

The Student of Scripture.

Edited by Percy W. Heward.

"Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning ; for
"in Thee do I trust : cause me to know the way wherein I
"should walk ; for I lift up my soul unto Thee."

Psalm 143. 8.

A Word of Introduction.

A *GAIN we realize the personal interest of God. Salvation is a wondrous reality. Eternal life is a present fact. Prayer is a constant privilege. Our Father actually makes known His will to His children ; communion with God is not put forward as a theory. How blessed it is to be able to speak with God. And not only can we say "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord" (Ps. 5. 3), "but cause me to hear." God delights that His people should be compassed about with songs of deliverance (Ps. 32. 7). Every morning is to anticipate THE morning. God is ready to direct our ways (Prov. 3. 5,6). That His redeemed may thus enjoy the realities of His love, and His guidance, are these pages sent forth. A merely mental or academic study of truth is never before us. God's glory in yielded lives is our wish for writer and reader, and thus shall we all be drawn in the Spirit to realized oneness—our Lord's loving will.*

CONTENTS.								Page
Unconscious Imputations	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
The Wine in John 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Some Thoughts on Love	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Hardened	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
The Narrowness of Broadness	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8

God's Word or Feelings?

SOMETIMES we find a dear believer who honestly, yet sadly misunderstands the will of the Lord, and pleads that he, or she, has "felt" the Lord's guidance and blessing. This seems to weigh so much beyond the **wording** of some portion of Scripture that there arises inability to see its application. To suggest that there is a wilful obstinacy would be altogether wrong. But the fact that feelings may influence and bias and overbalance to such an extent that we cannot see a part of God's truth, should make us all humbly concerned lest **we** thus grieve the Holy Spirit.

In contrast with this attitude, some may rightly emphasize God's facts rather than our feelings in a way that hinders. When we are dealing with an anxious soul who trembles lest he has "enough" faith, and who lacks the "feeling" of peace, we tell of the finished certainty and reality of our beloved Lord's work for sinners, and of the blessedness of taking Him at His word, and then we seek to show how "feelings" follow.

But we would **not** say to one not anxious:—"Christ died for sinners, you own you are a sinner, then you believe the fact, and are saved." No, **his** feelinglessness troubles us. Let us likewise, in our own experience and in relation to fellow believers not take the attitude, "God's words instead of feelings." There may be a mental acknowledgment of truth and an outward conformity to our Lord's commands, that contrasts with the error of those who over-emphasize feelings, and yet is almost "lifeless." This "remedy" would seem worse than the disease, which it is meant to counteract.

What then? Not feelings instead of God's words. Not God's words without feelings. Not God's words **and** feelings, as two **distinct** things. But feelings **within** God's words, and the blessed harmony of truth in the Holy Spirit.

Which Standpoint?

DO I approach the will of God from the standpoint, "I must not do this," "I must avoid that," and other negatives? Or do I begin with the love of Christ, and its constraining attraction? This is deeply important. A life full of negatives, though it may have many deliverances, has a tendency to much "disappointment," and the minor key. A life approaching the Lord's commands **via** Himself is more refreshed and refreshing. It is characterized by the positive. And was not this His order when He said "Me and My words"?

Happily we acknowledge the victories of saints in both ways, and that we do need the negative in warfare against the flesh. But should not the positive be in the predominance, since we are born of the Spirit, and thus pre-eminently in a new creation?

Sometimes one feels that believers come along a "street" from different ends. They may reach the same point. But there may be different experiences, some of which are very painful, and could be avoided. Another danger is the tendency to judge others who come down from the other end of the street, and to seek to force all personal life histories into our own groove. How important to ask God Himself for grace to go along each "street" of our life, and growth in knowledge of His will, from His **appointed** end, that we may not need so much discipline, but may glorify Him in the bright positive of true love to Himself, and thus be able to help others to avoid muddy paths where it is not easy to keep a footing.

Unconscious Imputations.

THERE is a tendency we all find, to answer another sharply when half conscious there is some fault of our own involved. In like manner when the question comes, "Who is to blame for this?" if we suspect a personal "share," it is easier to be **irritated**, and then we (try to) lay the blame on **others**. Self-defence and self-justification are **instinctive** sins of fallen nature. But we ought to walk in the Spirit. A somewhat similar sin is when we speak of others as "being occupied with outward things," if such should suggest our omission or alteration of some appointment of our Lord. This seems a self-defence of departure, by assuming "we" are **spiritual inwardly**, and, judging that those who plead for simple obedience are less godly. The idea that literal following of the Lord's will must be "occupied" with "it" rather than with "Him" is somewhat parallel with the thought that belief in verbal inspiration loses "the spirit of Scripture." And the very language of the criticism is usually "copied." We grieve when the infidel copies the criticism of Genesis 4, always misquoting, but is there nothing of this second-hand imitation among real children of God? It is so easy, too, when pointing mistakes out, as in this article, to fall into the same sin of imputation, and to say, "You judge others by yourself," or "You criticise in order to gloss over personal failure." We do long for grace to be kept from this iniquity. But we do know, in our own lives, these perils, and it is well for each believer to be very frank with himself, or herself, in God's light, and to seek cleansing from **secret** or unrealized faults, that we may humbly "grow up into Christ in all things."

And if we are ever the **wrongly** criticised ones, let us not retaliate, nor assume our spirituality on this account, nor despise those who make the mistake, but rather examine ourselves, for (a) probably our manner **has given some ground** for the criticism (in urging the Lord's appointments we **may** have had more occupation with **them** than we have realized, and lacked humble love to Himself personally), and (b) the Lord has **permitted** the criticism **for our blessing**, and, unless we thank Him, and receive in lowly love, **we** are grieving the Holy Spirit.

"Differences" should lead to the sanctifying and humility and tenderness of all concerned, but too often they lead to the stiffening of both "sides" and self-defence that dishonour our Lord.

Faith never doubts God, but it doubts self: it is truly sceptical. In like manner those who "love the Lord hate evil," and those who rejoice in "that blessed Hope" have no hope in man's theory of man's millennium.

The child of God is not to crave for **great** opportunities of showing his (or her) devotedness, but to please God now in all the little things, and to be willing for Him to appoint all things, whether small or great.

THE WINE IN JOHN 2.

IT has been assumed by some that because fermentation seems "natural," the wine produced by the Lord Jesus was of this character. Others confess the two kinds of wine, but add we cannot tell which our Lord made.

The loving caution not to assume, nor yet to fit Scripture with our pre-judgment, is important, but is there **no** further guidance? The writer would suggest that there is.

Let us remember that Proverbs 20. 1, 23. 30-35 were and are parts of Holy Scripture. Moreover, the prohibition of serving priests (Lev. 10. 9), and the statement concerning kings (Prov. 31. 4, 5) are inspired. In the former case abstinence is linked with clear judgment to discern, and in the latter with a similar thought, and the hindrance of forgetfulness. Would it be altogether in harmony with these passages for our beloved Lord to cause a large quantity of that which is a "mockery," and "rages"?

It is observable that both at the beginning and end of His ministry the vine is before us, and in the latter use He referred to "produce of the vine," a term never connected with ferment in Scripture. The Holy Spirit purposely **omits** the word "wine" as to the Lord's Supper: Christendom, even in hymnology, almost invariably introduces it. May we suggest a fuller reverence on the part of us all, for verbal inspiration?

We have said "purposely omits," for there is nothing meaningless in God's language. We may not always know His teaching, any more than in nature, but a tendency to alter and broaden, or vary, His words is not helpful. And the more common it is, and the more it is defended, the more concerned we should be lest there be an ulterior motive of the enemy to obscure truth.

But the generic word "wine" is used in John 2, and it is remarkable that absolutely contrasted statements are connected with this:—"Wine that maketh **glad** the heart of man" (Ps. 104. 15), and "Who hath woe? . . . They that tarry long at the wine" (Prov. 23. 29, 30). Yet this is not strange. In a ruined world it is ever so, the word "man" is connected with honour (Gen. 1. 26), and with vanity (Ps. 39. 5, 6, 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. 3): the tongue is associated with glory (Ps. 16. 9 with Acts 2. 26) and also called "a fire, a world of iniquity" (Jas. 3. 6). The fall has altered all.

Must we say that fermented wine is essentially "natural"? The ferment is **not within** the grapes. A foreign substance is needed, producing chemical changes of manifold kinds. The liquor apart from this alien "plant," would not ferment. Is not this a spiritual lesson? Has not something entered into man, and changed him?

Does the Lord Jesus ever refer to wine? Yes, twice. Once in connexion with the calumny of men (Luke 7. 34). Rather remarkably here He does not give any object to the verbs

"eating and drinking" when describing Himself. The wording is intentional. He who would build on the mockery of sinners is not wise. The other passage is the **only one** where He gives lessons in connexion with wine and strikingly He does refer to both kinds (Luke 5. 36, 39). The **old** wine is linked with **old** skins and an **old** garment in its spiritual meaning, i.e. in the one explanation our Lord gives He makes the old wine a contrast with His gospel, and, seems definitely to indicate that it is the result of the old skin (the unsaved heart) **changing** the new wine of His message. Yet He adds that the one who has partaken of this strange teaching prefers it as "agreeable" to himself (39). Hence in this unique "key" the Lord Jesus does not say **one good word** for the old wine, nor one word against the new. It is strange if we should interpret His parabolic miracle as diametrically opposed. He does not confuse thus.

Returning to John 2, we find the words, "And manifested forth **His glory**" (2. 11), an emphasis throughout this gospel (1. 14, 13. 31, 17. 1, 24). Fermentation is a change parallel with souring, and even putrefaction. Would this seem to manifest His glory? If the water pots suggest God's children (and six disciples have been specially before us in chap. 1), the filling with ferment would imply, as we have seen, a complete contrast with the new wine skins typifying His redeemed in Luke 5. The "assumptions" that He made **old wine**, like the wine of commerce, would, we suggest, be too many, and too unlikely, to harmonize with the **consistent** testimony of the gospel. And why should we reject that which fits all His language? Nay, we would behold His glory even in the use of words, and the message of His perfect parables and miracles.

UNION WITH CHRIST.—Colossians 3.

Members of one another, Christ the Head:—
He ever lives, Who suffered in our stead.
Himself our Life;—grace, strength, and rule we own
Not in ourselves, but from our Lord alone.

His interests are ours, for ours are His,—
How wondrous all such lovingkindness is!
His will becomes our will; His choice our choice;
His peace our peace; in Him we would rejoice.

He loved and gave; He loves and gives to-day:
He is the Same, He will not turn away:
Like Him we shall be, and in heart would be
Conformed to Him, until Himself we see!

If the Scriptures are only a book to any, they can say "I have read them," but if they are our very food, as living ones, we shall **feed** on them day by day, and enjoy the heart-strength which the Holy Spirit ministers thereby.

SOME THOUGHTS ON LOVE.

"GOD so loved that He gave" (John 3. 16). What is the fruit of our love? Giving is not necessarily love, but love inevitably gives. Love is the fountain, giving is the stream. One may give grudgingly, as a duty; that is not love.

Love must have an object. It cannot be vaguely existent. There must be the resting place of love: we cannot love "nothing." This illustrates the Triune Nature of God, for He is Love, and the wondrous Personal love within the Godhead is, as God's nature, without beginning and end.

Love not only has an object, it is also subjective, it is felt within. It cannot be there unless it is an experience. Inanimate love is impossible. Unconscious love, in the strict sense of the word, is a contradiction. There may be a precious sub-consciousness, as the result of that which is habitual, and saintly ones have this attitude to God amid their varied duties.

Love cannot be miserable, any more than happiness. It includes an emotion of delight. It cannot be measured, however, either by its activities or emotions:—including both, it exceeds all. How fitting then the command "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22. 37). How tragic man's failure. How blessed God's enabling, in the new creation.

Love must not be limited to the lover. If I love for the sake of enjoying my love, I am selfish. The one loved is included in the love, as well as the one loving. If I love righteousness I cannot benefit a quality, but love of a person is delighted in the delight of that one. Hence it is sinful to call self's gratification, in one who pleases "me," by the name of "love."

Love is not spent by spending. It is not manufactured: it is spontaneous and not forced. But it can be fed and encouraged. Love is a root, a source, a well-spring. How supernatural is spiritual love!

"Love" is not talkative. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" implies we cherish ourselves. Nor can true life neglect its trusteeship. But we do not say to ourselves, "I love you." Love is not an occasional effort, but the constant overflow of our whole being. If a stone be cast the eyelids close, but not by a sense of commandment from without: the law of love is written within. So is it spiritually. One who talks too much of love will often lose his temper. He lives in a groove, and mistakes the theory for the practice. Love never boasts of love. There is an artless simplicity in true love. Such is its graciousness for which, as Corinthians 13 shows, no detail of tenderness is too small.

It is one thing to know we should "fear not," it is another to know the deliverance in experience, not only outwardly from its manifestation, but inwardly from its beginnings, because of real heart resting in the Lord.

Hardened.

THE one of whom we read most that he was hardened is the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and we know his goal. But have not I a danger of being hardened? If I read about Israel in Nehemiah 9. 16, 17, 29, and about Zedekiah in 2 Chronicles 36. 13, and of men generally in Proverbs (28. 14, 29. 1), and do not look at myself, am I wise? Psalm 95. 8 is quoted for believers to-day three times in Hebrews (3. 8, 15, 4. 7). We remember the words, "Take heed, BRETHREN, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," and "Lest any one of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (verses 12, 13). Observe the personal note. It is well to consider one another (Heb. 10. 24), but let us not overlook our need.

What is hardness of heart? It is the reverse of the tenderness of Josiah (2 Chron. 34. 27), that receives with meekness the engrafted word (Jas. 1. 21). It is the evidence of a "stony" or "rocky" condition (2 Cor. 3. 3 with Ezek. 11. 19). Am I responsive to the Lord's wishes—hints—reproofs? He was "grieved" over the hardness of those around Him (Mark 3. 5; see 8. 17, 16. 14). There is no room for His message to sink in, whenever the heart is hard. And this attitude to the Lord, and His words, soon leads to harshness toward fellow believers. If we are not pained when others are pained, are we gracious? Can we wound weak brethren, and still say we walk lovingly? Can we ignore others' consciences, and view ourselves as Christ-like? Can we behold a ruined world lightly, and declare we have a concern for souls?

Hardness can be very emotional. The rocky ground receives the word with "joy." The very joy shows a hardness,—a superficial condition. And so also with weeping. Israel wept selfishly in Numbers 14. 1, and covered the altar of the Lord with tears when they repeated their sin in Malachi 2. 13. If the joy is "my" joy and the grief for "my" difficulties and smitten grounds, may it not be hard? Is love self-centred? Have I no FEELING FOR THE LORD JESUS?

Faith is not merely a word of five letters, but a living, calm, responsive "Yes" to God, to Himself, His words, and His works, and it involves a "No" to the devil, the world, and self.

Faith does not try to look bright, or appear outwardly what it is not inwardly. We may experience "two" feelings, but faith is bright, because living: it is both inward and outward, being the same through and through.

God never encourages a jerkiness that depends on the "weather" of circumstances, so that we are up or down, happy or despondent, energetic or hesitating because of things around. Rather He keeps our eyes on Himself, and our dependence on hidden fountains of supply that we may continue the same, because He is the Same, whatever is without, as His love and will are realized within.

The Narrowness of Broadness.

IT is the boast of many that they are broad-minded ones. But self-claims are often unfounded. It is easy to assume personal lack of bias, because the deciding bias blinds the possessor regarding its existence. But there is a standard, and it is a privilege to come humbly to God, and own His decision in all, and to be searched in His pure and holy light.

There is a right narrowness. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life" (Matt. 7. 14).

Are we by grace among those who find it?

There is a real broadness. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps. 119. 96). Both these verses call to lowliness.

To mix with the world is not real breadth of character, but a unity with that which is enmity against God (Jas. 4. 4), and true love to souls is not to encourage a blindness to peril, but to warn. Actually what is called broadness is very narrow—wrongly so. Pagan Rome had room for a Pantheon, acknowledging varied gods, but no room for "God over all."

The broadness of the world will permit of different "religions" or "opinions" and agree to differ, but it has no place for revealed authoritative TRUTH.

The broadest Corinthians were actually straitened, and encouraged to be "enlarged" (2 Cor. 6. 12, 13), and the immediate context of a yoke with unbelievers, and concord with Belial would show how such links shut out the Truth and those who would please the Lord.

Hear the tender exhortation "receive us" (ch. 7.2). The broadness of the walk with the world is a straitening of inward affection, as ch. 6. 12 has made clear.

With the Galatians it was similar. Mingling with those who left the Lord's ways, they treated the apostle as an enemy (Galatians 4. 16). Darkness has no room for light, nor truth for error. The real breadth of heart has scope for the love of Christ, and devotion to Him, and that includes a right relation to His Own in fellowship (Psalm 133. 1-3), and in relation to the world to which we have been crucified (Gal. 6. 14).

May we have no hesitation regarding the path of Nonconformity to this age; that we may prove with daily growth in grace, and in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12. 1, 2).

In electricity we have warmth, light, power, all by **contact**, and all **dependent** on the current received, and all **united**, and **seen or felt**, in needed ways. May it be so with our lives in the Spirit.

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

A Word of Introduction.

"HE that hath," not "he that saith" (1 John 2. 4). *Talkativeness is often an accompaniment of disobedience. Profession and boasting are idle: what ARE we INWARDLY? Consistency is "through and through," and "out and out." The measure of love to the Lord is seen by following Him (John 12. 26). The Lord Jesus bought the whole of us, and has a right to the whole. If one or two "members" are viewed as sufficient everything is in confusion. The Holy Spirit indwells the whole. We can never choose to disobey lovingly. It is not by fair words of devotion we prove our love, nor by doing what we think should please the Lord, but by keeping to what He said. These pages are meant to be simple and definite, and to search both writer and readers, that our Lord may be exalted in the drawing together of His own to His will, in the Holy Spirit.*

CONTENTS.

	Page
Problems and Perils through Speculation and Curiosity ...	11
Gods Order in Hebrews 11 ...	12
How much did it cost? ...	14

THE MINISTRY OF LETTERS.

MANY years ago we issued a leaflet entitled "Letter writing." Though still available, it seems a privilege to emphasize this service unto the Lord once again. So many believers omit it. Evil letters had a great significance in Israel's history (2 Kings 19. 14, 2 Chron. 32. 17, Ezra 5. 7, Neh. 6. 5, 19, Est. 3. 13). But godly letters have been wondrously emphasized and used in the present dispensation. How many of the inspired books since Pentecost are of this character? It is evident that God approves such **homely** service among His children. Human wisdom would have appointed "systems" and "bodies" of

"divinity." It is important to learn a lesson of abiding spiritual power.

And what about ourselves? May we not, when we cannot see others awhile, write in the gracious enabling of God to help and cheer (2 John 12, 13, John 13)? Letters are not to take the place of personal contact, but they do supplement this service (2 Pet. 3. 1).

Are our letters of this character? Do we seek that our Lord may be central? Not a word would we say against loving information (Phil. 2. 25-27, 2 Tim. 4. 11), or loving requests and arrangements (2 Tim. 4. 13, 21); but the epistles of Scripture show how everything is to be wrapped up, as it were, in the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and with godly encouragement—as we have already seen, to stir up the "pure minds by way of remembrance."

Many believers who feel they "cannot" do "this or that," publicly can—thus privately, and unobtrusively—hold up the hands that hang down. Let us remember that a letter needs prayer and care. Do not say "only a letter" any more than "only a prayer meeting." It may be in the Spirit, and change the whole course of a believer's life. A drooping saint may be refreshed, a worried believer may be drawn away from anxiety, a weak child of God may be strengthened.

But may a word of suggestion be added? You and I are not Paul; avoid undue length. I have known dear children of God **delay** a letter, and then write a treble length one! If only they knew how much more they might have encouraged, instead of wearying, by three **timely** helpful epistles! It is sometimes the same with prayer in a meeting. We realize this in private: we do not postpone our prayer or our food, and have three days' supply at once. Again, one may rightly rejoice in Scripture "references," yet may give too many for a busy reader. Yet further, we almost all fail by mistakes, e.g., a word left out, or careless handwriting. And it is possible to speak **against others** in a letter, yet to persuade oneself it is right, because of "asking prayer" for those mentioned. The letter must not be "gossip"—it must be spiritual food. "Suffer the word of exhortation."

And do not let us overlook writing to unsaved ones, whom we know, with whom we have influence—especially, it may be, at a crisis in their life. The Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

No individual saint can ever be the "bride." Other names as "child," "believer" are personal, but this one is collective (yet **each one** should seek the bridal affection to the Bridegroom). The Divine stress on the bride's **love** is thus a united love and a plea for **revival of saints**. Revelation 22. 17, encourages our hearts in this: may our prayer be earnest and overflowing.

Problems and Perils through Speculation and Curiosity.

WE often make our own burdens. "I wish"—and a wish becomes a craving, and domineers over "me." How blessed to will to do Gods will (John 7. 17). So is it with our worries; we dread what never comes. "In nothing be anxious" is God's command. We imagine wrong, and put it into the minds of others, and cause friction and bitterness. "Love worketh no evil." Is it not evident that we make many of our own loads? And yet we complain. Frequently speculations prevent a reverent enjoyment of what God has revealed. Some read too much (of what men have "thought") to **know** the truth which God has graciously revealed. They choose unsettlement by feeding on ill-digested theories. They flit from theory to theory until their mind becomes too superficial to understand, and their heart too restless to believe. "**Wide** knowledge" is often the reverse of **deep**—it may not be knowledge of realities at all, but only acquaintance with surmises. And some reason so much that they are unreasonable. Faith is Divine logic, and God's truth brings Divine conviction if we are sensitive enough. Curiosity too, has ruined the joy of many. Life has been frittered away instead of used. How unwise we are. How blessed to know God, and to start everything from that standpoint. That we shall begin with truth, with an experience that pervades all, a love that prevents misuse of knowledge, a reverence that sanctifies whatever is learnt, and an obedience that will keep the mind as well as the feet to the right path. It is blessed to have God's provision for every faculty of mind and body. "**All** that is within me, bless His holy Name." Truly "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and the absence fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of foolishness. The Holy Spirit says, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1. 22). O, that we may not make our own burdens, but walk with God.

TIME.

Time is wonderful: we cannot see or hear it, we cannot feel or touch it but we can use it for the Lord. No one has more than any other. Incomes of money vary, but not of time. Nor can we store it up to use later, when feeling more equipped. We can only receive and use it **NOW**.

There is no possible transfer to others: we can neither sell nor buy "time." It is God's gift—and when "today" is gone its moments never return, but the results remain. **What will these be?** How are **we** serving the Lord, with this great gift of **TIME**?

Your anxiety will not please God, it will not help you, it will not comfort fellow saints, it will not adorn God's doctrine before the world.

GOD'S ORDER IN HEBREWS 11.

THERE is a wealth in Holy Scripture, as in nature (and beyond that). Yet in neither case is all found on the surface. But, as in God's supply of food through nature, we **NEED** health, not analytical knowledge to **enjoy**, so is it spiritually. Howbeit, knowledge may be used of God in both to guide, and to limit some results of the fall, whether through weeds and pests on the one hand, or through imperfect translation on the other. And as the blending of wheats may help, so the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. Yet praise be to God the youngest believer can find today a wondrous fulness in God's words; and the fields of truth have rich and ripe crops and fruit every month.

The blessedness of God's testimony is that, like the Melchisedec priesthood, it does not change, and, like the new covenant, it does not wax old. There is perennial freshness. Those who have enjoyed His teaching for years can delight to re-read the written words of grace and truth, and to hear His tone with ever fresh fulness. The Holy Spirit is living.

We all are well acquainted with Hebrews 11, and how often have we been encouraged, and stimulated thereby! The precious harmony with the standpoint of this epistle has been seen in that the record begins with Genesis and leads up **in detail** to the **Kingdom** and there makes the pause—at Jericho and Rahab, typifying the bringing in of the Gentiles by faith. The failure at Ai showed (cf. Hebrews 4), that Israel did not then "enter into rest" through Joshua. Yet men of faith were still found, as Gideon and many others. The fulness of the **Kingdom** awaits the Lord Jesus! As in Hebrews 1 we turn from nature to Him, and in Ch. 2 from Adam to Him, and in Ch. 3 from Moses, and in Ch. 4 from Joshua, and in Ch. 5 from Aaron, so is it here—"looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith" (12. 2). He is on the Heavenly throne, and will soon be on the earthly (Rev. 3. 21).

But there is a wondrous **selection** by the Holy Spirit in the examples of faith. And first, He refers to that which was before man's creation (ch. 11. 3). Hence we behold God in His own Almighty power as Creator and Appointer of all (Ps. 33. 9). The **first** act of true belief here leading to "understanding" recognizes this, and with it the full acknowledgement of **the Scriptures**, including the oft-rejected Genesis 1. This is fundamental.

Then, in the Divine order, we appropriately meet Abel, the first one shown to be a child of God, and a man of faith, the first one to whom God is said to have looked (cf. Isa. 66. 2), and the first man revealed as offering a sacrifice. To try to penetrate the silence as to Adam would be to hinder God's searching deep message and warning thereby. Of others, too, we must say, as one wrote of Demas, "A destiny of **doubt**."

Thus the initial emphasis on faith disproves evolution, and

the second sets aside all religious activity that ignores the precious blood of Christ.

And next we approach Enoch, contrasted with Abel in that he, in **family** life, became a believer, and in that he was translated **without dying**, but he was exactly like to Abel as one of the household of the **FAITH**.

Then we pass from redemption to continued sanctification—he "walked with God" (the mark of the redeemed, Heb. 10. 14), and to a type of glory; (a) creation, (b) grace, pleasing God, and (c) the coming of Christ! Is not the order wonderful?

But what comes next? Is it not judgment? This appropriately leads on to the unveiling of the kingdom—"the place . . . for an inheritance." And the order is a call to live in the light of that Day. It is not that Abel is excluded from being caught up then, for "the dead in Christ shall rise first"; nor is it that the ark is to be prepared after the coming of Christ, the way of salvation is **already** made: any more is it that the call into God's kingdom is subsequent to judgment (1 Thess. 2. 12).

The "order" is that of the climax event, but the **preparatory** experiences are **all** for us **now**, and this is the Holy Spirit's ever-present practical message. And so we have the first section leading up to **the promised land**, even as the second is found in verses 22-31. And in each case we see the blessing of the home, typified by a woman—Sarah the mother of Isaac, and Rahab is in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 1. 5), Israel and the Gentiles are blessed together. Thus grace contrasts with the ruined home of Genesis 3. And the city that hath **the** foundations (Heb. 11. 10) is the opposite of the **Jericho** of which the walls fell down (cf. Isa. 26. 1, 5).

May it be ours to realize afresh this faith—Inspiration of Scripture—God's absolute Creation and Upholding of all;—Redemption by the blood of Christ—Sanctification—The Coming of Christ—Judgment—The Kingdom. Yes, this is ever before us, whether in Isaiah 53. 12 or Revelation 20. 4. Are we living in the light thereof? The Corn of Wheat fell into the ground and died (John 12. 24), the saints of Revelation 12, 12. 11 too loved not their lives unto the death, and the believing ones of Hebrews 11 "**died** in faith" (verse 13), and Joseph's bones were carried up to show the same faith in resurrection, and to stimulate us to live, setting aside earth's vain attractions, because, like Moses, we have faith's respect unto the recompense (cf. Tit. 2 13-14). How helpful to compare the twofoldness of verses 6 and 26, 27:—"He is," "Him Who is invisible": "A Rewarder," "The reward." May our ever open **eyes** of living faith enabled by the Holy Spirit, constantly see "afar off," while our rejoicing hearts say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The path of the just is not to become twilight in the evening of earthly life, but to shine more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4. 18).

HOW MUCH DID IT COST?

WE have broken something. It was an accident. We replace it for a shilling: years ago it might have been three pence. We balance our budget. We regret—and forget.

But there are other things, not reckoned only in pounds, shillings and pence. One falls down. He loses time at work, he suffers pain, a bone is set, there are other expenses, dear ones have extra duties. Sympathy of many is called forth, prayer to God is encouraged, you and I learn dependence: there is a profit as well as a loss account. We cannot estimate all. Even when we broke a **thing** worth a penny, we blamed ourselves, and were humbled, it may be, for carelessness, and asked our Father what He was teaching, and we **feel** these lessons much more when laid aside.

Life is complex. God teaches in many classes of His perfect school. His over-ruling is precious, though it never leads to our excusing. Of two extremes must we, by grace, beware. The one is a burden, and remorse, and introspection beyond measure. The other is a tendency to learn nothing, except from a climax and cataclysm.

God speaks by hints first; if not heard, by circumstances more awakening, if still unheard, by a rugged arousing, a sudden alarm, a heavy loss, or whatever it may be, He seeks our heart's attention. If we were more sensitive we should not need the earthquake. Yet it is not "so much failure, so much trial." Job and Paul prove the reverse. Do not practise introspection till there is occupation with it and self, instead of looking to Him, dear fellow believers. Your Father is not a taskmaster, He loves; He has not a system of penalties. And do not decide as to the spiritual condition of others by their difficulties, else you will be like the fickle barbarians of Acts 28. 4-6, or, at least, like Job's friends. Chastening is God's sovereign prerogative in perfect wisdom. Do not decide about others. An under-current of "serve him right" breaks your Lord's will in Romans 14. And for yourself the Holy Spirit graciously draws from morose, despondency and indifference alike in the graciously quoted words of Hebrews 12. 5, "My son (a) **despise** not the chastening of the Lord, nor (b) faint when thou art rebuked of Him."

And if a physical fall can bring such losses, that cannot be calculated in money, what about a spiritual fall? And sin is a fall. The word "trespass" in Roman 4. 25, 5. 15, 16, 18, 20, and "fault" in Galatians 6. 1, indicates this, and we remember Hosea 14. 1. And a so called **little** fall can bring **great** results, and affect many others. Let us beware of the **beginnings** of any sin. We soon set a stone rolling, and cannot stop it. One action leaves a sting. A word cannot be recalled. A thought poisons, and defiles the whole mind. As we sow, we reap. How much did it cost to replace a thing that I broke? Comparatively little, when I think of the greater, yet overlooked, effects of one un-

guarded word—effects on myself and others, and can I "replace" here? I may help to shorten the life of one by causing anguish, I may help to spoil the character permanently of ten who hear. "Infinitesimally" says the flesh: but the saint never whittles away, nor tones down **sin**. It is not the size of the sin, nor the amount of its seen effect, that should concern us, but the **fact** of sin against **Him** Whose we are. He bought us. His honour is entrusted to us. How great is our privilege—and our responsibility.

Is it not blessed to pray that we may realize God's will before, and without, a rugged awakening? If I am unconsciously selfish and unsympathetic, without "a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize," and need a loss or trouble, to show me this, am I walking with God? The mark of communion is quick understanding. When we are guided with **His** eye, **our** eye must be open, and towards Him, that other things may not draw aside. So we may be saved many delays and losses—the putting right what never should be wrong. But if we desire the blessing in order to prevent **our** losses, we miss the real meaning of real life—pleasing God.

Yet when sin has been really confessed to God, and forgiven (1 John 1. 9), do not let us permit the enemy's attempt at a lasting under-current of felt burden, and a feeling of distance between us and our Father. Under-currents have a wearying effect to prevent love's freshness and further responsiveness. Have you not known an under-current of remorse, through some slight earthly loss, and its power to produce a dull continued worry, and a **tendency** to impatience? This is the enemy's aim. First he belittles the sin to prevent godly sorrow. Then, if defeated, he belittles God's forgiveness, to hinder believing power. How much **does** it cost when we thus go on losing the freshness of communion? Others do not see Christ in us, and the life of a saint looks to them a drudgery.

O, that we may grow up into Christ in all things (Eph. 4. 15), and thus will He have the glory, the much glory that our hearts desire.

Life is complex, but it is not a mere philosophy. God is our Father, and we are His children. He does not willingly afflict nor occupy us with the arithmetic of our sins, nor of their unrealized consequences, but He does draw us, through the precious blood of Christ, to real sorrow and repentance, and then to real, increasing, and constant victory in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to-day.

Each healthy member of a body responds to the will of the head, and responds quickly, because of living union, and inner unity. So is it spiritually. And the head appoints in wisdom: it does not instruct eyes to walk, or hands to see. Thus it is with our living Head, the Lord Jesus. How wisely He commands, knowing our capacity, that we may simply do that for which He has fitted us.

BALANCE.

(Matthew 19.)

THE disciples in Matthew 19. 10 show a tendency of the human heart. There is often a swing of the pendulum. This accounts for the sudden saddening changes in "doctrine," and for many departures from the Lord. An enthusiastic worker will give up the labour, and a hopeful one will become despondent. We need prayerful concern to be kept from our natural "inferences." The Lord Jesus corrected perfectly, and there was the Divinely timed blessing of the **little children**, and thus loving emphasis on marriage and the home.

How often have many misused the words of Matthew 19. 14, "Of **such** is the kingdom of heaven," i.e. those born again, anew. Again the Lord's balancing correction is seen in the context dealing with the ruler. Men fail to understand the word "good," and the most honest have no standing, in the sphere of the law, as the Lord Jesus made clear (verses 20, 21). The enquirer **thought** he loved his neighbour as himself, but how far he fell short, and "went away sorrowful."

Next the added witness as to "riches" was misunderstood by the disciples. Once more the Lord lovingly corrected. That which is impossible with men is God's miracle, again and again. In like manner the crooked cannot be made straight "**under the sun**" (Eccl. 1. 15), but how different it is when God intervenes (Isa. 40. 4).

Instead of being occupied with grace that caused a wondrous work, Peter referred to the "giving up" of himself and his colleagues, and its deserving—"What shall we have therefore?" In love the Lord set forth a blessing but associated it with **following Him**. Thus He directed the mind away from self, and from **self-esteem of self-denial**. His added words—the first last and last first—give a holy warning we all still need, which the parable of Matthew 20 impresses. Thus the perfect balance of the Lord is ever seen in dealing graciously, but firmly, with any misjudgment, not limited to those who first listened to Him.

To do wrong and then confess it; to choose our own way and then to be sorry; to say evil, and then to try and undo it—how all this dishonours Him Who poured out His blood that we might be "not our own." It is easy to read "Ye are bought with a price"; be not ye the servants of **men**" (1 Cor. 7. 23), but the very same words of love's purchase come home more clearly, "Ye are not **your own**, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20). There is even more danger of servitude to self and to one's "own" will than of servitude to other men. May we ever have an all round victory in the Holy Spirit.

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The Student of Scripture.

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"After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." Hosea 6. 2.

A Word of Introduction.

THESE words encourage, as well as remind, us to pray expectantly for Israel (Isa. 62. 6, 7). God Himself desires and appoints this. They also emphasize the relation of their blessing to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The thousand years within which all in Adam died (see Gen 5) are contrasted with the day of the Lord, and life in Christ (2 Peter 3. 8, Rev. 20. 4). It is precious to enjoy the promises of God for Israel. And let us remember the parallel. As the church now has the JUBILEE DAY of Pentecost in the types, and Israel will share the JUBILEE YEAR, so we have the blessedness of experiencing in advance, because of Christ, the "new covenant." Life and revival are ours, and the power of His resurrection, and to us are the words "Because I live, ye shall live also." Let us "possess our possessions,"—"in His sight."

CONTENTS.

	Page
"Conscience . . . of the other"	19
The Holy Spirit's working in Acts 1 and 2	20
Objections to Scripture	22
Omissions	23
"Take heed what ye hear"	24

"Come out of him, and enter no more into him."

Mark 9. 25.

THESE words of the Lord Jesus unveil much to us. We need to PONDER them. Demon possession is A FACT: demons are realities. They are seeking rest (Matt. 12. 43), they desire bodies in which to dwell. And the narrative before us shows that they are not ONLY inhabiting those who have lived a life of iniquity. Mysterious as it seems, we find this possession permitted in CHILDHOOD. (Mark 9. 21). "Why?" We cannot say, but the fact remains. Moreover, there are different "kinds" of demons (Mark 9. 29), and some evidently have

special power, and never "come forth" unless driven forth by the spiritual power of redeemed ones waiting on God! Here is a line of thought of deep importance as to a holy warfare, and appointed victory. The devil and his forces are mighty, but the devil can be made to flee (Jas. 4. 7), and evil spirits can be compelled and commanded to depart, but only through resolute faith, and its prevailing. The words "prayer and fasting" are searching. They are our Lord's message.

Just now we are impressed, too, with the words "Enter no more into him." The demon will TRY to come back (Matt. 12. 44). Correspondingly we do not believe that relapse into illness after healing, (When this is God's will), "proves" failure as to the earlier blessing. It MAY indicate "relapse" into indifference or unbelief first (not **only** personal: we affect one another), and THEN the physical going back. Satan always seeks to undo. Hence the deep importance of seeking permanent deliverance from evil spirits. How blessed, too, is the spiritual parallel when a soul is delivered from the authority of the darkness (Col. 1. 13). Salvation is a blessed PERMANENCY. And the same continuance should characterize all our believing experience. O that we may know faith's **definiteness**, and holy expectation to the glory of God.

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM."
Philippians 3. 10.

And can I come to know
Himself yet more and more?
Will He His glory show
Beyond all seen before?
We **can** in closer contact be,
With inner eyes Himself to see.

How was the wish fulfilled
For him who wrote this word?
Faith's giving up he willed,
Affection, deeply stirred,
Desired Christ with all desire,
Nor would to earthly dross aspire.

Our Lord, the Same today,
Seeks undivided hearts:
This is the blessed way
That He Himself imparts,
Unveils His love, His joy, His will:
Communion's path is open still.

"Thou shalt **love**," is the repeated word of the Lord's commands. And blessedly so. "Love" always "does," but "doing" does not always love.

"Conscience . . . of the other."

1 Corinthians 10. 29.

THERE are those whom God shows to be careless of conscience. They put aside (1 Tim. 1. 19), they sear it (1 Tim. 4. 2). But thanks be unto God, there are others who are conscientious, and the fulness of their loving concern for God's glory in this should make them rightly beware of **another** temptation of the evil one, on the very line of their devoted obedience.

He does not suggest to **them**, "Go against your conscience." That evil would be detected, and hated, at once. But rather He leads to a personal oppression of mind, through failure, and remorse, instead of repentance—or to an expectation that **all** other consciences will quickly see alike. If they do not, there is the immediate tendency to impute indolence, or even unwillingness, or evil motives. If expressed, this leads to slander, and divisions. If kept under, it hinders a harmonious happiness, in which love and repentance on the part of all are kept growing. Hence history shows us that most "divisions" among saints have been "conscientiously" caused by or among the most conscientious, and devoted believers.

It behoves us therefore, beloved brethren, to find what is the Lord's loving **minimum** of reasons for right separation, while seeking in the Spirit, His **maximum** of unity in all things (Eph. 4. 13). We would be deeply earnest, never go or act against our own consciences, but never force others, nor intimidate, nor threaten, nor be impatient. In this connexion, let us always seek to give fellow believers the "benefit of the doubt," even as the apostle imputes a right motive in Romans 14. 6—and this not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but lovingly, and freely, aye and conscientiously. Then we shall become magnets, and not repellers. Thus shall we help the repentance and oneness which we all need. Yet sometimes we seek it by **our own** barriers and arrangements. "Suffer the word of exhortation," beloved brethren. One has read, or seen so much of failure, in history through mistaken zeal for "my" conscience, and forgetfulness of the "conscience of the other." Shall we not henceforth give other brethren the credit for being as conscientious as we? Or shall we expect, look out for, and even imagine, defect in this, and then publish it?

The loveliness of the character of our Lord Jesus is its perfect proportion and balance. God desires such frankness and freedom among His own, a contrast with the effects of wire-pulling and underground working, and criticizing, and self-seeking, and suspicion which exist so manifestly in a ruined race. We are born from above, and, the more confidence we have in other saints, the more shall we, in the prayer-enabling power of the Holy Spirit, encourage others to prove worthy of this confidence, and beget it in others toward ourselves. May these simple practical suggestions produce fruit to His glory Whose Name we bear.

The Holy Spirit's Working Revealed in Acts 1 and 2.

TO talk of salvation without knowing our precious Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour is vain. In like manner, to talk of the Holy Spirit, without walking in the Spirit, is profitless.

Let us seek, while meditating on words Divinely used in making clear His ministry, to enjoy and illustrate His enabling. Acts 1. 5 is the first mention here, where we read, "Ye shall be **baptised with (in)** the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Verse 8 explains further, "Ye shall receive power, the Holy Spirit **having come** upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses." These prophecies of the day of Pentecost, the jubilee (**fiftieth**) day, based on **the** Passover and resurrection-sheaf, are unmistakable. Some beloved children of God, noticing the link both of language, and of receiving, with water-baptism, have inferred that immersion is not meant, because of the words "having come upon." But they seem to have missed God's teaching. The water is not poured out, it is already **beneath**, and the judgment-picturing baptism is **down** into it. But the living breath of the Spirit is poured out **from above**,—not that **this** was baptism, but with a view to it. i.e., to make **immersion in the Spirit possible**. The **first** step is pouring out, the **next** is His gracious surrounding (and "being baptised"), and the **third** is His **filling** within (so in the type of **nature**—whenever air takes the place of water, living ones delivered from water, are first immersed in air, and then filled with that which becomes their vital breath). But grace far excels nature.

So we reach Acts 2. 1, 2, and the filling of verse 2 is followed by that of verse 4, and thereby the powers of missionary-utterance. He Who was given gave them utterance. **Dependence** is lovingly taught. The explanation in verses 17 and 18 is definite with verse 33, where we read, "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," alluding to Luke 24. 49, and preparing for Ephesians 1. 13 ("sealed with the Holy Spirit of **the promise**"). There is nothing in Scripture **now** to postpone this gracious blessing, but it follows being born of the Spirit (John 3. 6), and illustrates the sending of the Spirit into the hearts of those who are already sons (Gal. 4. 6). How rich are our privileges! Let us at once claim, enjoy, and manifest the fruit of what we possess (Num. 13. 30).

Acts 2. 38 contains a yet further word, "the gift of the Holy Ghost." This succeeds quickening, and is associated with living and obedience in Acts 5. 32. Chapters 8, 15-20 (note "the gift of God") confirms, and likewise chapter 10. 44, 45 (cf. 11. 16).

Now when we turn back to Acts 1. 8 we see the appropriateness of the three occasions, for in chapter 2 we are in **Jerusalem**, and in chapter 8 in **Samaria**. The **Romans at Caesarea**, in chapter 10, illustrate "the uttermost parts of the earth." And God's sovereignty shines out in that in the first two cases we

notice **preparation**, with God's direct action in one, and in the other through the apostles, thus attesting them. In the culminating case His direct work came **before** it was expected. In each record we find signs "For them that believe **not**" (1 Cor. 14. 22), even to prove to Israel ("this people," Isa. 28. 11) that Jew and Gentile, on believing, were baptised into **one** body.

This was Divinely appointed at **the change of dispensation**. But the blessing **continues**, and why should any doubt that those who are far off, and who believingly repent, and are gladly baptised into the name of the Lord, **have** received "the promise"? Dare we set aside Acts 2. 39? "The promise," not "the sign," is emphasized as permanent.

But how important to **know** our privileges, and to possess our possessions (Obad. 17), and to live to-day in the Spirit. A fourfold stress on the dispensational work of the Holy Spirit is—

- (a) The enjoyment of sonship (Rom. 8. 18, Gal. 4. 6).
- (b) The sealing and claiming, as the earnest of the inheritance (Eph. 1. 13, 14).
- (c) The unity of the redeemed in one body (1 Cor. 12. 13).
- (d) Power in missionary witness (Acts 1. 8).

Do we lack the consciousness of these? Do we fail to appropriate that which is ours? What possibilities and lives of Christlikeness are within our reach through the **mighty** indwelling of the living, indwelling Holy Spirit.

A plant has lovely flowers. They greet our eyes and refresh. The fragrance, unseen, is received by the nostrils God has given, to include this further helpfulness and stimulation. There is also fruit that we may partake and have an inward refreshment. So is it with God's precious words, in their appointed all-round ministry of blessing, and so should it be in **our** loving help and our gracious service to "one another." But possibly we lack fragrance? And have we much fruit? Or is it stunted and dry, not enlarged and refreshing? Our need is to receive, that we may give.

A Brainerd through intensity of prayer was warmed amid the extreme cold, we often seem to need amenities of body to have fervour in prayer. O for fuller reviving.

Waste, in God's earthly gifts, and spiritual alike, is either through ignorance, carelessness, laziness, disregard of others obstinacy, or wilful intention. O that we may learn the lesson, and see the root and fruits of evil, and hate and seek to avoid all, in the Lord's enabling day by day. Little things are a test for spirituality.

The Lord's lovingkindnesses are not small and narrow, but overflowing as well as many. Some speak of gratitude for "small mercies," but surely such do not know Him. And their proverbial words, "We **must** be grateful," indicate a lack of real and spiritual love. Our God of all grace "only doeth wondrous things." Blessed be His name.

Objections to Scripture.

UNFAIRNESS is a sadly common sin. We have all also interpreted our own actions and words more favourably than those of others. **Two** measures in business involve cheating (Deut. 25. 14, 15), but how easy it is to sin thus in judging the actions of those toward whom some irritated feeling has been nourished.

And Holy Scripture is often very unfairly treated. We know for instance the usual misquotation of Genesis 4. 16, 17 by the infidel. We call to mind the frequent statement, "There are many contradictions in the Bible." The writer, almost invariably offers a Bible for the objector to select one. Among varied responses we recollect such as, "I will bring one next week" and "O there are thousands," or the request that we would find one, or the fact Scripture does not tell us something the objector desired has been illogically introduced, or he has turned over the pages helplessly, or spoken of a book he has at home, or confessed he has not read Scripture lately. When has a fair difficulty been brought forward? Hardly ever. And if a real problem is brought, how beautifully God is willing to grant a further discovery of spiritual value thereby, or a fuller realization of the right translation. He never fails. His glory, and fruit for Him, and heart-blessing, not argument, must be our object.

One difficulty, recently stated by a very thoughtful agnostic, illustrates the danger of assumption. The molten sea of 1 Kings 7. 23, is said to have been ten cubits across, and thirty cubits compassed it round. Then it was **assumed** the writer did not know the relation of diameter to circumference. The first strange part of this objection is seen when we notice that there is nothing theoretical in the passage. The record simply gives a statement of measures then made for **one** article. Nothing mathematical or for **other** things is suggested. All could have been easily checked. Ordinary intelligence can measure, and the context shows we have no ignorant writer. It is interesting that the contents are variously described (1 Kings 7. 26, 2 Chron. 4. 5). Some would say "another contradiction." But everyone should know that there are **two** ways of reckoning—(a) possible capacity, (b) general measure of filling. Why should not the **size** be similarly treated? No general statement is made, therefore no contradiction can be proved. Surely it is simple to suggest that the "brim" had some breadth, and as the compassing of 1 Kings 7. 24 was **under** it, may not the same "compassing" in verse 23 have been **under** the brim, and thus excluding it? To assume a careful writer, who makes no generalization, is wrong, when we have not seen that which is described, is hardly right. One fair and possible interpretation rules, the objection out. To continue to hold it, even mentally, would evidence bias. O for an open heart for truth!

A risen Lord is our Joy. We have not a crib nor a crucifix: we know him.

OMISSIONS.

DO we not often realize how a believer, when tender before the Lord, is most concerned as to OMISSIONS? It is a true sense of these that removes all self-confidence, and all thoughts of personal perfection. Thanks be to God, we are perfected in Christ (Heb. 10. 14), and we should, and would, grow in grace, and bear much fruit, and seek to experience the apostle's victory over known sin (1 Cor. 4. 4), so that nothing is excused (Ps. 66. 18). But when we realize that God's "commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps. 119. 96), and the intense meaning of the words "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts," we realize our coming short of THE GLORY OF GOD (Rom. 3. 23), and how we could never dare to think, "That has been said, or done, without omission of anything: it could not have been better." Thus we are humbled, and would never minimise SINS of ignorance (Lev. 5. 18, with Heb. 5. 2, 3), nor call them by another name.

The present day tendency is toward the standpoint, "We cannot know everything, therefore we are not culpable." But this is dangerous. Some may ask "Why? How can we know all?" Such a question is plausible. But can we say we have used every opportunity to know? Can we plead we have been obedient always, up to our knowledge? If we had followed the Lord more simply, how much more fully would He have led us, and inclined our hearts to avoid mistakes, and we should have seen afterwards His gracious restraining. Today's ignorance is very often the result of yesterday's lack of communion. It is blessed to know our Father's interest, and the way in which He keeps His simple children, as they are responsive to Him. Human reasoning is the peril, "The meek will He guide in judgment."

It is a privilege to have a holy fear of grieving the Holy Spirit, so shall we be guided to do much, of which we should not have known otherwise. The Holy Scripture affords heavenly food. The believer who rises too late, and has "no time" for prayerful meditation on Scripture will lack insight into the way of the Lord. The habit of true feeding on the provided nourishment, and of abiding in Christ, will lead to an instinctive realization of the will of God, even as a child soon uses the mother tongue accurately.

May our lives be responsive, and not self-decisive, dependent and not self-appointed; so shall we be kept more and more from "omissions." Yet, when a believer grows in grace, and others see no faults, he will feel his inner shortcomings more, though not with a burdened and worrying remorse. He will REJOICE with TREMBLING, for his Father is not a taskmaster. The balance of a believing life without boasting and without fear that hath torment, is blessed indeed.

"Take heed what ye hear."

Mark 4. 24.

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

Proverbs 19. 27.

CURIOSITY has ruined many. Self-confidence that thinks, "I shall not be affected" has had bitter fruits. We are more influenced than we realize by what we choose to "hear." The perils of "broad" preaching, and of the popular "wireless," come before us. If we would "know everything," we shall have soon little time, or inclination to know the Lord. Are we ashamed to be unlike the world? Is the Lord Jesus so unreal to us?

The danger of reading is often parallel with that of hearing. Show me your books, and I shall know something of your character and tendencies. A romance instead of revelation may blight christian experience. The newspaper gradually may take the place of Scripture. Reading to know "the other side" may imperceptibly lead us **aside**.

We are not invulnerable. We may hear the argument, "If you are unwilling to read all, you are not sure of your own ground." But stop one moment. How do you know this? My time is limited. I have not opportunity to examine and refute all the plausible theories of centuries. Is it cowardice, or wisdom, to look after my spiritual food, and not weaken myself by neglecting it? Is God real to me? Is salvation a miracle? If the Bible is only an ordinary book, then I may argue for the reading of all manner of other books equally, but then I am not evidencing any **experience** of a personal Saviour. Have I **tasted** that the Lord is gracious, or not?

Pride does not like to be told, "You are behind the times: you have not read this or that." We often grieve if we cannot answer a man to our satisfaction, more than if we do not trust our Father, to His joy. The one who criticizes what he calls blind faith does not know how farseeing it is. Yet often he has something like a wish that he could share our peace. It is no disgrace to believe God. It is a privilege to bear the reproach of Christ. Human reasoning ever shifts its ground, and today's claim is tomorrow's denial. Actually saints are not behind the times but **before**, since they belong to "the Day." But much humility is needed, and the avoidance of pretending to understand all. We cannot be too simple, and lowly, denying self.

Christ is **our** Life, not only the Life (Col. 3. 4, John 14. 6). This is the standpoint of Colossians, and Ephesians 3. 17 shows a related blessing. Then Philippians 1. 21, sets forth the holy realization and response:—"To me to live is Christ."

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"Thou leddest Thy people like a flock."

Psalms 77. 20.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

John 10. 27.

A Word of Introduction.

ALL Scripture unites to emphasize the deep and lasting love of God to His own. We delight in the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, and in the unveiling of the Deity of our Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd. Blessed, indeed, are we because He became Man, to be the Lamb as well as the Shepherd, that "the Lamb's book of life" might abide with its precious, numberless entries, from of old, a proof of grace reigning through righteousness. O that we may NOW be led, and respond to "the Shepherd and Bishop" of our souls. This is our privilege, our responsibility, and our joy; and with such an object to His own glory are these pages humbly sent forth, in the gracious enabling of the Holy Spirit.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Beginning and Ending	28
Fitting in Together	30
Hidden Blessing in Scriptural Wording	32

"Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause . . . Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause."

Exodus 23. 3, 6.

"Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you . . . ye ought rather to forgive and comfort, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."

1 Corinthians 5. 2; 2 Corinthians 2. 7.

"He looked . . . he saw . . . he slew . . . Send I pray thee, by the hand Thou wilt send."

Exodus 2. 12; 4. 13.

WE are all in danger of the swing of the pendulum. How easy it is to push one part of **truth** to the forgetfulness and exclusion of another part, or to condemn one **sin** unsparingly and not only overlook but fall into another. But we need grace—

and grace is available—for a holy balance. If I suffer “that woman Jezebel” (Rev. 2. 20) I sin grievously, but if I cannot “bear them that are evil,” yet leave my “first love” (with mental and logical rather than loving fixity), I equally need repentance (Rev. 2. 2, 5). How many divisions have been crystallized among God’s beloved people because Satan has tempted **along the line of obedience**, and temperament and desire to be “**consistent with ourselves**” have influenced rather than continual dependence on the Lord, and momentary responsiveness to His ever present directing.

The temptation, on the line of love, to a gentle temperament, is **compromise**—the temptation, on the line of godly firmness, with a definite temperament, is **rigidity and hardness**. And the fact that the one sees the mistake of the other often veils perception of one’s own over-balance. And, in this unconscious lack, each becomes more “convinced” in **his own** onesideness.

Thus we fail to please our Lord as we should (and would) by all-round likeness to Himself. Hence divisions, and unlovely words, have often been common among the very saints who are most devoted to the Lord’s truth, and conscientiously concerned that they may not undervalue any part of it. Their very zeal for His truth has been over-balanced, to impute errors of intention to the errors of expression of others, and mutual-vilifying is easier than mutual humbling. But God is able to revive and uphold, and our hearts ever look up to Him for grace, and for balance, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May I lovingly remind all that when undue harshness is, at last, detected, there is a special immediate danger in sorrow over it, to swing to the other extreme? These **times of revival** are times of **special need** that we may be kept from a **natural** enthusiasm. Self-judgment is the enemy’s opportunity to lead us to include in this judgment part of the Lord’s will as well. When we take away **our** rubbish, let us not confuse with it His truth, but seek grace to “discern things that differ” in the yielded quietness of momentary dependence on our unfailing Lord, and the gracious leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

“The church which is His body”: how much this means! Not only is there the thought of living unity, but of dependence on Him, and responsiveness to Him, and of the carrying out of His will. The Head uses the body for this purpose. And the united activity of the members of the physical body is only as there is unparalysed healthiness. Is it not so spiritually? The “reunion of Christendom” is a caricature of union in Christ.

“Do you claim sinlessness?” No, but we would never excuse sinfulness. We dare not set a limit to the power of Him Who keeps us (1 Pet. 1. 5, Jude 24). And it is possible to be overcomers, and more than conquerors in the Holy Spirit’s strength. All failure is to be judged. Rapid growth, and abundant fruit are God’s will, and He giveth “more grace.”

TWENTY FOUR.

THIS number, in Revelation (“elders,” 4. 4) leads us to the one Old Testament passage where it is in repeated prominence, and thus we may learn the meaning. In 1 Chronicles 24 the **priests** were distributed in **twenty four** orders. When was this? In the days of the **kingdom** under **David**, and with a view to the temple. Next we have the **singers** of praise (1 Chron. 25) arranged in twenty four groups. Is this all? No. 1 Chronicles 26. 17, 18 shows the **porters**—the door-keepers of the house of the Lord—in a similar number of co-working divisions. Surely this is not accidental. And “twenty four thousand” characterizes the courses of 1 Chronicles 27, and the supply of food in the kingdom. Though the “elders” are **personally** individual (Rev. 5. 5), they remind of (not “are”), and also “anticipate” it would seem, the “kingdom” and “priests” of Revelation 1. 6 (cf. 1 Peter 2. 5, 9), and refresh our hearts regarding saints in view of Revelation 20. 4.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
they shall prosper that love thee.”

Psalm 122. 6.

A people scattered,
Their hopes oft shattered:
But yet God’s word shall stand.
Israel distressed,
And sore oppressed,
Must own His promised land.

A nation wand’ring,
Sad history pond’ring—
God speaks, but few will hear!
Israel brought low,
Him fail to know,
Uncircumcised their ear.

Soon comes the shaking,
Soon the awaking,
Dry bones will hear, and live!
God is the Same,
And He will claim,
His Holy Spirit give.

For Israel praying,
Be not delaying;
Believers, importune!
Christ’s death availed;
He has not failed;
He comes in glory soon!

BEGINNING AND ENDING.

I do not mean these precious names of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 22. 13) nor am I thinking of the oft-repeated words "first and last" concerning kings of Judah which often give much food for thought (e.g., 2 Chron. 9. 12, 12. 15). Rather the beginnings and endings in Scripture Books are before me. There is throughout a Divine plan—Genesis 1. 1 reveals "God" in creation, but Revelation 22. 21 has a **claiming** pronoun "**our** Lord"; for "grace" has shone forth, and Matthew 1. 1, containing the names without the "**our**" which **redemption** brings, must lay further stress on God's loving purpose, for lost sinners to become His saints.

What about individual books? Genesis begins with creation, but, because sin entered, it leads up to "a coffin in Egypt"; not cremation, but a coffin with a view to resurrection, and "bones" are carried up to Canaan telling of the promise of the Lord's land (Jos. 24. 32). Exodus begins with Egypt and treasure cities of Pharaoh, but ends with deliverance, and God's indwelt sanctuary. Joshua solemnly sets forth, "Moses, My Servant is dead" at the beginning and tells of the death of Joshua and Eleazar at the end, **but** the bodies are "sown"—to use the wording of that precious gospel which brings life and incorruption to light (1 Cor. 15. 42-44). Judges begins with victory but, alas, finds its climax in every man doing right in his own eyes (21.25). Yet Ruth commencing in Moab and death ends with Bethlehem and David. The first Psalm has first **One** Who obeys, but in the 150th is a chorus of praise from "everything that hath breath." Isaiah tells of sad conditions in Judah, but the 66th chapter is clear as to returned Israel's blessings. Daniel 1 is from Jerusalem to Babylon, but chapter 12 has the "blessedness" of deliverances for Israel (Verses 1, 7, 12). And so it is with many of the shorter prophets, which as Hosea and Joel so fully illustrate do not leave the "Lo-ammi" or stripped people, but make evident God's restoration of backsliders, and His dwelling in Zion. So the gospel of Matthew begins with our Lord's earthly birth, but tells of His glory as the First Begotten from the dead in chapter 28. The great missionary narrative of The Acts leads us from triumph among Israel at Jerusalem to salvation among Gentiles at Rome, for the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1. 16). Thus the way each book commences is not a chance, and the last geographical name is included in that verbal inspiration which we rejoice to acknowledge.

REFUSALS.

- "Thou refusedst to **be ashamed**" (Jer. 3. 3).
- "They have refused to **return**" (Jer. 5. 3; 8. 5).
- "They refuse to **know** Me" (Jer. 9. 6).
- "Which refused to **hear** My words" (Jer. 11. 10).

DIFFERENCES.

HARMONIOUS differences, as of colour in flowers, and sound in singing, are helpful, and thus is it with members of the body of Christ, even as with those of the physical body. We are meant to supplement "one another," and by love serve "one another."

But there are others, as when we say, "They have a difference practically," and likewise in doctrine or interpretation. Concerning the former, "selfness" and pride are so often at the root (may we not say always?) and A sees B's failure, and B looks at A's, whereas the wound might be healed if we humbly dealt with our own. The holy principle of Matthew 5. 24 and Philipians 4. 2, 3 helps.

Regarding doctrine, it is important to put Ephesians 4. 3 before 13. To make all error equivalent to the denial of the Person of Christ (2 John 9, 10) is wrong. Prophetical misapprehension, for instance is quite different, and each believer should have patience with others. It is so "easy" to be irritated. The tendency is for those most loyal to Christ to be most expressive, with mistaken zeal. The thought "It is so clear, why can't he see it?" soon becomes "He shuts his eyes to it." Nearly all divisions among earnest believers might have been obviated had such prayed more, and avoided three things, in the Spirit—

- (a) Threats (of separation, etc.).
- (b) Imputations (of motive, wilfulness, tendency, and other evils "logically" said to be involved).
- (c) Hasty words, and temper.

Shall we not learn to be more gracious?

Differences of "interpretation" of ANY verse when both hold the SAME belief, yet do not think alike as to WHICH part of truth is emphasized in one verse, are still more surprisingly misused by the enemy to sow discord. If we would "judge ourselves" and remember the words, "Rather let it be healed," we should have a different history. Godly men have "misunderstood," and written books in self-defence, when they might have used the time in bringing saints together to the glory of God.

SEVEN "NOTS" CONCERNING THE PASSOVER.

- "Eat **not** of it raw."
 - "**Nor** sodden at all with water."
 - "Ye shall let **nothing** of it remain until the morning."
 - "Ye shall eat **nothing** leavened."
 - "There shall **no** stranger eat thereof."
 - "A foreigner and a hired servant shall **not** eat thereof."
 - "**Neither** shall ye break a bone thereof."
- (Ex. 12. 9, 10, 20, 43, 45, 46).

FITTING IN TOGETHER.

IT is wonderful to see how really God is over all, and how the most unlikely things work TOGETHER in His purpose. Joseph is **sinfully** sold into Egypt, and then God overrules a **false** charge of a **wicked** person, and the **wrath** of Pharaoh, and the **sadness** of his officers, and the **forgetfulness** of the one restored—all to bring about the **delayed** mention of Joseph to the king at the **decreed moment**, when needed. How wonderful all is. Again, in Philippi, Paul's waiting, and the cry of the **demon-possessed** woman, the **greed** and **spite** of her masters, the **excitement** of the **rulers**, the cruel **severity** of the jailer, all bring to (a) the victory of praise, and (b) the salvation of the "man of Macedonia," and (c) the beginning of God's work in Europe, through His servants, and (d) the planting of an assembly peculiarly commended for faithfulness (Phil. 1. 5, 4. 15, 16). Not one item can be left out and all looked so unlikely. Yet the Divine intimation as to the "help" in Macedonia (even as the Divine promise to Joseph in his dreams), was thus fulfilled.

Said Jacob, "All these things are against me," and Job said, "Why died I not?" Neither saw "the end of the Lord." They interpreted "all" when knowing "part," and drew inferences in accord with their impressions and feelings. This is always a peril. If you have God's words, believe them. If you see not His way out, trust Him. If you are not told what He will do, wait for Him. If He has veiled His purpose, do not seek to uncover it with your arguments. It is this attitude which has brought murmuring and complaint into many a life, and natural reasoning, with objections to God's providence, criticisms of His revealed dealings in holy judgment to come. The wish of man is to fit all together with his thoughts, instead of realizing that God will fit all together to His glory. To Him there are no limitations of time, place, knowledge, wisdom, power of circumstances. Revere Him, trust Him, praise Him, God is God, His way is perfect.

It is easy to write this. Job did not have chapter 42 when he went through chapters 3—31, and therefore he talked. There was much of truth in much he said, but "inferences" spoilt it. "Faith" must have no "and's" to undo its **simplicity**. All things are working together for good—we do not read for "all" but for the Lord's called ones. If you are a loving child of God, everything is for your good. Can you not believe this—believe Him? Do not live to-morrow to-day (Matt. 6. 34): Jesus Christ is the Same yesterday and to-day, and for ever (Heb. 13. 8). When "to-morrow" comes it will be "to-day," and He will be the Same to-day, with present grace for present need, in the ever present application of the Holy Spirit.

Bear your trials without advertising them, because of simple confidence in the Lord's love and permitting them.

THANKFUL TO BE CORRECTED.

AM I glad to be put right? Is there a hesitating "yes?" Do I feel, "It depends on—when it is done, how, and by whom?" There may be "some truth" in this. If I wound anyone more than a fall would,—to prevent him slipping over an obstacle, I am wrong; and, in many human schemes, the remedy is as bad as, or worse than the disease. But there is a tendency in every "I—life" to cling to reputation and to "self-consistency," and to "what I have held." Hence the lack of full openness. Many **misunderstandings** are not through mental obtuseness but, rather, through pride. The proverbs of men often show up sin without removing it. Convince anyone against his **will**, his opinion remains. The "will" decides. We can blind ourselves. Bias is not an accident of circumstances, it is fed by pride. O that we may have a holy humility, spontaneously, not via a long struggle.

The condition when one first comes to the Lord Jesus—nothingness, and as a little child—needs to be retained. We often become too clever to learn, too strong to be led, too self-opiniated to go forward. But if I always realize I am "nothing," and **truly esteem others**, then, if the righteous smite me, it will be a blessing (Ps. 141. 5). Yes, and even the **unkind** attack, of one unrighteous, is permitted by God **for my good**. Let me not be angrily occupied with the **means**, but gratefully with God's **message** behind it. "In everything give thanks." Resentment is pride, and criticizes God.

Again, am I not thankful to be corrected, that I may become right? Do I excuse one error? Am I willing to **be** wrong, to **do** wrong, to **lead** others wrongly, in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ? How **can** I be, if I **love** Him, and His truth? How can I have joy in delaying the knowledge and loving doing of the truth? How much **better** to find His will now, than to see my mistakes "in that Day"? I desire, you desire, His will done, for His joy then.

THE COVENANT OF PEACE.

"Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace." Numbers 25. 12.

"Neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed." Isaiah 54. 10.

"I will make with them a covenant of peace." Ezekiel 34. 25.

"I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them." Ezekiel 37. 26.

"My covenant was with him of life and peace." Malachi 2. 5.

"The God of peace, That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," Hebrews 13. 20.

Hidden Blessing in Scriptural Wording.

I felt drawn to Matthew 5, as the Lord lovingly impressed upon me the wealth of words in the first "beatitude": Happy, poor, spirit, theirs, is, kingdom, heavens. We see a cluster of jewels, the inwardness and the heavenliness of true life, the present "possession," and the dependence, and the joy of saints. The first word, "happy," comes here nine times, with the added "Rejoice," reminiscent of the nine "not's" and one positive command of Exodus 20, but with the **contrasted** positive stress on joy, and absence of the negative, so fitting for the new covenant principles. The **first** words of our Lord's different addresses, e.g., "Behold" in Matthew 13 and "Take heed" in Matthew 24, as of His prayer "Father" (John 17. 1), must impress. How practical is His message! "Happy" reminds of the **first** Psalm, and also of the beginning of the **longest** psalm—all is precious.

"Why?" I hardly know, but God's grace led me to count the words of the Holy Spirit in the original and I found the 8 "Happinesses" before the climax "ye" contained 12, 6, 8, 10, 6, 10, 8, 12 words respectively. The two with "is" (present) have each 12; in between we have two sets of three, with "shall" (future) each counting 24 words, and all have multiples of 2 (the even numbers in Scripture referring to **our** relation to God). Thus we have 72 words, and the chapter begins, moreover, with sentences of 8, 8, 8 words (24). Remembering the "twelve thrones" (Luke 22. 30) of **government** and this signification throughout with the 12 and 12 x 12 of Revelation 21 we cannot but see a wondrous order, we rejoice in the unveiling of our Lord's poetry of balanced sentences just as in the Psalms. Such a "structure" illustrates the full inspiration of Holy Scripture and hidden beauties to refresh saints, and to witness against any who oppose. God is here, and working here. We praise Him, and would praise Him more. Nor is the ninth and last "beatitude" without its twice 8, the resurrection number, again even, and a square (of 4), fittingly showing the experiences of saints in all parts of the earth, as His witnesses, and thus we reach a striking multiple of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet (88, 4 x 22) suggestive of the balanced messages in the narratives of the Old Testament and the twice 88 of the longest poem of praise, emphasising the words of the Lord. To the believer these "details" are helpful, as in nature (Ps. 104. 24), and may also afford helpful witness to others in daily life.

Do not expect failure, but look to the Lord for victory. Let not your past take your mind from the Lord's present.

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"Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."
Revelation 5. 9.

A Word of Introduction.

REDEMPTION is the joy of heaven. Shall it not be our joy to day? A miserable believer is an anomaly. The flesh is not stronger than the Spirit. The world is not mightier than Christ. We **WERE** in captivity, the servants of sin (Rom. 6. 17), we are not. We are "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20)—redeemed to God. There is no dual ownership. The work is finished (John 19. 30) and now reconciliation, peace, cleansing, overcoming—all blessings are by the precious blood of Christ. Only as we emphasize Him, and His death and resurrection, can there be a true realization of our riches, even our birthright. These pages go forth to His glory, and to enjoy and enjoin praise, worship, and adoration, with a holy emphasis on oneness in Christ, and the blessed Hope, even His coming which can never be separated from His atonement, as the Holy Spirit ministers living truth to our hearts.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Love One Another...	35
"At Thy Word" ...	38
Doubts as to Eternal Salvation...	40

A Few Meditations on the Holy of Holies.

THE fulness of God's teaching in the types, who can realize? We have never exhausted, and can never exhaust this precious instruction. Everything exalts the Lord Jesus Christ, and the one way of salvation IN HIM. In the veil—rent—we see the perfect life of Christ, and His work for us, and likewise in the ark. From the throne the veil was in front—the rent veil the only access. The boards all without one exception rested on silver sockets of **redemption**, and thus we behold a type of faith appropriating the work of the Lord Jesus, and the dwelling place of God was thus surrounded, as it were—the veil causing union and completeness and access. The mercy seat (upon the **only** piece of

furniture), was exalted, and central, picturing by its gold the Lord Jesus lifted up in resurrection, by its position the setting forth that the claims of the **unbroken** law were satisfied, and, by the **inseparable** union of the Cherubim, indicating the eternal union of the redeemed with the Lord Jesus, on resurrection ground. O the fulness of grace! How each aspect of the Lord Jesus should fill us with joy and praise! And as we realize how God emphasized **His** dwelling place and **His** delight in being among His own, we worship and rejoice. These are not dreams but realities. Grace is not a theory, but a fact. And the unveiling of covenant love long before the Word was made flesh, and the entire harmony of truth, demonstrates the full inspiration of the precious **Old Testament** also, and that there are no after-thoughts with God. His purpose shall stand, and He has purposed to have a complete people for an indestructible temple (Eph. 2. 22), and such are we, by sovereign grace.

"THIS DAY."

Deuteronomy 26. 16-18.

"**THIS** day the Lord thy God hath commanded," "Thou hast avouched the Lord **this day** to be thy God," "The Lord hath avouched thee **this day** to be His peculiar people." Deuteronomy is the special book of "this day." I do not mean that the more than sixty occurrences have the same context of aspect, but a large proportion emphasize a holy definiteness, a spiritually emphasized "now." And this is well. We find those who live in the past, with happy memories—or regrets. Others are always intending to do "something more" yet there is a putting off, are we among such? It is well to remember the privilege of a **present** obedience, a **prompt** devotedness. We all **need** more of the "this day" determination before God our Father. We would not say, "To-morrow I will give" (Prov. 3. 28). Nor would we "hope" to follow the Lord more fully **when** times are easier, but would realize Jesus Christ the **Same** . . . to-day," and "make haste and **delay not**" (Ps. 119. 60). "**To-day**, if ye have heard His Voice" is a precious thought. How much was lost in Song of Songs 5 because the heart failed when He spoke. He withdrew Himself! and often we are too late to receive the fuller blessing that awaits responsiveness and a spiritually spontaneous love.

The rulers of Israel "**SOUGHT**" witness against the Lord Jesus (Mark 14. 55)—evil wishes. The witnesses were "false" (57) because they "remodelled" His words. Beware of "half-truth" lying against others. Note, too, how the Sanhedrin pretended to be legal (Deut. 17. 6).

Receive God's promises and His precepts together: never separate them. He who always talks of promises may become careless, and he who only thinks of precepts fearful.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

A lovely command, and a loving one. The Lord Jesus emphasized "love" thrice in John 13. 34, 35, and "love" is a commandment-word. The first commandment and the second and the new—all alike contain it, as none other word (Matt. 22. 38, 39). Man's idea that love is independent of command, and that law is hard and legalistic, breaks down. We can make anything legalistic—even eating our dinner. Attitude causes legalism. But if the heart within exactly harmonizes with the Lord's will, there is a removal of all friction, and every action becomes "twofold"—it is obedient, and thus pleases God, it is living fruit and is our own life-manifestation, and joy. Thus, instead of being an independent action "in the air," Christian love fulfills God's purpose and is also the outflow of our very being. Thus is there the double satisfaction, and, wonder of wonders, we shall be "rewarded" for that which delights ourselves.

Our beloved Lord in appointing "love" unites His words with the earlier Scriptures, for "love" is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13. 10), and the law is spiritual (Rom. 7. 14). Moreover, He appoints not a miserable duty, **but** a happy privilege, for one cannot thus love wretchedly. He delivers from the slavery of infatuated counterfeits, to the liberty of true affection. In so doing He shows that outward "obedience" alone is not really obedience, only a shell.

He did not say "Keep My Commandments," but "if ye love me, keep My Commandments." He isolates nothing, but blends all. Thus He shows the way to keep and the way to love, lest we should seek a counterfeit. Nor does He only say "Love," but "**that** ye may love" and the word is "in order that" including His purpose, and His empowering, by the Holy Spirit's incoming.

How real is the language of Divine truth, and how encouraging. Praise be to God for all.

And "one another" is another remarkable word. It has no singular; it is always plural, and thus I realize I am a member of my brother and he of me, and our distinctness is "another" for fellowship, never for friction. He is "another," and yet part of myself.

The words "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" do not only mean the one who lives next door; rather we have the going of graciousness to make the needy unattractive one a "neighbour" (Luke 10. 36). Yet he remains "near," he is not part of ourselves. But grace and redemption have brought about a new unity on resurrection ground: hence the new covenant word "**one another**." How precious are all the hints and harmonies of the Holy Spirit in the perfect language of Holy Scripture.

And next the word "**according as** I loved you." This emphasizes the cause, but, more than this, the enabling power, and still more, the motive, and yet further, the example, and thus the manner, and again the intensity, although we humbly own we

fall short in degree. So would we press onward, and become like Him (Eph. 5. 1).

The kind of love is seen, it is not merely natural, it is as the Lord Jesus loved. It is not in Adam, but "in Christ." A love that gives, for He gave; a love that bears; a love that abides and is not weary; a love that is never irritated; a love that is undying, eternal. A love in the Spirit, a love that awakens and stimulates love. All this, and more, must be included.

"That ye **also**." We are ever an "also" people. We respond to grace. "Shouldest not thou also?" In Matthew 18, 33, comes to mind. The love we have received causes us to love, and thus there is the growth of love among saints, as our Lord Jesus is realized more and more.

"By this shall men know that ye are My disciples **if**," but how rarely has there been this manifestation. Was it not only for a brief period that the appointed unity was seen? in Acts 2 and 4. Not only at Jerusalem, but in all churches the enemy sought to make friction. And the wolf **has** "scattered," though not destroyed the sheep (John 10. 12).

Let us be humbled that the world does not see what it should see. Let us pray for, and expect, reviving, and seek to illustrate the love of Christ among the "one another" where we live, and desire to glorify Him.

A WASTE OF TIME?

YOU were seriously ill and someone had to spend much time in helping you. Was it a waste? Was it for you a prayerful "stocktaking" spiritually, a "new valuation" (the things of time and sense were seen more fully in their worthlessness apart from Christ), a consciousness that earthly life is not a freehold, and a purpose of heart to be much more devoted to the Lord? Your after experience has proved if this inward searching was spiritual, deep and lasting. Has there been "fruit" or not? For your helper, the outlay of time was a tender lesson in sympathy and love, and also a reminder to him, or her, of **personal** possibilities of similar illness, and of life's brevity. Was this in vain? I hope not.

Eliminate pain and suffering from the present world, and it would become doubly commercial, harsh and godless. **Man** would be disregarded in the forgetting of **God**. The tyranny of self's craving would enlarge greed and oppression.

So is it with regard to "the little ones." How long they remain weak. Unlike the young animals, they need such prolonged care. Why? God has laid an unusual emphasis on **families**. Take away **children**, as well as suffering of **pain**, and "**time**" will be a commercial term; or pleasure that satisfies not will run riot. The ballast of time-taking weaknesses, whether of infants or the sick, is an untold blessing. Evolution knows nothing of this. Any theory of the State, or of Communism, that

would crush out the **home** is ungodly; any conception of life that would get rid of pain is hopeless, while man is a sinner. Humanity cannot be trusted with "perfect health." These Divine appointments are "breaks" on the speed of men to a fearful and fatal climax, even as the confusion of tongues was a long-suffering restraint. Are we profiting by the lessons of "adversity," and grateful for the reminders of our true need, of eternity, and of the privilege of living for God and not for ourselves, befitting those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ?

"Clean Hands and a Pure Heart."

Psalm 24. 4.

THIS unveiling of the Lord Jesus (primarily as Psalm 15, notice the **singular**) shows also what His redeemed should be. It is deeply important to have cleanness "in His eyesight" (Ps. 18. 24). And we observe the union of heart and hand. Nor is this strange for out of the heart are the issues of life, and not only out of the heart the mouth speaketh, but the hand worketh. God thus witnesses against the idea of some that the motive may be good within, and yet there must be the yielding to "circumstances." And He equally emphasizes that straight actions without must have a holy mainspring within. They must never be the result of a continuance in outward obedience, and thus a habit of that which is honourable, yet lacking inward spiritual fellowship with the Lord TO-DAY. Still more definitely do we need to fear correct activities because of a reputation and concern for its **maintenance**. Ever should there be a living desire to please the Lord, and a living rendering to Him all that we have and are.

The Majesty of God, and His grace.

I tried to measure time! Unmeasured years
Go back, but no **beginning** can I trace!
Behold GOD'S glory! Vanish all my fears!
God Who hath no beginning saves in GRACE.

I tried to pierce the future—life for aye:
I measured "ages"—ages keep not pace
With love God had, and hath, and shall display:
God without ending saves in wondrous GRACE.

I tried to measure space—no barrier find,
No terminus, no goal to boundless space.
Our thoughts must falter, helpless seems the mind—
God over all saves souls in glorious GRACE.

I tried to measure depth and height, and see
The grace that reached to meet my helpless case:
But I can only say "Christ died for me,"
And I adore, o'erwhelmed by matchless GRACE!

"AT THY WORD."

1 KINGS 18. 36.

ELIJAH'S simple dependence on God shines out. At the beginning he comes forth as one standing before "the Lord God of Israel," and Jeremiah 23. 22 beautifully explains that this means hearing His word first before speaking (cf. Prov. 8. 34). Hence Elijah's power. In like manner, "The word of the Lord came to him" ere he went to Cherith (1 Kings 17. 2, 3). Was there to be a change later? "The word of the Lord came unto him" (verse 8). And he was preserved at Zarephath "according to the word of the Lord" (verse 16). Well could the widow testify, "The word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (verse 24).

After many days, "the word of the Lord came to Elijah" to show himself unto Ahab (ch. 18. 1). He obeyed: and we remember the ministry and victory at Carmel. The stress on the "evening sacrifice" is not only helpful as a witness against the Baal-worshippers, emphasizing the **going down** of their "sun," but also setting forth the sacrifice of Christ as the ground of all blessing. The altar of TWELVE stones emphasizes faith in God's covenant plan—we recollect 2 Chronicles 29. 24 and Ezra 6. 17: O that we may thus own the unity of and plead for "all saints."

The four barrels of water, evidently from the sea (of judgment), **thrice** poured out, would give the picture of all the twelve tribes under judgment. But grace removed the very water (1 Kings 18. 38). "All these things" are precious, for Elijah said "I have done all these things at **Thy word**" (verse 36). This is the emphasis in his life. O that it may be ours too! The same thought shines out in "a voice (not only 'sound') of abundance of rain" (1 Kings 18. 41, 42).

Thus he spoke confidently, but felt the need for prayer just the same (Ezek. 36. 37). Only when he acted **without** the word of the Lord did he falter (1 Kings 19. 1-10). He was a man of "like feelings" with ourselves, and needed continual upholding grace (Jas. 5. 17). Let us not imagine the servants of God were naturally "super-men": they were dependent, willing, responsive. **That** was their strength, and this strength may be ours, as we realize God and His word, and the enabling of the same Holy Spirit TO-DAY.

"OIDA" AND "GINOSKO."

(Two Greek words for "know").

THE Holy Spirit never uses a word without a special reason; no other word would do "just as well." The root of "oida" is the verb to "see," and thus there seems an emphasis on **having** seen (for it is a perfect tense) and thus "knowing." (The "seeing" may be with "the eyes of the heart"). Hence it appears to have the twofold thought:— objective: SEEN;

subjective: A CONSCIOUSNESS. (The Holy Spirit's word "conscience" is from the same root). Sometimes words are like two "circles"—cutting one another, and have **partly** the same view, and **partly** a distinct "relative emphasis." "Ginosko" has much similarity but sometimes expresses "recognition" or even affection and interest, so in 2 Timothy 2. 19 and John 10. 14, 27. One translator has mentioned where the two words come together. This may help. John 8. 55, Christ's fixed knowledge beautifully shown; **they** did not recognize. So John 21. 17 "Thou knowest all, Thou art recognizing that I love Thee." 1 Corinthians 8. 1, with holy rebuke. 1 John 2. 29, "If ye know fixedly that He is righteous, ye are coming to know" (perceive, recognize). May I add Hebrews 8. 11 and 1 John 5. 20 as helpful with both? The words are wonderful.

"Beginners," "Learners," "Improvers," "Finishers."

IT may be that such words in a factory window have impressed us, and we have realized the need for a spiritual parallel. Thanks be to God for all who are, by grace, **beginners**, who are brought to a new position in Christ Jesus. What a need there is then to be disciples, or "learners," learning Christ (Eph. 4. 20), and learning from Him (Matt. 11. 29)—Nor has this precious privilege ceased, though we have known Him many years. We would ever desire, as Moses and Paul, to know Him more fully. We can always learn more of His fulness. Olden time preachers spoke of "improving" a passage of Scripture when they used its message for the holy improvement of their hearers by taking advantage of its precious teaching. And we need to go forward.

If we are where we were a year ago in spiritual knowledge, or capacity, or faithfulness, there is failure. In our standing before God the moment we believed we were able to say "Fully justified." The life, too, of an infant and after growing up is the same, but the **power** is very different. Are we "improving," or are we going **back**? Are we growing and bringing forth more fruit, or less? The questions are deeply important, if we love our Lord, and desire to bring Him glory. Of some we have no doubt, we can see such a difference in their spiritual enthusiasm and experience from what they were some months ago. Of others we may be doubtful. What about ourselves? "He that endureth to the end" is a helpful description of a faithful one. Do we continue in the word of the Lord? Philippians 1. 6 is precious from God's standpoint. May our response be a holy running, that we may **finish** our course with joy and bring glory to Him Whose Name we bear.

The living branches are acting with the Root, and thus is their fruit. Our Lord deigns to work **through** us, not without, or merely overruling. And **will-ing** yieldedness is an active WILL-ING.

Doubts as to Eternal Salvation.

WE would not be highminded but fear (Rom. 11. 20). Assurance without obedience is not taught in Scripture (Heb. 5. 9). "Healthy doctrine" is never taught theoretically, but, as "healthy" implies, spiritually, and in godly living experience. But, it seems clear to the writer, the thought of losing salvation does not honour God, nor stand the test of His words. May I, therefore, suggest, as well as such verses as John 10. 28, Phil. 1. 6, two or three principles found in the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit in Scripture? (1) If the Lord Jesus was **raised again because of our justification**, this includes "mine" and if I am finally unjustified, I could not have been ever justified, hence my profession could not have been **real**. (A rocky ground hearer can show joy and the quick results of God's words springing up, yet the ground is not good, there is no true root). (2) If I believe in the Lord Jesus, and afterwards lose **eternal life**, how can I say He died for me, and my sins, at the time I **believed**, without meaning only **part** of my sins, or implying that I shall bear the judgment again, making **His** work imperfect? Either He died instead of me, or He did not. If the latter, I was never really saved. (3) If one is born from above, and scripturally baptized, and then dies out from that birth so that he needs to be born afresh, would he not be rightly baptized after this, or would the earlier baptism count? 2 Corinthians 2, seem to view a returning backslider as quite different from a newly born soul and the words of sternness in 1 Corinthians 5. 5, "that the **spirit** may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," would otherwise lose force. (4) If eternal life is lost, how do we understand "when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11. 32)? Truth, full—never leads to presumption, nor depression, but unveils grace and obedience, and emphasizes the harmony of the work of Christ for us, and of the Holy Spirit in us, without belittling either, and never implying that one without the other, would bring to the glory of eternal salvation.

PRAISE ALL THE DAY!

"Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, and with Thy honour all the day."

"My mouth shall shew forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day."

"I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only."

"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto Thee: and my soul, which Thou hast redeemed."

"My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long."

Psalm. 71, 8, 15, 16, 23, 24.

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"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

"The things which are Jesus Christ's."

"The work of Christ." Philippians 2. 5, 21, 30.

A Word of Introduction.

SELF is the hindrance. It obscures our Lord, burdens our brethren, breaks unity and fellowship in the experience enslaves our own lives. Friction is through "pride," "Strife," "Vainglory," "his own things," "all seek their own" (Phil. 2 3, 4, 21):—such words impress us. We call to mind Acts 4. 32 and contrast the condition in 1 Corinthians 11. 21. Love never behaves itself unseemly, that which behaves itself unseemly is not love. All difficulties begin within. The call to loving unity is not only, or primarily, doctrinal. Bad doctrines are the result of pride and independence. Love is willing for God's instruction. O that these pages may seek a complete revival, fruit from WITHIN.

"He that teacheth . . . He that exhorteth"	...	...	...	43
"Upon this Rock I will build My church"	...	...	...	44
Words without Thinking ...	...	...	...	47

THE LAW ESTABLISHED.

Romans 3. 31

THE glory of the Lord Jesus shines out in **all** His character.

His work and His substitutionary death. There is nothing but glory in Him. When He **emptied** Himself (Phil. 2. 7) He was, indeed, **full** (John 1. 14). It has been urged by "seventh day" teachers that the Divine, moral law is contrasted with that which "made nothing perfect". Their mistake seems to include forgetfulness of the fact that law is a **contract**, thus involving two persons (the Giver and the one under it) and that a **sinner must make it powerless**. The fault is in the sinner. "One" is a reality in itself, but "one" **multiplied by nought** becomes nought thereby.

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I have been impressed by the fact that these teachings **dishonour the Law** by their very arguments, professedly to honour it. For the Lord Jesus was ever perfect, when He became under law. Hence the law **could not** condemn Him personally. If He died only by the **sacrificial** law, the moral law would become immoral to permit His condemnation. This is impossible: it would charge God with untruth. Therefore must it not be that God's moral law viewed Him as bearing sin? But that it was **our** guilt: blessed be God He had none of His own! Hence our beloved Lord met death by the holy moral law, which could "give" us nothing, and was thus **strengthless** through our flesh. But meeting death thus, He fully accomplished and exhausted its application. He met its doom substitutionarily, and was declared to be the justified One, at the very same moment. And so He was raised, and could not be **under** it any more. Hence He took it away from application to Himself, and necessarily took it away from all for whom He was Substitute, else His substitution would have been imperfect. So they in Him, on resurrection ground, cannot be any more under it than He is. If they are **under** it, He is also. Then they would not be justified in Him, but **seeking** toward a personally wrought justification. In such a relation the law would either condemn them or tolerate their incomplete obedience. But the latter would be immoral. And as we saw His death would be **immoral** were it not meeting and thus removing law's holy claims sacrificially, so **our life** would be immoral were it not (as it is by grace) in the **new** resurrection-blessedness in Him. Hence in attempting to exalt the law, their own way instead of God's, these interpretations would, however unconsciously, twice dishonour His righteous law.

The true meaning which the trustful saint can see, as he realizes His Lord's finished work, **does** establish law, and begins the new privilege of a new life fulfilling whatever its appointments which are re-enacted in "the law of Christ". (Gal. 6. 2). And the nine commandments **are** thus found in the New Testament, but where is the seventh day thus re-enacted? O the blessedness of being "in Christ", and of not being viewed in Adam, of being on resurrection ground and not in the sphere of "sin and death" (Rom. 8. 2). Well may we rejoice in **grace** reigning through **righteousness** (Rom. 5. 21). Grace establishes law, and law magnifies grace, in their **separate** yet related spheres, but any attempt to **blend** them, would nullify both, and make self, not the Lord Jesus, the Saviour. The glory would be taken away from Himself, from grace and law alike, however unintentionally, and given to the sinner.

It is not what I am in the meeting on the Lord's Day, but what I am in the home Monday, or in the place of occupation Tuesday, or how I spend Saturday afternoon, that shows what my life really is.

"He that teacheth . . . he that exhorteth."

Romans 12. 7, 8.

"Attention . . . to exhortation, to doctrine (teaching)."

1 Timothy 4. 13 (cf. 6. 2 and 2 Timothy 4. 2).

THE Holy Spirit definitely uses different words with a purpose. As we need "body building" food, **and** that which is "fuel" for warmth, so is it spiritually. May we never become onesided. Have we always enough **exhortation**? The word implies "encouragement and stimulus." Do we refresh and "spur on" one another? We see this holy attitude in Hebrews 10. 25, 2 Peter 3. 1. Acts 11. 23 well illustrates. When hands hang down, and knees are feeble, the way is not easy, and the enemy is not weak. But God is able to make all grace abound. It is blessedly true that saints have all in **Him**. But He deigns to use "one another" to refresh. Are we too busy to encourage? This is not only in a meeting. A word in season may refresh one who is weary, whenever we meet. Saints sometimes call on one another without realizing the privilege of prayer together, and a word of encouragement. Is it not strange? We sometimes discourage one another instead. An unpleasant tone, a criticizing attitude—need I say more? Sometimes the discouragement is "only" negative—an omission through forgetfulness. Are we too **self-centred**? It is easy to forget that we are members one of another. Love is thoughtful. Yet we would not overlook that a gathering must not afford only "exhortation." Definite clear **teaching** and a full-orbed view of the doctrine of God are important. **We need** to know what He has taught that we may be kept from errors around. An **undue proportion** of "exhortation" will mean lack of growth. There will be over-emotion. Thus the Holy Spirit shows, and enables a duly balanced diet. May this be our joy in love's care for one another, in the body of Christ.

Everything exalts the Lord Jesus, the Righteous One with unbroken bones (Ps. 34. 20): everything emphasizes what He went through for us: everything shows that His redeemed are not "strangers," "foreigners," "hired," but "bought" and "**born**" (not only "bought" or "born"), and that they should have a **living** freshness (as if His sacrifice were this very day, not only in the "**yesterday**," for faith) in their happy experience of Himself and His once accomplished work.

One victory is not winning the complete war. This is true spiritually. Indeed, a once defeated foe will often prove a thrice conquering one, because he will lay special devices, and the victor will be resting at ease, flushed with success. 1 Samuel 30. 16 strikingly illustrates. In all our spiritual warfare, let us rely not on victory but on the Victorious One in Whom we conquer.

"Upon this Rock I will build My church."

Matthew 16. 18.

THIS sudden, and **unique**, prophecy in the gospels at once follows the testimony that Peter gave, by **revelation**, to the Person of the Lord Jesus. Yes, it was revelation, even as to Paul (Gal. 1. 15, 16), and, in both cases, of the Son of God. "It" in italics (Matt. 16. 17) quite obscures the meaning.

Strangely and sadly the natural tendency of the human heart betrays itself in suggesting that Peter is "the Rock". First, the **subject** of the context is definitely against such exegesis. The **stress** is wholly on the Lord Jesus, and His glory, and none other. "Thou art **the** Christ, **the** Son of **the** Living God". Peter needed a Foundation, One Who is uniquely exalted.

Secondly, all suggestion that the **same word** might be used in Aramaic is beside the mark. The Holy Spirit has used Aramaic words elsewhere and omitted them here, and in the language He Himself has chosen "Petros" is distinct from, and contrasted with, "Petra" a Rock. The relationship and distinction exalts Christ all the more.

Thirdly, the word is not unusual in the Old Testament, and it is a name of Deity, not of a man (Deut. 32. 4, 18, 30, 31, Psalm 18. 2, 31. Isa. 26. 4 marg., etc.).

Fourthly, the apostle himself was moved to give the inspired commentary. The living Foundation Stone, on Which many other stones (plural) are being built, is said to be Christ Jesus exclusively (1 Pet. 2. 5, see Isa. 28. 16).

Fifthly, our Lord's mode of speaking, "This Rock", pointing out Himself is in full harmony with "Destroy this Temple" (John 2. 19), and "The Stone Which the builders rejected:—**This** (literally) is become the Head of the Corner" Matt. 21. 42, cf. Acts 4. 11). Thus the language confirms the true meaning. The suggestion that Peter's confession is the foundation would not only be out of harmony with other contexts, but would seem incongruous. If the stones are persons, not "doctrine," would not the Foundation have the same **personal** character?

We notice next that this epoch-marking statement is prophetic. "I **will** build". It is the "will" of prophecy and of certainty. It is not "I have built", nor "I am building". Hence it is contrasted with "Thou **art** the Christ", "Thou **art** Peter". Nor can we without strong Scriptural warrant incline to the suggestion that it signifies "I will go on building", any more than "I will go on giving to thee the keys". He is the Foundation **in resurrection**. The Lord Jesus is the First begotten from the dead, and His own are **united** to Him thus. As the Corn of Wheat He abode alone till He died. All union with Christ is the fruit of His substitutionary sacrifice. "The gates of Hades could not prevail against the Rock (Acts 2. 27). As the Righteous One He must be raised, and "the church", which

is His body (Eph. 1. 22, 23), is thus created. In type the first woman was "built" up **after** the deep sleep of the first man, a picture or figure of Christ's death. The rejected and exalted Stone is essential to the building (Matt. 21. 42).

We have a new beginning, and the wondrous purpose of God is seen in that Pentecost, which is described as "being fulfilled" in Acts 2. 1 (literally, not only "fully come"), is claimed as a prophecy. And Pentecost has no month-date, but must be on the day after the **sabbath** (made for man, and the sign of God's covenant with **Israel**), the first of a new week belonging to a heavenly people, "In Christ Jesus". The "**new meal offering**" of Leviticus 23. 16 is significant. Old Testament saints were not said to be in "the body" before our beloved Lord died and rose again. Search and see. It is plain from Matthew 8. 11 that they can be brought to a **new** position ("the kingdom of the heavens") and from Hebrews 12. 23 that they are now brought to a goal which was not theirs when they waited in Hades. They are now in heavenly places and blessed in the "Seed, Which is Christ" (Gal. 3. 16). The Holy Spirit's stress on "in" is deeply important. There is no eternal blessing for those who remain outside Christ, without that living union which is the fruit of His complete redemption.

And the transference of those chosen in Him from Hades to Paradise may also be included in "the gates of **Hades** shall not prevail". It is clear that saints do not go thither in the present dispensation. All truth harmonizes with itself. How blessed is union with Christ, and the unity of His own. We all may have individual characteristics and national and dispensational distinctions temporarily, but "all one in Christ Jesus" is the blessed testimony as to the redeemed. Those who are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3. 28, 29).

Do we sufficiently realize the Holy Spirit's choice of the word "His body" in Ephesians 1. 23 (4. 12) the "one body" of Romans 12. 5, 1 Corinthians 12. 13, Ephesians 4. 4, Colossians 3. 15? Are we responsive and praiseful as we should be? What grace is manifested, for the Lord Jesus is the Altogether Glorious One. What possibilities are ours, for the Holy Spirit indwells even now, until the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. 1. 13, 14, 4. 30). And what responsibilities are entwined, lest He should be dishonoured, responsibilities too, toward "one another," for our relationship to fellow members is intimate, as a Divinely revealed corollary (Eph. 4. 15, 16, Col. 2. 19). And the prospect in view is amazing. This is not fiction, or mere hyperbole, not the language of phantasy, but a "revelation" of the mystery, and the **purpose** of God, with its appointed witness, even to principalities and powers (Eph. 3. 9-11). Here is God's central unveiling, the masterpiece of His plan. Here is His own object, His glorious purpose. Other displays of His power and mercy are subordinate, and linked with dispensational and

temporary portions of His unfolding. Here is the centre, the pivot, the climax, to which all leads, and all is conveyed by the words "in Christ Jesus our Lord." How appropriately did He say to the one predestinated to set forth most fully His glorious purpose of the ages, on the very day of claiming that "vessel of election", "Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou Me?"

The church is not associated with a worldwide hierarchy, as Rome assumes, nor is it a national organization. Nor is it a "sect-ional" or denominational federation, nor does the word suggest any **material** structures. What then? It is a living company of those "called out" (the very root meaning), no longer of the world (John 17. 14, 16), but a heavenly people (1 Peter 2. 9). And the usage indicates first that Israel, typically redeemed, indwelt and led by God, provided a beautiful but incomplete type, and secondly (in the Greek application) it is an assembly of free "citizens" with a responsibility to act in accord with their freedom, and the privileges of **their** "city" (Phil. 3. 20, Heb. 11. 10, 12. 22).

(If the Lord will, to be concluded.)

FILLING.

"The vessels were full Bring me yet a vessel There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed".

2 Kings 4. 6.

God delights to **fill**. Have we vessels ready, empty, clean? Are we expectant? He does not **half-fill**. He does not exceeding abundantly **under** what we ask or think? He does not overlook **one** ready vessel. He is gracious indeed. The fellowship of mother and sons is precious. Let the home life be sanctified. God blesses there, and in little things.

Expect His oil. Look for His blessing on the barrel of meal. Not worldly things. The oil reminds of life, light, gentleness, the Holy Spirit. Expect blessing thus. Do not desire a blessing that is not truly helpful.

The oil stayed. Why? Because of God's insufficiency? Nay, because of God's unwillingness? No. Why? Because there was not a vessel more. Because there was not more preparedness. Because there was nothing to receive. Though He was ready to give. Let this indeed, speak to you and me.

God's grace is not only beyond all measuring in fulness and eternity, but it is also exactly suited to my smallest needs to-day. He not only blesses infinitely but deals with our infinitesimal problems. It is a privilege to realize His fitting supply for immediate use. He Who has made stars and diatoms alike is the God of all grace for His children's largest and smallest experiences.

WORDS WITHOUT THINKING.

WE are pained by the evil words of many to-day. When loving reproof is given, at the **right** time, the answer may be, "I mean nothing; it is only a habit, and I can't get out of it." This gives force to the Holy Spirit's description of the tongue as "a world of iniquity" and emphasizes our beloved Lord's message to His own, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," or the evil one (Matt. 5. 37). It is remarkable how habits grow, and men become slaves.

But though we reject wrong language, and even such expletives as "My word" and "Goodness," have we also realized how **right** and holy words may become meaningless and untruthful? Possibly we have felt this in remembering old letter endings as "Yours obediently," "Your obedient servant," etc.

But are our "Hearty greetings" always "hearty," and is "so glad to see you," always truthful? When we say "I am very sorry," are we sorry? And even expressions like "The Lord be with you," "if the Lord will," "Praise the Lord," and "beloved Brother," may become as external as the Mohammedan "if God will."

How deeply important to mean what we say, and to say what we mean, or to keep silent. We all need to think before we speak, and to have a watch set before our mouths (Ps. 141. 3).

The disciples' prayer is so well known that we could utter it without any heart feeling. Unconscious repetition of the latter part is possible even when we begin in the Spirit. Truth that is known is often recited parrot fashion. How dangerous is this, both in reading Scripture and in praying. Let us seek grace to be "mindful" and "truthful," and to ask God's use of our opened lips. I do not plead for remorse after confessed failure, but for a purpose of heart to keep to the Lord's will in all these seeming details in the future. So will our Father be glorified, and our lips minister to His own. (Prov. 10. 21).

An addition to "Hidden Blessing in Scriptural Wording."

(Matt. 5, page 32).

THE stress on 6 and 8 is further remarkable in that 8 "Beatitudes" contain the description "the," and 6 an **emphasized** "they", the other 2 (balanced; first and last), have the word "theirs". In like manner there are 6 future and 2 present tenses in these 8, the present being first and last. This wondrous harmony seems to militate against the theory that the gospel handed down to us by the grace of God is a "translation" from an Aramaic original. The Holy Spirit's own marking appears very evidently. The word "for" (or "because") is likewise 8 times. 8 nouns occur in these,— "Spirit, kingdom, heavens, earth, righteousness, heart, God, sons".

"YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE."

(1 Corinthians 6. 20, 7. 23).

"BOUGHT with a price." Let our hearts realize this, let us recognize the privilege, the dignity, the deep meaning of this declaration by the Holy Spirit Himself. We do not simply work as servants for a master, by contract or for fixed hours. We do not merely "work," but we **are** in every member of our bodies, and in every second of our lives, **His** Who died for us! This is not servitude, but freedom. He bought us that He might give us the highest privilege and the truest liberty, even that of pleasing Himself. To be possessed by Him is our glory. No part of our being is exempted. Exemption would be our greatest loss. To be told, "You are not Mine," would be our greatest grief. "His" by grace, by redemption, and by heavenly birth. We rejoice to be His altogether and desire to respond to His possession more and more devotedly. The purchase price was so vast, that the fruit must be greater than words can express. A new creation, we have all things new, and the new song is our joy therein. "Bought with a price" we shall neither be lost, nor sold. The purchase is eternal, the possession is a freehold! Let our whole experience be in this blessedness, and the testimony of our whole life make it known to others, not by mere words, or effort, but in the reality of love.

"WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE."

Philippians 4. 3.

Why these few words? They surely show
That saints should all agree!
Our "life" is one, since Christ we know,
This fact must fruitful be.

Self-life is judged; then how can I
With other saints dispute?
In Christ to one another nigh,
We hate each bitter root.

Euodias and Syntyche
Should "one another" love,
And Christ in "one another" see,
Since quickened from above.

Friction and striving ill consort
When in life's book we're writ:
By Christ's own blood for ever bought
Our life therewith should fit.

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