can be wrought by an angry tongue, a false tongue, a slandering tongue, and so forth. No man can tame, but God works in the heart, and then out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But long after we are believers, and indeed at all times, we need to **grow** in grace, and we come to realize that there are more ways of grieving God's Holy Spirit through our words than these which are manifestly impatient and unholy.

It is so easy to impute wrong motives to others: so natural to say just sufficient to imply "something" of this character, without putting it openly enough to make our own conscience troubled by the slander we have started. It is so easy as a flame to flare up when OUR motives are questioned, and yet to commit the same grievous sin:—so easy, moreover, to say such words as, "Well, if you won't see it, I can't help it," "Everyone can see that if only he is honest," "You don't want to see it," "Do be honest," "Don't stick to your point at all costs," "You've made up your mind already." There are a thousand variations of such expressions, and they "come out" so readily. Or the statement may be, "All who prayerfully study the Scriptures agree on this point" (i.e., your interpretation against that of a brother), "Everyone with an open mind must see this," "If only there is prayerful humility, I have no doubt as to what the result will be."

There need be no anger, but sarcasm can be just as "self-ish." There may be an attitude of calm, and we may think highly of ourselves, alas, because of this, and despise a brother, whereas our fault of a patronizing manner may be yet more harmful, because we are not suddenly overcome but are cold and calculating. "Let your speech be always with **grace**" means so much. And there are many other temptations to sins of the tongue, which only a walk with God can discover. Even if a list were made, we should not realize our own failing, unless in HIS LIGHT (Ps. 36. 9).

Possibly the greatest dangers for earnest children of God are in connexion with "spiritual language." Sometimes we may be really zealous for THE TRUTH, and may thus be carried away, so that we hinder when we long to help,—hinder by "overstatement." Or we speak of what the Lord has "shown us," and of His "leading," and record how He brought us to see a part of what we now believe, and laid low our pride,—in a way that rebukes the one hearing for his pride, and unwittingly we exalt ourselves. The remedy is not continual uncertainty but "grace," grace that realizes the difference between the fulness of God's truth and our imperfect realization of it, and withal our imperfect presentation of it, so that our manner adorns the doctrine of God, and wins those in whom He is working.

If one says, "How can I speak thus? I shall always be afraid of making a mistake," does not this suggest a real need? The fact is that we all shall express ourselves with much more grace and power, as we are consistently humbler, and as we know more of God's presence. Many a time the truth has been hindered by a hard and harsh presentation, and some have been repelled. Many a time there has been a lack of love, as we all must acknowledge, and our words have had more of the "self" ring than we meant. We have been taken off our guard. We cannot be too lowly. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). The words of 1 Corinthians 8. 2 apply more searchingly than any of us have

realized, "If any man think that he knoweth any thing he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." At once we read, "But if any man **love** God, the same is known of Him," and 1 Corinthians 13. 12 comes to mind,—and to "heart."

Before me lies a letter to a brother in Christ. After mentioning certain points of interpretation, the writer adds, "There is a distinction that few notice . . . any who are spiritually minded can embrace the truth of the (subject under prayerful consideration). If you can be humble and simple to believe that you do not know all, God **will** enlighten in such a way that you will be astounded in silent adoration, but self **MUST** be in the background. I speak plainly to you brother, and find difficulty in choosing my words which will convince you without causing you the slightest offence." I feel that these lines show a real danger among beloved children of God,—the danger of almost suggesting that any who do not see what we set forth are **not** spiritually minded, and that they lack humility. The addition concerning difficulty in choosing words seems to intensify this. If we are growing up into Christ in all things, shall we not avoid the suggestion that we feel ourselves spiritually minded and humble? And certainly we shall find no great difficulty in using gracious and wise words to another. It is clear that the majority who thus write are unconscious of the appearance of their language, and of the assumption of personal humility beyond others. But this very unconsciousness shows (does it not?) a spiritual lack? And this attitude impedes us in true and intense seeking after that godly unity, in manifestation, for which our beloved Lord prayed.

I do hope these meditations will really contribute to love among God's own children. If any sentence illustrates the failure pointed out, I would ask forgiveness. It is not as a prophet that the writer pens these suggestions, but with a desire to speak to his own heart also, and as one who has received mercy to be faithful. When we see the "differences" among children of God as to the Body of Christ, for example, and as to the prophetic Scriptures, and as to the Breaking of the Bread, must we not be pained that such divergencies can exist, when we are indwelt by the same Spirit of God, and that bitterness has so often been manifested? Indifference is not the remedy: that is only a swing of the pendulum to another sin and failure. The privilege of looking to God, and of expecting His gracious work, should be linked with the humble appropriating of Philippians 3. 14, 15 as we seek to love one another and to wash one another's feet.

It is easy to "speak," it is not so easy to do, God's will. But God gives more grace that we may **BE** what we **ARE**, and "live out" that which is, by grace, within, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The heart is the centre, but it must be manifested in wishes, words, ways, and works.

Parables Associated With Feasts.

(Concluded)

Thus our hearts realize that all the messages of our Lord are searching and practical. The fact that they were spoken long ago has not altered their present full value. The Holy Spirit applies them to-day in living power. There is ever an encouragement: there is ever a warning. The "feast" is now, not only in the type of the Lord's Supper, but in the partaking of "the Bread of Life," and in the sitting down under our Lord's shadow. O that it may be with great delight (Song 2. 3). And the prospect is certain, and precious, even to sit at His table in His Kingdom (Luke 22. 30). It is well to ruminate and meditate on God's thoughts, and to enjoy the promises of our Lord, for we can never enjoy them, nor Himself, too much, if we are His, and seeking to please Him. Parables are not instead of realities, not greater than realities, but only faint foreshadowings of the full realities. How rich, and how blest are all who are "in Christ Jesus." The emphasis on food in connexion with spiritual things throughout Scripture shows how our Father delights in the delight of His people, and how all our blessings are to become part of our very being, with their rich and eternal fruit in our lives, to the praise of the glory of His grace. And our hearts say, "Amen and amen."

Edom, Moab, Ammon.

A Sad Beginning (Gen. 19. 37, 38, 36. 1-43).
 Spared in God's Providence Awhile (Deut. 2. 5, 9, 19).
 Opposed Israel (Num. 20. 20, Jud. 3. 12, 13).
 Laid low in the short-lived victories of the first king of Israel (1 Sam. 14. 47).
 Subdued by David (2 Sam. 8. 12, 14).
 Rose up again to fight, but brought down by God's power, in answer to prayer (2 Chron. 20. 10, 22).
 Will oppose, at first, in Antichrist's southern journey of conquest (Dan. 11. 41).
 Will unite with him in the final attempt to exterminate Israel (Ps. 83. 6-8).
 To be brought to submission, under Israel, in the day of the Lord (Isa. 11. 14. See Obadiah, and Jeremiah 48. 47, 49. 6: observe this refers to the people then: NO universalism or promise of resurrection in blessing for those who have died in their sins. Thank God, some will be saved of every nation, Revelation 5. 9, but we think of the **general** record of these peoples).
 The whole history is deeply solemn when we realize the origin of these nations. How we would pray for godly families.

Some Parables Associated with Houses.

IF we seek to classify the priceless parables of our Lord Jesus we find their fulness. If we enumerate those that set forth His wondrous love and redemption; and those that tell of His Coming again, and those that speak of our lost condition, the message of the Good Samaritan will be in all our lists. And, for another example, those parables which tell of prayer contain, entwined, an unveiling of our close relation to our Father. Nor is this strange: We cannot isolate grace and service, we cannot separate the Lord's loving work in the past and the future. All parts of truth are united, and the words of our Lord are fuller than we have ever realized.

A "house" is often before us, and we think of the Householder of Matthew 13. 27, and call to mind also the Shepherd who brings the lost sheep home, no longer lost, nor to be lost, and recollect how each part of Luke 15 displays the final blessedness of the redeemed within the house. The marriage feast and the great supper have a like reminder, and again the man to whom the Good Samaritan became the "Near One" comes before our praiseful notice. He has found a dwelling place with all its restfulness and provision. These parables have already been studied.

But there are some others which we would now prayerfully ponder, as we desire to have at least an outline-fulness of our wondrous theme. We think of Matthew 7. 24-27, the climax of the Address on the Mount, and the somewhat similar message (for our Lord emphasized His teaching by repetition), at the close of Luke 6.

There are two builders, and only two. The essential difference, moreover, is two-fold; but remarkably the two blessed characteristics are viewed as together, or both absent. We should have expected, after the reference to the one who "heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them," a special stress on the act of building, but at once the FOUNDATION comes in view, and it is not A rock but THE Rock, the only parallel in this gospel being 16. 18, where the meaning is clear to our hearts. What then do we learn from Matthew 7? If we have the right Foundation we should be characterized by hearing and doing our Lord's words (cf. John 10. 27), AND if we do not hear and do, we cannot, however devoted our language may appear, be right as to the Foundation. It is impossible to exalt the Person of Christ and to ignore His words. His own utterances with regard to this at once appeal to our hearts:—"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed OF ME AND OF MY WORDS," "If ye love ME keep MY COMMANDMENTS," "He that loveth ME not keepeth not MY SAYINGS," "If ye abide in ME, AND MY WORDS abide in you." Before our study goes forward, let us pray for grace to FEEL the power of this message.

"Hearing and doing": how blessed is the link. Israel said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do, and we will hear" (Ex.

24. 7, Heb.). May not this suggest one cause of their failure? "They waited not for His counsel." We need to "Keep on hearing" all the while, that we may have the true freshness of doing His will in His way. We read of His heavenly servants, "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that DO His commandments, HEARKENING unto the voice of His word" (Ps. 103. 20).

It is sadly clear that the instructions of the Lord Jesus on the Mount have been largely forgotten. It is there that we find His instruction against oaths on the part of those who acknowledge Him, and against the use of judicial force on their part, though they fully recognise that, in another sphere, "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1). The pilgrim path for believers has been overlooked. Had Matthew 5-7 been laid to heart, worldly success and state churches would alike have been impossible. Numerical greatness, as of the mustard tree, may attend the disregard of His commandments, but "the least" is not small to those who are His (Matt. 5. 19), and the attitude has a tremendous effect, even if "one" command is set aside, with regard to "the kingdom of the heavens." "I say unto you" should be music to those for whom He gave His life-blood. The inwardness and the heavenliness of the Address on the Mount can never be obscured. Socialism knows nothing of the ground of these ethics, that are more than ethical. Only "the poor in spirit" who as "the poor of the flock" in Zechariah 11. 11 wait on Him, and know the word of the Lord, can understand aright. Such have been taught by grace, that He Himself is the Rock-Foundation of all their obedience even as of their everlasting salvation. Yes, as in all the parables, CHRIST IS CENTRAL, and we would ever see and glorify Him.

Can we do without hearing? Reading is not enough. Though this may not be the primary thought here, we feel how definitely we need the living accent of the Holy Spirit, as He takes of the things of Christ. Then our response will be a "doing" which is likened to wise building. On the ground of His Person and work we shall carry out His will in a way that will abide (cf. John 15. 16), and we shall receive the reward "in that Day." A house is not a mausoleum: it is for living occupation. Often we think of a temple and God's indwelling, and likewise of our enjoyment. The stress on "HIS house" here would seem to emphasize this aspect, though not excluding the former. The testing here indicated may refer to present trials, which show reality (cf. Matt. 13. 21), but its fulfilment appears to be in the future (cf. 1 Cor. 3. 15). Only that which is in accord with our Lord's words will then stand. We may have much activity, and apparent success, but all is vain, except living and loving obedience (1 Sam. 15. 22). Rain, rivers, and winds give a searching test. It is no mere amusement to live. We should be concerned to build well. There is no jerry building

when the Lord's words are rightly taken to heart. But the stability is not here associated with a commendation of the building. "FOR it was founded (it had been established) on the Rock." The glory belongs to Christ. Our attitude in that Day is seen in Luke 17. 10, 19. 16, 18. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory."

The sad alternative is linked with hearing. But there is only a physical listening by the unwise, whether among those who were with Christ in the days of His ministry or those who attend the testimony of the truth to-day. As in Matthew 25, we see the UNWISDOM of disobedience. Its sinfulness is oft emphasized, but the grace of our Lord shines out in the use of this word of warning, "A foolish man." Though we are among the redeemed, is it not possible that as to some parts of Scripture even we illustrate this un wisdom? Are we growing up into Christ in all things? Is our obedience all-round? If not, to the extent that we thus fail, our work will be destroyed in the coming day. Only that which is in accord with His words can be recognized. "His house" is the expression again in verse 26, but it will prove neither temple, nor dwelling place, only a ruin. Does not this speak searchingly to us? The opinions of man, with everything of man, are likened to the shifting sand. How appropriate is the picture. There is none other rock except the Lord Jesus. And let us observe that the same testing, whether present or future, shows the unsatisfactory character of the whole. We do not read "for it was founded on the sand," inasmuch as the Lord would here emphasize the failure of the building as well. That which is made of disobedience can never be well pleasing. Yet HOW MUCH is so done, and the building appears awhile to be right, until it is tested. So much is erected, for it is not a matter of a few bricks, the fall of it is "GREAT." How vain is "success" that is but for a few moments, until the Lord tests.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"A stranger there," said Moses (Ex. 2. 22) that the name might fit the blessings then future, in the promised land. And yet Judges 18 seems to show the failure in Gershom's family "That we and our cattle should die there" was the strange expression of Israel (Num. 20. 4), as if to contradict themselves, and to prove God's words that the "here" of the wilderness would become "there," in His wondrous grace. Yet they rebelled. How sinful is sin.

It is the privilege of a child of God to know the Father, of a believer to believe, of a saint to be holy, of one who is made nigh to draw near, of one in heavenly places in Christ Jesus to be heavenly, of a possessor of that blessed Hope to be hopeful. How great are our riches in Christ Jesus. What manner of persons we ought to be.

"But be not Ye called Rabbi."

Matthew 23. 8.

"WHY not?" may be the thought of many. What does it matter if we are called this or that? A title may afford certain prestige and esteem. People "respect" those who bear a title: and such arrangements have existed so long. "There is no wrong intention, or self-glorification," may be the added defence.

But against this we have the simple and decisive words of the Lord Jesus. When He has spoken, "reasoning" does not come into the question. A disciple has the privilege and joy of obedience. The "advantages" avail nothing against His loving will: how can they be called "advantages" by one who loves Him?

It is deeply important to see that the Lord Jesus Himself gives the reason: "for One is your Teacher." Hence any departure from this command is an attack on Him, and an infringement of His rights, however unintentional. "For" is an impressive word. His unique authority is before us.

"But," it may be replied, "we do not take the title, Rabbi, that is Jewish." The heart of a disciple would hardly defend this, for the parallel name in English is one surely excluded. The PRINCIPLE is one. And the context shows this. "Call no man your father upon the earth," "neither be ye called masters" (Matt. 23. 9, 10).

It will be seen that all these titles are "religious" in this context. There is no statement as to civil titles, but every prefix as "Reverend" and "Doctor" (of Divinity) appears to be forbidden. And Scripture consistently emphasizes this by illustration. We do not even read of "the apostle Paul," but of "Paul an apostle." The term "Pastor" is never used in Scripture as a title. The witness of the New Testament is uniform and consistent.

Hence the path of a believer appears to be clear. Our Lord's will has been expressed, and whatever we have done in the past, we would not wish to continue, against His appointment. We would neither take the title, nor approve of it if given. It is not only, "Do not call yourselves," but "be not ye called." A concern for the Lord's will encourages us to refuse, though with courtesy, if we have this title offered.

Yet a further thought. The natural wish for dignity is quite out of harmony with the standpoint of a Christian. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30) gives us the right attitude. And the Lord Jesus said "He that is the greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22. 26). May it be ours to enjoy and fulfil His will, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

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"Have the faith of God." Mark 11. 22.

A Word of Introduction.

SCRIPTURE is God's truth graciously written. Should not His children, who are called "believers" be characterized by believing? Faith is in Him, in His faithfulness, in His words, in His work, in everything that is His. And faith is not only a logical act of the mind, it is a loving attitude of the heart, an experience—with living power and restfulness. It is with the desire that God may be glorified in the daily lives of His children that these pages are sent forth, and by no means with the thought of mere studying. It is not for SOME believers who have special "mental gifts," but to lead all who are redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus to have time for the words of their Father, and to seek the realization of their reality and preciousness.

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Three Striking Explanations.

THE Holy Spirit has granted us many remarkable lessons in the QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. We call them "quotations," but, inasmuch as the language is different, they are "translations," and He has been pleased to give us certain explanations which are rich in meaning.

In John 12. 15 we have the MOST REPEATED prohibition of Scripture, with its deeply encouraging message to children of God, "Fear not." But in Zechariah 9. 9 we read, "Rejoice greatly!" There is no contrast, rather the parallels are very beautiful, because "Fear hath torment" (1 John 4. 18), and excludes true joy. We note, moreover, that the joy of the Lord, which is our strength, is no mere temporary merriment. It is a holy deliverance from ANXIETY, because dependent on God

*It is noteworthy that, when we recollect the English "Hallelujah," the MOST REPEATED command and exhortation is "Praise ye."

and His changeless faithfulness. We remember the words "JOY and peace in BELIEVING," and faith is the cure for fear ("Be not afraid, only believe," "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God," "Fear not, Paul—I believe God"). The message of Luke 2 comes helpfully, "FEAR NOT: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of GREAT JOY, which shall be to all the people."

Personally I have found the apparently less striking translation in Romans 11. 26 very helpful. "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The words in Isaiah 59. 20, 21 declare His coming TO Zion, but the added statement "AND" shows that He is not limited to this, and so His further going forth from Zion is thereby implied. But we should have expected, in Romans 11 also, "Unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." It is true that the shortened Hebrew writing might suggest "the ones turned," but this would bring another grammatical problem. Rather it seems that the Holy Spirit shows HOW the ones who are said to turn in Isaiah are brought to this attitude. In Romans, the inner working of grace is specially before us, and the preparation of that wherein the prophet delights is seen to be in God's own mercy. But this is not absent from Isaiah. If they are "transgressors," and there is a "Redeemer," it is plain that the work is one of grace. By the two passages together we not only see this lest we be proud, but also learn that when the Lord works within there must be the response and fruit. Salvation is not simply FOR us, but IN us. We are not saved by our will, NOR AGAINST OUR WILL, but our will is saved. "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God" (Jer. 31. 18). And the prepositional change gives a further lesson. When there is a turning from transgression IN Jacob, will not the Lord turn unrighteousness altogether AWAY from His people? Verily, as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

The third passage is Hebrews 10. 5, with Psalm 40. 6. "Mine ears hast Thou opened,"—"a body hast Thou prepared Me."§ At first this seems remarkable, and it is. But the word § I am aware some will suggest that the explanation is an adherence to the Septuagint. This opens up a very important, and misunderstood subject. If the quotations were always from that version the claim would seem forceful. If they were never thence, we might always proudly try to translate for ourselves, instead of using the common version, as much as possible, or we might discourage uninspired translations altogether. As it is, we are graciously led to use a translation whenever we can, and are, moreover, helped to pray that God will enable translators, and grant His overruling work, even as He evidently granted of old, so much, that some unexpected renderings were appointed to indicate the hidden fulness of the inspired language, and to bring out thoughts we might never have seen. But this does not give US any warrant to employ the Septuagint when it varies, as far as we can see, erroneously from the inspired Hebrew, nor can we ourselves paraphrase, or explain, with the authority of the Holy Spirit. A little prayerful thought will show how important these meditations are.

"opened" is not as in Isaiah 50. 5. It denotes rather the PREPARATION of the ear (note margin, cf. Ps. 94. 9). Hence, inasmuch as an ear is impossible without a body, and as the sin of the first Adam is described as hearing aside (Gen. 3. 17, Rom. 5. 19), and as the typical High Priest of Israel was anointed first on the ear, the body of the Last Adam is viewed as FILLED with the CHARACTERIZED by holy listening to the will of the Father. All was in concord. Thus the description speaks to our hearts, and reveals His glory, and shows what will become increasingly our characteristics if, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to walk in His steps, and with growing likeness to Himself, in the newness of life which fits those who are no longer viewed as "in Adam," but "in Christ."

"The eyes of Eli began to WAX DIM" "He RESTRAINED them not"

1 Samuel 3. 2, 13.

AT first we are surprised that these words are evidently from the same Hebrew root. Some have sought to differentiate. But the Holy Spirit remarkably brings together two words with the same root-letters. Is this strange? Do we not realize the deep spiritual lesson? Eli's physical failure was on this occasion linked with a spiritual failure, for it followed his spiritual declension in chapter 2. He had not responded to the Lord's voice, and the Lord opened Samuel's ears: Eli had not seen God's way, and Samuel became a "seer." Eli's own sons were cast out. He lacked perception: his spiritual sight was faint, but his sons were bold, and not faint, in their sin, and he did not "make them weak" (for the force is causative, or prohibitive in such a word)—he did not check them. Their sin, alas, flourished: he did not weaken it: he had no home-power and influence. He "knew" (verse 13), but that was all.

How important it is in our own life that sin should be weakened, and laid low. The sin that is "mortified" is thus restrained, and we learn something of our own need. And the privilege of influence is of the same character (cf. Luke 14. 26). How saddening it is when sin is strong, and when there is the reverse of "weakening," when there is no checking, no holding back. 1 Kings 1. 6 illustrates, "His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?" How different is the gracious ministry of our Father, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him" (Heb. 12. 5). How tenderly and lovingly, yet firmly, He reproveth, and causes us pain that we may be deterred from the way that grieves His Holy Spirit.

It is easier to study than to obey when the head advances quicker than the heart. May we grow up into Christ in all things.

"The Finest Passage."

WE hear to-day such expressions as "the finest passage in Isaiah." It is important to ask "Have we any Scriptural ground for using such language?" I cannot find it. Ought we to say "the best verse," etc.? It may be one verse has been used most in our personal experience, or that one chapter is translated with peculiar accuracy and beauty, but "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," and we must never use words to obscure this fact.

But it may be said "Is there not a difference between Isaiah 53, for example, and some of the obscure portions of Ezekiel? should we not distinguish John 3 and the historical and genealogical portions of the Old Testament?" Yes, we may "distinguish," but not regard as different with regard to inspiration. Take the figure of the body. We have many members and all have not the same function, but all have the same life. So is it in Scripture. God does not mean the smaller members to do the work of the eye, but all are necessary (1 Cor. 12. 22). And this thought applies more forcibly as to Scripture, for the human frame belongs to a man, a member of a fallen race, and is affected thereby. All things in nature have not the same purpose. Wheat is more in use than certain herbs, and I may use John 3 far more often than a genealogical chapter, but the latter has an appointed sphere which John 3 cannot fill. Hence it is for me to value all that God has given, and to seek to know what I possess, and to use at the right time, asking that the Holy Spirit may bring to remembrance when and as I need.

All verses of Scripture do not contain the same revelation; but, when anyone says that historical facts could be written without inspiration, he confuses everything. History needs a perfect control if it is to be kept from all "bias," and even a genealogy requires just as much "inspiration" as to its inclusion or not, and as to abridgment in certain cases (Matt. 1 illustrates this).

When, by God's grace, we realize this our hearts are grateful to God for His wisdom, and that He has granted us all we need. Yes, there are times in our lives when He uses a little known passage to speak to us in a way that the epistle to the Ephesians will not THEN speak, and thus He shows His sovereignty, and the Lord Jesus is exalted as we find "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27). Thus is it, in measure, as to His people. Are there not times when He uses a background brother in a way in which a more prominent servant of the Lord does not THEN meet the need? We dare not dictate to God: it is folly and worse to criticize. Our food supply in Scripture is wide and varied, even as that of nature, and Scripture is our *materia medica* as well. Thanks be unto God for the Scriptures to meet every circumstance, as applied by the Holy Spirit, when we are teachable.

Seven Thoughts in Galatians 6. 1-2.

SOMEONE is "overtaken" in a fault, the context implies he is a believer, and the word used does not NECESSARILY mean that he is suddenly surprised by the enemy, but rather that he is taken "before" something else. The "next" thing will be, ah, who can tell? Spiritual believers are needed to intervene promptly. We are responsible for "one another." Are we SPIRITUAL? Do we desire to be? The question is searching. Those who, by grace, are in CONDITION thus prepared for their privilege are bidden to RESTORE. Is not this the Lord's work? Yes, but He works through instruments, and believers are said to "do" what they do in His power (Jas. 5. 20). Observe the word "ye": there is a working together. The word "restore" is used of mending a net, or setting a limb. How concerned we should be as to RESTORATION, "lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but rather let it be healed" (Heb. 12. 13). If the first point is SPIRITUALITY, and the second is fellowship, the third is definite expectancy of RESTORATION.

But a condition of spirituality is not enough. There must be the CONTINUED "SPIRIT" of meekness." The manner must be to the glory of God. How often we have hindered a right action by a wrong manner. How much we need "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 1). It is so easy to spoil all by an unguarded word. Only those who own their feet need washing can wash "one another's" feet. Only those who acknowledge that they need forbearance can be "forbearing ONE ANOTHER in love" (Eph. 4. 2). Pride unfits for all service.

But yet a fifth point is added—"Considering thyself." Doubtless this suggests, "It is by grace that you are saved": we are to say to our own heart "I also have the flesh in me." We can never despise our brother. But there is an added thought—"Lest thou also have been tempted." Not only "Lest thou be tempted" and fail in some parallel way, though outwardly different, but "lest thou also may have been tempted," i.e., lest the very restoring may have been made THE OCCASION for a greater sin than any of us realize, namely self-exaltation. This goes beyond the general thought of judging the flesh, it shows us that amid privileges and acts of services, we shall find the enemy peculiarly busy, and that there is to be, by contrast, the blessing of victory over definite temptation at the very time, that we may be able more fully to help the one overtaken.

Finally, remember that a restored brother is not perfect. He may have sinned before partly, at least, through our neglect, through our indifference. Hence "bear ye (present tense) one another's burdens." When there is this godly continuance, in the power of the Holy Spirit, there is a gracious harmony with "the law of Christ." "Love one another"—His new com-

mandment, new because "one another" involves a new relationship, possible, in its fulness, only in one body, on the ground of redemption—"love one another" includes ALL that is set forth in this context, and the many "one another's" of the epistle are but illustrations of its precious fulness. May we not only read, but "go" and "do."

Some Parables Associated With Houses.

(Continued)

The parallel passage, though not spoken on the same occasion, in Luke 6 makes the "witness" two-fold. And in that context also we find the emphasis on those who say "Lord, Lord." He does not seek our lip-expressiveness but our loving devotedness. There are some added thoughts. The wise builder "dugged deep." Does not this indicate a personal experience of the Lord Jesus and what He is? It may also indicate the unwillingness to be content with anything of men that obscures and hides Him from view. "Could not SHAKE it" is the precious statement here. We, who receive a kingdom unshaken, are thus refreshed. All true obedience will not merely "pass" the test. There will be a completeness. Here some manuscripts emphasize the manifestly right mode of building. The Lord is well pleased to record the beauty and accuracy of true obedience.

The contrasted builder is here described as "without a foundation." That which is of sand is not worthy of the name. He who looks to self, or others, looks to nothing. How quickly such a house will fall. And again we are reminded that much is so erected, for a "great" ruin is seen. Moreover, this word may imply that the breaking down is complete. Nothing at all is left. O that we may not thus build!

Surely we need to apply the words ourselves, and then with loving earnestness to bring them before others. How much to-day is being built up on "church-arrangements" which are not the Lord's commandments, with baptism and the Lord's Supper corrupted. How great will be the ruin. Christendom has a sad future. Why should we not go back to the will of our Lord now? THAT is faith's inference from these parables. And grace shines out continually. Thanks be unto God there is THE Rock on which we may build, and the Lord's words wherewith we have the precious material. Let us not mix them with aught else. As the Sower soweth the WORD, and as the food is God's truth, so must the building be without any admixture. It is deeply important to keep to His will alone.

Two brief parables concerning houses are found in Matthew 12. "How can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." The context shows the meaning. Satan's power is emphasized (verse 26), and he is the prince of "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2. 2). Salvation is not a gliding into a better life. The enemy

fight hard for his citadel. The strong man is strong, but there is One stronger. If we see in the binding an anticipation of Revelation 20. 2, and also a special reference to the Lord's ministry among Israel, in casting out demons, and manifesting "the powers of the age to come" (Heb. 6. 5), we seem to have one key to the passage. But inasmuch as there are parallels in all Satan's tactics, may we not also think of the flesh in the natural man, in fellowship with the evil one, and the Lord's mighty work in laying low when He claims one of His own redeemed? How blessedly should we experience the fruit of this, if we are His, for our bodies have now become the temple of God. The parallel in Luke 11. 21, 22 speaks of a "palace" or "court," and refers to the strong one as armed, and then "overcome." The emphasis on overcoming in 1 John and Revelation 2 and 3 will help in a prayerful Bible study. It is clear that God's work is deep, and with a conflict. We are brought to the judgment of the old life: a mere profession belongs to the rocky-ground hearer. The house is taken with might: it becomes our Lord's spoil. As in Isaiah 53. 12, He delights to share with His own. And the record in Luke continues to explain what this means. All the armour is taken, that "the strong man" may have right to nothing. And then the spoils are divided. Does this indicate that the Lord takes something directly for Himself, and gives us the responsibility of other possessions, even our members which were the weapons of the enemy, but which He gives us the privilege of "presenting" (Rom. 6. 13)? He does not compel, but "divides," that we may bring, with love's willingness, what He has given to us? Or does the dividing go beyond the members or "weapons," and indicate that He gives to several a share in the blessing that attends the salvation of a soul, for we are joined together. The sister who has lived in the power of Christ, in the same house, receives a portion: the brother who has shewn the grace of Christ in the same business house or workshop is likewise encouraged: and the brother who ministered the Word, whereby the sinner was brought to the Saviour, is not overlooked.

It is clear that the old possessor is laid low. His right is denied, as to any member or weapon. What manner of persons we ought to be after salvation, and how contrasted with the world! These weapons had been those wherein the strong man had "trusted." How solemn it is to realize this use of the members previously against the Lord (Rom. 6. 19). May the change be ever manifest, and the victory be ever continued in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The second parable in Matthew 12 comes in verses 43-45. The unclean spirit is here said to GO out of a man, not to be cast out. There is no work of mighty grace. We thus discern that reformation is no proof of regeneration. Evil spirits can voluntarily leave their dwelling without surrendering their fearful tenancy. It is easy to be deceived in these matters, and for the

person himself to be deceived. Do not let such words be mistaken. They are not written that tender souls may be burdened, and ask "Am I saved after all?" There is no suggestion of universal uncertainty. It is blessedly possible to know we have eternal life (1 John 5. 13) and the evidences are not intricate, nor requiring skill to unravel. The simplest Christian may rest in peace wherever there is the blessed token of childlike love to the Lord and His words, and a hatred of sin. "Great things" are not necessary. Be joyful, dear tender believer, you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who desire the sincere milk of the Word, and who are sometimes troubled that your witness is not clearer and bolder. The Lord sees the little things, and your fear of grieving His Holy Spirit is precious in His sight. It is well to be tender, and to remain tender, and to feel the searching power of this parable, but the attitude of loving concern is a sure sign of God's work in the heart.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

FAITHFUL.

"GOD IS FAITHFUL, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 1. 9.

"GOD IS FAITHFUL, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear."

1 Corinthians 10. 13.

"FAITHFUL IS HE THAT CALLETH YOU, Who also will do it."

1 Thessalonians 5. 24.

"THE LORD IS FAITHFUL, Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."

2 Thessalonians 3. 3.

"He is FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED."

Hebrews 10. 23, 11. 11.

"THE FAITHFUL WITNESS," "THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS," "He That sat upon him was called FAITHFUL AND TRUE."

Revelation 1. 5, 3. 14, 19. 11.

Love as.

"Thou hast loved them, AS Thou hast loved Me"

John 17. 23.

"AS the Father hath loved Me, SO have I loved you"

John 15. 9.

"Walk in love AS Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us" Ephesians 5. 2.

"AS Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it"

Ephesians 5. 25.

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