

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity."
2 Timothy 2. 19.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD'S truth is often twofold. Grace and responsibility are entwined. Fellowship and separation are united. Love of God's will and hatred of evil are linked (Heb. 1. 9, Ps. 97. 10). So is it in connexion with God's seal. He knows His own, and will not leave nor lose. But it is our privilege to respond to His love, and never to misuse it. I am thankful that the words "The Lord knoweth them that are His" come first, are not you? But the other words follow immediately. What manner of persons should we be! The object of these pages is God's glory in your life and mine. If we grow in head-knowledge, and become clever students, who can "dissect" a verse, and explain it with human skill, we are only dealing with "death," for we are in a dead condition; but if our hearts are in living harmony with Him, and His will, how different will our attitude be from that of one dissecting. O that out from us may flow rivers of living water.

CONTENTS:—

	Page
Some of the Wonders of Genesis 1. 1	1
Some "Firsts" in Matthew's Gospel	3
The Names of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 2 and 3)	4
The "Council" of Acts 15	4
Some Parables of Service	6

Some of the Wonders of Genesis 1.1.

ALL Scripture is wonderful. We know this well. It is enjoyable to notice the first things in the Old or the New Testament, and the first occurrences of words. Plainly the first verse will help in this. And it is helpful to ponder any "complete portions" of Scripture, e.g., a psalm. We cannot always tell what is a complete portion, for the chapter and verse divisions are useful for reference, but only human. There seems

no doubt, however, that Genesis 1. 1 is "a chapter" by itself. We notice, at the outset, some of its beauties in English, e.g., the emphasis on God, and on His works, the simplicity, the quiet assertion, the absence of any attempt at rhetoric or flowery language. The first verse of Scripture brings His glory before us, even as the last reveals His **grace** and His relationship to us:—a wondrous addition! It is remarkable, for in the beginning we do not see salvation on the surface, only creation. "WE" are not found here: rather we feel God's exalted greatness, and there is awe:—but our heart's deep need is not met. This is important. Thus the very omissions of the first verse are suggestive, and we notice further that not only are we absent, but none other is here. God is alone. Without help, without co-operation, He "created." Yes, the first verb in Scripture tells of a miracle—the only verb of the opening verse reminds of that which only He can accomplish. How remarkable is the condescension of the first verse of the New Testament in this connexion.

As we should expect, the Hebrew original, the very words of God, will be yet fuller. We observe that the name of "God" is plural, and the verb "created" singular. The first sentence is thus contrary to usual grammar, and harmonizes with the revelation elsewhere of our Triune God. And we observe that the six letters of the **first** word ("in the beginning," written as **one** in Hebrew) can also be read "He created, He placed." How remarkable, making the letters of "created" **twice** in this brief verse. **Only** three other letters occur **twice** in the same order here, and they (a, t, h) if united, denote the emphatic "Thou," and thus remind us of God's creative glory in Psalm 102. 26, 27, which Hebrews 1. 10, 11 associates with the Deity of Christ. Is this strange? I would pass on, too, what impressed me, when pointed out, that the three letters of "created" (b, r, a) give the **initials** for the Hebrew words "Son," "Spirit," "Father" (Ben, Ruach, Ab). These facts are not essential to salvation nor to a belief in inspiration, nor should we occupy undue time with such meditations, and neglect our Lord's definite promises and commands, but we may be thankful for the details that, like the little shells from the ocean bed, under the microscope, have hidden beauties that awaken more **praise**.

It has often been mentioned that in the verse in Hebrew there are 7 words, and in these are 28 (4 x 7) letters, divided into two parts of 14 (7 x 2). "In the beginning God created" (The Creator). "The heavens and the earth" (The Creation):* 7 letters in the **nouns**, and 7 in the **particles**. Is this accidental? Only 11 different letters of the 22 in Hebrew (half) occur. May this not remind us of "parts" of God's ways?

* Divided into 3 (God's work), and 4 (Creation), in accord with other Scriptures.

Redemption is beyond **Creation**, and another book was to follow the **Old Testament**.† Correspondingly, the **rainbow**, or half-circle of Genesis 9, becomes the iris round about the throne, the fuller **unveiling** in Revelation 4.

Praising God that all Scripture is wonderful, let us remember that it is not given for the "laboratory," but for our spiritual food, for our washing, and, if need be, to cleanse with fire, yea, and break that which is "hard," as a hammer. O that our hearts may respond to all, and glorify God in a loving, obedient life.

† Hebrew writes "in the beginning," etc., as one, but, if we "analyse," again the number 11 comes before us, in separate "words."

SOME "FIRSTS" IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

The first word—"Book" (see this word in Revelation 22 also).

The first name—"Jesus Christ."

The first verb—"Begot" (Abraham's faith, Rom. 4. 19, 20).

The first "family"—"Judah (first, Gen. 49. 10, Jud. 1. 1, 2) and his brethren."

The first woman—"Tamar" (a solemn reminder of Genesis 38, and of over-abounding grace).

The first Gentile—"Ruth, the Moabitess" (Grace in view of Deut. 23. 3, a Moabite—masculine—excluded).

The first description—"The King" (verse 6).

The first omission—after Joram, 3 generations (cf. God's reference to 3rd and 4th generation): Joram had married into the family of Ahab: observe how "all" is **limited** to first fourteen in verse 17: **God's** accuracy.

The first time-mark—Captivity (verse 11).

The first place—Babylon (note Rev. 18).

The first reference to One Who "**was born**" (i.e., He is the **Subject** of the sentence concerning birth—previously the father "begat")—"Jesus, Who is called Christ" (the **FIRST** and **LAST** name in this genealogy, see verse 1).

The first reference to the Holy Spirit—verse 18.

The first recorded words of an angel—concerning Christ (verses 20, 21).

The first emphatic pronoun—"He Himself" (verse 21).

The first future—"SHALL save."

The first reference to sins—"Deliverance FROM."

The first fulfilled prophecy—"That . . ." (verses 22, 23).

The first occurrence of the name "God"—"God with us" (The Deity of Christ; and grace).

The first stress on the word "name" (verses 23, 25, notice at the end of Matthew, ch. 28. 19).

The first mentioned act of obedience—"As" (cf. "as," respecting obedience, often in Ex. 40, Matt. 21. 6, etc.).

Much more might be written on this chapter, and the contrasts with Genesis 4 and 5 strikingly seen: but O that our hearts might be warm with love to Him Who saves "His people" from their sins.

THE NAMES OF THE LORD JESUS IN THE SEVEN LAST EPISTLES.*

- "These things saith (a) He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand; (b) Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands."
 "These things saith (a) the First and the Last; (b) Which was dead, and is alive."
 "These things saith He Which hath the sharp sword with two edges."
 "These things saith (a) the Son of God; (b) Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."
 "These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars."
 "These things saith (a) He That is Holy; (b) He that is True; (c) He That hath the Key of David; (d) He That openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."
 "These things saith (a) the Amen; (b) the Faithful and True Witness; (c) the Beginning (a title of Deity here, cf. 21. 6, 22. 13) of the creation of God."

About 15 wondrous descriptions, all showing His glory, and suited to the **condition** in each case. Notice how (several times) the Deity of Christ is emphasized. So in the middle of the fourth epistle ("I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts," 2. 23).

It might be helpful for some to write these letters in seven columns, arranging the beginnings, and endings, and promises, etc., in parallel lines, to compare.

How striking is the anticipation of "the Judgment Seat of Christ" here. O that we may value the searching investigation of our lives also by Him Whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and Who walketh in the midst. Blessed be God, He is also in the midst to lead our prayer (Matt. 18. 20) and praise (Heb. 2. 12).

*Observe seven epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude: and "twice 7" otherwise, of which 7 are addressed to Europe, if we include Crete.

The "Council" of Acts 15.

Suggestions for Prayerful Thought.

WE are often asked concerning this. It is plain that the object there was God's glory, and that the sin of those mentioned in verse 1 was reprov'd. But we must notice the absence of the mention of prayer in verse 6, and the emphasis on disputation in verse 7. We cannot quite understand "Hearken unto me" (13), and "my sentence is" (19, "I judge"). Nevertheless we rightly seek opened hearts to avoid our hasty decision. There is no doubt as to the helpful prohibition of verses 20 and 29, but does verse 28 with 21 ("For Moses") imply a **different** arrange-

ment for believers from Israel? If so, they would still remain under Judaism. That this was the usual interpretation Acts 21. 21 seems to indicate, and the fruit in that chapter is Paul's identification with those who had taken a vow, and thereby with animal sacrifices, presented by a priesthood that rejected the Lord Jesus in a house now left unto them "desolate" (Matt. 23. 38). This seems to bring to view unequivocally a Divine principle, namely, that historical books of Scripture sometimes **record** the failure of children of God without indicating at once the sinfulness (e.g., Gen. 12. 10-13), but calling upon believers to compare Scripture with Scripture. The statement of the **writer** of an historical book, and the whole of an **epistle**, even as a prophetic book, must be contrasted, **all these being not only a verbally inspired record, but a perfect intimation of the will of God.** Does any **epistle** give light on Acts 15? We observe Galatians 2. 9 ("When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars," note with verse 6) and 12 ("Before that certain came from James"). There is no **statement** of the Holy Spirit in any epistle (nor by the inspired writer of Acts), that the council was the will of God, or that the Holy Spirit appointed the decree. This is striking. The claim is only recorded, that is all (Acts 15. 28),—a claim based on the unaccountable leadership of James in verse 19. How different is the whole atmosphere of ch. 13, with its prayerfulness. And there **the inspired writer** definitely states his standpoint, "The Holy Spirit said," and "They being sent forth by the Holy Spirit" (verses 2 and 4). How blessed were the fruits there and thereby.

Nothing wrong was appointed in ch. 15, but why was all **limited** to Gentile believers, erecting a barrier with its sad and bitter results in Antioch, and at Jerusalem (Acts 21)? The decree was not wrong as to what it **said**, but was it not **incomplete**, and was there not an **omission** of Jewish believers? And were there not inferences which hindered joy in the unity which the Lord Jesus appointed? We do not find any word in Acts 15 against this interpretation. It exactly meets Galatians 2 and Acts 21, and gives to us a needed warning, when we meet, or when we are alone, to be concerned lest we are content with godly motives and unity of wish, and forget the vital importance of **the revealed will of God.***

*Two or three tracts, "We sought Him not after the due order," and concerning Matthias (as to the choice of whom there seems a *parallel* "waiting not" for God's counsel), may help believers not only in interpretation, but in daily life.

"Let us pass over UNTO THE OTHER SIDE" (Mark 4. 35): that was a promise that the PERSONS should not be wrecked half way, or turn back. It was, therefore, UNBELIEF to be troubled as to the SHIP. The Lord has His way: how searching is this.

Some Parables of Service.

(Continuing Matthew 20. 1-16).

Coming to the exact words, we observe that this is one of the six parables of "the Kingdom of the heavens" that begin with the adjective "like" (the five are in Matthew 13), and four others begin with the verb "likened." Though all that comes after is to give deep instruction, the emphasis here is on the parallel with "a man that is a householder." His standpoint, therefore, is primarily before us, for He manifests the attitude which befits the kingdom: thus we learn the **purpose** of the message, and the exaltation of the Lord, in His "goodness" to the unworthy. But we must not overlook the word "for." Is it not a conjunction, "joining" with 19. 30? Chapter and verse breaks are only helpful human expedients for quick reference: I am inclined to regret this one. The Lord Jesus is still dealing with Peter's "What?" in 19. 27. He has already shown a precious "where" in 19. 28, and a gracious "what" (29), but there is also a warning as to the "where" in verse 30, and now we have His wise parabolic rebuke as to the "what" and "where" together, "TAKE that thine is and GO" (20. 14): how different from the encouragement to "enter," in Matthew 25. 21, and to rejoice **with** the Lord. And Peter's "what" reminds us that he was then answering previous words of the Lord Jesus, relative to the conversation with the rich young man, who asked "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" How easy it is to over-estimate our power and our obedience, and to "have" earthly things that hinder (19. 22). And now the intimate association of the parable becomes evident, following the reference to the little ones that believe in the Lord (Matt. 18. 5, 6; 19. 14), and "the Kingdom of the heavens." There is no merit or self-glory: all the glory belongs to the Lord. Let us observe the young man's stress on "goodness," and the Lord's twofold reference to the **will**:—"If thou wilt" (19. 17, 21). In our present parable we find, in contrast, the Lord's goodness (20. 15), and this is in connexion with His "will,"—again twice emphasized ("I **will** to give," "what I **will**," 20. 14, 15). Was not the young man taken on his own ground, and in accord with his own claim? May not this be some clue to the problem? The disciples had, alas, failed to grasp, "with **men** this is impossible, but **with God all things** are possible." Had not Peter thought too much of his "forsaking all"? The Lord Jesus showed that the blessings were linked with following Him, and forsaking for **His sake** alone. Was there not a meaning in the changed order from Peter's? The Lord put following Him at the beginning. And was there not a further power in the changed wording, "shall receive" (see 1 Cor. 4. 7), "shall inherit" (because **born** again)? To "have" **something, away** from the Father, was the characteristic of the "lost" son in Luke 15. 13, and likewise the wish expressed afterwards by the

other in verse 29. But the son, when found, was in the Father's presence. And now we see the bitterness of "Take that thine is, and go," in the light of the rebuke, "Child, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine" (Luke 15. 31,—the Greek makes the link more impressive).

Are we anticipating too quickly if we ask, "Are there **further** parables which specially link with this one?" We would suggest the other parable of two sons in Matthew 21. 28-30, and the Householder immediately following (21. 33-46), and then the marriage for the King's Son (22. 1-14). In all we have the two classes; and is it not so here? And what do the **two** classes represent, as a rule, in the parables?

Some may suggest, "There are several classes in the vineyard." Is it so? Verse 4 says "**But** they went" (lit.). There is no suggestion that they went into the vineyard. Nor is there any indication of this in verse 5. The act of invitation is before us, that is all. And in verses 8-10 any others are not mentioned. Two classes, the first and the last, are there seen. And let us observe that the preceding chapter ends with this emphasis—"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (19. 30). And the conclusion of the parable is quite similar, "So the last shall be first, and the first last" (20. 16). The parable is actually wrapped up in these expressions: do they not contain a key? Do they not indicate the subject? The Lord's use of these words on another occasion is in an illuminating context (Luke 13. 30), and the already-noticed parable of the two sons may well come to mind. And the introductory "**but**" of Matthew 19. 30 implies a contrast with the blessing just mentioned. There is something to cause heart-searching here. Who are the first that will be last? The "change" in "that Day" is often connected with judgment (Matt. 8. 12, cf. the principle of Luke 16. 25). Is there not a "change" here with a similar message?

If there were the view of position alone, we might connect Luke 14. 9 ("the last place"), and think of 1 John 2. 28 ("and not be shamed away from Him in His presence"). The added narrative in Matthew 20. 20-28 again leading up to the "will" of man (recalling 19. 17) might help in this needful application. But the parable seems to include much more. Its interpretation cuts more deeply. The "last" in chapter 20. 6 were at first away from the Lord altogether, and may well suggest the position of the Gentiles (Eph. 2. 12). When the first become "last," is it **only** that they receive the "penny" at the end? Surely not. The termination of the contract is complete, and the word "Go" is final, giving, so far as this parable shows, no hint of any further relationship or nearness. Nor can we identify the goal of this parable with the circumstances at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where the graciously bestowed "rewards" will be **different**, and definitely according to the work of faith, and labour of

love (2 Cor. 5. 10, Rev. 22. 12). This leads us back to the beginning. The Householder went out "early in the morning to hire labourers into His vineyard." The law said, "This do and thou shalt live" (Luke 10. 28). But the gospel knows nothing of hiring (Rom. 1. 16, 17). Is it not clear that our Lord Jesus went to the principles of law in the preceding context (Matt. 19. 16-22), and in the parallel of Luke just adduced? May it not be that He went back to the same principles here in warning, because Peter was leaving the ground of grace? Does not the Holy Spirit act thus in Galatians 5. 3, 4, "He is a debtor to do the whole law: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are (being) justified (by personal claim) by (in) the law; ye are fallen from grace" (in doctrine, and realization)? And did not the Lord Jesus deal with the disciples somewhat thus in Luke 22. 36? The parable is "like" unto the "Man," but the labourers who have fulfilled the conditions are not necessarily found in the spiritual counterpart. They may exist in the earthly narrative, and their character, and how they would act if they were in the parallel may be portrayed, without any evidence that they are part of the parallel. As with "types," for example, in the tabernacle, there may well be contrasts to emphasize the Divine teaching all the more. Here is evidently the ground of law: the thought of the "first," the morning, the whole day, the agreement, the official "wages," the bearing of the "burden and heat" throughout, would all indicate this. There is no suggestion of leaving the work in the middle: the steward says nothing as to their failure, the words "labourer" and "hire" are definitely used (verse 9), it is assumed the contract was carried out, and we cannot but observe the words "I do thee no wrong" ("I am not unrighteous as to thee"), "Didst thou not agree?" "Take that thine is." Everything indicates "law." This alone fits the context, and we see that the One Who "wills" to give in grace is the same One Who gave the law. This is important. We wonder the disciples were not ashamed: the passage seems to have this purport, and purpose for us too.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

* Leaflet available.

† "Contrast Parables" are somewhat different: but will help. Write for a booklet containing these.

O how often we speak to men much more than to God, and speak to Him longer than we hear His voice, and it may be forget the words, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1. 19). O for more godly proportion in our redeemed lives.

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"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

GOD has not given us a charge to reform and improve the world. We have received a powerful gospel (Rom. 1. 16) that deals personally with those who are dead in sins (Eph. 2. 1), and such are brought out of death into LIFE (John 5. 24). Hence "if anyone is in Christ there is a NEW CREATION" (2 Cor. 5. 17). A "Helper" would have availed NOTHING for those lying in death. The only hope is a miracle of grace by an almighty Saviour. Hence the Lord Jesus came and by His one sacrifice for sins for ever, we have peace with God and eternal life. This gospel meets the holy claims of God and the sinner's need. And it is equally plain that such a message has nothing to rival it. There is no parallel. The grace and righteousness, and holiness and efficiency of God's way of salvation call forth the praise of His redeemed, and it is also clear that such are not their own (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20) but His. Hence the whole life belongs to Him, and it is with a view to this and not merely head-knowledge, that this magazine is issued. The glory of Christ is paramount.

CONTENTS:—

	Page
The Divine Balance in the Epistle to the Ephesians ...	9
Confessions of a Servant of God Feeling his Insufficiency and Unworthiness ...	12
Some Parables of Service ...	14
Repeated Words Emphasized ...	16

The Divine Balance in The Epistle to the Ephesians.

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Hence there is a unique fulness; and a wondrous arrangement awakens our praise. We have observed how Ephesians begins with blessing in heavenly places (ch. 1. 3.), and ends with practical conflict, and means of victory also there (ch. 6. 12, marg.), even as it commences with "grace" and "peace" and concludes with "peace" and "grace" (1. 2, 6. 23, 24). Is this a gracious

key, to lead us to expect much more? At once we notice that in the MIDDLE of the epistle we have a climax, a doxology, and an amen (3. 20, 21). Thus a new section starts in the midst: the letter has two parts. Let us ponder these. What if we shall find in the first an especial stress on God's infinite grace and our height of privilege, and in the second an emphasis on our response to grace in love's obedience? To illustrate this we observe at the outset "in Christ Jesus," but chapter four begins with an immediate reminder of the Lordship of Christ ("in the Lord," 4. 1, marg.). How many times does "in the Lord" come in the first part? Three times, 1. 15, 2. 21, 3. 11, only once alone. But in the second part we find it in 4. 1, 5, 17, 5. 8, 6. 1, 10, 21, and the other references to service "unto the Lord" illustrate The Person is the Same, and obedience is **never** forgotten in part one. But the Holy Spirit's relative emphasis is beautiful. Thanks be unto God, the second section is not first. We receive fulness of grace **that** we may obey, but the receiving is first. As we behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18), and what He has done for us, we receive power to live and walk correspondingly. The Christian life is not a mere passing of examinations after mental study, but a graciously enabled manifestation of fellowship with God. Shall we make a list? Others may be enabled to add.

"Apostle" (1. 1).
 "Which are" (1. 1, a statement of fact).
 "In the heavenlies . . . made to sit" (1. 3, 2. 6).
 "Chosen . . . to be holy and without blame" (1. 4).
 "In love" (1. 4, 3. 17, God's glorious plan).
 "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will" (1. 9).
 "Gospel of your salvation" (1. 13).
 "Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise . . . until the redemption of the purchased possession" (1. 13, 14).
 Subject of praise and prayer:—Knowledge of what God has done (1. 15-19).
 "The eyes of your heart being enlightened" (1. 18).
 "Hope of HIS calling" (1. 18).
 "His inheritance" (1. 18).
 Power, might, strength—in grace (1. 19, 20).
 Christ above every principality and power (1. 21).
 "Given Him to be Head" (1. 22).
 "His body—the fulness" (1. 23).

"Prisoner" (4. 1).
 "Walk" (4. 1, the first message an exhortation).
 Warring "in the heavenlies" (6. 10-12).
 "Cleansed . . . that it should be holy and without blemish" (5. 26, 27).
 "In love" (4. 15, 16, 5. 2, our walk).
 "Tychicus . . . shall make known to you all things" (6. 21 i.e. in the daily life).
 "The helmet of salvation" (6. 17).
 "Grieve not (exhortation) the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (4. 30).
 Subject of prayer:—Power of utterance (6. 18, 19).
 "Awake . . . arise . . . Christ shall give thee light" (5. 14).
 "Hope of **your** calling" (4. 4).
 Our inheritance (5. 5).
 Power, might, strength—in service (6. 10).
 Warfare against principalities and powers (6. 12).
 "Grow up into Him . . . Which is the Head" (4. 15).
 "The edifying (building up) of the body" (4. 12).

"You . . . who were dead (2. 1, 5).
 Quickened from the old walk (God's standpoint, 2. 1, 2).
 "By grace are ye saved" (2. 5, 8).
 "Created" (2. 10).
 "To make in Himself . . . one new man" (2. 15).
 "The foundation of apostles and prophets" (part of the building (2. 20).
 "Having been builded" (2. 20).
 "The prisoner . . . I bow my knees" (3. 1, 14—2-13 parenthesis: "for this cause" shows this).
 "Partakers" (grace, 3. 6).

"Arise from the dead" (5. 14).
 Walking, in contrast with the dead (4. 17, 18).
 "Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (4. 7).
 "Created" (responsibility 4. 24).
 "Till we all come . . . unto a perfect man" (4. 13).
 "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets" (responsibility of ministry 4. 11).
 "For the building up of the body of Christ" (4. 12, cf. verse 29).
 "The prisoner . . . I beseech you that ye walk" (4. 1).
 "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (responsibility 5. 7).

The prayerful reader will notice much more. As soon as we start chapter 4 we have a fresh vocabulary, "lowliness," "meekness," "longsuffering," and the wondrous expression "learned Christ" (4. 20) comes appropriately in that chapter. In chs. 1-3 we have "in Christ Jesus" and the marvels of grace. Moreover, the exhortation to wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, masters, are fittingly in Part 2.

But what, dear believing reader shall be the fruit of this in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Shall it not be love's responsive and glad obedience? Surely infinite grace makes us ashamed of all else! Only devotion can fit those who have been redeemed at priceless cost. What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us? (Ps. 116. 12).

CONTRASTS.

"The **servant** abideth not in the house for ever: but the **Son** abideth ever. "If the **Son** therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "Ye have not received the spirit of **servitude** again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of **sonship** whereby we cry, Abba, Father." John 8. 35, 36, Romans 8. 15 (lit.).

"Not now as a **servant**, but above a servant, a **brother** beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?" Philemon 16.

"Henceforth I call you not **servants**; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you **friends**; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." John 15. 15.

How wonderful is God's grace!

CONFESSIONS OF A SERVANT OF GOD, FEELING HIS INSUFFICIENCY AND UNWORTHINESS.

"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Colossians 4. 17.

And was it that for me He died—
O God of grace—Thine Only Son?
Hast Thou, O God, in me begun
A work that ever shall abide?
'Tis for the glory of Thy grace—
Not for mine honour, but for Thine,
That in Thy covenant design
I have a predetermined place.
And yet, before Thy holiness,
I bare to Thee my troubled soul,
On Thee alone my burden roll,
My sinful failures now confess.
My heart with grief, mine eyes with tears
O'erflow, for I do not fulfil
The plan that Thou for me dost will,
And I have doubts and many fears.
For this is my desert, I feel,
Ne'er to be used by Thee again;
And yet the very thought gives pain;—
O wilt Thou not Thy wounded heal?
How poor I am! How deep my need!
To lift mine eyes to Thee I blush;
Thine hand omnipotent could crush
Thy creature,—but a bruised reed.
Yet, O my God, if deeper still
To probe the wound Thou purposest,
So be it, all Thy way is best,
And wise and loving is Thy will.
But I would trust Thy sympathy,
Thy healing touch, Thy gracious hand,
For who, O righteous God, could stand
If Thou shouldst mark iniquity?
Forgive, O Father, now forgive
Thy penitent, Thine erring child,
Cleanse from the sins that have defiled;
Deal graciously, that I may live.
That I may live to serve Thee yet,
Depending on Thy rich supplies,—
While pressing onward for the Prize,—
And things that are behind forget.
How brief the time that doth remain
To me, to fill the ministry
Thou hast entrusted unto me,
For soon my Lord shall come again!
"I quickly come, and My reward
Is with Me." 'Tis my Lord on high
Who speaketh: let me occupy
Until He Come, my glorious Lord!

E.K.

SPIRITUAL HEALING.

"Lord be merciful unto me; heal my soul" (Ps. 41. 4).
"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,—Who healeth all thy diseases" (Ps. 103. 3).
"He healeth the broken in heart" (Ps. 147. 3).
"I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him" (Isa. 57. 18, 19).
"They have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 8. 11).
"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God" (Jer. 3. 22).
"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my Praise" (Jer. 17. 14).
"I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds" (Jer. 30. 17).
"King Jereb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound . . . Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up" (Hos. 5. 13, 6. 1, with Deut. 32. 39).
"When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered" (Hos. 7. 1, with Jer. 51. 9).
"They knew not that I healed them" (Hos. 11. 3).
"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. 14. 4).
"With His stripe(s) we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5, 1 Pet. 2. 24).
"Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2).

NO STRENGTH AND STRENGTHENING IN DANIEL 10.

"There remained no strength in me" (8).
"I retained no strength" (8).
"I have retained no strength" (16).
"There remained no strength in me" (17).
"He strengthened me" (18).
"Be strong, yea, be strong" (19).
"I was strengthened" (19).
"Thou hast strengthened me" (19).
"There is none that strengtheneth himself with me in these things" (21 marg.).

Some Parables of Service.

(Continuing Matthew 20. 1-16).

The further goings forth in verses 4 and 5 may partly indicate the ministry of the prophets, not only in time, but in character. The word "righteous" is employed (verse 4): but there is not the same emphasis on an "agreement." There were definite foreshadowings of grace. The absence of recorded response would remind of Romans 10. 21, yet would not deny that there were many saved by **pure grace** before the Lord Jesus came. Every parable (as every picture) gives only a part-view.* Those called at the eleventh hour cannot expect any agreement: an older manuscript reading of verse 7 omitting "whatsoever is righteous" would, if sustained, seem to emphasize this further. Certainly the whole context shows that such are welcomed apart from law, albeit they do work, since salvation by grace is ever manifest in "faith that worketh by love."

It may be asked—"Did those who heard at Sinai remain throughout the whole period?" That is hardly the point. Is it not rather that Peter was going back to the Sinai standpoint, and introducing merit instead of mercy? He was, therefore, taken on his own ground. Had not the Lord Jesus in love given the command at the first, "Follow Me" (Matt. 4. 19), and "straightway they FORSOOK their nets and followed Him" (Mark 1. 18)? There is a basis-verse: both words are in Matthew 19. 27. Peter was in every sense a "first" one (Matt. 10. 2). But now he seemed to be making the invitation of grace into a contract of law. The parable claim to have "borne the heat," and to have "done" all in Matthew 19. 27 is as definite as that of the young man eight verses earlier. Here is legalism: and the disciples, speaking as if salvation were "possible" from self, forgot ch. 19. 25, 26. He Who afterwards turned, and looked upon Peter, "BEHELD" them here: they did not know their limitations. Thus they must be dealt with awhile as those "without," and a parable is given to them, taking them on their own claim, and calculated, as the amazing words of Ezekiel 18. 31, to lead a humble soul to repentance. Let their claim be acknowledged, then have they not won by their works, without the new birth, the entry into resurrection life for the body also (Matt. 19. 17)? But if this glory can be gained without the first fruits of the Spirit, resurrection "life" is no longer "the redemption of our body": it has been earned, "Take that thine

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is." The redemption-silver penny no longer tells of "redemption," and so the unquickened one **retains** his own character, and "murmurs" against grace. Ah, we need redemption, we need a **new** life, to take God's standpoint. If a legalist could reach glory he would be miserable, as miserable as the elder son who "would not come in."* But that such an one does **not** actually reach glory is the testimony of all Scripture, and this parable has striking thoughts on this theme also. Notice that the "last" ones here, after their work, have not **one** word of love, or harmony, with the Householder. ONE is addressed, but the Lord emphasizes the plural murmuring and its continuance. This reminds of the "wicked" servant in the parable of the talents and pounds alike. Moreover, the word "Friend" is quite different from that of John 15. 14, and only occurs elsewhere, in relation to the Lord, with regard to Judas (Matt. 26. 50), and in a parable where the King speaks to the **self-righteous** one, cast outside (Matt. 22. 12). This also is impressive. And the Lord's allusion to an "evil" eye is not only in full **contrast** with His **goodness**, but also in reference to Mark 7. 22, speaking of those who are religious in law, without grace in the heart. If the climax is "Many be called, but few chosen" (as some MSS. read), this would still further illustrate. As we look again and again at the parable we find no evidence that the "first" really know the Lord. How blessed if we are really saved, and, as those who could not boast of their labour, shall receive glory because the Lord "wills" to give. Our little labour of love here, for Him Who redeemed us, gives us no right, no expectation grounded upon ourselves. How forcible is this message. May it reach our hearts, and be fruitful in our lives, as the Holy Spirit applies. When we notice the relative emphasis elsewhere in the words "righteous" and "good" (Rom. 5. 7), we see here that the objection was to grace and its "goodness" (verse 15). Grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21), but righteousness **without grace** would condemn us. But alas, the "first ones" here are against free grace. "I am not unrighteous as to thee" seems to imply that their confidence was in their "right" and "rightness" and "righteousness" in contrast with others. The spirit of the Pharisee in Luke 18. 9-14 is not absent to-day, and we need grace that we may never yield to it.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

* A booklet on Luke 15 will, I think, help. (Free.)

"This continued by the space of two years; so that **all they which dwelt in Asia** heard the words of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19. 10). But how much gracious determination was needed to continue when, as we read, "Thou knowest that **all they which are in Asia**, be turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1. 15). Let us ever have faith in God.

*The wheat and tares may illustrate: there is no mention of one of the tares being brought to Christ: any more than the type of fishing, ("thou shalt catch men"), goes further than unveiling the bringing out of the world, and the judgment of the old nature. Thanks be unto God, He goes further and gives a new life (the "fish" of John 21. 6, 11 pass into the "sheep" of verses 15-17), in the spiritual counterpart.

REPEATED WORDS EMPHASIZED (Five, or More).

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1. 2).

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

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly" (lit. all-speaking: Eph. 6. 18. 19).

"That I might live unto God! I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and that which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 19, 20).

"The Father of mercies, and the God all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1. 3, 4. The passage continues "our comfort," 5, for your "comfort," and "whether we are comforted it is for your comfort," 6, "partakers . . . of the comfort," 7—twice "five" words to encourage, 1 Cor. 14. 19).

"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13. 31, 32).

"I will never (not, not) leave thee, nor (not, not, not) forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5: two words, but five emphatic negatives: it has been pointed out that whenever a man used the two negatives in Greek together he broke his promise, e.g., Matt. 26. 35, John 20. 25. How different is our God!)

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world (the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away" (1 John 2. 15-17).

The repeated words of 1 John are most remarkable, e.g., "love" which comes in each verse from ch. 4. 7-12, and 4. 15-5. 3, and in some verses three times. So "witness" in ch. 5.

The subject may be viewed as a "foretaste" to encourage believers in further study. "O taste and see that the Lord is good," and the psalmist added, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps. 119. 103).

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The Student of Scripture.

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"If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee go among us." Exodus 34. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

MOSES had power with God in prayer. God delights in the boldness of humble, believing prayer. One who has found grace, one who knows God's "way," can pray with might (Ex. 33. 13). The earlier verses of Exodus 34 unveil the glory of the way of the Lord. He passed by: He proclaimed His Name (verse 6). "Forgiving iniquity" is literally "bearing iniquity," and thus unveils the Lord Jesus. In holy contrast, (and yet harmony), we have "visiting the iniquity" in the very same verse. Sin CANNOT be excused. Then Moses prays! Observe "my Lord" as in Psalm 110. 1, plainly a prophecy of Christ (Matt. 22. 44, 45). The Lord Jesus was Moses' Lord and David's Lord, and He is our Lord. Moses' desire was His presence, even as David longed to behold His beauty and dwell in His house. With a view to the fuller realization of what He is, and the enjoyment of His gracious will in the midst (cf. Matt. 18. 20) are these pages sent forth. What is a meeting without Him? What is an assembly without Him? What is our individual life apart from Him?

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Covenant Broken by Adam and by Israel	17
The Translation of the Scriptures	19
The Prayer of 2 Samuel 7. 18-29	20
The Glory of Devoted Dependence	21
Some Parables of Service	23

The Covenant Broken by Adam and by Israel.

Some Striking Parallels between Genesis 2, 3, and Exodus 31, 32.

First let us notice Genesis 2. 1-3 with Exodus 31. 16, 17.

Next we observe "Thou shalt surely die" ("Dying thou shalt die," Gen 2. 17) and "He shall surely be put to death" ("Dying he shall be put to death," Ex. 31. 15).

"The serpent said unto the **woman**" (Gen. 3. 1): and "In the ears of your **wives**" (Ex. 32. 2).

"Ye shall be **as God**" (Gen. 3. 5), with "Make us gods" (or God, Ex. 32. 1).

"She did eat, . . . he did eat" (Gen. 3. 6): leads up to "the people sat down to eat and to drink" (Ex. 32. 6).

Again, "They knew that they were naked" (Gen. 3. 7), and "Moses saw that the people were naked" (Ex. 32. 25).

There are many other striking allusions in the context. For example, the stress on the **ear rings** reminds of "Because thou hast **hearkened** unto the voice of thy wife" (Gen. 3. 17).

Again, just as Psalm 49. 12 seems to imply, in Hebrew, that Adam did not "pass the night" in his original splendour, but sinned on his first **sabbath**, so the date of the first day of the week designedly given by the Holy Spirit in Exodus 16. 1-5 seems to indicate that Israel made the golden calf on the **sabbath** day. This is the more solemnizing after the stress on the covenant in Exodus 31.*

Again we observe God's **longsuffering** in Genesis 3, and likewise in the permitted "breaking" awhile of the "two" tables of "witness," which might have been used to "stone" the people (Num. 15. 35, Deut. 17. 5-7). But forbearance does not save (Rom. 3. 25, marg.): all was written again, to be "kept," and to be covered by the atonement-mercy-seat (Deut. 10. 5, 1 Kings 8. 9). But "He That is without sin" shall bring the stones of judgment for all who do not have faith in His blood (John 8. 7). The longsuffering seems wondrously linked with the **1st** day of the week in both passages, and thus with the expectation of Christ's finished work to bring in redemption. The Divine waiting was with a view to this.

Further, the sword of Genesis 3. 24 reminds us of a sword in Exodus 31. Yet **here** we find a contrast, for the sword did not sleep awhile, but a warning was given in that 3,000 were then slain (Ex. 32. 28),—with another contrast regarding the 3,000 saved on a Divinely distinct first day in Acts 2. 41, where there is also a contrasted "eating."†

Exodus 32. 34 suggests the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3. 24, see also Ex. 33. 13), and the chapters in Exodus continue to tell of the ark (ch. 34), and the making of the cherubim. Everything points to Christ, and exalts **Him**, and shows the peril and vanity without **Him**.

* We shall be glad to help further as to this.

† Here, moreover, observe another series of "contrasts"—with Babel and Genesis 11. How full is Scripture.

"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." Psalm 27. 4.

The Translation of the Scripture.

HOW grateful we should be to God for an excellent translation. It reminds us too that God's children suffered in days gone by to produce that which was its basis. Are we sufficiently thankful for that which we now receive through martyred Christians in the past?

It does not take much ability to criticize. If you (unaided) draw a circle on a blackboard, I can point out defects, but cannot draw a better. Pride criticizes, wisdom oftener sympathizes, yet not sinfully. Many have tried to better the translation, and damaged, at least as much as they have improved it. Not a few unsaved souls still have a strange idea:—A man will ask, "Why are they always changing the Bible?" We seek to explain that it is NOT altering the Bible, but, through reverence for God's original words, seeking to reproduce these more clearly in English. But some remain very confused as to this point. The Holy Spirit's frequent use of the Septuagint in the New Testament may suggest to us that we should usually employ the common version, whenever we can do so consistently, although recognizing that special translations may be prepared for special purposes, e.g., to bring out the Holy Spirit's use of words from the same root (as from "house," Eph. 2. 19, 3. 2), or to help those prayerfully studying, who do not know Greek and Hebrew, —also to help in comparing "Scripture with Scripture." How much grace is needed in all these points, lest there be a parade of knowledge or an encouragement of merely mental knowledge. Let us also remember that translating is still going on in other lands. Do we pray enough for translators, some of whom only know their own language, and some are in pioneer service, where an unwritten language possesses no words for certain precious Christian conceptions? In general, too, a translator needs much grace not to seek to add his own interpretation. Further he desires, as far as possible to use consistently one word where the same word is in the original, and to preserve the simplicity, and emphasis, and order of the words, whenever able. But no languages are exactly like Hebrew and Greek in structure and vocabulary, hence the modifications of this rule need much prayer. A child of God serving Him thus, though definite, should be very humble, and ready to be criticized: unwillingness for this will hinder. It is important to realize that a "**fair**" translation will contain very clearly the way of salvation.* In this connexion we can well praise God that all textual investigation

* Some versions of Roman Catholics, that feel the necessity of "notes," to bring in their dogmas, illustrate this point very strikingly. Such ADDED annotations are quite different from the very helpful marginal renderings, marked "Heb." and "Gr.," in our version: a principle that might be extended, where one English word fails to give a fulness.

and suggestion of improved renderings leave us praisefully confident that the "Authorized" English Version not only displays the gospel of grace, but also the path of obedience both in personal life and Scriptural assembling, and none need be led astray. Obedience, and a willingness for the guidance of the Holy Spirit are deeply important at all times.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

THE PRAYER OF 2 SAMUEL 7. 18-29 (or 1 CHRONICLES 16. 16-27).

How many times the name of the Lord comes!

Mark the emphasis on **His word**:—

"Thou hast spoken" (19).

"For Thy word's sake" (21).

"The word that Thou hast spoken" (25).

"Thou hast said" (25).

"Thou . . . hast opened the ear . . . saying" (27).

"Thy words be true" (28).

"Thou hast promised" ("said," 28).

"Thou . . . hast spoken" (29).

Observe "according to Thine own heart" (21), and

"Therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart" (27).

Mark the emphasis:—

"God went to redeem for a people **to Himself**" (23).

"Which Thou redeemedst **to Thee**" (23).

"Thou hast confirmed to **Thyself** Thy people Israel" (24).

"A people **unto Thee**" (24).

"Doing":—

"Hast Thou done" (21).

"To do for you great things" (23).

"Do as Thou hast said" (25).

O that we may experience more of the reverence and confidence of God's servant of old.

"FROM THE LEAST UNTO THE GREATEST."

"From the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness" (Jer. 6. 13, cf. 8. 10).

"All the people, from the least even unto the greatest, came near" (Jer. 42. 1, 8)—apparently earnest in prayer, but see verse 20.

"They shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine" (Jer. 44. 12).

But how blessed the contrast: "They shall **KNOW ME**, from the least even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31. 34).

The Glory of Devoted Dependence.

"We speak that We do know, and testify that We have seen" (John 3. 11).

"What He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth" (John 3. 32).

"He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3. 34).

"My meat is to do the Will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4. 34).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5. 19).

"The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth" (John 5. 30).

"I can of Mine Own Self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine Own will, but the will of the Father Which hath sent Me" (John 5. 30).

"My doctrine is not Mine, but His That sent Me. If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of (from) Myself: he that speaketh of (from) himself seeketh his own glory: but He That seeketh His glory That sent Him, the Same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him" (John 7. 16-18).

"I am not come of (from) Myself, but He That sent Me is true" (John 7. 28).

"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father That sent Me" (John 8. 15, 16).

"I speak to the world those things that I have heard of Him" (John 8. 26).

"I do nothing of (from) Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me I speak these things. And He That sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (John 8. 28, 29).

"I speak that which I have seen with My Father" (John 8. 38).

"This commandment have I received from My Father" (John 10. 18).

"Many good works have I showed you from My Father" (John 10. 32).

"I have not spoken of (from) Myself; but the Father Which hath sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12. 49, 50).*

* Cf. John 16. 13 concerning the Holy Spirit.

"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John 14. 10).

"As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (John 14. 31).

"I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17. 4).

The frequency of these striking words must impress us, and particularly in the gospel of John, where the Deity of our beloved Lord is so definitely emphasized. But is this strange? Philippians 2 gives the key. When He took the form of a Servant, was He not the perfect Servant? Therefore He would do nothing before the time, nothing independently. The beauty of His obedient life shines out, and we remember Psalm 40. 6-8. Moses was bidden to make everything according to the pattern shown him (Ex. 25. 40), and the Lord Jesus, the Greater than Moses, was continually with the Father, and thus there was an ever present communion, an ever present "seeing" (Ps. 16. 8, John 5. 19). Let us observe that His "cannot" was not the "cannot" of weakness, but of love's unreserved delight in the Father's will. We sometimes speak of knowing how to do certain things, but needing guidance as to other things. Such language loses the precious teaching here. The Lord Jesus has shown us that Christian experience does not mean we can act more independently. He was the Perfect One, and His glorious character could not be marred. But He **never** acted independently, but ever dependently, because of His wondrous knowledge and love and past fellowship with the Father. He continued ever "seeing" that which the Father showed, and "hearing" that which the Father said. Satan's first temptation was an attack on His blessed dependence, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt 4. 3); and the second temptation was the same, and the third likewise. But our Lord's marvellous answers show His inflexible and perfect dependence, as the One Who had voluntarily become the Perfect Servant. A prayerful study of this subject more fully will surely lead to helpful thoughts as to His wondrous character, and as to the path of an obedient believer.

"MOVED."

"He that doeth these things shall never be moved" (Ps. 15. 5).

"I have set the Lord always before Me: because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved" (Ps. 16. 8).

"Hold up my goings in Thy path, that my footsteps be not moved" (Ps. 17. 5 marg.). The link (and sequence) of psalm with psalm, and the same word in each, may not always be noticed, but it is from God, for our spiritual profit.

Some Parables of Service.

(Concluding Matthew 20. 1-16).

As explained, this parable has caused me more thought than almost any other, and the prayers, and help, of God's beloved children are ever valued. My desire is that nothing may ever mislead His own, by error or grave disproportion. But I am conscious how much fuller is His truth than my perception. Months—I might almost say years—I have hesitated to write on this parable, and have chosen others first,—not with conscious self-will, but seeking to be in God's will, and with a sense of need. Our Father has deigned to encourage before when ministering on this subject, and I do trust that the further encouragement He has given me in the preceding meditations may not be without blessing and fruit in the lives of some who read. Should I not record gratitude to God for enabling, and will He not further bless to His glory? Permit this personal note.

"Difficulties" still remain in Scripture. Is it not so in nature, and are not God's thoughts ever greater than ours (Isa. 55. 8, 9)? If one or two in this parable are pondered, it may be the Lord will use them to our united blessing.

Is not the chief one a prayerful distinguishing **what** is a parallel, and **what** a contrast? The rejected ones, and those who, in that Day, speak against His way, appear always to be those who know Him not. I can find NO Scriptural suggestion of raised believers having **one** word, or wish, or thought against their Lord. As already shown, the key here seems to be that the rich young man had come on the ground of law; and Peter, although among scribes "discipled unto the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13. 52), had also adopted this. Hence the Lord dealt with his need accordingly, showing the real standpoint of the kingdom of heaven, and that the only ones blest to **remain with the Lord** are those who are brought there without bargain, or merit, and who receive what He gives, because it is His "Own," and He is "good," and doeth "good."

In accord with this, our Lord takes at once His own standpoint in connexion with the dispensation He graciously came to bring, but as He is the same Owner of all, Whose goings forth were from of old (Mic. 5. 2), He is seen as the One Who appointed the agreement of law. Peter, as the rich young man, looked to himself, and the Lord Jesus reckoned back, as it were, his call to the dispensation of law, and then showed how he would be out of harmony with the principles of grace, and of "that Day." As we know, from other Scriptures, all true believers will actually be brought, ere then, to see that all salvation is by grace. But the searching of **heart** is important. This involves the problem that "the kingdom of heaven" is mentioned in verse 1, whereas we might have here expected "the kingdom of God" as in Matthew 21. 43, when including the **previous** period, and God's dealings with Israel. Yet not only is the description

specially linked with the Householder personally, but we may see the Lord's loving reproof, indicating that He was no longer going forth from the standpoint of law. In the "transition" period, this attitude would be possible, though the wording may remain a little difficulty to the understanding, while witnessing to the humbled heart.

The young man in ch. 19. 20 claimed he had kept all. Our Lord did not **deny this** directly, but showed his failure under law in a way that unveiled the nature of the love that would find treasure in heaven, and be in harmony therewith. May it not be somewhat similar here? The Householder does not say that these had borne the burden and heat of the day: it is their own claim, and they are treated accordingly, but at a distance. O that such ministry may have its effect on our daily life, and that we may simply serve on the ground of grace and His will. We are not told "the last" were hired, though, by grace, we feel sure that those who receive grace, show this by good works (1 Cor. 15. 10, 58).

In closing, we repeat there is no evidence that those who "murmured" were children of God. Their own words, the Lord's description in a special word "Friend" ("Hetairos"), and His appointment "Go," together, possibly, with the message of verse 16, all give a contrasted view—and yet all professed to serve! The frequency of **contrasts** in parables and types alike, calls to mind the Lord's dealings with Peter (**on his own ground again**) in Luke 22. 36*, and also such verses as Ezekiel 18. 31, written to bring the reader startlingly to realize his failure and danger? I know much more might be said, and am conscious our Father may grant much more ere this is reprinted, and hence the prayer and correspondence of His children are welcome.

Again I would own how much fuller is Scripture than our part knowledge of it (1 Cor. 13. 9).

But whatever we know, or do not know, we know our Lord, and the Holy Spirit's gracious use of this parable is precious, to keep us from all self-confidence and from seeking the "first" place. The blessedness put before us is not the counterfeit of a Pharisee (see Luke 18. 11, 12), but one having a deep and ever deepening harmony with God's will. Is His eye good? Undoubtedly! We rejoice, and rejoice when the Lord does what **He** wills, and when He saves the "unlikely," and blesses such at once, and fully, and equally **WITH** those who have known His Name and served Him many years. So shall we hear His own words, "REJOICE WITH ME, for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15. 6); and learn the preciousness of "The GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the LOVE of God, and the COMMUNION of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (2 Cor. 13. 14).

* Leaflets gladly sent.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved; for Thou art my Praise." Jeremiah 17. 14.

A Word of Introduction.

THE words of God's servant of old impress an important principle, or several important principles. First, we see that what God does He does fully and completely. Secondly, we learn how faith should expect, and how definitely God honours living faith that takes Him at His word. Thirdly, we realize that those who praise Him, and who rejoice to find in Him the Sum and Fulness of their praise, are the ones who can pray with power (Phil. 4. 6, 7). The personal note, too, and the simplicity, must be helpfully felt. May our Father grant a deeper consciousness of all these things in both writer and readers, and may the object of this magazine be His glory in a fuller experience of our blessed relationship to Himself. Why should this not be so to-day?

CONTENTS.

	Page
Doxologies of the New Testament	25
The Translation of the Scripture	27
A Letter Concerning a Book of Prayers	28
The "Afterwards" of Some Miracles	31
"He that Ruleth his Spirit"	32

Doxologies of the New Testament.

- (1) "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be (or is) glory for ever, Amen" (Rom. 11. 36).
- (2) "Now to Him That is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be (or, is) glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 16. 25-27).*
- (3) "To Whom be (or, is) glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Gal. 1. 5).
- (4) "Unto Him be (or, is) glory in the church by (in) Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Lit.

- "Unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen," Eph. 3. 21).
- (5) "Now unto God and our Father be (or, is) glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Phil. 4. 20).
 - (6) "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be (or, is) honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1. 17).
 - (7) "To Whom be (or, is) honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6. 16).
 - (8) "To Whom be (or, is) glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13. 21).
 - (9) "To Whom is the glory and the might, for the ages of the ages. Amen" (1 Pet. 4. 11, lit.).
 - (10) "To Him be (or, is) dominion for ever and ever" (1 Pet. 5. 11).
 - (11) "To Him be (or, is) glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Pet. 3. 18).
 - (12) "To the only God our Saviour, be (or, is) glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 25).
 - (13) "To Him be (or, is) glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1. 6).
 - (14) "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be (or, are) unto Him That sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living ones said, Amen" (Rev. 5. 13, 14).
 - (15) "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be (or, are) unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 7. 12).
- (a) We notice that "Amen" follows. Is it a call for **our response** (see Rev. 5. 13, 14, cf. Ps. 106. 48 with 89. 52)? In one case "Amen" begins and ends.
 - (b) A "doxology" may come in the beginning of a book (Gal. 1. 5), or where a "division" into two parts is found (Rom. 11. 36, Eph. 3. 21), or at the end.
 - (c) In only one case is the **verb** expressed (the italic type shows this), and there we find the **indicative** "is" (though strangely rendered "be" in the A.V., 1 Pet. 4. 11).[‡] The difference is not one of doctrine, but it is precious to emphasize the fact that all DOES belong to the Lord, and then our praise follows. The **declaration** is the ground of our heart-felt wishful prayer.
 - (d) The uniting of God the Father and God the Son is very helpful (e.g., 1. Pet. 4. 11, cf. Rom. 9. 5. Revelation 5. 6. 12 would seem to emphasize this harmony).

* We give this in full: will the prayerful reader turn up the context of the others?

‡ We might compare Romans 1. 25, "The Creator Who is Blessed for ever. Amen," and 9. 5, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen," 2 Corinthians 11. 31 "Which is blessed for ever." Our translators naturally put "is" where the verb is omitted. The "Amens" here emphasize the parallel. In Ephesians 1. 3, "Blessed be (or is) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," they insert "be" in italics.

- (e) It is clear that we need a constant, deeper, fuller sense of the greatness and glory of God, that our thanksgiving may flow over! How many "doxologies" are there in our lives, and in our letters?

The Translation of the Scripture.

(Concluded)

I have sometimes thought it would be helpful if we could keep more fully the **order** of the words of the Holy Spirit. English, unlike Hindustani, for example, makes this possible May 1 just prefix a few general limitations:—

(a) The negative in Greek (and Hebrew) normally precedes the verb. To preserve this we should need to use "do not" or "did not."

(b) Some words as "for" and "but" (Greek **de**) are not the **first** word in a sentence. If we seek to keep to this we should need to omit "but" and use "however" or "nevertheless," but such rendering would be heavy, and unnecessarily emphatic, and we have no substitute with regard to "for."

(c) At times the **introductory** English word "There" is inserted to preserve the order.

(d) Sometimes a variation of order seems essential for clearness,[‡] and often when the original is definitely preserved, a suitable **emphasis** will be required, or the language will be misunderstood. But this may help to remind beloved children of God that the reading of Scripture in a meeting, which is often so lightly regarded, is a very important matter, needing prayerful power. Thus there will be a spiritual gain in deeper spiritual thoughtfulness.

A few New Testament examples may help. But at first we will illustrate how much of our A.V. **already** keeps to the order.

"We are grateful to the God and Father of our Lord§ Jesus Christ, always concerning you praying, having heard of the faith (that is) yours in Christ Jesus, and the love that ye have toward all the saints, because of the hope that is laid up for you in the heavens" (Col. 1. 3-5).

"But a wisdom we speak among the mature: but a wisdom not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, that are coming to nought: but (on the contrary) we speak God's wisdom in mystery, that which hath been hidden, which God preordained before the ages unto the glory (that is) ours"

"For of **Him** are we a workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2. 10).

"Because members are we of His body" (Eph. 5. 30).

"For of God are we co-workers; of God a cultivated field, of God a building are ye" (1 Cor. 3. 9).

‡ e.g. Greek says "The one My word hearing" in John 5. 24, and "the in Colosse saints,"—explanations being between "the" and its noun.

§ Lit.: "the Lord of us."

"Already have ye been satiated, already were ye rich, without us ye reigned" (1 Cor. 4. 8).

"Or, the church of God are ye despising, and shame ye the ones who have not?" (i.e., the poor, 1 Cor. 11. 22).

"But the One, for a little while than the angels made lower, we behold—Jesus, because of the suffering of the death, with glory and honour crowned" (Heb. 2. 9).

"Wherefore, brethren, holy ones, of a calling heavenly partakers, consider the Apostle and High Priest of the confession that is ours—Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3. 1).

"But consider how great is this one, to whom a tenth part (tithe) Abraham gave out from the spoils—the patriarch!" (Heb. 7. 4).

"... by so much rather, by how much ye behold approaching—the Day!" (Heb. 10. 25).

"A fellow servant of thee am I,—and of thy brethren the prophets, and of the ones keeping the words of this book" (Rev. 22. 9).

One is encouraged to see how much the English has been modelled to preserve the Holy Spirit's order, e.g., "Saith the Lord," "Good and upright is the Lord," "O Lord, for Thy servant's sake, and according to Thine Own heart, hast Thou done all this greatness." The very moulding of English has been affected by the Bible; may our daily lives be yet more affected.

|| This may show more clearly that "of thee and of thy brethren" are parallel.

A Letter concerning A Book of Prayers.

Dear Friend,

Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a privilege to love and to please Him! You have asked as to a Book of Prayers, and I am glad to seek to answer. It is blessed to feel the **importance** of prayer. God is so great and holy, dwelling in the light (1 Tim. 6. 16), and how grateful those of us who now love Him should be that He invites us to come to the throne of grace (Heb. 4. 16). We realize now, and learn to realize more and more, the preciousness of the blood of Christ. Yes, it is a high honour to be **able** to pray, and I am thankful you are concerned to be in the right condition, and to use the right words. In this connexion, we can well understand how one of Christ's disciples said "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11. 1), and the answer in verses 2-4 gives us wonderful teaching as to both (a) words, and (b) subjects, when we come before "our Father." Read it prayerfully, again and again, and you will find more and more guidance **how** to pray. Many, many thoughts are linked with each "model" petition.

A little further thought will, I feel sure, show you why we do not issue or recommend a "prayer book," though ever glad

to help any by suggesting requests for prayer, and words of reverent love. I say "words of reverent love," remembering, too, the way we should **address** God. Some pray, with good intentions, "Jesus" or "Dear Jesus," but it is important and so helpful to see how the apostles never addressed Him thus, but as "Lord." Yes, the **Lord** Jesus! You would not go to the King of England, and speak to him by his first name: how careful then should we be in addressing the King of kings!

This may remind you that usually we draw near to "our Father" in the Name of the Lord Jesus (John 16. 24). Is not that a help? Does a child require a "book" to know how to speak to father or mother at home? Why not? There are books of "etiquette" when one goes to a **stranger**, or to a **strange** land. But home is so different. The child knows its father, and asks for **felt** needs. Now let us join the two thoughts:—(1) Great reverence,—for God is God in heaven, and over all, and (2) Much confidence—for we are, by grace, His children, no longer strangers; we know Him! Does not an earthly father **like** to hear his children's simple wishes? Would he not be sad if they came to him with "set phrases" from a book, instead? God your Father wants the desires of your heart (Ps. 37. 4). Is not that simple? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12. 34). Let the heart be full, and prayer will come out,—will overflow (cf. Ps. 45. 1).

But, you ask, "How can I always have right desires?" That is an important question. May I ask another? How can you be healthy? Must you not eat nourishing food? So is it spiritually. And did you notice the words "in the Name of the Lord Jesus"? If I asked you to go to someone "**in my name**," you would want to know my wishes first, would you not? How can we know the wishes of the Lord Jesus? He has told them to us,—in the Scriptures. So the Bible is our Prayer Book! Do you remember how God spoke to David in 2 Samuel 7? And at once David prayed and used God's very words, and said, "Do as Thou hast said!" Again in Ezekiel 36. 37, after His promise, God says, "I will yet for this **be enquired of** by the house of Israel, **to do it for them**." Is not that beautiful? Every "promise" leads up to prayer. And there are thousands of them (2 Cor. 1. 20). We never need lack prayer! The very last petition of Scripture shows this. The Lord Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly," and John's prayer, **in answer**, is, "Come, Lord Jesus." If you want to know how to pray, seek to know more of your Lord's promises. "But how can I remember?" you ask. You can pray with an **open Bible before you**. Moreover, the Holy Spirit lovingly brings the suited words to remembrance (John 14. 26). Have you thought how He indwells, to help God's people in prayer (Rom. 8. 26, 27)? This has a special emphasis in the present dispensation. Israel had a temple, and outward arrangements, but now believers are to enjoy sonship, and the inworking of the Holy Spirit more and more fully. So our Triune God is interested, and more than interested, in **our**

praying. We can surely come "boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4. 16).

And what about our Lord's commands? Can we not pray that He will fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His goodness (2 Thess. 1. 11), and enable us to obey? So, the commands, as well as the promises, aid us in prayer! And the prayers of Paul, God's beloved servant, are so helpful; for example, Ephesians 1. 16-18, 3. 16-19, Colossians 1. 9-12. Here you see a command applied in prayer ("Walk worthy," Eph. 4. 1 with Col. 1. 10), and so it should be always.

Hence the important thing is to come to know our Father more. And let us never forget the right condition of attitude of heart. Psalm 66. 18 searches us, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Do we not at once pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139. 23, 24)? And since it is so easy to use our tongues wrongly in talking to others, how useful is such a prayer as Psalm 143. 3, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." And thus we have yet another gold mine of prayer in the Book of Psalms, applied by the gracious Holy Spirit.

And as we come to know our Father more, we shall learn to pray more, and then, in turn, we shall know Him, and His will still more. So there can be the going forward at all times. We can never know Him too much. May I, in closing, remind of "thanksgiving"? Both Philippians 4. 6 and Colossians 4. 2 say "with thanksgiving." Never let us forget this, else we shall become selfish, even in receiving blessings (see Luke 17. 15, 16). And another help against selfishness is in Ephesians 6. 18, "for all saints." Not only for yourself, or even for those you know, but for those you do not know, and in all lands (notice also, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2). We cannot all go to other lands. Some may be weak in body. But prayer can take a share in God's witness throughout the whole world (2 Cor. 1. 11). Have you ever thought how many blessings are opened to us by prayer? How wondrous is the fruit of salvation by the precious blood of Christ! O that you and I may learn to "possess our possessions" in Christ Jesus, and let us ask to know in experience the meaning of His words "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15. 7), and again, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John 5. 14). It is wonderful to be able to pray to-day, and at all times, "in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

Yours in Him, all by grace,

Percy W. Heward.

The Lord delights in His people, and takes pleasure in them: does not this speak to our hearts? O that we may delight ourselves in Him.

The "Afterwards" of some Miracles of our Lord Jesus.

"His disciples believed on Him" (John 2. 11).

"Himself believed, and his whole house" (John 4. 53).

"When Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5. 8).

"She arose and ministered unto them" (Matt. 8. 15).

"Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all" (Mark 2. 12).

"They see him that . . . had the legion, sitting and clothed, and in his right mind . . . Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5. 15, 19).

"He commanded that something should be given her to eat" (Mark 5. 43).

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him" (Matt. 14. 33).

"Immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (Luke 13. 13).

"Immediately their eyes received sight and they followed Him" (Matt. 20. 34).

"One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God" (Luke 17. 15).

"He said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped Him" (John 9. 38).

"Loose him and let him go . . . Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him" (John 11. 44, 12. 2).

"He said, See thou say nothing to any man . . . but he went out and began to publish it much" (Mark 1. 44, 45).

"Jesus straightly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country" (Matt. 9. 30, 31).

"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6. 26).

We observe how belief, worship, thankfulness, following and ministering came as the precious fruit. And should not we have the same fruit of the precious spiritual miracle we have, by grace, experienced? Food and clothing are together from Genesis 3 onwards: we find them both in Revelation 19 for the bride, as well as in the striking parables of the "Prodigal Son," and the Marriage Feast. Are we surprised then that the Lord appointed food in Mark 5. 43, and changed clothing in John 11. 44. We think of Zechariah 3, and praise God. The last three verses above are sad. They show disobedience where there should have been obedience. Ah, is not this a message to us?

"Rooted and grounded" (Eph. 3. 17), the words suggest depth and firmness, life and a temple: the tense implies a definite work of God's grace in the past, with a precious result in the present.

He that ruleth his spirit (is better) than he that taketh a city.

Proverbs 16. 32.

HUMAN opinions differ. Man's verdict is otherwise than God's. Here we have God's standpoint. Do we not sometimes hear the verse misquoted as "greater"? I am thankful that God uses the word "better." Goodness is precious to Him.

In every sense the one ruling in his own spirit is the "better." The work is within, not only without. It is "easy" to do a great thing before men. The action may be apparently a Scriptural one, but how many failures in motive are possible in such a case, especially when we rule without being ruled. That seems enjoyable. We call to mind Matthew 6. 4 and 6 also, "Thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee." Do we think enough of His eye upon us?

Secondly, it is "better," because it is more important to correct ourselves than to improve other people. Let us remember our own need more, and a personal walk with God.

Thirdly, it is "better," because a city may be conquered, and held in order, without living acquiescence, but rule in one's spirit implies a **true** victory, a unity and harmony with God's will, not merely subjugation.

Fourthly, it is "better," because as the heart is deceitful above all things, and Satan is so subtle, such a godly control is much to the joy of our beloved Lord, Who redeemed us, and Whom we shall yet serve perfectly in that Day.

Fifthly, the ruling in the Spirit must be **continual**, it embraces the little things and goes to the very root. How different is this from mere conquest of a city.

Sixthly, victory over a city may be followed by pride, even if at first without this, but the holy conquest in one's spirit is undone as soon as self-confidence intrudes. Hence it only exists while there is humility, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Seventhly, is it not "better" because a work in the spirit is rich in results to God's glory? It is impossible without "much fruit." Are we surprised that the climax in the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, "self-control," or "holding-in," is just what this inspired verse brings before us? "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 15. 17), seems our Lord's constant commentary to you and to me.

Yes, we each and all, need to receive this message and not only read or write it. O that we may pray for one another!

"The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh": therefore let us stablish our hearts. If we have a hope set on Him, let us purify ourselves. "That blessed Hope" is sanctifying, and meant to be resultful in our experience.

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Edited by Percy W. Heward

A Word of Introduction.

"I THOUGHT, I studied."—Ah, dear fellow believers, though thought and study are good, in the line of God's will, they must be in fellowship with Him, and with the humbling and laying low of the "I." How much we all need the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, leading to lowliness and obedience, and the growing up into Christ in all things, else we shall make so many mistakes. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). Is the principle broken because we find "differences" all along the centuries among children of God? No. We would not set it aside, nor excuse the failures WHICH ARE OURS ALSO. We all could be much more meek and humble, "swift to hear, slow to speak," subject to our gracious Lord, and responsive to His will, and quiet enough to hear His voice. How united and fruitful would a loving, tender, humble company of believers be!

CONTENTS:—

	Page
Some Brief Parables of the Lord Jesus	33
Some Parallels with the "Disciples' Prayer"	36
The Words of Peter	38
Hezekiah's "Answer" to Trials	40

Some Brief Parables of the Lord Jesus.

OUR Lord often spoke in a parabolic way (John 16. 25), and even one sentence or one word may be rich in helpful teaching by parallels (or contrasts), either as to nature and grace, or as to history and grace. In Luke 14 He emphasized thrice that there are those that cannot be His learners (verses 26, 27, 33). Only when there is the right condition can we learn of Him, and He illustrated this by three brief messages, alike emphasizing **continuance**. The first brings before us a builder. How much, as we have already seen, concerns "building" in Scripture. Nor is this strange. The thought of a foundation, an orderly arrangement, and a purpose are deeply important. But here we have a **tower**, not a house. The context, too, is military. But the

warfare is one of suffering (verse 27), as in 1 Peter 4. 1. The bearing of a cross has just been mentioned. The standpoint of contrast and conflict with the world cannot be taken up lightly. Have we counted the cost? Can we carry through? The flesh will soon hesitate, even as the rocky ground hearer "dureth for a while." "Ye did run well" is the searching statement of Galatians 5. 7. It is, indeed, perilous to begin, and then draw back (2 Pet. 2. 20-22). We remember the Lord's **threefold** stress on a similar "counting the cost," and on godly continuance, with regard to discipleship in Luke 9. 57-62. Surely these words should sink deeply into our hearts. If we count on God, we have "sufficient." He will never fail. But it is better that all human impulse, and confidence in the flesh, should be detected at once. The "tower" that is finished reminds of Proverbs 18. 10, and the Lord's Name, a striking contrast with the leaving off to build of Genesis 11. 8, 9, when men said, "Let us make us a name." All Scripture harmonizes. Do we count the cost as to God's path, and as to every part of His will? It is well. Dishonour and mockery are aroused otherwise, and this is against the Name of the Lord, when a bold beginning is followed by a giving up. But let not the feeble soul who trusts in the Lord be intimidated. The righteous one "in Christ" shall hold on his way. The Lord will perfect that which concerns us.

The parallel view of a warrior king goes yet further on the same lines. Believers experience a warfare against a very powerful adversary (1 Pet. 5. 8). He has organized forces that double ours; but "Greater is He That is in us than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4). Unless, however, we have realized our own insufficiency, and weighed up the issue, and so put our simple reliance on One Who **makes us able**, it is vain to go forward. The conflict needs **the Victor**. We cannot fight, and win, without the whole armour of God, including the sword of **the Spirit** Who Himself leads (Eph. 6. 10, 17). Searching is the alternative to conflict—namely "conditions of peace" with the enemy. This language reminds us of the solemn statement when Peter and the other disciples were looking to themselves: "He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." Such words were introduced by the impressive "But now," indicating how the disciples had left their **only** safe ground of faith and the Lord's will, as to true service in this sinful world. It would be terrible to make peace with the enemy, but to try and fight in the power of the flesh is only to bring a more alarming final surrender to the dishonour of the Lord.

The "so likewise," or "so therefore," of the very next verse makes clear the application. "Therefore" alone would have linked, but "so" intensifies remarkably. Our victory is through conscious strengthlessness (2 Cor. 12. 9). The renouncing of all for Christ's sake is the living faith that overcomes. Counting the "cost," and seeing if one is "able" are the means

to bring us to ability in our Lord via realization of our inability (2 Cor. 3. 5, 6). So long as we hold the things of self and earth, the foe will gain ground. While Moses' two hands were emptied and uplifted, Israel had power. Faith looks on difficulties as opportunities for God (Num. 14. 9, 2 Chron. 20. 17). The hand that is full of earthly things can neither be uplifted in prayer nor hold the weapon God has provided. The intense antithesis is between discipleship or making peace with the enemy of our souls.

The added reference to "Salt" again suggests "continuance." To be salt, no longer having any savour, is a miserable condition. May it not describe one who professed Christ's Name, but who failed to count the cost, and has thus broken down in the flesh, and abandoned that which the flesh took up? The word "salt," as "virgins" in Matthew 25, would well set forth that men are characterized according to their claim and profession. O that we may have a "reality."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

"CHANGED" IN DANIEL.

- "Till the time be **changed**" (2. 9).
 - "He **changeth** the times and the seasons" (2. 21).
 - "Another shall rise . . . and he shall speak words against the Most High . . . and **think to change** times and laws" (7. 25, same word "diverse" in verses 3, 7, 19, 23, 24).
 - "These men upon whose bodies the fire had no power . . . neither were their coats **changed**" (3. 27).
 - "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abeg-nego, Who hath . . . delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have **changed** the king's word" (3. 28).
 - "Sign the writing that it be not **changed**, according to the law of the Medes and Persians" (6. 8).
 - "No decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be **changed**" (6. 15).
 - "The king sealed it . . . that the purpose might not be **changed** concerning Daniel" (6. 17, but see verse 22).
 - "The king's countenance was **changed**" (5. 6).
 - "Let his heart be **changed**" (4. 16).
- Behold the words of Malachi 3. 6, "I am the Lord, I **change** not."

"WORDS" IN DANIEL 10.

- "He understood the **WORD**" (1. lit.).
- "The Voice of HIS WORDS like the Voice of the multitude" (6).
- "Yet heard I the voice of HIS WORDS" (9).
- "Understand the WORDS that I speak unto thee" (11).
- "THY WORDS were heard, and I am come for THY WORDS" (12).
- "When he had spoken **SUCH WORDS**" (15).

Some parallels with "the Disciples' Prayer" in the Prayer Life of the Lord Jesus.

"OUR Father": how often He used the name "Father." At the outset in John 17, and at the beginning and end of His recorded prayers on the cross (Luke 23. 34, 46), and Gethsemane too comes to our mind! In view of the next words—"HALLOWED BE THY NAME," John 12. 28 may be specially before us—"FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME." Surely that is an appointed parallel.

We know the kingdom was ever before Him, and He emphasized it in His ministry and parables (e.g. Luke 19. 12). As to the absence of mention in John 17, will the prayerful reader first ponder, and then see below?

The well-known words, "Thy will be done" characterized the whole life of Him Who came down to do the Father's will (John 6. 38) and delighted therein (Ps. 40. 8), and we at once remember the words of Luke 22. 42.

The thought of daily bread brings to mind Matthew 4. 4, indicating the dependence of Him Who said "I am a prayer" (Ps. 109. 4, note italics), and we would not forget John 4. 32. But it is characteristic of our beloved Lord that whereas He so wondrously provided for the hungry, when He Himself was hungry (whether in Matthew 4 or 21), there is no record of asking for food. He was absolutely contrasted with all our self-thought, which comes into prominence even in connexion with prayer.

Concerning "Forgive us our sins," we realize anew that, unlike godly men, who, in their growing spirituality abhorred themselves, His whole life shows not the slightest suggestion of this (John 8. 46), because He had no sin. This is deeply important. Hence the blessed antithesis, in that He only prayed for forgiveness of others "Father, forgive **them**; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 24).

The same thought comes before us when we see that He, unlike His people, who are taught their weakness, did not pray as they are bidden; "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Rather we read, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4. 1). He could stand, and He stood and overcame.

Hence, while we find the first part of the disciples prayer in His petitions (the "kingdom" is omitted in the record, possibly because specially connected with His own reward and possession), the second part is designedly seen in His life only in contrast. How grateful we should be for Himself, for His work, His precious blood, for His fulness, and for all we, His redeemed, have in Him.

"AMONG (IN) YOU" IN 1 CORINTHIANS.

- "The testimony of Christ was confirmed in (or among) you" (1. 6).
- "That there be no divisions among you" (1. 10).
- "There are contentions among you" (1. 11).
- "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (2. 2).
- "There is among you envying, and strife, and division" (3. 3).
- "The Spirit of God dwelleth in (and among) you" (3. 16, same word*).
- "If any man among you seemeth to be wise . . ." (3. 18).
- "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you" (5. 1).
- "If the world is being judged among you" (6. 2, lit.).
- "Is it so that there is not a wise man among you?" (6. 5).
- "The Holy Spirit Which is in (and among) you" (6. 19, same word).
- "Judge ye among yourselves" (11. 13).
- "Divisions among you" (11. 18).
- "Heresies (self-choosings) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (11. 19).
- "Many are weak and sickly among you" (11. 30).
- "He will worship God, and report that God is among you (in you) of a truth" (14. 25).
- "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (15. 12).

* With the plural we commonly say "among." Both words help. Surely the figure of a body surely shows this, but I do not wish any to misunderstand and weaken the Divine force, through the wider meaning of the English word "among."

"THE HOPE"—A NAME OF THE LORD.

- "Thou art my Hope, O Lord. God: Thou art my Trust from my youth." Psalm 71. 5.
 - "O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger?" Jeremiah 14. 8.
 - "O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed." Jeremiah 17. 13 (see verses 7 and 17, three different words).
 - "They have sinned against the Lord, the Habitation of justice, even the Lord, the Hope of their fathers." Jeremiah 50. 7.
 - "The Lord will be the Hope of His people, and the Strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3. 16.
 - "Christ in you the Hope of glory." Colossians 1. 27.
 - "The Commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, Which is our Hope." 1 Timothy 1. 1.
- Possibly Titus 2. 13 suggests His Name, "Looking for that Blessed Hope." May this be our attitude of heart.

The Words of Peter.

- "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5. 8).
 "Master, the multitude throng Thee, and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" (Luke 8. 45).
 "Lord if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water" (Matt. 14. 28).
 "Lord, save me" (Matt. 14. 30).
 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16. 16).
 "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6. 68, 69).
 "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (Matt. 16. 22).
 "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17. 4).
 "Yes" (Matt. 17. 25).
 "Of strangers" (Matt. 17. 26).
 "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matt. 18. 21).
 "Lord, speakest Thou this parable to us, or even to all?" (Luke 12. 41).
 "Behold we have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19. 27).
 "Master, behold the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away" (Mark 11. 21).
 "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? . . . Thou shalt never wash my feet . . . Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13. 6-9).
 "Lord, whither goest Thou? . . . Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake" (John 13. 36, 37).
 "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. 26. 33).
 "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee" (Matt. 26. 35).
 "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and to death" (Luke 22. 33).
 "I know not what Thou sayest" (Matt. 26. 70, see other gospels also).
 "I do not know the Man" (Matt. 26. 72).
 "I know not the Man" (Matt. 26. 74).
 Then after the Lord's resurrection:—
 "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee . . . Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee . . . Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee" (John 21. 15-17).

"Lord, and what shall this man do?" (John 21. 21).

See also Acts 1, and then the mighty contrast in Acts 2.

The whole history shows the precious truthful unveiling of Scripture, and Peter's real affection, but the dross mixed with the gold and the need of refining,—the number of "failure-words," and self-confident words. But if we took the words of the others, they would be similar. Then we see the Lord's patience, and how He lovingly dealt with all "characters," and He alone can deal with ours. But O to be willing for His moulding!*

* One is impressed to see that the first words of Peter are linked with the miracle of the fish after they had toiled in vain. He felt his sin, and heard the Lord's encouragement. The thought of following Him is here, and that is the repeated message joined with another miraculous supply of fish, after another failure all night. This is not an accident. Peter's first and last words in the gospels are in the same setting. "Fishers of men" is the promise in Luke 5, and we think of the salvation of souls, *out from* the world's sea, brought to an end of themselves. "Feed My sheep" is the command in John 21, and we think of the building up of saints, with food, for deliverance from the sea is followed by a new life, and the Lord's possession. Not "My fish" (*that* life is judged), but "My sheep."

NIGHTS WITHOUT THE LORD JESUS.

"Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." Luke 5. 5.

"It was now dark, and Jesus was not come unto them, and the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew." "The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary, and in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them." John 6. 17, 18, Matthew 14. 24, 25.

"They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." John 21. 3.

On each occasion when He came, He altered everything. Is it not so to-day, for us also? We remember Psalm 30. 5: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Nor would we forget that when they should have watched with Him in the night, the disciples in Gethsemane slept, and thus the morning then brought an entering into temptation. How much this likewise means to us. May the experience of Psalm 42. 8 be ours: "The Lord will command His loving kindness in the day time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

How little we feel! How little we feel our sins, and what they cost our Saviour. How little we feel our Father's love, and our Lord's present interest in us. How little we feel the Holy Spirit's groanings, which cannot be uttered, and the way in which He is so often grieved, because His love is so real, and His care for us so tender.

Hezekiah's "Answer" to Trials.

"**T**HEN came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the WORDS of Rabshakeh. And it came to pass when king Hezekiah heard, that he rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth (humiliation: no merit), and went into the house of the Lord (worship and prayer): and he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz (the Word of the Lord sought)." 2 Kings 18. 37, 19. 12.

Again, "And Hezekiah received the LETTER of the hand of the messengers, and read it, and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD, and Hezekiah prayed before the LORD." 2 Kings 19. 14, 15.

Two is a number of emphasis (Gen. 41. 32), and of witness (John 8. 17). May this repeated attitude of Hezekiah be impressed on our hearts to-day, and be a witness to us, with fruit in our lives. Let us seek God's words (now written in Scripture) and seek prayer regarding all our trials, yea, as to all our circumstances. We do not send to "Isaiah," but at once approach the Scriptures, conscious of our need for the living work of the Holy Spirit, else all will be vain. And we must not forget the privilege of **continuance** in humble prayer. How often we need "difficulties" to bring us to the throne of grace; otherwise, although we do not forget that throne, we become somewhat indefinite. The stress on the Word of God and prayer is very striking in Psalm 119, and Daniel 9 shows us that when the prophet was truly searching the Scriptures he had power in prayer. May this be our experience also.

"REJOICE."

"Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost" (Luke 15. 6).

"Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost" (Luke 15. 9).

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12. 15).

"If . . . one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12. 26).

"I joy and rejoice with you all: for the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with Me" (Phil. 2. 17, 18).

"My joy is the joy of you all" (2 Cor. 2. 3).

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 23).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

A Word of Introduction.

GOD has given His Beloved Son for sinners, and with Him freely gives all things. The acceptance which is ours is by grace. The right of way in prayer is by grace. The gift of Scripture is by grace. The tender, yet mighty, work of the Holy Spirit is ours by grace. What have we which we have not received? These pages are a record of grace, and praise should fill each one, and every day of our life. The object of all issues should be His glory. We are conscious that we only know in part, and only set forth a portion of His truth, nor is there perfect "proportion," but our desire is to please our Lord Who redeemed us, and to walk and minister in the Spirit, and that we may not keep back "good convenient," or that which is profitable. O that we may never blend our wisdom with His words, or seek our honour instead of His! WE NEED PRAYER that all error may be more and more feared, and graciously kept out. The presentation of much truth is not sufficient but the keeping OUT of that which would hinder. A meal with much excellent food can be neutralized by a little that is putrid, and ointment spoilt by flies of death.

CONTENTS:—

	Page
"Born of Water and of Spirit"	41
Peter and Judas	43
"A word in his season, how good is it"	44
Wrong Love	45
Some Brief Parables	45
"Written in the Lamb's Book of Life." When?	48

"Born of Water, and of Spirit."

John 3. 5.

MANY assume that "birth" means "baptism." Where does the Lord Jesus say this? Where does the Holy Spirit so explain these words? The Lord Jesus **could** have used the word "baptised"; He chose the word "born." The earlier use of this verb does not suggest baptism (John 1. 13, see, too, 1 John 2. 29, 3. 9, 4. 7, 5. 1, 18). Quite different language is found in

John 1. 26, 31, 33, Acts 1. 5. What shall we say when we link with "born from above" (verse 3)? Does not Psalm 18. 16 become doubly parallel (with the word "Spirit" in verse 5)? If this suggests deliverance from the waters of wrath, there is a further parallel in the first references to water (Genesis 1. 2-9, 8. 1-5, in each case the word "Spirit" is found in the original).^{*} A further reference to the waters of judgment in Exodus 15. 8-10 ("blast" and "wind" are alike the word "Spirit") would afford a striking contrast with Israel, brought up out of the midst. "Born of the Spirit" is explained by John 3. 6, plainly a Divine work. But it may be said, "This suggests two meanings to the preposition 'out of.'" Is this possible? It exists in 1 John 2. 19, and the one preposition "through" with two nouns in 1 John 5. 6 has a somewhat different application to each. Since "water" and "Spirit" are different, may not this be appropriate? "Birth out of water" is deliverance from a grave, from the wrong position: but the "Spirit" must be within as well as around, and therefore this reveals the blessed condition, a quickening of the Spirit, a new life given. "Birth from above" thus unveils a salvation from a ruined race (cf. the fish brought out of the sea in John 21: a parable of salvation), but there must also be a new life within (hence not only "Thou shalt catch men" but "Feed My sheep," no longer fish, but possessing a fresh life, born of the Spirit). Baptism is not pictured in John 3, but rather itself is a "picture" of the reality set forth here, even as (in ch. 6) the Lord's Supper is not pictured, but the Lord's Supper is a figure of the spiritual partaking there shown. Baptism can only give an important "type" of salvation (1 Pet. 3. 21). The reality both in John 3 and 6 comes first, otherwise one is not fit for the symbol.

^{*} 2 Peter 3. 5 refers to the water covering the earth, and uses the very word "out of water" as the contrast with submerging.

"Father, I will that they also, Whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may BEHOLD MY GLORY." (John 17. 24).

"We all, with unveiled face BEHOLDING AS IN A GLASS THE GLORY OF THE LORD, are changed into the same image" (2 Corinthians 3. 18).

"I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory" (Ex. 33. 18).

"When they were awake, they saw His glory" (Luke 9. 32).

"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1. 14).

"We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory" (in the Scripture record, made living in our experience, Heb. 2. 9).

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John 17. 24).

Peter and Judas.

HOW often the Holy Spirit brings together, to show the tremendous contrast. Peter failed, but he was a believer. Judas shows how far one can go, in knowledge and in intimacy, and yet be away from the Lord.

Matthew 10. 2-4. "The first Simon, who is called Peter," and the last one in each list is "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him."

John 6. 68, 71. "Simon Peter answered Him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life . . . Thou art the Holy One of God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (thus Judas was not a believer then: there is no suggestion that he was ever spiritually alive). He spake of Judas Iscariot." (After the similar blessed confession of Peter in Matthew 16. 16, the deeply searching words of verse 23 suggest a parallel, and yet a contrast with John 6. 70).

Luke 22. 3, 8. "Then Satan entered into Judas . . . and he went his way." Contrast "He sent Peter and John saying, Go, and prepare us the passover."

John 13. 6, 18. "Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and he saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" . . . "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me."

John 13. 21-24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me . . . Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him that he should ask who it should be."

Luke 22. 31, John 13. 26, 27. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired you, that he may sift as wheat." "He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, and after the sop Satan entered into him."

Mark 14. 43-47. "While He yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves . . . and one of them that stood by (Peter, John 18. 10) drew a sword and smote a servant of the high priest."

Matthew 26. 75, 27. 3, 4. "Peter remembered the word of Jesus . . . and he went out, and wept bitterly. Then Judas . . . repented himself . . . saying, I have sinned."

John 21. 19, Matthew 27. 5. "By what death he (Peter) should glorify God." "(Judas) went and hanged himself."

John 14. 2 (after 13. 37, 38 to Peter), Acts 1. 25. "I go to prepare a place for you." "That he might go to his own place."

How solemn is the definite emphasis. O that we may beware of sin, and dread its beginnings, though rejoicing in the grace that brings a wandering believer back to his Lord. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

A word in his season, how good is it.

Proverbs 15. 23.

HOW much we read about the tongue, whether in Proverbs or James 3, and in other parts of Scripture. "There is that speaketh like the piercing of a sword: but **the tongue of the wise is health**" (Prov. 12. 18). We would not only think of the "dark side," but of the lips of the righteous, feeding many. It is wonderful how even **one word** can be used by God. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but **a good word maketh it glad**" (Prov. 12. 25). God has given us wonderful power in our tongues,—life as well as death (Prov. 18. 21). We call to mind the words of the wise "fitted" in the lips (Prov. 22. 18), and one of the best known verses, which has never lost its freshness and power, says, A word spoken upon his wheels is like oranges of gold in pictures of silver (Prov. 25. 11). How real is the **living** power of a godly tongue. Do we wonder it is called our glory? How wondrously was this illustrated in the grace poured over our Lord's lips. "Never man spake like This Man."

"A word in its season!" What does this signify? We should be "instant in season, out of season," with holy enthusiasm. It is a privilege to serve the Lord at all times. We cannot be too concerned to buy up the opportunity, because the days are evil (Eph. 5. 16). But though we would ever seek to be on the alert, we would remember that there is a suited time for the word of testimony—not wrongly employing an employer's five minutes. There is also a suited time for a word of reproof: not usually before others, but with gracious tact. There is also the time for a gentle word of encouragement, and if we let it slip by there may be the continued pain and strain of another, with a wounded spirit (Prov. 18. 14). Job's friends knew how to use salt, but their speech was not "**seasoned with salt**." They gave that which was out of harmony with the condition of their friend. And have we not sometimes said that which is true, but said it at the wrong time, and with wrong implications? Truth misapplied brings many sorrows. May we seek God's grace to have the right word, and at the right time. How good it is! And the result will often be a fuller illustration of other blessings of which the Holy Spirit says, "How good and how pleasant," namely, the dwelling together of brethren in unity (Ps. 133. 1).

"This do in remembrance of Me," "He shall bring all things to your remembrance," "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers" and similar words would seem to indicate a very real danger, without evil intentions. We need not be "willingly ignorant" to lose a blessing. Occupation of mind with other things is Satan's snare. The repeated words to Israel, "Remember and forget not," are impressive to us also. May we know much more of this gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

WRONG LOVE.

- "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2. 15).
- "Shouldest thou love them that hate the Lord?" (2 Chron. 19. 2).
- "The Lord said unto the children of Israel . . . Surely they will turn away your heart after other gods: Solomon clave unto these in love" (1 Kings 11. 1, 2).
- "Thou saidst, 'There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go'" (Jer. 2. 25).
- "How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" (Ps. 4. 2).
- "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence, His soul hateth" (Ps. 11. 5).
- "Thou lovest evil more than good; lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. Thou lovest all devouring words, O deceitful tongue" (Ps. 52. 3, 4).
- "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?" (Prov. 1. 22).
- "He loveth transgression that loveth strife" (Prov. 17. 19).
- "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty" (Prov. 20. 13, cf. Isa. 56. 10).
- "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man" (Prov. 21. 17, see 2 Tim. 3. 4).
- "Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards" (Isa. 1. 23, cf. Hos. 4. 18, 9. 1).
- "The prophets prophecy falsely;—and My people love to have it so" (Jer. 5. 31).
- "All the host of heaven, whom they have loved" (Jer. 8. 2).
- "Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet" (Jer. 14. 10).
- "Their abominations were according as they loved" (Hos. 9. 10).
- "He is a merchant . . . he loveth to oppress" (Hos. 12. 7).
- "Who hate the good and love the evil" (Mic. 3. 2).
- "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19).
- "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12. 43).
- "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6. 10).
- "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence" (3 John 9).

Some Brief Parables.

(Continued)

Again we may see the concentrated fulness of our Lord's language in Matthew 15. 13. There are many plants, alas, which, like the tares, are **not** of God. It is an unspeakable blessing to be the branch of His planting (Isa. 60. 21): all such He tends, and all such are "that He may be glorified." But an

uprooting of others will soon take place. We think of John's parable of the fruitless tree cut down (Matt. 3. 10). There will be drastic measures in holy judgment (Jude 12). Few realize this: they live as if longsuffering were eternal, but it is not. The thought of a plant implies "life"—with growth and fruit. But what kind of fruit? We have seen that the tares, sown by the evil one, do not set forth the gift of physical life, but of a religious "life of profession." So is it here. The Pharisees were plants of evil: they bore evil fruit. And what are we? Only that which is Divinely planted can be spiritually fruitful. So is it as to the individual: so is it as to the assembly. May we be graciously preserved from all counterfeits.

The passage continues, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Peter soon enquired regarding this "parable" (verse 15). The fact was clear: but what was, and is, the application? The Pharisees were blind: their eyes were not opened, but tightly closed, although they boldly said, "We see" (John 9. 41). They saw no beauty in the One Who came to be manifested to Israel, they knew not the time of their visitation, they discerned not the signs of the times. Yet they were "leaders" (Matt. 23. 16, 23, Rom. 2. 19). How contrasted is the gracious Holy Spirit, Who leads into all the truth (John 16. 13). The people, too, were blind (Matt. 13. 15, Jer. 5. 31), and thus there was progress in sin. There could be but one result. Ahead the Lord Jesus saw not simply a wilderness, but a ditch. The history of Israel illustrated this in the year 70, but the eternal judgment is in view. Hence there was not only a temporary misleading, but a misleading with a fearful end. The goal, a ditch: the condition, fallen. Sin from the beginning is characterized as a fall ("offence" is "**falling aside**" in Rom. 5. 18), and at the climax there is the same bringing down. How blessed is the contrasted standing before the Lord.

Luke 6. 39 gives this parable in another context. Thus would the Lord impress it on our **heart**. O that amongst us the eyes of the **heart** may be opened (Eph. 1. 18), and that those who are privileged to minister His Word among His people may themselves have a true view of His glory, and lead others in the right way, as they themselves are led by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus continued in Matthew 15 with the solemn thought of defilement by that which comes out from the heart, and then out of the mouth. This also was characterized as a "parable" by the disciples in Mark 7. 17. Its meaning is clear, but its application is deeply important and often misunderstood. Meat does not commend us to God (1 Cor. 8. 8). We are not to be occupied with meats (Heb. 13. 9). The typical arrangements of Leviticus 11 have a **spiritual** parallel now. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified with the Word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4. 4, 5). Not that we are to

indulge ourselves: not that we are to eat in a way that causes others to stumble (Rom. 14. 21): not that we are to partake of food in which blood is retained, or to accept a "tonic" which contains blood, for that has **NEVER BEEN GIVEN** as food (Gen. 9. 4). But the ceremonial arrangements are not applied in the present dispensation (Col. 2. 20 22). The externalism of **modern** Judaism, and of Mohammedanism, is to find a contrast in our deeply spiritual life, so that we are concerned as to every word that comes out of our mouth. Let us realize that thoughts are not merely mental, but "out of the heart": and that words are not merely "on the spur of the moment," but the expression of the heart, and a revelation of its condition. The book of Proverbs illustrates this (e.g. 12. 23, 23. 33). How far-reaching is the command, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4. 23). May we obey in the Holy Spirit. It is worthy of observation that the words of our adorable Lord are intensely practical. They show unmistakably the ruined condition of man, and the need for a new life. How graciously He came to die, that such a life might be ours. There is nothing in the gospel to suggest half measures. There is no patchwork righteousness: there is no mere improvement of the flesh. "If any one is in Christ, there is a new creation."

RICHES IN ECCLESIASTES AND EPHESIANS.

(These two books are throughout strikingly contrasted,—
"under the sun" and "in heavenly places in Christ").

- "Neither is his eye satisfied with riches" (Eccl. 4. 8).
- "Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt" (Eccl. 5. 13).
- "Those riches perish by evil travail" (Eccl. 5. 14).
- "Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof . . . this is the gift of God."—"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour . . . yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease" (Eccl. 5. 19, 6. 1, 2).
- "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift . . . nor yet riches to men of understanding" (Eccl. 9. 11).

- BUT "Forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1. 7).
- "What is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1. 18).
- "That He might show the exceeding riches of His grace" (Eph. 2. 7).
- "Grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3. 8).
- "That He would grant unto you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3. 16).

"Written in the Lamb's Book of Life." WHEN?

"THE book of life!" Wonderful words! There could be no "life" for guilty sinners had not the Lamb of God died for such. Well can we understand why believers speak with joy of this. And sometimes, in emphasizing the blessedness, they say to others "When (or if) you believe in the Lord Jesus, your name will be written in the book of life." But is this so? Where does the Scripture speak of a waiting till we believe? Is not God's grace **before**? Did not He, in wondrous love, lay the sins of those who believe on the Son of His love before they were born? The tense used in Revelation 21. 27 is impressive in that it is the same "perfect tense" in John 19. 22, where Pilate emphasized "What I have written I have written." However, this does not state the time. Nor does the solemn message of Revelation 20. 15. But chapter 13. 8 surely gives an answer to our question. "Whose names are not written in the book of life (of the Lamb slain) from the foundation of the world." The Lord Jesus was not slain till He lovingly came into the world to save sinners. He was foreordained, foreknown, but not manifested before (1 Pet. 1. 20), nor was His death possible before He became a curse for us. The words "written in the book of life" are plainly linked with "from the foundation of the world." Surely this implies that those who are saved could not have been written **later**. They were written (again perfect tense) at that time: they could have been written earlier, even as what has been written in a book I saw yesterday may have been written long before, but not after. Certainly the names were known before (Eph. 1. 4). How wondrous is the grace of God. How blessed to be brought to a living faith, and receive as Lord and Saviour, the One Who died for us when we were dead and lost and strengthless.

"The Son of God . . . loved me and gave **Himself** for me" (Gal. 2. 20). This was love, fulness of love. A man may give many "things" without love: mark the contrast in 1 Corinthians 13. 3, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not love." "My body" is outward, and not inward. But "Himself" is inward as well as outward, the whole without reserve:—impossible without the fulness of complete love. O how He loved, our loving and lovely Saviour! Shall we not love Him, and love Him more?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have more abundantly."
John 10. 10.

A Word of Introduction.

THE passing days and years have a solemn message. Their testimony, however, is twofold as the pillar of the cloud in Exodus 15. 20, "It was a cloud of darkness, but it gave light." Everything depends on "Which side of the cloud?" The future is "very dark and no brightness in it" (Amos 5. 18) for some, but for God's children there is a **Blessed Hope**. The Lord Jesus came that His own might have eternal life. Happy indeed are those who have this glorious prospect, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." There is a **fulness** in Christ. He died that His redeemed might be blest with all spiritual blessings. There is an abundance in salvation. The words of the gospel are bright and comforting. "That they might have more abundantly!" The Lord Jesus did not die to make the door ajar, or to give a half salvation. Everything is complete in Him. Do we possess our possessions as we should?

CONTENTS: -

	Page
A Few Notes on Part of the Revelation	49
"Ye Worship ye know not What"	55
"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect"	56

A Few Notes on Part of "The Revelation."

THE first verse emphasizes the Lord Jesus Christ **Himself**; so does the last. If we do not exalt, and love, and see Him by faith, our study is vain. The book was not given that we might be clever, but that we might be servants (Rev. 1. 1). O that we may ever pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Practical exhortations and warnings are graciously interspersed, that we may never lose the daily-life aspect of all Bible study, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, Who also guides our prayer (Rev. 22. 17).

I have no thought of detailed exposition just now, but of indicating two or three points that have helped me much as to God's arrangement of the book. If a child of God assumes that each chapter must be **fulfilled after** the preceding, he forgets Scripture teaches often "in parallel lines"—the same period is viewed in two ways. It was so in Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41), it is likewise in the **four** gospels, and (this is a most striking example), the book of Daniel is written on this principle. We cannot make the unveiling in Daniel 8 and 9 after ch. 7. No, they all lead up to the same glorious goal and terminus.*

So is it in Revelation. After the sevenfold preface, to seven real assemblies then existing (though full of exhortation for us to-day, if we have "an ear to hear"), we have two parallel lines leading up to the Day of the Lord. **Both** have a heavenly introduction, and then the Divine outworking on earth. In **both**, we find a sevenfoldness: in both, the saints are NOT seen personally in glory at the **beginning**: their glory is at the end (i.e., in the Day of the Lord). To place the seven trumpets **within** the seventh seal is to cause confusion, but when we see that 8. 1 belongs to 7. 17, and 8. 2 is the new section, everything fits in.

7 Seals.

Heavenly introduction (chs. 4, 5).
Divine unsealings on earth (6. 1—8. 1—climax "half hour").

Standpoint of God's **plan**: nothing unknown to Him.

7 Trumpets.

Heavenly introduction† (8. 2-5).
Divine warning (in view of the battle of the Day of the Lord 8. 6-10. 7 and 11. 15-19. cf. 1 Cor. 14. 8).

Standpoint of God's **preparation**.

Next we observe three views of the same period 1260 days (or 42 months):—

- (1) Jerusalem (11. 1-13)—Israel's City.
- (2) The wilderness (12. 6-16)—The children of God.
- (3) The kingdom of the beast (13. 1-18)—The Gentiles.

Observe in each section how the same limited period is emphasized by a stress on the precise time in two of them twice.

Following this, we have two parallel lines that remind of the Seals and Trumpets, but with two or three remarkable differences:—

- (1) The saints are seen in glory at the **beginning** of each of these (ch. 14. 1, 15. 2).
- (2) The "hour" and "wrath" are viewed at the beginning (ch. 14. 7, 15. 1).
- (3) The **sphere** of each vial in the **second** "panel" here is parallel with the sphere of each trumpet in the **second** "panel" before (e.g., earth, sea, rivers, etc.), but all the longer "time" marks (ch. 9. 5, 15. 10. 7) as well as the "third parts" (two parts "spared") are now omitted.

* Cf. also the parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven.

† Saints still viewed as on earth ("prayers," ch. 8. 4).

This is very significant. The introduction is, as usual, in heaven.

Ingathering of earth.

Heavenly introduction—saints personally present. God's "first-fruits" (14. 1-5).

Sevenfold unveiling of judgment ("another angel" six times, verses 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, and centrally "One like unto the Son of man," verse 14). Harvest and vintage of EARTH.

Vials of wrath.

Heavenly introduction: saints personally present (15. 1-8).

Seven vials (shallow: quickly poured out). "Wrath": contrast 6. 17, and 11. 18—where wrath "comes" at the end.

Thus we learn something of God's plan, in the central part of the book. It is important ever to remember that the seals and trumpets lead up to "the Hour," § to the Day of the Lord. The harvesting and vials are in the Day of the Lord. It is worthy of notice that the **balance** of subjects is not only maintained with regard to spheres of trumpets and vials, but also as to the 144,000 of Israel on earth being seen in connexion with the first part of the earlier section, and here 144,000 in heaven in the first part of this later section. No doubt prayerful thought would lead to observing many more Divine arrangements. It will now be noticed that chapter 12 becomes central not only of the **three** "1,260 days" but of all the seven sections before us. How precious are God's own redeemed to Him! The prayerful student may have noticed that the heavenly view is first there also (ch. 12. 1-5), and then the sustaining amid suffering on earth (ch. 12. 6-17).

Revelation adds another "parallel"—ch. 17, Babylon as a "mystery"; ch. 18, Babylon as a commercial city. Both lead up to the "hour." How striking is the contrast of chapter 17 with God's view of what He sought in assemblies (chapters 1-3) and with the Lamb's wife (chapter 21).

The continuance and conclusion of this wondrous book bring before us the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" contrasted with the "Supper of the great God," and the repeated emphasis on "the thousand years," in striking contrast with the limited 1,260 days. Yes, the kingdom is a glorious fact. The eternal state, for saint and sinner, is next unfolded briefly, as a fitting climax, followed by important, heart-searching, and refreshing exhortations and encouragements, and warnings without. May our hearts receive all God's "words" (note Rev. 22. 18, 19) in the gracious and powerful working of the Holy Spirit, and pray continually the last prayer of this book.

§ Booklet gladly sent. This subject is most important.

"God so loved the world that He gave" (John 3. 16).
"The Son of God . . . loved . . . and gave" (Gal. 2. 20, Eph. 5. 2). And God's love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5. 5).

“Understanding” and “Wisdom.”

IN the following verses God has given the usual word for the “heart.” This seems searching to us, that we may keep our hearts with all diligence. Could we not wish the translators had kept the simpler and more forcible language the Holy Spirit employs, reminding us **how** we fail first in love and then in understanding?

- “O foolish people, and without heart” (Jer. 5. 21).
 - “I . . . beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of heart” (Prov. 7. 7, cf. 6. 32, “lacketh heart”).
 - “As for him that wanteth heart, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread” (Prov. 9. 4, 5: “a foolish woman” and a false system counterfeit this invitation in 9. 16, 17).
 - “A rod is for the back of him that is void of heart” (Prov. 10. 13).
 - “Fools die for want of heart” (Prov. 10. 21).
 - “He that is void of heart despiseth his neighbour” (Prov. 11. 12).
 - “He that followeth vain persons is void of heart” (Prov. 12. 11).
 - “Folly is joy to him that is destitute of heart” (Prov. 15. 21).
 - “He that heareth reproof possesseth an heart” (Prov. 15. 32 margin).
 - “He that getteth (possesseth) an heart loveth his own soul” (Prov. 19. 8).
 - “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of heart” (Prov. 24. 30).
 - “His heart faileth him” (Eccl. 10. 3).
- The margin only sometimes indicates. The word “void of,” “lacketh,” “wanteth,” “destitute” is one, thus this is the usual expression, showing deficiency of heart. O that we may have a filled heart; because of the grace of Him “Who is mighty in strength and heart” (Job 36. 5).

JOY FULL.

Four Precious Reasons.

“These things have I spoken unto you, **that My joy might remain in you**, and that your joy might be full.” John 15. 11.

“Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16. 24.

“These things **write** we unto you, that your joy may be full.” 1 John 1. 4.

“I trust to come unto you **and speak face to face**, that your joy may be full.” 2 John 12.

(a) The Lord’s Presence, Joy and Words; (b) Prayer; (c) The Scriptures; (d) Christian Fellowship. Four important points for your Christian life and mine.

Compare John 3. 29, “This my joy therefore is fulfilled.”

“BETTER THAN.”

- “The lovingkindness is better than life” (Ps. 63. 3).
 - “Thy love is better than wine” (Song 1. 2).
 - “The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver” (Ps. 119. 72).
 - “Wisdom is better than rubies” (Prov 8. 11, cf. 3. 14).
 - “My fruit is better than gold” (Prov. 8. 19).
 - “Wisdom is better than weapons of war” (Eccl. 9. 18, see 16).
 - “A good name is better than precious ointment” (Eccl. 7. 1).
 - “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15. 22).
 - “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty” (Prov. 16. 32, see Eccl. 7. 8).
 - “Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool” (Prov. 19. 1, see verse 22, and 28. 6).
 - “Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Prov. 15. 16, 17, 1, Gal. 4. 6).
 - “It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire” (Matt. 18. 8, 9).
 - “I . . . will do better unto you than at your beginnings” (Ezek. 36. 11).
- Man’s limited “better” is seen “under the sun” in Ecclesiastes 2. 24, 3. 22, 8. 15, and the sad choice of Israel in Exodus 14. 12, and Numbers 14. 3 is not without painful parallels to-day. May our heart be kept restful and fixed (Ps. 57. 7), enjoying Psalm 63. 3.

NOT WITH HANDS.

- “Thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold” (Dan. 2. 45).
- “He shall be broken without hand” (Dan. 8. 25).
- “We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands” (Mark 14. 58).
- “The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7. 48).
- “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5. 1).
- “In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2. 11, see Eph. 2. 11).
- “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building” (Heb. 9. 11).
- “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true; but into heaven itself” (Heb. 9. 24).

SOME STRIKING "ALLS."

- (A distant reader asks our prayerful emphasis on these. We rejoice in such a wish, and all correspondence concerning the Lord from far off lands).
- " ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God " (2 Tim. 3. 16).
 - " EVERY word of God is pure " (Prov. 30. 5).
 - " We are ALL as an unclean thing, and ALL our righteousnesses are as filthy rags " (Isa. 64. 6).
 - " If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness " (1 John 1. 9).
 - " ALL power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach ALL nations." (Matt. 28. 18, 19).
 - " Come unto Me ALL ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest " (Matt. 11. 28).
 - " Except ye repent, ye shall ALL likewise perish " (Luke 13. 3, 5).
 - " By Him (the Lord Jesus) ALL that believe are justified from ALL things " (Acts 13. 39).
 - " Do ALL in the Name of the Lord Jesus " (Col. 3. 17).
 - " Do ALL to the glory of God " (1 Cor. 10. 31).
 - " ALL things are lawful for me, but ALL things edify not " (1 Cor. 10. 23).
 - " ALL the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us " (2 Cor. 1. 20).
 - " I can do ALL things through Christ Which strengtheneth me " (Phil. 4. 13).
 - " That God in ALL things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen " (1 Pet. 4. 11).

"His" or "his"?

In response to a request a brother lovingly contributes the following:—

- Genesis 6. 12, " All flesh had corrupted His (or his) way upon the earth."
- Job 17. 9, " The righteous also shall hold on His (or his) way " (in view of the " He " of v. 6 and 16. 7, 9, 12, 13, 14).
- Psalms 25. 9, " The meek will He teach His (or his) way."
- Psalms 37. 23, " He (or he) delighteth in his (or His) way."
- Proverbs 16. 17, " He that keepeth His (or his) way, preserveth his soul " (if we read capital K in v. 15 " King's," v. 17 referring to His highway).
- Proverbs 19. 3, " the foolishness of man perverteth His (or his) way " (in view of the last clause—" And his heart fretteth against the LORD ").
- Proverbs 19. 16, " He that despiseth His (or his) ways shall die " (" his " referring to the idle soul of v. 15).
- Proverbs 21. 29, " The upright, He (or he) directeth his way " (in view of v. 30 immediately following).

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship."

John 4. 22.

THESE words seems to present a difficulty. The Samaritan travesty might well be set forth under the word " what," but do we not associate God's arrangements at Jerusalem, even in the old dispensation, with the word " Whom "?

The careful reader will have noticed in the preceding verse the emphasis on worshipping **the Father**. The woman had spoken of the **act** and the **place**, but not a word as to the **One Who** alone makes worship a wondrous and glorious privilege. The Lord Jesus laid double stress on the personal aspect throughout. The **Father** seeketh not worship but **worshippers** (verse 23). How important and heart-searching is this. Our whole being, as His redeemed people, should be in harmony, and before Him in reverent devotedness.

The word " Father " in verse 21 is in what is called " the dative case," which is fairly usual in connexion with worship, because this is rendered " to " God. But there is no dative in verse 22, and the meaning would seem to be, " ye worship with reference to that which ye know not: we worship with reference to that which we know," i.e., the worship of Israel was arranged by God with precious types, all pointing unto Christ, " FOR the Salvation is of the Jews." Observe how fitting is this added statement, plainly linked by the word " for." True, Israel had departed from God, and the words of Mark 7. 7 were sadly illustrated, but God's appointment was holy and full of deep meaning, and the temple was then not yet put aside (Matt. 23. 38 was subsequent).

It may be said that in a few cases (verses 23 and 24 among them) the **same** " accusative " case is found. We would not overlook this. There may be a special reason for this. In each case here (23, 24) the participle is before us, as the **characteristic** of the persons described: hence their relation to **Him** is indicated, rather than any **one** act of worship alone. Hence this would not seem to invalidate due regard for the change from the dative of verse 21 in **description** of appointed worship according to knowledge of God's revealed will.

Ere leaving the passage how grateful should we be for the stress on **true** (real) worshippers, and " in spirit and **truth**." The Holy Spirit indicates not only a contrast with false worship, but with the shadows of the types. How privileged are we to live in the knowledge of this Antitype. O that we may never separate the Spirit of God and His words. The blending of " Spirit and truth " would emphasize a double contrast with form and worldly ritual. Truth without the Spirit would become formal. And the Spirit of God, and the spirituality He causes, can never approve mere statement, but ever call attention to **THE TRUTH** (John 14. 6).

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in Heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5. 48.

ONE came up to me in the open air, to cavil regarding this utterance of Christ. How ready is the natural man to oppose Scripture. Almost every word has special applications according to the context. That which is small, when speaking of **one** thing would be tremendous when speaking of **another**. And so we will mention the word "perfect" afterwards. The objection was raised somewhat thus:—"Is this an exhortation, or a command? If the latter, why do some say that we are ruined, and cannot be perfect?" Then followed a suggestion of natural, **human attainment**. Poor, "human reasoning." Blessed be God, here is an exhortation for those who have come to Him, since our Lord encourages **His disciples**, and ever shows them the path of blessing and joy. Here is also a command, for how **can** He command imperfection and failure?

But He does not **ONLY** command. He gives grace.—He intercedes, He enables! Ah who can tell the fulness of Christ for His own? The following illustration was added in answer:—If a copy book with a perfect writing-example be given to one without hands, how can he write? But if given to a child, the perfection is a help to the copying more exactly, **as** the eyes are kept on that, and not on the **imperfect** personal copies. The child has life, and capacity, and power to improve. And have not God's children life and power, yea, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit also? Let us not limit **Him**: let us not lower our possibilities because of our past failures, but, confessing sin, seek grace to be more like our Father (Eph. 5. 1), and like our Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 11. 1).

The **context** is the manifestation of kindness (Matt. 5. 45), and love and grace (verse 46, see Luke 6. 32-34, lit. "What **grace** have ye?"). It is not that we are commanded to have the perfect **knowledge**, and absolute power, and all the essential perfections of God. Reverently we realize His glory, but we desire to show His character and will more and more fully, since we now belong to His family by a new birth. Thus everything is fitting, as a gracious stimulus to disciples, and we would ever seek to become more manifestly epistles of Christ, and those whose lives and faces show forth "the gospel of the **GRACE** of God."

"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19). Our love is the fruit, not the root. Thanks be unto God, there must be fruit, and fruit is **LIVING**.

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

1 Corinthians 4. 5.

A Word of Introduction.

THE Coming of the Lord is a bright hope for those who have been redeemed. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The Holy Spirit ever encourages a realization of the near Return of the Lord Jesus, ever stimulates a love for His Appearing. But such love is not merely emotion. Everyone that rightly hath the hope purifies himself, and thus is concerned to be ready. And all the epistles are written from 'his standpoint. Our knowledge now is limited. Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 4 that he was not conscious of wrong actions tolerated in his life. But he did not rest his confidence thereon. Nor did he approve of the attitude of praising and judging one another which is so easy and natural. The Lord will investigate all, and His praise is the only one worth possessing. That writer and readers may be more conscious of this, and live in the light of their Lord's Coming, is the purpose of these pages.

CONTENTS: -

	Page
Some Striking Contrasts	59
Parables and Miracles	81
"Thou Bearest not the Root, but the Root thee"	64

PAUL'S BONDS.

IN Ephesians 3. 1, 4. 1, and Philemon 1 and 9, he speaks of himself as a prisoner, as one in bonds, and in Romans 16. 7, Colossians 4. 10, Philemon 23, using a different term, he refers to himself as a "fellow prisoner." We little realise the strain of his life. It is most before us in the tender, brief, personal letter to Philemon,

The word for "bonds" comes helpfully nine times, and the context reveals his heavenly attitude. Let us seek to see this:—

"In **my bonds**, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel ye all are partakers of my grace" (Phil. 1. 7).

"**My bonds** in Christ are manifest" (Phil. 1. 13).

"Waxing confident in **my bonds**" (Phil. 1. 14).

"Supposing to add affliction to **my bonds**" (Phil. 1. 16).

"Remember **my bonds**" (Col. 4. 18).

"I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto **bonds**, but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2. 9).

"Ye had compassion of me in **my bonds**, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods" (Heb. 10. 34).

Not a word of complaint: everything is to the furtherance of the gospel.

Now mark further, how the strengthened form of this word ("Bond together") occurs in three passages (apart from the solemnizing contrast of Acts 8. 23):—

"The unity of the Spirit in the **bond** of peace" (Eph. 4. 3).

"All the body by joints and **bonds** having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2. 19).

"Love, which is the **bond** of perfectness" (Col. 3. 14).

How wonderful is the bondservice of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1. 1), with the words of love, and how delightful love's imprisonment and binding together of those who are in the same body. May we experience and illustrate this blessed intimacy, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

PSALM 93.

The Lord reigned, Clothed with majesty!
Clothed, the Lord girded Himself with strength,
The world also is established,
It shall not be moved.
Established is **THY THRONE** of old:
From everlasting art Thou!

Rivers lift up, O Lord, rivers lift up their voice,
Rivers lift up their roaring:
Than the voice of many mighty waters,
Than the breakers of the sea, mighty is the Lord on high.
THY TESTIMONIES are very sure ("Amen").
Holiness becometh **THY HOUSE**, O Lord, to length of days.

We suggest the simple "structure" of this Psalm, emphasizing, in two verses of six lines, the glorious climax—"THY THRONE" and "THY HOUSE" (Note 1 Chron. 17. 14), and looking forward to that day. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Some Striking Contrasts.

WE are all acquainted with the Holy Spirit's emphasis thus, particularly respecting the Lord Jesus Christ. The **first** Adam was made a living soul, the **Last** Adam a Life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15. 45). "In Adam all die," says the same chapter. How strikingly the first man, "the figure of Him That was to come" (Rom. 5. 14), is connected with death, for "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Rom. 5. 12). But Christ is the Life (John 14. 6). We realize, too, how Adam was cast out of Eden, how the Lord Jesus has effectually opened the way to the tree of life. We could continue with many helpful thoughts, e.g., the **curse** is seen in Genesis 3. 17, but the work of Christ will bring blessing to nature "in that Day" (Isa. 55. 13). Our hearts are grateful (should they not be overwhelmed with gratitude?) when we remember the blessed change through "the second Man" (1 Cor. 15. 47), even our adorable Lord, Who became Man, to redeem us. Again, the Lord Jesus is in entire antithesis with "Antichrist," as the very name betokens. In connexion with both we find three and a half years, and the receiving of a kingdom, but how saddening is the whole narrative of Revelation 13, including the travesty of the death of Christ with the deadly wound healed. Many, many such points might be set forth illustrating the central thought that all Scripture is written to exalt the Lord Jesus, directly, or by contrast. O that our life may be that which honours Him directly, both in its actions and its words!

Just now, however, I am thinking rather of persons who are contrasted, as Rahab and her family, brought, by grace, into Judah, when one family, Achan's, was thrust out of the same tribe. Then again, we recollect Balaam in the Old Testament, and Saul of Tarsus (even Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ), in the New. **Both** were stopped in the way, but Balaam did not see: Paul saw. The ass fell and spoke: Paul himself fell and uttered the words "Who art Thou, Lord?" It is solemnizing to see "the madness of the prophet" who loved the wages of unrighteousness. How different was the apostle, made willing to do the Lord's will, a chosen vessel to bear His Name, and occupied with loving service after, illustrating Acts 20. 33, supporting the weak, and ministering to the needs of others. There was no money-loving in that attitude. Balaam's end, despite his wish (Num. 23. 10), was a miserable one. He taught Balak to seduce Israel (Rev. 2. 14), and, when Israel killed the kings of Midian, he was with them, and we read, "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword" (Num. 31. 8). Two more strikingly contrasted journeys could hardly be conceived than that of Balaam with the desire to please Balak, and that of Paul with the Lord's mighty interruption claiming the chosen vessel for Himself.

I was impressed with Ahab in 1 Kings 21, and David in 2 Samuel 11. Both caused death, to gratify their cravings, but how different was the subsequent attitude. We thank God for 1 Kings 21. 27-29, but the repentance of David was **spiritual**, as Psalms 51 and 32 evidence. God's overruling, in blessing to Solomon (Jedidiah), is contrasted with the message as to Ahab, "In his son's day will I bring evil upon his house." And Jezebel is far, far different from Bathsheba: her scheme illustrates the sin of Israel against Christ (Matt. 26. 59, 60). It is always helpful to read different portions of Scripture together.

There are also some remarkable contrasts as to the closing years of different lives. Aged Daniel in chapter 6 was as faithful as youthful Daniel in chapter 1, nor was Caleb at four score and five (Jos. 14. 10, etc.) any less determined to follow the Lord fully. But can the same thing be said of Solomon when old (1 Kings 11. 4, note Eccl. 4. 13, see 1 Kings 3. 7)? Of youthful Saul we read that which encourages (1 Sam. 10. 27, 11. 13-15), but how bitter the end, in spiritism and suicide! The words of 1 Samuel 15. 17 may convey a heart-impressive insight and warning, "When thou wast little in thine own sight" (cf. Hos. 13. 1). We also recollect Jehoash, who "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him" (2 Kings 12. 2), but after the death of Jehoiada he hearkened to the princes, and "remembered not" (2 Chron. 24. 17, 22). How needful is purpose of heart, to cleave unto the Lord, and how grateful we are for the true testimony of such an one as Paul the aged, "I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7). Are our own last days more devoted unto the Lord? Do we not well to be humbled, and to "be not high minded, but fear"?

Some families are in striking antithesis. Ananias and Sapphira "agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord" (Acts 5. 1-9), a contrast with the agreement of Matthew 18. 19, 20, and with Aquila and Priscilla, whose home is portrayed in Acts 18, Romans 16 and elsewhere. The defection of Demas in 2 Timothy 4. 10 contrasts sadly with the restoration of John Mark in the next verse, after faltering recorded in Acts 15. 38. Thus the historical records of Scripture are all arranged by the Holy Spirit that we may search our ways, and seek that reviving and fixity of heart which alone can bring God glory. May this be our privilege to His praise, to-day and ever.

1 John 5. 1 shows us that faith is living, and that all who believe also love, for faith worketh by love (Gal. 5. 6). Also we see that right relation to Him is right relation to those who are His. How much is contained in this verse.

"The fruit of the **Spirit**": "being fruitful in every good work": "the fruit of our lips": such words emphasize the living character of God's work in His own. How can a dead sinner have the **fruit** of the lips?

Parables in Miracles in the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE miracles of the Lord Jesus were all appointed evidences of His Messiahship (John 5. 36). Men ought to have believed because of the nature of these mighty works, and their accompaniments (John 6. 29, 14. 11). Miracles of themselves are not sufficient: they may be associated with the "lie" (2 Thess. 2. 9). But every circumstance proved otherwise in the unique life and witness of Christ. It is also helpful to observe that the miracles were in accord with His character as the One Who beheld the city and wept over it, and as the "Meek and Lowly" One; in accord, moreover, with His words that He came not to condemn but to save (John 12. 47). When did He use power to wound or kill? Nay, He healed, He raised up from the dead. He cast out demons. Everything was in grace. The nearest approach to wounding was in John 18. 6, where, in merciful warning, He caused a halt, in bringing some to fall backward, but, unlike Saul of Tarsus, who fell to the ground (Acts 22. 7), they repented not. Some may suggest miracles betokening judgment in connection with the driving of animals from the temple (though there is no indication of injuring one), and the **permission** for the "Legion" to enter the swine, but the **only** direct work of this nature was the **judgment** on the barren fig tree, not on a living being (Matt. 21. 19). This is of deep importance. It brings before us that every miracle had a message, in other words ALL WERE PARABLES, graciously designed to teach us something as to the way of salvation.

When, by God's grace, we realize this, we see the fuller beauty of the healing hand of the Lord. Not only did He have compassion on the bodies of men, but also He taught thereby the greater and deeper need, unveiling, moreover, the blessedness of salvation, followed by the rendering unto God of that which every faculty suggests. Did He open blind eyes? Verily, and are not sinners blinded as to the gospel (2 Cor. 4. 4)? How forcible is the record that one was "born blind." Is it not true that we have not only become blind?—We too were ever blind. But God's sovereign grace was, and is, not defeated. 'Tis such He delights to save. And our saved eyes, are claimed eyes. Even as the one who was thus blest in John 9 heard the message, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He That talketh with thee" (verse 37), so the eyes of our heart are opened to behold the beauty of the Lord (Ps. 27. 4), and wondrous things out of His law (Ps. 119. 18).

In like manner is it with every miracle on every part of the body, for there is a parallel spiritually. The reader will notice that apart from the more general statements, "He healed many," "He healed their sick," "healing every sickness and every disease," "as many as touched were made whole," there is a

definite emphasis on different parts of the body, for is not everything affected by the fall, and is not everything to be rendered to our gracious Lord in the new creation? Four times are we told of the blind (Matt. 9. 27-31, 12. 22, 20. 30-34, John 9. 1-30); four times is the Lord's victory over dumbness before us (Matt. 9. 32, 33, 12. 22, 15. 30, 31, Mark 9. 17-27). It is notable how the power of an evil spirit is emphasized each time in connexion with the closed mouth. How blessedly contrasted is the work of the Holy Spirit seen in the opened lips, as Psalm 51 illustrates. Twice we find a reference to the same one spirit as deaf (Mark 7. 37, Mark 9. 25), nor would we overlook the healing of Malchus' ear (Luke 22. 51), and the general record of Matthew 11. 5 with its fullness of meaning. How graciously our ears have been caused to hear the voice of the Son of God, and how important that they should ever be open. Twice fever was laid low (Matt. 8. 14, 15, John 4. 46-54), and likewise was it with paralysis (Matt. 8. 5-13, 9. 2-7). This would remind of Romans 5. 6, "When we were yet **without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." We cannot say **where** this paralysis was, but the hands and feet somewhat naturally come before us, and so is it as to the impotent man in John 5. 7. Nor can we forget the spirit of infirmity in Luke 13. 11-17, that hindered all lifting up toward heaven, and the withered hand of Matthew 12. 10-13, which could not be raised in prayer and praise. It is helpful to see a frequent "twofold" witness, and so we are not surprised to find the one leper in Matthew 8. 2-4, and the ten lepers in Luke 17. 12-19. Nor were **inward** diseases able to resist the mighty power of Christ. Where "many physicians" had failed, Christ was omnipotent, and the woman with the deep-seated issue of **blood** knew instantaneous relief, as definitely as the one suffering from **dropsy**, in Luke 14. 2-6. Our hearts call to mind the work of our Saviour, and the glorious contrast with these diseases when, in His death, "there came out blood and water."

Sin is not only deadly, it is death: but a gracious illustration of the precious words "quicken" and "passed from death into life" was seen when Christ raised the widow's son (Luke 7. 11-15), and Lazarus (John 11. 1-44), nor would we overlook the blessing of Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9. 18, 19). How often too, have we already seen the reference to Satan's work and its defeat (Acts 10. 38). Other specific cases impress:—the man in whom was the Legion (Mark 5. 2-20), and Mary Magdalene (Mark 16. 9, cf. Luke 8. 2, 3) and the man of Mark 1. 23-27.

Thus we learn not only that the corruption of sin affects every part of our being, so that none render to God that which is His due, but also that the purpose of Christ's work (1 John 3. 8) is already being manifested, although we only have the **earnest of the Spirit** now, and await the redemption of the body. But

even now we are to present our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6. 13), and to experience the salvation of our countenance (Ps. 42. 11, 43. 5). Even now our hands are to be holy (1 Tim. 2. 8), and our mouth is to show forth His praise (Ps. 51. 15), with a watch graciously set before it (Ps. 141. 3), that our speech may be always with grace (Col. 4. 6). Thus each miracle speaks to us revealing what God claims, and has He not the right to this? We are not our own, we are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6. 20). We are to hold back nothing from Himself.

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

UNCONSCIOUSLY OVERESTIMATING ONESELF.

- "The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (Matt. 19. 20).
- "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee" (Matt. 19. 27).
- "They say unto Him, We are able" (Matt. 20. 22).
- "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22. 33).
- "I will lay down my life for Thy sake" (John 13. 37).

There is NOT the pride of the Pharisee (Luke 18. 11, 12) in these utterances, but a reality,—and yet, a sad (and dangerous) lack of self-knowledge. Does not this speak to our hearts? Have not we failed in the same way? How little we realize our limitations, and how dependent we are on the Lord for everything—yes, **FOR EVERYTHING**. When Peter said, "We have forsaken all," he had not forsaken his self-confidence. When we begin to speak of self, and what we have done we always make a mistake. O for much more lowliness.

"ONE ANOTHER" IN JAMES.

- "Speak not evil of ONE ANOTHER, brethren" (4. 11).
- "Grudge not against ONE ANOTHER, brethren" (5. 9).
- "Confess your faults to ONE ANOTHER, and pray for ONE ANOTHER" (5. 16).

(The renderings "one of another," etc., are possible, but as "one another" is one word in Greek, it seems usually preferable to put the preposition in front).

"FIRE" IN ZECHARIAH.

Salvation. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (3. 2).

Preservation. "I will bring the third part through the fire" (13. 9).

God's Presence. "I will be a Wall of Fire round about, and will be the Glory in the midst of her" (2. 5).

Judgment. "She shall be devoured with fire" (9. 4, cf. 11. 1, 12. 6).

"Thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee."

Romans II. 18.

A VERY simple statement: an obvious fact. No one forgets this is nature: but how often pride enters, to hinder the remembrance in our Christian experience. "Thou bearest not the Root":—there is no glory to us in salvation, nor is there in service. We call to mind the words, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15. 16). We think of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and how the types of God's children, as distinguished from the types of Christ, ever needed a foundation, without which they would have fallen. So was it with the cherubim, and with the branches in the Lampstand. In like manner, the boards must rest on redemption-money sockets, and the laver had its foot or pedestal. "Thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee."

Thus there is a humbling message to shut out all self-esteem, and all boasting "against the branches" (Rom. 11. 17). I am quite as dependent on the Lord as any other branch. "One is your Master: and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23. 8). No one can be puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4. 6). We give nothing to our Lord till we have first received from Him: we do not help Him to sustain the tremendous weight, we ourselves are part thereof. He is alone.

But how refreshing is the thought "but the Root (bears) thee." The unseen Root is always the Same,—living, mighty, and unhindered. He will not fail to supply nourishment to each separate branch. There are many such, but One Root meets the need. If we are discouraged, do we not find comfort here? We look around: "circumstances" are perplexing. Ah, the work is not ours, the responsibility of the branch is not the maintenance of the tree. The Root is responsible. Our privilege is dependence: our strength is in "abiding."

We can boast,—boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1. 31). He is worthy. A "branch" is not sent forth to take charge of anything with the possibility of failure. The Lord remains the Root, wherever we are, physically or geographically. He "bears." He does not drop thee. As we have seen, that which removes self-confidence, removes fear, and brings in trustful peace and praise. It is our privilege to enjoy this fact, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

Faith does not make promises but takes and pleads them.

No Divine promise will break or shake.

It is not merely what we "do," but what we "are." God sees our whole being and life.

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"Christ in you, the Hope of Glory." Colossians 1. 27.

A Word of Introduction.

BY the constant and ever continuing grace of God we are permitted to minister the Word. How great is the glory of the gospel. It is "the power of God unto salvation." Never do we find that Christ used the word "religion." He ever emphasized "life." And we have no confidence in "it": we have full confidence in Him. As to salvation, from its beginning to its climax, we would emphasize a Person. HE died for us, HE lives to intercede for us, HE will soon come again for us. We have no other hope, no other message. These pages are not issued to emphasize a theory, nor to organize a system, but to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. His will for us, and His work in us are our joy. How blessed is "the gospel of the Glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 4), and how amazing are the words, "Christ in you, the Hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27). And the words are TRUE.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Parables in Miracles	65
Fellowship in Prayer	68
A Few Thoughts on Religion	69

Parables in Miracles in the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Continued)

Another fact comes strikingly before us. Considerably more than half the miracles of Christ were upon the body: this was the primary type. And hereby we learn, too, how important it is to glorify God therein. Moreover, may we not expect His

gracious help to-day with our bodies of humiliation? Are we not encouraged to bring everything to Him? How often human methods and worldly means deflect us from simple faith. It is so easy to go in the way of the Gentiles, and in our disease, like Asa, to seek not to the Lord but to the physicians (2 Chron. 16. 12).

There are other detailed miracles also. The first, in Cana of Galilee, changed water to wine (John 2. 1-11), and manifested the "glory" of Christ. Can there be any doubt as to the typical meaning? Six disciples are before us in John 1 (if we rightly read verse 41 that the **other** brought **his** brother to the Lord Jesus). These were empty when among the Jews (2. 6), but, when brought to Christ, received His word (verse 7), which was made fruitful by the living work of the Holy Spirit, revealing the excellencies of "the True Vine." Thus chosen vessels are still to bear His Name and show His glory. Fittingly this came as the climax of the "week" recorded in John 1 and 2. 1, in contrast with the sad climax of the week in Genesis 1-3, and the misuse of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so that the **shame** of the first Adam was contrasted with the **glory** of the last Adam. O that we may be vessels meet for the Master's use (2 Tim. 2. 21 with Acts 9. 15).

We approach also miracles connected with the sea. On more than one occasion the Lord Jesus stilled the storm (Matt. 8. 24-27, 14. 32). We cannot fail to see therein a reminder of His power over all nations, and also a picture of His sovereignty as to our lives, with their troublous experiences. These can only **surround**, He is nearer. Why should we be anxious? And with one word He can speak "Peace." It is deeply important to trust our lives to Him—His "I AM" (John 6. 20, lit.) is more than a doctrinal unveiling: He desires us to feel His presence and nearness (Heb. 13. 8). The fact that He had said, "Let us **pass over** unto the other side" (Mark 4. 35), was sufficient proof that (a) the disciples, as well as Himself, (b) should reach the shore. Unbelief was evident in failure to grasp these gracious hints. Hence His searching words, "Where is your FAITH?" (Luke 8. 25). We need to be stirred up, and spurred on, to fuller restful confidence in Himself. Faith is independent of CIRCUMstances, because dependent on Him.

The second of these miracles was accompanied by two others. Christ walked on the rough waves, against the wind: and He also enabled Peter so to do, as long as the disciple had faith. The case was unusual. The "need" was not to be compared with that of the blind and maimed. Why did Peter wish this? May we not learn from Christ's attitude that He sometimes responds to our desires, when our faith is weak, and when we request that which would not usually be granted? He condescends to the "wish" of the "child," and may grant a special encouragement which would not be sought, nor obtained, by one older and more established in the faith. The tender wisdom of our Father is ever manifest.

Nor can we forget the five miracles as to fish, and first as to the filled nets. Just as the parables of the wedding breakfast (Matt. 22. 1-14) and the supper (Luke 14. 15-24) are complementary, the latter suggesting "that Day," so is it here. In

Luke 5 we behold a broken net, and two ships, which begin to sink: in John 21 an unbroken net, counted fish, and no thought of sinking. The gospel proclamation is before us in each case, but do we not see **our** failure in the former? Many fish there fall out, even as one is turned out in Matthew 22. But, just as none are lost when the Holy Spirit brings in Luke 14, so is it in John 21. Such parallels are striking and illustrate once more the parabolic nature of the miracles, and the importance of these two aspects of truth, even our responsibility, and God's own sovereign and ever resultful work. On each occasion we are made yet more conscious of our own weakness, for each previous "night" had been spent fruitlessly, until the Lord sent forth and equipped. Is not this practical lesson of deep importance to-day?

A third miracle with a fish (Matt. 17. 24-27) reminds us of the Lord's condescension once more, "Lest we should offend them." The type of redemption-money is very important (Ex. 30. 11-16), and how fitting that the one **fish** on this occasion should be pierced by the **hook**, and not caught by a net, and that the standard coin ("stater" margin), of silver, the redemption metal, should be found ready, as soon as the judgment reached the fish, to meet the appointed payment of two, the same number as the cherubim. It is deeply interesting to notice that though Christ clearly indicated here **He** needed no redemption, He explained the **principle** involved, by using the striking words, "FOR Me and thee." Redemption necessitates that which is complete, for, and on behalf of, a person. How we needed a complete Saviour to be our complete Substitute. Thanks be unto God, there was, and is, and will be, no defect in the Lord Jesus Christ. Both miracles of feeding the multitudes include fish, and remind us of God's gift of food in Genesis 1 and 9. Moreover when God revealed the way of salvation, whether in Genesis 3 or Exodus 12, we find His gracious instructions as to food. Once again we have **two** related miracles. This twofoldness is evidently frequent in Scripture. The provision for families ("besides women and children") is spiritually helpful, and the baskets over have surely a meaning. "Twelve" on the first occasion may remind us that twelve persons had waited on the others, and he that feedeth others shall be fed (cf. Prov. 11. 25). But inasmuch as the number 5,000 has a similar prominence in Acts 4. 4 (a climax as to the united church), may it not be that we obtain a twofold view of the work of Christ, as in John 11. 50, namely the application of His blessing to believers of the present dispensation (and those preceding, Heb. 12. 23), and the subsequent application of the blessing, the overplus, for those of all twelve tribes to be blest when the Lord comes back (Zech. 12. 10, Jer. 31. 9, Rom. 11. 26, 27)? If this is so, the mistake of those who received the earthly blessing seen in John 6. 14, 15, becomes more striking. The second miracle, with the seven large baskets, may give another aspect, for the number there is based not on

the servants but the loaves (Matt. 15. 34), and "seven" often speaks of completeness of peace, and may look into the glorious eternal future for the redeemed. Surely there is a fulness in Christ for the present and for eternity. May we rejoice and have confidence in Him more and more. The general practical message refreshes us in our present condition. We never bring anything to Him without receiving more back: He does not work on the narrowest margin to stint, but delights to give abundantly, even as He abundantly pardons. It is sad to read John 6 after the first miracle. John 12. 37 has many illustrations.

(If the Lord will, to be concluded).

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

IT is not a small matter to aid others in prayer. We are entirely dependent on the Lord, but He is pleased to help through "one another." I feel that there is a real blessing in changing the word from "others" to "one another." This unique "inseparable word made of two words," is essentially plural, showing a twofold responsibility for each of the members contained in it.

We think of Moses in Exodus 17. He prayed for Joshua. He could not be "doing" what Joshua was doing, nor vice versa. They worked together. The aged servant of God, unlike the Lord Jesus (Heb. 7. 25) was weary. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, a beautiful reminder of the principle of Matthew 18. 19, 20).

It is a joy to know that Aaron could not do exactly what Moses did, but each had his place. So is it to-day. When one brother prays another can say "Amen," and this signing of the prayer with the name of the Lord Jesus is mighty. The great point is not prominence, but the Lord's will.

We call to mind Ephesians 6. 18, 19. Even Paul (why should we say, "Even"?—the greater the privilege the greater the need) longed for the support of praying believers. How many value your prayers? The writer is conscious that in many lands children of God are upholding him day by day. And one's heart longs that this may increase. A missionary prayer life is more efficacious than many think. Not all can take a railway ticket: not all are called to journey and preach, but all are called to wait on God.

It is worthy of notice that in Acts 12. 6, Peter was sleeping, and equally worthy of notice that the saints were awake at Mary's house praying. It was necessary as an evidence of faith that he should sleep, and as an evidence of love that they should not sleep. Thus the Lord worked, and praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20), that will not faint (Luke 18. 1), is mighty to-day. May we ever experience this God-granted privilege.

A Few Thoughts on Religion.

HOW often we hear this word to-day. But how many times did the Lord Jesus use it, in the Divinely appointed record of His sayings? NOT ONCE. This is striking. And, indeed, such a term as "Christianity" is not found at all in the New Testament. Man delights in defining, and in abstract terms. God's standpoint is not that of philosophy. Indeed, we might well observe that the revelation of God's grace in the present dispensation affords a contrast with the prison, with the barracks, with the factory, and with the college. The aspect is that of the home. God is the Father, not of all men but of all who are redeemed by the blood of His beloved Son, and brought to know this. The Bible is a family book. We do not read of "the Christian religion." The Lord Jesus emphasizes life, a new life, an eternal life. Such an unveiling not only takes away the glory of man: it shows the blessed certainty of salvation in a living union with our personal Saviour.

"All religions are good," said a man, adding that their exponents were not good. But though there may be some good principles incorporated in many religions, there is poison mixed therewith. And even if one could be made which was good throughout, as a "religion" it would be powerless. The very word implies this. It is Latin in origin, and denotes "binding back." Religion can only restrain and modify, what is already found in a man. It can give nothing. It cannot meet his need as a poor lost sinner, destitute of forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life. The gospel of the grace of God is far different from "religion." It is the power of God unto salvation, because the righteousness of God is therein revealed (Rom. 1. 17).

There is nothing unfinished in the ground of the gospel. Religion waits for a man, and for his righteousness. It waits in vain. It demands, but grace gives. It may be that some reader is still looking to religion for "peace with God." He (or she) is doomed to disappointment. The blessedness of salvation is when we are broken and humbled, to turn from all that is of man, and find everything "in Christ."

When a sinner is graciously saved, "religion" comes in blessedly. Not the counterfeit religion of Colossians 2. 18,—for it is this very word which is there rendered "worshipping." No, but the "pure religion and undefiled" of James 1. 27. There we see its true setting. There is nothing about the way of salvation in this verse. The believer is already viewed as blessed and saved by God's grace. He is already a beloved brother. Now he is bidden and encouraged to be an obedient doer of the Word, not to gain pardon, but in gratitude to God for His love. There is the call to outward godliness, for "religion" is external and manifest. In the outworking of Philippians 2. 12, 13 we need the "binding back" in the power of the Holy Spirit, of that

which is natural and selfish. We need the graciously enabled self-control which pleases God, and which does not find its outflow in ceremonies and rubrics, but, as Isaiah 58. 10 illustrates (the whole ch: helps), in the manifest godliness that is truly thoughtful and kind. God marked out His care of old for the widow and the fatherless and the stranger. Is it then surprising that He expects from His own, in the new covenant, a correspondence with His will? Not a religion of pomp and bare outwardness, but one of living grace in little things, even as the love that pleases God in 1 Corinthians 13 is seen, not by striking works that men applaud, but by the constant little things which are truly fruit, and in harmony with His will.

"EXHORT."

"To call along side." Exhortation is distinguished from teaching, e.g., "He that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation (Rom. 12. 7, 8): "Give attention to (the) reading, to (the) exhortation, to (the) doctrine" (1 Tim. 4. 13): "These things teach and exhort" (1 Tim. 6. 2). Barnabas was called "the son of exhortation" (rendered "consolation," Acts 4. 36), and in Antioch he "exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11. 23). We observe the apostle's emphasis on exhortation which was thought to be "necessary" in 2 Corinthians 9. 5, and was manifested in homely love at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2. 11). We notice the repeated words "we exhort," "I exhort" (1 Thess. 4. 1, 5. 14, 2 Thess. 3. 12, 1 Tim. 2. 1). And those "exhorted" were encouraged to "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4. 2, Tit. 2. 6, 15). Exhorting "one another daily" (Heb. 3. 13) is a privilege, and "so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10. 25). The epistles of Peter, too, are characterized by exhortation (1 Pet. 5. 12, cf. Heb. 13. 22). O that we may have more of this gracious ministry, this stimulating and arousing ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

How beautiful are the "twofold" thoughts of Scripture, and their appointed order. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1. 9, and 10. 13, "God is Faithful," but, in the FIRST, the **fellowship** of His dear Son, in the SECOND, the **way** out of temptation. So in Hebrews 1. 12, "Thou art the Same," and so in 13. 8, but, in the FIRST, the Deity of Christ, and His glory, in the SECOND, what He IS in our daily life to-day. In like manner, Hebrews 10. 19 is **before** 13. 13. How blessed for us. We call to mind also Colossians 1. 23, "A minister" of the gospel, then in verse 25, in glorious sequence, a minister of the church. May He be glorified as the Holy Spirit applies to our hearts and causes them to burn.

A DANGER.

WE are never free from danger. When one is in a mine, one may agree that the danger is **increased**, and likewise when warfare surrounds. But there is no place of absolute safety on earth. And so is it spiritually. Our danger of "falling" may be even greater when we are free from fear. Self-confidence may have entered, and carelessness may lay us low. The enemy is subtle. The Thessalonians were rightly longing for the Coming of the Lord Jesus. This was misused to bring in erroneous teaching, and some acted as if the Day of the Lord had begun. They laid aside ordinary occupation. The sin rebuked in 2 Thessalonians 3 was already in the view of the Holy Spirit in the first epistle (4. 11). How many evils begin very gradually. At Philippi there were no saddening parallels with Corinth, but **there** the enemy encouraged friction between two whose names were blessedly in the book of life, and who had both shown devotedness to the Lord (ch. 4. 2, 3). Doubtless they both could "get on well" with many others, but not with one another. Thus there was a real loss to the whole assembly, for we are members one of another. And dangers are more insidious than we think. Even Moses spoke unadvisedly, and Josiah omitted to seek God's will. Many years of Christian service do not free us from the need of godly care **to-day** "Without Me ye can do nothing" is never out of date. The Holy Spirit's reference to "sleep" is most impressive, for nothing is more overpowering, and paralysing of a firm attitude, and it steals upon us. There is no outward display. O that this parallel may speak to our humbled and trustful hearts.

LEVITICUS 7. 18.

"Not accepted . . . neither imputed unto him that offereth it." How solemn are such words. The types were not matters of human choice, any deviation from God's will was perilous. Our hearts rejoice that our adorable Lord perfectly fulfilled the Will of the Father. The antitype would not—could not—fail in the tiniest detail. Where there is acceptance there is Divine reckoning. And God will not allow anything to undo what He accounts. In faith's **participation** there was the consciousness of this gracious reckoning. Possibly this verse will help many as to the meaning of the word "impute" which is so often used in a bad sense to-day (e.g., impute motives), and with the thought of a mere fiction. How different was God's "imputing" with regard to that which He provided, and how blessedly the offerer should have realized the accounting to him of the spotless and well-pleasing sacrifice.

A FEW NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 7. 1-15.

1, "Promises"—many (1. 20, 2 Pet. 1. 4): particularly ch. 6. 16-18. O to value such words of love. All filthiness, even inward, must be hated (Jas. 4. 8). Oh, how easy is iniquity entwined around holy exercises, as the ivy,—or as dross with gold. 2, Love's welcome (1 Sam. 12. 3). 3, No personal motive (cf. 13. 7, Phil 4. 17). 4, How intense the love, and delight at all tokens of good in the Corinthians: are we **thus** refreshed when a brother is revived? 5, How deep were Paul's feelings (ch. 11. 28, 29). 6, "He Who encourageth the lowly" (Jas. 4. 6). 7, cf. 1. 6. "Fervent mind," same word "zeal" in 11, a godly "jealousy" for God's glory. When we see what God quickly wrought in so many at Corinth, after the carelessness, etc., let us **not** lose courage as to revival **to-day**. 8, ch. 2. 4 shows us how much Paul "**felt**," when needing thus to write: if we can rebuke another easily, it is doubtful if we are "prepared" to reprove at all, to God's glory. 9, "Damage," suffer loss, in that day (cf. wording in 1 Cor. 3. 15). 9, 10, 11, "Godly," "**according to God**," a wondrous thought. 11, "Wrought," God's work is fruitful (Heb. 4. 12, 1 Thess. 2. 13): O for deeper feelings. 13, "Joy" repeatedly mentioned: Why? Love! 15, "Inward affection": from same root "Moved with compassion." Too much is "outward," superficial.

How often we have misunderstood God's loving tests of living faith. His seeming "delay" is not delay. God has the key. Saul was premature (1 Sam. 13. 11-14). Israel **waited not** for God's counsel. God will work as His children **WAIT** on Him. There was **no sign of the falling wall** till the seventh day. No token of the cloud was given to Elijah **till** the seventh time. No cleansing at all was effected at the fifth, or even the sixth, time with Naaman. We sometimes expect evidences too soon, instead of continuing instant in prayer. Joshua had God's word: Elijah had heard God's "voice" (not only "sound" as to the rain) 1 Kings 18. 41. For Naaman there was "the saying of the man of God." "He gave none inheritance . . . yet He promised" (Acts 7. 5) was sufficient for believing Abraham. God's time is best (Hab. 2. 3). Do we believe?

"Your feet shod with the preparation (or readiness) of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6. 15). Gospel proclamation is associated with the feet, not only with the mouth. So is it in Romans 10. 15, "How beautiful are the **feet** of them that preach the gospel," not how beautiful is the language. Eloquence is not God's object. And have we not a spiritual parallel with Joshua 1. 3? God gave the land, but the claiming must be not merely with wish and word, but with the sole of the feet—a godly walk, as that of Enoch. Is not this the only way we can truly appropriate our Father's exceeding great and precious promises?

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

OUR Father delights in the gladness of His children. He gives liberally, and pours out blessings. We read of the exceeding riches of His grace and of plenteous redemption. He lovingly bestows "grace AND PEACE." The fact that epistle after epistle commences thus makes clear His joy in His children's joy. And the word "multiplied" is a refreshment. But the experience is not bare emotion: it cannot be separated from Himself. Whereas the wish of Satan in Genesis 3 is a sudden,ing contrast, the message of John 17. 3 affords a helpful background (for 2 Peter 1. 2), and it is evident that we cannot separate the Father and the Son (1 John 2. 23, Rev. 22. 1). 2 Peter starts with knowledge and ends with it (3. 18). And the desire of God's servant of old, encouraged, approved and recorded by inspiration, is surely our wish for one another to-day. This is not merely a magazine to help in the preparation of a subject, nor to promote mental Bible study, but with the deeper object of the deeper experience of God's beloved children.

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Day of Pentecost	73
Parables in Miracles	76
Have Angels Wings?	77
Graious Omissions in Hebrews 11.	79

The Day of Pentecost.

In Acts 2.

THERE is no thought of exhausting this precious Scriptural subject. If a few meditations lead us to seek more personal harmony with the Lord's will, and more of the power of the Holy Spirit personally, to God be the glory.

The Day of Pentecost was then "being fulfilled," as the Divine wording of verse 1 should be translated. "The feasts of the Lord" were indeed types: we know that Christ was "our

Passover," and the sheaf raised up (cf. John 12. 24) in Leviticus 23. 11, on "the morrow after the Sabbath," the first day, was the type of Himself in resurrection, and the Basis for the "firstfruits" on "the morrow after the seventh Sabbath" (verse 16). And was not this second firstfruits a picture of the church, on resurrection ground, and "in Christ Jesus"?

The deep and manifest unity in Acts 2. 1 is precious: God still works mightily when there is loving and undisputing harmony, and true waiting on Him. The parallel with Exodus 40. 33, 34 and 2 Chronicles 5. 13, 14 (note 120 in verse 12 as in Acts 1. 15) was then graciously granted, and the word "filled" comes twice more in Acts 2. 2 and 4 (the same root in verse 1, "being fulfilled"). Here then was the fruition of Christ's promise in Acts 1. 5, and we realize the appointed **character** of the church, and of the individual believer also (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20), remembering John 1. 14, 16. What manner of persons ought we to be!

Observe the striking **contrast** with the "exceeding magnificent" temple of Solomon, which is also continued in the beautiful living miracle contrasted with "the beautiful Gate" of the material temple in Acts 3. In the present dispensation God emphasizes living stones and uniting with Christ (1 Pet. 2. 4, 5). Correspondingly there is no longer a thought of a journey to an earthly city, or incorporation with an earthly nation, however favoured. The gospel comes to sinners, as such, wherever they are, in accord with their birth in all lands (Acts 2. 8). Thus the gift of tongues was the solemn witness to **Israel**, "this people" (1 Cor. 14. 21, 22 with Isa. 28. 11, 12, 14, 16). The dispensation was changed. This revealed meaning of the gift is often overlooked.

Alas, the Day of Pentecost showed, even as the Day of Crucifixion, "the thoughts of many hearts," and mockers dared to say, "These men are full of new wine." Thus the gospel is still "a savour of death unto death" to them that perish. But it pleased God by the "foolishness" of the preaching to save them (1 Cor. 1. 21), and the Scripture-full address of Peter was used to open the door, and in contrast with the 3,000 slain when the law was given (Ex. 32. 28), about 3,000 men believed. How definitely the address was full of Christ. Truly the grace of God was exceeding abundant, and the gospel was "the power of God unto salvation." O that we may **expect** more from His gracious hand even now. That hand is not shortened (Isa. 59. 1).

The Holy Spirit's record is impressive. The hearers were pricked in their heart. A merely mental assent is not spiritual faith. There was no emotional counterfeit of revival in Acts 2. **God's** work was deep, and is to-day. The answer to the earnest question, "What shall we do?" rightly emphasized repentance, a testimony which some urge should be largely omitted to-day.

But the sovereignty of grace does not make repentance unnecessary. We see the full reply:—

- (a) "Repent, and
- (b) Be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and
- (c) Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

We acknowledge the Divinely revealed order,—Repentance and then baptism. There is no Scripture for baptism without or before repentance. The **true** "Infant baptism" is that of **spiritual** infants: anything else is the baptism of those "dead," without the Lord's authority, without any Scriptural precept or precedent, and a denial of Scriptural principles, yea, an "addition" to the Lord's word and will that leads to the omission of His will later, and to many dangerous deceits. O that believers may neither alter, nor omit,—nor delay,—the baptism in water which their Lord has condescended to appoint, as a precious testimony of their relation to Him and His work.*

The command here was **with a promise**, "Ye shall receive." We have no doubt that God kept and ever keeps His word. These souls, convicted and quickened by the Spirit that their repentance might be living, a repentance from dead works (Heb. 6. 1), now experienced a sealing, and the Spirit of God was sent into their believing hearts (Gal. 4. 6), and they were thus baptized in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12. 13). The Holy Spirit's own description in verse 41 harmonizes:

- "Repent." "They that gladly received his Word."
- "Be baptised." "Were baptised."
- "Ye shall receive." "Were added."

(If the Lord will, to be continued).

* Leaflets gladly sent, and correspondence gladly offered to help any, that there may be the removal of difficulties and the joy of Psalm 119. 60.

GRACE REIGNING.

Why did God love a sinner lost?
And why redeem at priceless cost?
My judgment hath the Saviour borne—
Guilty, rebellious and forlorn.
And now, by grace, in Christ am I,
Nor will He His own work deny;
Eternal life is mine, secured
Because my judgment Christ endured.
Wondrous the love that reached to me,
That set the guilty sinner free;
My life to Him must hence belong,
My Saviour, and my Strength and Song.

Parables in Miracles in the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Concluded.)

We begin to realize how large a proportion of Christ's miracles concerned the bodies of men, and how important is our service thereby. Salvation is not merely a mental theory. We are also impressed with the absence of miracle for our Lord's own personal need (observe Matt. 4. 2-4). Nor did He provide food miraculously for his disciples in Matthew 12. 1. Many were the miracles for those of whom we know nothing more. In like manner in the Acts there are many wonders, and Paul refers to such in Romans 15. 19, albeit he personally took pleasure in strengthlessness; and alludes to Timothy's frequent infirmities, and left Trophimus at Miletum sick. Faith seeks not for personal convenience, or that which could be produced to suit one's own apparent needs.

The one miracle of judgment illustrates this still more. "One" fig tree,—(this description is Divinely emphasized), claimed by its leaves to be premature, and distinct from all others. Like to Israel, it had profession, but likewise had "no fruit." The fig appears to picture Israel as to "privilege" apart from Christ. HE is likened to the Vine and the Olive, and Israel are grafted into the Olive, Romans 11. 24-27, a saved nation of elect and saved individuals. In this connexion we read the solemn words, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever." There will be no national restoration for that nation apart from personal salvation. The context also tells of fruitlessness (Matt. 21. 33-41), and the interpretation has been seen elsewhere in connexion with Israel, who are plainly pictured in Luke 13. 6, and in Matthew 24. 32.* Nor can we forget the linked words, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23. 38). Israel failed, even as Adam, who used fig leaves in vain: but, in contrast, the Israelites indeed (John 1. 47, 48) were brought out of the sheepfold of Judaism (John 10. 3) to a living union with the Lord Jesus. We have no hope in a Jewish "Zionism" any more than in the world's "nationalism." All "fruit" is in the Lord Jesus, and all because of His atonement. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Doubtless there are many other lessons wrapped up in the judgment on the pretentious fig tree. The context shows how the Lord Jesus instructed His disciples thereby as to prayer and faith. How blessedly we see His use of a miracle of withering to draw our hearts to desire loving fruitfulness in prayer, by the Holy Spirit's gracious power.

And so it is with every parable and miracle of our Lord. There is a fulness, beyond human calculation, in each deed and word of His (John 21. 25). Grace was poured over His lips,

* See booklet on *Parables Concerning Fruit*.

and all He said was living (John 6. 63). And in like manner, His miracles, wrought many years ago, still speak. We have thought of them, but have we sought the application to our own hearts as fully as we might have done? By grace, when we read of miracles of healing we thought of our members belonging to the Lord, and also of the spiritual parallel in the opening of our eyes, and ears, and hearts unto Himself. But have we soon forgotten? Is the application continual? How definitely we need, and may humbly expect, an anointing with fresh oil (Ps. 92. 10), in the gracious power of the Holy Spirit.

Have Angels Wings?

HOW often are pictures found depicting angels as women, or with the faces of little children, and with wings. The first question to arise is, "Should we use such paintings at all?" Then comes the further question, "Why does the Holy Spirit never liken them to women or babes, but to men, whenever they are described?"—E.g. Judges 13. 3, 6, Luke 24. 4, Acts 1. 10 ("Andres," the special word for "males"). And yet more, Why is the only exception linked with evil angels (Zech. 5. 9), two women?—and there, strikingly, we do have wings. May another question be permitted? Why are the cherubim and seraphim (e.g. Isa. 6, Ezek. 10) always associated with wings, and never called angels, and why, when the word "angel" is employed is mention of wings invariably omitted? Surely we should say that if God has not revealed "wings" we would not add to His revelation, whatever men have thought and artists have suggested.

The great power of "pictures," in affecting man's belief, even against Scripture, must be realized in connexion with what has been said as to "men," nor can we forget the idolatry associated with pictures of the Lord Jesus, and "saints." How needful it is to return to the simplicity of Scripture. It may be said that in one verse the word "fly" is used (Rev. 14. 6). God can make His ministers a flame of fire and can even give wings when He pleases, but would it not be going beyond His revelation to build on this passage, where wings are not mentioned, and where the verb used is not only employed (as in English) in classical Greek for a horde's quick movement, but in the Sept., for the flying roll (Zech. 5. 1, 2)? We also call to mind Daniel 9. 21, where there is only the description of a man. When Israel fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines (Isa. 11. 14), there will not be the necessity for material wings. It is a privilege to keep to God's revelation. All reasoning and imagining beyond are dangerous.

* We are deeply concerned as to the tendency to portray the Lord Jesus, Who was God, manifest in the flesh. To guess in such a matter, and to go beyond Scripture, would seem to us more that unwarranted, although God may have overruled.

Unconscious Irreverence.

WE have all fallen into it. I do not mean an intentional irreverence. We should have been saddened by anything of that character. But in how many ways and on how many occasions have we forgotten to "sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself." It is true that all "unbelief" sins thus (Num. 20. 12). But I am rather thinking now of such things as slovenliness in prayer and ministry, and in various details of a life in which we desire to walk with God.

Passages of Scripture have, it may be, been quoted "lightly," and a misapplication has been permitted. Or there may have been a smile at that which was sinful. We have not referred to the things that God hates with a sense of His majesty. We have possibly permitted such words as "It would be amusing if it were not serious" in a manner that half-apologises for a wrong attitude. And in a thousand ways we have failed to show the standpoint of the psalmist when his heart stood in awe of God's word.

Do I think myself immune from these sins? By no means. Do I plead for a solemnity that buries brightness? Far otherwise. The Lord desires His people to have joy, but heavenly joy never treats sin triflingly, nor misuses Scripture. Its purity is its truefulness. O that we may grow up into Christ in all things.

"THAT . . . BELIEVE."

(In the Gospel of John).

- "To bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe" (1. 7).
- "This (miracle) is the work of God, that ye may believe on Him Whom He hath sent" (6. 29).
- "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent (= that) ye may believe" (11. 15).
- "I said it that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (11. 42).
- "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He" (13. 19).
- "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (14. 29).
- "That they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (17. 21).
- "He knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (19. 35).
- "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (20. 31).

THE FIRST AND LAST USE OF CERTAIN WORDS.

A Book—Gen. 5. 1, "The Generations of Adam"—how contrasted is "this book" (Rev. 22. 19), and its "revelation of Jesus Christ." How contrasted too is "the book of life of the Lamb." We were of Adam, believers are now in Christ.

"The tree of life" is the first specific tree (Gen. 2. 9),—before "the tree of knowledge"—and it is the last also (Rev. 22. 14).

The first death of a guiltless one seems to be found in Genesis 3. 21, and the last sacrifice mentioned is the Guiltless One (Rev. 22. 3).

The first marriage is a type (Gen. 2. 22-25), but how blessedly contrasted is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19. 9), and the showing of the bride, the "Lamb's" wife (Rev. 21. 9).

The first river is found in Eden (Gen. 2. 10): the last is from the throne (Rev. 22. 1).

The first garden (Gen. 2. 8), with its sin, is so different from the last, where the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead (John 19. 41).

The first real clothing (Gen. 3. 21) prepares us for the last, whether in Revelation 19. 8 or 22. 14 ("Blessed are they that wash their robes"), throughout glorifying God and His grace.

The first question ("Where art thou?" Gen. 3. 9), to Adam in his shame, reminds us that the last question addressed to a man is, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" (Rev. 7. 13).

These are only samples, to suggest to God's dear children the manifold possibilities of such prayerful Bible study.

Gracious omissions in Hebrews 11.

GOD never hides His people's sins in a way that would excuse. But He does not everlastingly, or even frequently remind of them.

We know how "Terah took" Abraham at the outset, and Genesis 11 says that though they started to go unto Canaan they only came to Haran till his father was dead (Acts 7. 3, 4). But Hebrews 11. 8 lays stress on the faith—Abraham "being called" (better than "when," etc.).

In like manner, we observe the gracious reference to Sarah's faith, not to her sad, but temporary failure in Genesis 18. 13-15.

Isaac was humbled as to the saddening part the flesh played in Genesis 27, but God records the faith that viewed the things to come, even though so much dross was mingled therewith. Painful indeed, was the way many of God's children learnt, and is it not so with us still?

Rahab's faith is before us in verse 31, not the unbelief, which might have endangered all, had not God graciously forgiven, and overcome, and freed. How important that we should

see the **record** of the sin in Joshua 2, but not the **repetition** in Hebrew 11, that we may neither excuse sin, **nor** advertise it. Thus we are instructed how to deal with other believers.

The same grace is seen in that Gideon's **faith**, not that which became a snare (Jud. 8. 27) is here before us, and Barak's **faith**, not his hesitancy, and Samson's **faith**, not his sad admixture of fleshliness. Correspondingly in Revelation 2 and 3 the Lord usually mentions what He can commend first. If only we had learnt of Him in this, how many misunderstandings, and, alas, quarrels among those who bear His Name might have been avoided. O that we may see all of Christ we can in our brethren.

Jottings.

The Watchmen to pray:—

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence."

(Isa. 62. 6, marg.).

The Watchman to warn:—

"So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me." (Ezek. 33. 7).

"Ye shall compass the city . . . Thus shalt thou do six days . . . Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise . . . until the day that I bid you shout; then shall ye shout . . . And it came to pass on the seventh day that they arose about the dawning of the day . . . At the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." Joshua 6 3, 10, 15, 16.

"There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times . . . At the seventh time . . . Behold there ariseth a little cloud." 1 Kings 18. 43, 44.

"Go and wash in Jordan seven times . . . Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan . . . and he was clean." 2 Kings 5. 10, 14.

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

Intensity in prayer is marked by such words as "ask, seek, knock," "Pour out your heart," "pray without ceasing," "watching thereunto with all perseverance," "labouring fervently for you in prayers" (see marg: of "strive together" in Rom. 15. 30). Have we this earnestness? The **two** parables of importunity (the only two) are prayer parables. Nothing else is marked out as so wondrously altering usual arrangements in our Lord's life. (Luke 6. 12, and Gethsemane).

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God."

1 Corinthians 1. 24.

A Word of Introduction.

AGAIN a few pages concerning an inexhaustible subject. We have not only a theme but the Theme, a Person in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2. 3), and in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2. 9). Our desire is that this magazine may ever be a signpost, pointing more, and yet more, to CHRIST. We have not a religion for the brain and for profession, but a Saviour for the life and for possession. Something in the head is very different from Someone in the heart by faith (Eph. 3. 17). It is our joy that God has enabled hitherto, and we do not doubt His enabling as long as He is pleased. If souls are blessed and believers strengthened to His glory, we praise God. The days are not bright, but He abideth Faithful. Much around would sadden, but we would look upward. Let His Own be more united in His way and will. It is ever a joy to hear from believers who respond to this prayerful wish.

CONTENTS:—

	Page
The Same Words: Two Aspects	81
The Day of Pentecost (concluded)	83
"He shall read therein all the days of his life"	85
Some Thoughts on the Earthly Life of the Lord Jesus	86
Missionary Churches	87

The Same Words: Two Aspects.

"OUR God is a Consuming Fire" (Heb. 12. 29). To which verse in Deuteronomy does the Holy Spirit refer? To chapter 4. 24 or 9. 3? May we not say to both? But how important to observe the two contexts. In the earlier verse we have a holy warning against sin; in the latter we find a wondrous promise of possession. God's fire is seen against Israel's own sins, and against Israel's enemies. And is it not important that we too should remember both views of His holiness? If we misuse His grace to excuse one sin, the message comes, with

living power, "Our God is a consuming Fire." Hence the call to serve and worship with godly fear. But if we momentarily hesitate as to the kingdom, and a timid fear would enter, how blessed to realize God's fire to drive out the Anakim: "the Lord thy God, He it is That doth go before thee," "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord hath said" (Deut. 31. 8, Jos. 14. 12).

Next we think of the words, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 31, 2 Cor. 10. 17). In the earlier context these words have a doctrinal setting as to our complete salvation. We cannot attribute anything to ourselves, nor can we boast in self at all. In the latter we have the thought of Christian service. All our labour must be in the Lord: yes, all is by grace (1 Cor. 15. 10, 58). How important that we should boast, for the verse encourages such true boasting perpetuation. It is not written only that we should silence vain self-confidence. The **wrong** must be displaced by the right, and we may even translate, "He that boasteth in the Lord, let him be boasting" (i.e., ever continue this attitude). O that it may be ours to-day, and thus there will be no room for pride.

And now we think of "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." 1 Corinthians 5. 6 reminds us of unholy practice, and its dangerous leavening power: Galatians 5. 9 rather brings before us the evil effect of wrong doctrine. And thus the Holy Spirit shows us how the life should grow up into Christ in all things. Do we not feel that these twin perils surround? But is not the Lord equal to our every need and emergency? Let us seek grace to deal with every form of leaven.

May we not say that the words "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" are associated in John 17. 14, with the world's rejection (hence the word "because"), but in 16 with God's preservation, inasmuch as His beloved ones so definitely belong to Him. Without question, the repeated commands, as "Fear not," and "Praise ye the Lord," have specially contextual shades of thought, showing the Lord's merciful appointments suited to us in **all** our varied circumstances. The Holy Spirit's reference to Habakkuk 2. 4 in Romans 1. 17, and Galatians 3. 11 lays special stress on faith as distinct from the works of the law: Hebrews 10. 37 has much to tell us concerning the continued living faith of a believer as the evidence of his relation to the Lord Jesus, in contrast with the mental profession which may be followed by utter denial. Somewhat strikingly Hebrews 11 unveils to us the inner source of power in the case of both Abraham and Rahab, but in James 2. 21 and 25 we see the **outward** fruit of the very same faith. Thus one narrative has a blessed twofoldness to meet our spiritual need at all times. How important then that the Scripture should be a living book applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is fuller than we at first realize. May our hearts ever be in a condition to receive God's special message for us thereby.

The Day of Pentecost (Concluded)

We acknowledge that this is "the promise" (Acts 2. 39), and turn to Ephesians 1. 13, where there is the same emphasis on them that are "afar off," in chapter 2. 17. Our hearts rejoice that the promise was not limited to "your children" (a holy contrast with Matt. 27. 25), but extended to "all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall **call**," inasmuch as **Gentiles** are made "fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His **promise** in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3. 6.). If we have repented and been thus baptized, may we not humbly believe that our gracious God and Father has fulfilled "the promise," and that we too have received this gift? But do we in experience possess our possessions, or is the Holy Spirit grieved (Eph. 4. 30), so that His guidance, and work, and power are not realized. May it not be that many dear children of God have thought there has been a **new** fact when they have been granted a **new** experience of that blessed fact which has been so largely unrealized? Thanks be unto God, for all true and humble stirring of our hearts to know the personal Holy Spirit (John 14. 17), though often the descriptive language has been, alas, inexact, and unscriptural; and, moreover, there have been counterfeits. These sad thoughts must not blind us to the reality that both a **crisis** and a **continuance** are needed as to the consciousness of "the promise" of the Holy Spirit, beyond His initial quickening work.

It is wonderful to see God's grace in providing a complete salvation at amazing cost, and to realize that He still "calls" (cf. Rom. 8. 30, 1 Pet. 2. 9). How grateful should those be who are "in Christ Jesus," and how gladly should they "keep His commandments" (John 14. 15) including baptism, which is emphasized in connexion with His "**authority**" (Matt. 28. 18, 19 lit.).

The work of God is deep and permanent. Hence we see that these "**continued steadfastly** in the apostles' doctrine." Doctrine is important. Salvation by **grace** does not make us careless as to the **truth** (John 1. 14, 17). Christ and His words are inseparable. If there is to be godly practice there must be God's doctrine, for an assembly is "a pillar and ground of the **truth**" (1 Tim. 3. 15). Doctrine is not only in the head, it is at **once** followed by "fellowship." The context refers to the giving up of self's possessions (verse 45 with ch. 4. 32), and the freewill offering of Romans 15. 26 is, literally, "fellowship" and not only "contribution" (cf. 2 Cor 9. 13). The Lord's people should give cheerfully for the Lord's work (2 Cor. 9. 7). But this is only one expression of "fellowship" (2 Cor. 13. 14, Phil. 2. 1). God's doctrine is not to make us self-assertive and quarrelsome, but the reverse. And then (**not** ignoring baptism, or before it, **not** apart from a Scriptural assembly) we find "the

breaking of the bread, and the prayers." How few believers are sufficiently exercised about the Lord's **Supper** according to the pattern with the unaltered "This" of Christ's declaration and command? Many who would say that "baptism," changed in symbol, would be, in one sense, more dangerous than nothing at all, say that they "must" partake of the breaking of bread, though it be "otherwise than it was written." But surely, though the Lord forgives so graciously, when there is ignorance, we should not misuse His love to "change" His commandments. **Forgiveness never justifies the sin.** How happy was the unity at first, **none** meeting differently, and **none** making a condition of partaking a willingness to alter the Lord's unleavened symbol. No wonder there was power in "the prayers." The missionary power continued, the witness was definitely given, and the Lord gave fruit.

Let us humbly read this passage and then ponder the conditions to-day. Do we see the same unity, of believers together? Is there the same stress on baptism? Are the Lord's arrangements so carried out that all who would simply **keep** to His will can be gathered together to break bread? Is there the same unworldliness in giving up the property of earth to help, in accord with a true heavenliness and treasure laid up in heaven? Would any one think that Acts 2 was a description of children of God to-day? O that we may be concerned, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the fuller following of the Lord, and a true conformity to His will (Rom. 12. 2).

Some Sidelights on the Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

SINCE we have the precious revelation of our Triune God, everything harmonizes therewith, and confirms and emphasizes. For example, the striking question of Mark 10. 18, "Why callest thou Me good?" has clearly a stress on the word "Why?" The One Who thus spake also said, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8. 46). He had NO DOUBT as to His own goodness; He did ever those things that pleased the Father. The one who sought eternal life without knowing his own guilt, and without knowing a Divine Saviour, was in confusion. But how tenderly and patiently and lovingly the Lord dealt with him, to show the need.

In like manner, "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1. 1) distinguishes our beloved Lord from all men, even as Hebrews 1. 6 from all angels. Such verses entirely harmonize with the fact that "was" precedes "became" in John 1 ("The Word was God": "the Word became flesh"), and in Philippians 2. 6, 7, 8 there is a close parallel (cf. Rom. 9. 5, Heb. 1. 3, 4, Rev. 1. 18). Yes, in His essential and eternal glory "BE" stands before "BECOME."

Correspondingly, 1 Corinthians 6. 19 illustrates the Deity of the Holy Spirit. Who has a TEMPLE except God? And the

harmony of all Scripture is precious. Passing references become more than allusions in the light thereof: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?—thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5. 3, 4). In such a context there is an emphasis on His glorious nature.

"He shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words . . . to do them: that his heart be not lifted up, and that he turn not aside."

(Deut. 17. 19, 20).

GOD'S arrangement for a king of Israel has a deep meaning for us. The daily reading of the Scripture was emphasized: no day could be rightly missed. We call to mind Joshua 1. 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." And the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily . . . therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17. 11, 12). Must it be said that some believers fall short in this privilege? Should a day pass without definite "searching," aye, and feeding on the words of the Lord? How many Christian lives are dwarfed through lack of food. If we treated our bodies as we treat our souls, how many of us would be invalids.

It is deeply important to see that Israel's king was to **keep** as well as **read**. Knowledge without loving obedience is a failure. And associated with all we find humility, "that his heart be not lifted up." Scripture is meant to humble, as well as encourage us. Have we not found this to be so? Does not God show us, in the looking glass of Scripture, our own shortcomings, and what we should be? We cannot be too concerned to glorify God in lowliness. The mental study of Scripture grammatically may cause pride, but the spiritual study thereof obediently will lead to humbleness of mind. We cannot be too humble. Paul felt himself to be "less than the least of all saints."

Observe the added words, "And that he turn not aside." It is so easy, especially when one is outwardly blessed, to turn aside. The Scripture is the means, used by the Holy Spirit, to draw back from wandering. The straight way is there set forth, that we may not turn to the right hand or to the left. God did not **promise** to provide for the king by miracles, or by special revelation, but through the right use of the Scriptures which He gave. And is it not so to-day. If we expect that God will work without the revelation of His will which He **has** granted, we make a mistake. Laziness and personal exaltation must ever lead to failure: it is the privilege of God's dear people to learn through the words already given. This brings all believers to one position. The highest in Israel's kingdom had the same Scriptures as the lowest, and the oldest and wisest child of God to-day needs the Scriptures even as the one who was brought to

the Lord yesterday. If we become irregular, and think we know, or that we are "led" more than others, and do not need the Scriptures, applied by the Holy Spirit, we are on very dangerous ground. May we be preserved from this!

Some Thoughts on the Earthly Life of The Lord Jesus.

WE should naturally have expected that the Lord of glory would, in His perfection, have gone forth early in life to preach, but He waited till He was about thirty (Luke 3. 23). Was this to teach us, among other things, the blessedness of the background, and of "ordinary" occupation, whenever done faithfully to please God? Was it, moreover, to call us to more preparation, lest aught else, alas, engenders our self-confidence?

We should have thought that He would have lived in a prominent city, from the first. Why was He brought up in despised Nazareth of despised Galilee? Everything is "strange" from the human standpoint. Let us remember there was no necessity, and no chance. All was God's choice and plan.

We should have anticipated some prominence in connexion with the educational arrangements of that day, and the social standing of earth. But He was not found among the learned, nor did His home possess earthly goods in abundance. Why? We often link influence with outward dignity. The Lord Jesus presented a contrast in all such particulars.

Again, we should have imagined propaganda, and widespread and remarkable results in all lands. But He was pleased to remain in one small country, and among a subjected people. Only after His resurrection did He appoint that His disciples should go to all nations. Almost everything in Christ's wondrously earthly life was meant to SPEAK to our natural inclinations. He "might" have done so much that would have startled the whole world, but He was pleased to abide restfully in the Father's will. Remarkably we can make clear to opposers how after-history, in the light of the partly secluded and rejected life of the Lord Jesus, can only be explained as we acknowledge His glory, and that which is beyond all human arrangement.

Further, the Lord Jesus needed no weakness, as we need, to humble us. He had no sin. Why should He, the Perfect One, be a Man of sorrows, continually suffering weariness and strain? Thus the contrast with human reasoning is not only striking as to one point, but as to almost everything in His life and circumstances. Israel wished for a Messiah with outward glory, to win earthly victories and honour. From birth, in a manger, to death, on the cross, the Lord of glory was treated with disdain, and in ignominy. His true glory, His fulness of grace and truth, shines out in His perfect patience and lowliness. The **stumbling block** of the cross is the call to **faith**, and the Divine words are illustrated once more, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55. 8).

Missionary Churches.

THE Lord Jesus appointed a missionary **church**: not missionary "societies." And each assembly should, in its miniature, heartily manifest this characteristic. We thank God for all the love of His children, and for all preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified by **devoted workers in societies**, holding the faithful word of redemption through His blood. But we long for a fuller revival, and for **assemblies** according to the pattern, with **all** children of God together, in the way of His will.

Shall we notice some precious indications of God's plan—one verse regarding each church?—"Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and TO BE BROUGHT ON MY WAY THITHERWARD BY YOU, if first I be somewhat filled with your company" (Rom. 15. 24). "Having hope, WHEN YOUR FAITH IS INCREASED WE SHALL BE ENLARGED BY YOU ACCORDING TO OUR RULE ABUNDANTLY, TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THE REGIONS BEYOND YOU" (2 Cor. 10. 15, 16).

"Take unto you the whole armour of God . . . PRAYING always . . . for all saints; AND FOR ME THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL" (Eph. 6. 13, 18, 19).

"YOUR FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW . . . YE PHILIPPIANS KNOW ALSO, THAT IN THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL, WHEN I DEPARTED FROM MACEDONIA, NO CHURCH COMMUNICATED WITH ME AS CONCERNING GIVING AND RECEIVING, BUT YE ONLY . . . YE SENT ONCE AND AGAIN" (Phil. 1. 5, 4. 15, 16).

"Withal PRAYING also for us, that God would OPEN UNTO US A DOOR OF UTTERANCE" (Col. 4. 3).

"For FROM YOU SOUNDED OUT THE WORD OF THE LORD not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (1 Thess. 1. 8).

We notice, moreover, how Paul took Timothy from **Lystra**, and Sopater of **Berea** accompanied, and two **Thessalonians**, and Gaius of **Derbe**, and two from **Asia** (Acts 20. 4). Thus each assembly not only constituted prayer, and had the privilege of supplying gifts—"sowing bountifully"—but also was permitted to give **persons**. And John's testimony is a helpful parallel, "Because that for His Name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles: WE THEREFORE OUGHT TO RECEIVE SUCH, THAT WE MIGHT BE FELLOW-HELPERS TO THE TRUTH" (3 John 7, 8). Are we?

THE PARABLES OF THE LORD JESUS.

The eight booklets on the Parables are now complete. We praise God! We present the Index, and shall be glad to hear from believers who desire to possess the complete series, and to send the same to other servants of the Lord. And much prayer for His blessing is valued.

	No. of Booklet	Page
Barren Fig Tree, The (Luke 13. 6-9)	3	12
Blind leading the Blind (Matt. 15. 14, Luke 6. 39)	8	36
Corn of Wheat, The (John 12. 24)	3	16
Creditor and Two Debtors (Luke 7. 41-43)	2	21
Debtor, Forgiven and Unforgiving, The (Matt. 18. 23-35)	2	10
Empty House, The (Matt. 12. 43-45, Luke 11. 24-26)	7	26
Feast and the Guests, The (Luke 14. 12-24)	6	15
Fig Tree and Its Leaves, The (Matt. 24. 32, Mark 13. 28, Luke 21. 29, 30)	7	30
Foundation, or No Foundation (Matt. 7. 24-27, Luke 6. 47-49)	7	21
Friend at Midnight, The (Luke 11. 5-8)	3	28
Good Samaritan, The (Luke 10. 30-37)	7	3
Householder and His Treasures, The (Matt. 13. 52)	1	31
Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20. 1-16)	8	24
Leaven, The (Matt. 13. 33, Luke 13. 31)	1	18
Man on a Journey, The (Mark 13. 34-37)	8	23
Mustard Seed, The (Matt. 13. 31, 32, Mk. 4. 30-32, Lu. 13. 19)	1	16
New Wine and Old Wineskins (Matt. 9. 17, Mark 2. 22, Luke 5. 37, 38)	2	6
"Not Rich toward God" (Luke 12. 16-21)	3	11
Patching an Old Garment (From a New Garment, Lu. 5. 36)	2	4
Patching an Old Garment (Uncarded Cloth, Matt. 9. 16, Mark 2. 21)	2	3
Pearl of Great Price, One (Matt. 13. 45, 46)	1	27
Pharisee and Publican, The (Luke 18. 9-14)	7	14
Places at a Feast (Luke 14. 7-11)	2	6
Pounds, The (Luke 19. 11-27)	8	11
Seed Growing Spontaneously (Mark 4. 26-29)	7	29
Servant, Faithful and Wise, The (Matt. 24. 45-47)	6	26
Servant returning from the Field, The (Luke 17. 7-10)	3	35
Servant who Beat his Fellows, The (Matt. 24. 26-29)	7	29
Sheep in a Pit, The (Matt. 12. 11)	5	4
Sheep and Goats, The (Matt. 25. 31-33)	5	27
Sheep, Lost and Found, The (Luke 15. 3-7)	4	3
Shepherd and Sheepfold, The (John 10. 1-6)	5	5
Shepherd and One Flock, The (John 10. 7-16)	5	11
Silver, Lost and Found, The (Luke 15. 8-10)	4	8
Son, Lost and Found, The (Luke 15. 11-32)	4	11
Sower, The (Matt. 13. 3-23, Mark 4. 3-20, Luke 8. 5-15)	1	7
Strong Man and the Stronger, The (Matt. 12. 29, Mark 3. 27, Luke 11. 21, 22)	7	25
Talents, The (Matt. 25. 14-30)	8	3
Tares among the Wheat, The (Matt. 13. 24-30)	1	11
Ten Virgins, The (Matt. 25. 1-13)	6	28
Things that Defile a Man (Matt. 15. 11, 15-20, Mark 7. 15-23)	8	36
Treasure Hid in a Field (Matt. 13. 44)	1	24
True Vine, The (John 15. 1-16)	3	18
Two Sons, The (Matt. 21. 28, 31)	3	6
Unjust Judge, The (Luke 18. 1-8)	3	31
Unjust Steward, The (Luke 16. 1-8)	2	25
Unprepared Builder, and King, The (Luke 14. 28-32)	8	34
Uprooted Plant (Matt. 15. 13)	8	35
Wedding Feast, The (Matt. 22. 1-14)	6	3
Wicked Husbandmen, The (Matt. 21. 33-41, Mark 12. 1-9, Luke 20. 9-16)	3	7

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The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" 1 Corinthians 6. 19.

A Word of Introduction.

A CHILD of God is wondrously privileged. He is not merely "bettered," and "helped," he is a new creation in Christ Jesus." God's words are written on the very heart. He Himself has said, "I will write." This remarkable language used of Israel's honour as to the Ten Commandments, for which the tabernacle and temple were built, are applicable to each humble believer. His heart is God's ark, for God dwells where the blood of His Beloved Son is exalted. Hence we would not be surprised at the verse above, but we are praiseful. The body a temple of the Holy Ghost! How tremendous is the blessing. A temple—although a body of humiliation. A temple clean and holy for God. A temple—full of true worship: this should be our daily characteristic. And observe how this verse emphasizes the Personality and the Deity of the Holy Spirit, and He actually dwells within, and claims us. Do we live up to our experience? This Magazine is not only for "head-study" but that God may be glorified in our growing and obedient realization of all the privileges of saintship.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Stephen's Faithful Following of Christ	89
Misunderstandings	92
Two Experiences of Ezekiel	94

Stephen's faithful following of Christ.

HAVE you noticed that the words of the Lord Jesus, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34) seem thrust in the middle of a narrative (cf. Gen. 14 18-20 between 17 and 21)? Verse 33 contains the words, "There they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left," and the passage continues, "And they parted His raiment and cast lots." Other gospels show who did this: the words "they parted" look back to the earlier sentence. Some manuscript-writers (feeling this link, it may be) overlooked

and left out the precious intervening prayer. The R.V. alludes to this in the margin, but, if we mistake not, a remarkable side light on the right inclusion of these words (if it be needed) is found in Acts 7, by comparing with Scripture. Stephen was evidently a man after God's own heart: it is God's will that His people should be temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6. 19), and a temple should be filled (2 Chron. 5. 14, cf. Ex. 40. 35). This is emphasized as to Stephen (Acts 6. 5, 8,—cf. verse 10—ch. 7. 55). His address is the **longest** recorded in Acts, after he had been chosen to "serve tables" while others thought "the ministry of the word" would be theirs. At once their ministry is unmentioned, and that of Stephen and Philip, the second on the same list, is before us. There is no parallel with this: it must be with a Divine purpose. Again, we find in this message a clear view of the setting aside of the temple made with hands, and of Judaism, which the dear children of God were so slow to learn. Is it surprising that Saul is mentioned in Acts 7. 58, and again immediately after Stephen's prayer (7. 60) in 8. 1? He is the only one thus before us, and is thus on both sides of a prayer, just as the soldiers on both sides of the prayer in Luke 23. And what was the prayer?—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," an exact reminder of Christ's own petition, even as Acts 7. 59 suggests Luke 23. 46, but was beautifully addressed to the Lord Jesus. How truly and exactly the disciple followed his Lord.

And what was the fruit? **Why** was the Lord Jesus seen standing in Acts 7. 56, not sitting (see Heb. 10. 12), and why is He **next** seen intercepting Saul on the way (Acts 9. 3-8)? Was not Saul blessed through Stephen's prayer, and did he not continue the first martyr's witness as to the heavenly calling, and the setting aside of Judaism? This is the more remarkable, for Matthias seems linked with a certain precipitancy which may be hinted by the silence as to seeking the Lord in Acts 6. 2-4, and **His own use** of Stephen immediately, and thereby the bringing in of Paul, as an apostle of the Lamb. Truly God's ways are wondrous. The length of a life is not its years but its faithfulness and service.

WITH THE LORD.

"With the Lord there is **mercy**."

"With Him is plenteous **redemption**."

"There is **forgiveness** with Thee" (Ps. 130. 4, 7). Mercy is the root: we deserve nothing. Redemption is the manifestation of mercy, the righteous channel whereby mercy reaches a sinner, without breaking God's holy law. Forgiveness is the precious fruit. God the Father has revealed His mercy. The Lord Jesus died to cause redemption, in His blood. The Holy Spirit makes known forgiveness to the broken heart. How richly blest are all poor, humbled sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus!

And such is the privilege of the writer of these lines. And is it yours? Yes, believing readers, Yours! Let us praise God with more gratitude that overflows, love that overflows.

FIRST.

THE number "one" indicates there is nothing before, but it does not necessarily imply something after. On the other hand, "first" suggests **both** thoughts. This is often full of spiritual helpfulness. For example, the "first" commandment (Matt. 22. 38) shows that one cannot love **God** and ignore **men** (cf. 1 John 4. 20). Very strikingly the first day of the week (Mark 16. 9), associated with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, indicates that **all** our week-days, all our "working" days are to be lived in the **light** of communion with Him on resurrection ground. Again! Timothy 1. 15, 16 ("of whom I am first," "in me first") looks forward to the day when the remnant of Israel will be saved by the revelation of Jesus Christ, **just as** Paul on the road to Damascus. But does it not **also** show how that dear servant of God was not content to remain **alone**: he **must** become a soul winner: thus others were reached and quickened and gathered. The word "first" thrice in the Address on the Mount is deeply instructive (Matt. 5. 24, 6. 33, 7. 5): in **each** case there is something to **follow**, which the natural man would like to put in the reverse order or have **without** that which precedes. The Holy Spirit emphasizes that "first" cannot exist without a second in Hebrews 7. 2. Righteousness will bring true peace, but "peace" without righteousness is not godly. In like manner, "peace" at any price, or agreement and friendship with evil, at the expense of purity, is sin (Jas. 3. 17). The child of God is not an enemy, but he must expect enemies against him if he is like his Lord: there cannot be friendship with the world.

Finally, how blessed is the message of 1 John 4. 19. "He loved us." No, that is not complete. "He **first** loved us," with a love that mightily constrains and compels our **responding** love. There **MUST** be a second. May our hearts enjoy this more and more.

"In time past Gentiles . . . but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime (time past) were far off are made nigh."

Ephesians 2. 2, 3, 11, 13, cf. 5. 8.

Thanks be to God for the blessed change of time.

"We **were** by nature the children of wrath even as others."

"By grace ye **are** saved."

"Ye **were** without Christ."

"Ye **are** no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Ephesians 2. 3, 5, 8, 12, 19.

Thanks be to God for the blessed change of tense.

Misunderstandings.

THE enemy does not always need a great thing to cause difficulties among children of God. He is content if there can be a "misunderstanding," and thus discord is sown among brethren (Prov. 6. 19). Why the word "sown"? Because it GROWS. Satan hates that wherein God delights—brotherly love (Ps. 133. 1). "It was such a trivial thing," we may often say, but—! Alas, how many encouragements have been blighted, and blessings withheld, because of "a little thing." You do not need to break up a watch to stop it from going: put a little dirt inside. That is all.

And so a Euodia and a Syntyche are not of the same mind "in the Lord." And Euodia may be so **fragrant** in spiritual devotedness in other things, and Syntyche may "**fall in**" so well with other children of God,* but she cannot get on with Euodia. There is no doubt as to their salvation, praise God, their names are in the book of life, and they will be together in glory. They are both "in Christ," but not "of the same mind in the Lord" to-day. Why not? "Self" is at the root of the trouble.

How did it all start? Possibly a "word" kindled the flame. The tongue is a little member, but death and life are in its power. Or, it may be, one omitted to do something for the other, and it was misunderstood. Then everything else was interpreted in the light of the first misunderstanding. Things that would have been hardly noticed became large, and "motives" were inferred, and **seemed** so clear. Thus the grievance was nursed and fed, and of course it grew. (If only we fed our devotion to the Lord with the same consistency!) And then it is easy for a Euodia to speak of Syntyche to another, instead of speaking to Syntyche, and for a Syntyche to speak to some one else, and possibly the third party in each case "sympathizes," and talks a little more, for we have not always the wisest ears as to what we hear, nor the wisest tongues in what we say. And so something "gets round" to the one who has the grievance, and that does not improve the feeling, and the Spirit of God is grieved (Eph. 4. 30). Verily, if the love of Christ were realized in all its fulness, the whole matter might be settled in five minutes. If only we just saw our own faults more simply, and esteemed others better than ourselves (Phil. 2. 3), and judged ourselves (1 Cor. 11. 31), how many sins might be escaped.

But if we make up our minds, and stick to it, and forget that love thinketh (imputeth) no evil (1 Cor. 13. 5), we shall soon find fuel to keep the fire burning. Are we surprised at the Holy Spirit's emphasis on godly love? One believer quite misunderstands another, and yet in other matters seems so encouraging: two can be even bitter toward "one another," and yet both be

very gracious toward most others, yea, toward the same people. And it is even possible to feel one is dealing with the failure in the other to God's glory, but without the water, or without the towel of humble service (John 13. 4, 5).

Temperament is sometimes Satan's opportunity, but frequently one hardly realizes how all could have started. And both believers involved make themselves grievous burdens, often thinking how "right" they are, and comforting themselves in the fact that they are bearing the cross of being misunderstood, and pitying themselves as if suffering for Christ, and "conscientiously" sorrowing over the obtuseness of those who misunderstand them, without realizing that something in their attitude is partly the cause, and partly the fuel of the fire. Ah, do we need to go further than **ourselves** to find illustrations of such failures? O that there may be more overflowing love in the Holy Spirit among children of God, to prevent misunderstandings, or, when they have sprung up, to remove them.

The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh! If the enemy cannot bring about in Philippi the removal from the gospel as in Galatia, and a general saddening condition of things as in Corinth, he will seek something else. Surely we are not ignorant of his devices. **If only we saw more of Christ in one another**, and hated the flesh in ourselves more, and were more willing to doubt our "reasonable" and "probable" inferences from this or that, how much more we might see of the gracious freedom of the Spirit of God.

Such an attitude will not mean indifference to the truth and will of God. It will mean the opposite. When we thus please God we shall wash one another's feet more and more. Children of God will be able to speak frankly to one another, without being misconstrued, and a fuller desire for God's glory in each will make us all more tender, and grieved as to anything that grieves the Holy Spirit. So will a deeper wish for our Father's will be part of the all-round growth which brings forth fruit, to His praise Who died for us. May God grant such a revival.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God in all thine heart." Such love must be **within**, and then it must come **out**. The whole heart is to love Him; so the love for the neighbour was to be **part of love to Him**. Everything begins from a right relationship to God. Not two loves, but **one love** affecting everything. And in the **new** commandment of the new covenant we see the same word "love" (John 13. 34), but two additions, viz.: (a) "as I have loved Thee" (His love is first: Deut. 6. 5 does not mention this), (b) "one another" a plural word that has no singular, we cannot take our brother or ourselves out of the word: it must be "one," but there must be **more than one** in the unity. The law had not this word: the blood of Christ has caused "one another."

* A reference to the meaning of the Greek names.

Two Experiences of Ezekiel.

(2. 1, 2, 3. 1, 2).

GOD'S past dealings are rich in instruction for us to-day. Are they not recorded for our learning (Rom. 15. 4)? In chapter 2, the Lord said, "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee." There we find a command, and a promise. What was the experience of this servant of God? He was willing, but needed enabling, and (possibly) determination. At once we read, "And the Spirit entered into me while He spake with me," with the Word of God there is still power. How little we realize His willingness to strengthen us for prompt and devoted obedience. There is heavenly music and encouragement in the words, "While He spake with me." How quickly God worked. Another aspect of like grace is found in Isaiah 65. 24, "while they are yet speaking, I will hear." And who of us has fully meditated on the grace that ever anticipates our asking in this connexion, "Before they call, I will answer"? We have a gracious God and Father! Our heart also turns to yet another application of Ezekiel 2 in Mark 3, illustrating the declaration of the gospel to the helpless souls:—"Stand forth . . . stretch forth thine hand, and he stretched it out" (verses 3, 5): the might was given. So is it in Acts 3, "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk: and he took him by the hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength" (verses 6, 7 and 16, "His Name . . . hath made this man strong," but observe that "His Name" is the subject of the sentence "through faith in His Name" is associated, cf. Ezek. 37. 3, 7). We cannot fully "analyse" how God works in salvation, or in Christian experience, but whether we speak or hear, in His power, will He not work? O that the word may be "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4. 2), both when we listen, and when we announce it to others.

We continue in Ezekiel 2. 2, "And set me upon my feet, that (and) I heard Him That spake unto me." Thus both parts of verse 1—the precept and the promise—are fulfilled in verse 2. "Stand, I will speak." "The Spirit set me upon my feet, and I heard." Here is the operation of the Spirit still. Are we willing and expectant? He is living.

In chapter 3. 1, we read, "Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go, speak." God spoke in 2. 1, and then Ezekiel is empowered to speak. Mark the order. God said of some that He had not spoken to them, yet they had ran. They had not stood in His counsel (Jer. 23. 21, 22). They had not waited for His counsel. But Ezekiel was obedient. "So I opened my mouth."

Is that all? Nay. In ch. 2. 8 we read, "Open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee." The "opening" of the mouth was to be a contrast with the closed attitude of "that rebellious

house." "I opened." What follows? "And He caused me to eat." Yes, grace and power are again manifested. If we are in the way, will not the Lord lead us, even as Abraham's servant in Genesis 24? And next comes the word again, "Go, get thee to the house of Israel" (Ezek. 3. 4, 11). "Then the Spirit took me up" (verse 12). Once more, the enabling power. Thus Ezekiel went, and, waiting to hear, he realized continued dependence in verses 15-17, "Hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me." The wealth of the grace, and the deep importance of humble confidence in God and never in ourselves, coupled with active, and not only passive, willing responsiveness are graciously set before us. May we, though we are not prophets, have the blessedly parallel experience of the Holy Spirit's use of the written words of Scripture in living power in our lives.

THE CONTRAST WITH A SERVANT.

In John 15. 15.

Even as "the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever" (John 8. 35), so the servant is "outside" the family treasures and secrets. He "knoweth not what his Lord doeth." But our gracious Lord wishes us to know what He is doing, as well as what He has done (Ps. 22. 31). Hence the beautiful prayer of John 17, to set forth how He now intercedes, and hence the delightful words of John 14. 2, 3. Are we interested, keenly interested in what HE is doing? We remember that the one whom God called His "friend" was the very one of whom He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I DO?" (Gen. 18. 17). Do we meditate and talk of His doings (Ps. 77. 12)? Our hearts call to mind Amos 3. 7, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant" (Ps. 25. 14). He delights to make known what His purpose is. Are we so occupied with the doings of men, and our own doings, that we have little time for His?

Words from the same origin are often a wonderful study in Scripture (e.g., called, church, blameless, beseech, in 1 Cor. 1. 10). "Prison" in 1 Peter 3. 19 is from the same root as the contrasted "guard yourselves" (rendered "beware") of 2 Peter 3. 17. How blessed to be confined in God's grace: how terrible to be confined in God's judgment.

After Pentecost God never used a Semitic language in Scripture. The change is startling, and explains His purpose in the gift of tongues (cf. Isa. 28. 11, 12, the only passage cited in 1 Cor. 14), till the Scriptures were WRITTEN in a non-Semitic tongue.

Two Related Aspects.

THE Lord Jesus is revealed in Isaiah 32 as "an Hiding Place from the wind, and a Covert from the tempest." **Then** (mark this comes after) "as Rivers of water in a dry place." He does not only save us from judgment, He gives blessing within.

It was the same in Egypt. The blood was **first** on the door, and then the **same** Passover Lamb was food for the sheltered people. To omit the blood on the door, or to make it secondary, was impossible. So was it with respect to the Ark in the days of Noah. The safety was within, but when anyone came **within**, he found "all food that is eaten." God delights in the joy and satisfaction of His people. Salvation is first **FOR** us, then **IN** us: an **objective** work is finished, a **subjective** work is going forward, to God's glory. Christ died **FOR** us: and Christ is **IN** us, the Hope of Glory. The Rock in Exodus 17 must be smitten: then there was the water to refresh the thirsting people. It is always so. Salvation is wondrously full, and meets every need.

In baptism (once) we have a type of Christ's work for us, but the Lord's Supper is graciously intended to follow and to be repeated (Acts 2. 42 after 41), that we may emphasize the constant feeding upon Himself spiritually, when we have been brought out of death into life. Some would put the Lord's Supper before baptism, or omit one. But is not this quite contrary to the Scripture?

In accord with this, Passover preceded Pentecost in Israel's typical year, and Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us that we might enjoy the work of the Holy Spirit. The thoughtful reader will observe the two sendings in Galatians 4. 4, 6, and their order. All Scripture harmonizes. May we enjoy God's truth.

Christ is "the **HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER**" (Col. 2. 10). But also "He is the **HEAD OF THE BODY**, the Church" (Col. 1. 18). (The two aspects of leadership are also found in Ephesians 1. 22, 23). In like manner, He is "the **FIRSTBORN OF every creature**" (Col. 1. 15, i.e., the One over all, see Ps. 89. 27, the next verse in Colossians shows He is contrasted with all **created** ones, so Hebrews 1. 6, cf. Revelation 3. 14, where "The Beginning" in the light of ch. 21. 6, 22. 13, emphasizes His Deity).

But we rejoice He is also "The Beginning, the **FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD**: that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1. 18): and **this** is the new creation, in which His own are found. Thus in connexion with both names we behold our beloved Lord exalted in **nature** and in **grace**. How we thank God it is not only in nature, for we are **united** to Him in **grace**, by His precious blood.

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