

# The Berean Expositor

Acts xvii. 10, 11

“Study to show thyself approved unto God,  
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,  
rightly dividing the Word of truth”

II Tim. ii. 15

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DEAR FELLOW-MEMBERS,

As a public testimony *The Berean Expositor* is now twenty-two years of age, and we are constrained to call upon all who rejoice with us in the revelation of the Mystery to join us both in praise and prayer on this occasion.

Uppermost in our consciousness is the outstanding fact of *grace* all these years. Grace that first of all chose, grace that sustained, and grace that has been mingled all along with much longsuffering.

While the prison ministry of the apostle Paul must ever be our central theme, a glance at the forthcoming index for the twenty volumes of *The Berean Expositor* will testify to our love for, and conscious need of, "all Scripture".

We believe the teaching for which we stand magnifies the Lord Jesus as nothing else can to-day, and we confidently anticipate the continued fellowship of all those who rejoice to know that He is exalted.

Yours by grace,

In the unity of the Spirit,

CHARLES H. WELCH  
FREDK. P. BRININGER

*December, 1930.*

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## **No remedy.**

**p. 92**

We are already aware of the two lines of teaching that are discovered by viewing the epistles of Paul (1) canonically (i.e., in the order that they appear in the New Testament), and (2) chronologically (i.e., in the order in which they were written).

A lesson that may be of help is also discovered by considering the last page of the Old Testament canonically, Malachi, the last of the prophets, is the last of the Old Testament, and his closing theme is the second coming of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, together with the forerunner, Elijah.

The last book of the Old Testament according to the Hebrew canon is II Chronicles, and upon the last page thereof we read the solemn words: "*till there was no remedy*" (xxxvi. 16).

Surely the opening words of the new Testament may be placed in blessed contrast with this sad ending:--

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ . . . . Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 1-21).

Here, in the gift of His only begotten Son, is God's remedy for Israel's utter failure, and not for theirs only, but for the world also.

This note is necessarily brief, but sufficient may have been suggested to encourage our hearts, and maybe provide a theme for Bible Class or Sunday School worker.



## The testimony of Rom. viii.

These four key words find their exposition in Rom. viii., and we therefore turn to that chapter for illumination. Let us quote the passages first:--

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the spirit of ADOPTION, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. viii. 15).

“If children, then HEIRS; heirs of God” (Rom. viii. 17).

“Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the ADOPTION, to wit, the REDEMPTION of our body” (Rom. viii. 23).

“Whom He did foreknow, He also did PREDESTINATE to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. viii. 29).

Adoption is closely connected with inheritance here, for that is the sequel of verse 17. Adoption is also most certainly connected with a future redemption, the day of resurrection. By noticing exactly what is said here, we shall better appreciate not only Rom. viii. but also Eph. i.

In verse 15 we are not said to have received the adoption, but “the spirit of adoption”. Now if adoption in the future be resurrection, the redemption of the body (viii. 23), then the spirit of adoption will be resurrection anticipated now. This is what we find. Verse 15 is part of an argument that commences at verse 1. There is now no condemnation, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death. This Spirit of life is explained as “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in us”, and it is connected with the quickening of these “mortal bodies” (viii. 11). In verse 14 this Spirit of life is expressed in terms of sonship: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Now this passage leads on to verse 15 where we read of the Spirit of adoption. It is clearly a continuation of the argument, commencing as it does with the word “For”. In verse 15, moreover, we have another way of ascertaining something of the special character of the Spirit of adoption, for it is placed in direct contrast with another spirit, namely, “the spirit of bondage”. The Spirit of adoption therefore carries with it “freedom”. But what kind of freedom? It has been already defined as, freedom from the law of sin and death. This is further confirmed when we observe that in verse 21 this bondage is specified as “the bondage of corruption”, and the freedom as “the freedom of the glory of the children of God”. Now if the bondage be that of “corruption”, freedom from it will be the “redemption of the body”, or resurrection. We arrive therefore at the following important conclusions:--

1. We receive now the *Spirit* of adoption, but look forward to the adoption itself in resurrection.
2. This Spirit of adoption is placed in opposition to the spirit of bondage. This bondage being called the bondage of “corruption”, it follows that the Spirit of adoption anticipates the resurrection.
3. This is manifested in present sonship whereby we cry “Abba, Father”. While we are sons of God now, the day of our “manifestation” awaits the resurrection (verse 19)

and the freedom experienced by the children of God now is a foretaste of “the liberty of the GLORY” which is to come.

4. What we have therefore is a “firstfruits of the Spirit”, and while we are “saved by hope”, this does not exempt us at the moment from “groaning within ourselves” as we “wait for the adoption”.
5. The word adoption in the Greek is *huiothesia*—“to place as a son”, meaning something more than birth.

By turning to the companion epistle to the Galatians, further light on this wondrous theme may be gathered:--

### **The testimony of Gal. iv.**

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child (*nepios*, infant), differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 1-6).

Here, instead of the bondage of corruption, we have the bondage of worldly elements. The “time appointed of the father” is parallel with the “manifestation of the sons of God”. Redemption is effected by Christ in the same way as is recorded in Rom. viii. 3. The sequel, “Walk in the spirit” (Rom. viii. 4), is found in Gal. iv. 21-31 and v. 16. The difference between the references to adoption and inheritance in Galatians and Romans is that in Galatians the bondage is that of the law of Moses, and the freedom is experienced now and immediately, whereas the bondage of Rom. viii. is that of corruption, and its freedom can only be fully experienced in resurrection. Consequently we have introduced in Romans the “Spirit of adoption”. This does not exempt from “groaning” and “suffering” and being “killed all the day long” (Rom. viii. 18, 23, 36), but “in all these things” we may, by faith, be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

### **The adoption and the earnest.**

In Rom. viii. the Spirit of adoption is spoken of as “firstfruits”, and firstfruits is the earnest of future harvest. In Eph. i. we have adoption as the great feature in the Father’s will, and the Spirit of adoption, given while we walk by faith and wait patiently, is not called the Spirit of adoption, but “the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession”. The inheritance is future, the adoption, or “placing as sons”, is future; the earnest of it is the Spirit of promise, the Spirit whereby even now we cry, “Abba, Father”.

Another phase of our adoption is expressed in Eph. iv. 13:--

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ.”

This is the Ephesian parallel with Rom. viii. 29: “conformed to the image of His Son.” The power that worketh in us is the mighty power which wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead. It enabled Paul to say: “The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God.” Paul, however, was under no illusion. He knew the outer man was perishing. He knew what suffering meant. He did not “claim” any exemption from these things, but he was more than conqueror in them all.

The day of redemption, which is the day of adoption, has not yet come. Let us beware lest by any excess of zeal we say that “the resurrection is past already”. We have the earnest, the leading of the Spirit of God, the indwelling of the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We have the assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. For the freedom from the bondage of the elements of the world we are unfeignedly thankful. In the bestowal of the spirit of freedom from the bondage of corruption we rejoice, and for actual and literal emancipation from the bondage of corruption we confidently wait. Let us not miss the fullness of the earnest, which *is* our present possession, by vainly assuming a position that is ours only when the day of redemption shall have come.

As an appendix we give the following quotation from *A historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, by W. M. Ramsay, D.C.L.:--

“The idea that they who follow the principle of faith are sons of Abraham, whatever family they belong to by nature, would certainly be understood by the Galatians as referring to the legal process called, *hiothesia*.”

“Adoption was a kind of embryo Will; the adopted son became the owner of the property, and the property could pass to a person that was naturally outside the family only through his being adopted. The adoption was a sort of Will-making; and this ancient form of Will was irrevocable and public. The terms ‘Son’ and ‘Heir’ are interchangeable.”

“An illustration from the ordinary fact of society, as it existed in the Galatian cities, is here stated: ‘I speak after the manner of men’. The Will (*diatheke*) of a human being is irrevocable when once duly executed. But if Paul is speaking about a Will, how can he say, after it is once made, it is irrevocable?”

“Such irrevocability was a characteristic feature of Greek law, according to which an heir outside the family must be adopted into the family; and the adoption was the Will-making. The testator, after adopting his heir, could not subsequently take away from him his share of the inheritance or impose new conditions on his succession. The Roman-Syrian Law Book will illustrate this passage of the Epistle. It actually lays down the principle that a man can never put away an adopted son, and that he cannot put away a real son without good ground. It is remarkable that the adopted son should have a stronger position than the son by birth; yet it is so. The expression in Gal. iii. verse 15, ‘When it hath been confirmed’, must also be observed. Every Will had to be passed through the Record Office of the city. It was not regarded in the Greek law as a purely private document. It must be deposited in the Record Office.”

If the reader will read Gal. iii. 15 - iv. 7, and Eph. i. 13, 14 in the light of this Galatian usage of adoption, it will be seen how utterly impossible it is for any subsequent law, sin or forfeiture to deprive the heir of the full benefits of this adoption “when the time appointed by the Father” arrives. We do not omit from our reckoning that which

finds no place in the Greek law, namely, that manifestation of love in the gift of the Redeemer. This only makes God's adoption the stronger.

The parallel between Gal. iii. and Eph. i. on this point is so important as to justify a little repetition:--

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect” (Gal. iii. 17).

Paraphrasing this passage in the terms of Ephesians, we can say:--

“And this I say, that the predestination unto adoption and the choice in Christ by God, before the overthrow of the world, the law of sin and death that entered into the world by one man, Adam, at a later period, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

In both cases we have the outworking of a purpose that knows no change. In both the provision of a Redeemer. In both the shutting out of works of merit. In both the simple ground of faith. In both a period when the child, though “lord of all” or “far above all”, is nevertheless under tutors and governors (the word “governor” giving us the word “dispensation” of Eph. i. 20, iii. 2, and 9 R.V.) until the time appointed, until we all arrive at the perfect man. In both the freedom we possess now is manifested in deliverance from ordinances (Gal. iv. 9, 10; Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 16).

We wait for adoption. We wait for resurrection, the redemption of the body, the day of the redemption of the purchased possession. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us.”*

## **Studies in Colossians.**

### **#1. A discovery of its theme. pp. 56 - 58**

The epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are a pair, and deal with the same theme. With so few epistles that actually deal with the dispensation of the mystery, one might at first wonder why there should be such repetition. This feature is not, however, limited to these epistles. In the Gospels there are many repetitions, notwithstanding the fact, as John tells us, that if all things which the Lord did were written, he supposed the world would not be large enough to contain the books that must be written.

In Phil. iii. 1 the apostle has said: "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." While, therefore, we recognize the similarity of these two great epistles, we are prepared to find that they each have a distinctive feature that makes each witness essential. This distinctive feature we desire to make clear in this article, and then to pursue the study of Colossians in a subsequent series.

Ephesians is mainly concerned with positive teaching. Broadly speaking, its three opening chapters are taken up with the revelation of the mystery, and its three concluding chapters with the walk that should accompany such a calling. Warning concerning error or the attack of evil teachers is perceptible in Eph. iv. 14, and one phase of the evil expressed in Colossians is found in Eph. v. 6. Also, the apostle gives clear warning as to the spiritual foes that confront the believer, but in Ephesians he does not enlarge upon their method of attack nor expose the doctrine that is invented by the "cunning craftiness" of those who "lie in wait to deceive". Yet, after all, this knowledge is essential if we are to be saved from the snares that beset us, and it is in the unfolding of that system of evil doctrine, largely connected with "angels, principalities and powers" that Colossians takes its place. Instead of following the outline of Ephesians, Colossians compresses the truth somewhat, both in the doctrinal and practical sections, so that a large central section may be devoted to the great warning that occupies the bulk of Col. ii.

We now proceed to set out in barest outline the teaching of the epistle, leaving the development of detail for subsequent studies:--

- A | i. 1, 2. Salutation.
- B | i. 3-8. Faithful ministry. Epaphras. The word of truth heard.
- C | a | i. 9-12. Prayer for spiritual walk.
  - b | i. 13-23. Christ before all things, and in Him all things consist.
- D | i. 23-28. The mystery manifested by God.
  - E | i. 28 - ii. 1. Preaching to present perfect.
    - F | ii. 2, 3. Hid—the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—in Christ.
      - G | ii. 4-23. BEWARE. A five-fold warning.
        - F | iii. 1-4. Hid—your life—with Christ.
- C | b | iii. 5-15. Christ is all and in all.
  - a | iii. 16 - iv. 1. Indwelling Word for spiritual walk.
- D | iv. 2-11. The mystery manifested by Paul.
  - E | iv. 12, 13. Prayer to stand perfect.
- B | iv. 14-17. Fulfill ministry. Archippus. Epistle to be read.
- A | iv. 18. Salutation.

The full justification of this structure must of necessity await the evidence which detailed study alone can supply. Some of the marks of correspondence, however, are sufficiently obvious to establish the general trustworthiness of the whole. For example, no long argument is needed to prove the intimate correspondence suggested by the two members F | ii. 2, 3. and F | iii. 1-4.; in both the key word is “Hid”. Then again, the members C | b | i. 13-23. and C | b | iii. 5-15. contain a number of common features, among them the balance indicated in the outline, and also such items as “creation”, “image”, &c. The two members E | i. 28 - ii. 1. and E | iv. 12, 13. have “perfection” in view, beside both using the words “agonize” and “Laodicea”. With these parallels established, we trust the reader will either seek out the proofs of the remainder, or rest assured that they are forthcoming as the time arrives.

The important feature of the epistle is undoubtedly the great central section, labeled “Beware”. While all the rest of the epistle is vital truth, we shall realize that it is relative to the warning which is the principal theme. With this introduction to our study we must here stay, trusting that the ministry of the Word that will arise out of the exposition of this great epistle will be blessed to all readers, old as well as new.

## #2. Features of a faithful ministry (i. 3-8). pp. 98 - 103

The association of the name of Timothy with that of the apostle in the opening salutation of this epistle, and the fact that afterwards Timothy was appointed to take charge of the neighbouring Church at Ephesus, suggest the possibility that some of the heresies combated in Colossians have much in common with the “fables and endless genealogies”, and “oppositions of falsely-so-called *gnosis*” dealt with in Timothy. “The neglecting of the body” of Col. ii. 23, and the advice, “Be no longer a water-drinker” of I Tim. v. 23, will be seen as parts of a whole, connected also with the teaching of seducing spirits, “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats” (I Tim. iv. 3, 4).

The error of “angel worship” spoken of in Col. ii. may be the reason for the definite stress laid in I Tim. ii. 5 on the statement that: “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

These points of contact we hope to deal with more thoroughly when the part of Colossians concerned is under review. Meanwhile we pass on to the opening section of Col. i., which occupies verses 3-8, and is largely taken up with the ministry of Epaphras.

### B | i. 3-8. The faithful ministry of Epaphras.

- A | 3-5. What Paul heard from Epaphras.  
Your faith, love and hope.
- B | 5, 6. | a | “Heard.”
  - b | “Truth.” Gospel.
  - c | Come unto you AS in all the world.
  - c | Brought forth fruit AS also it doth in you.
- a | “Heard.”
  - b | “Truth.” Grace.
- A | 7, 8. What they had learnt of Epaphras.  
What he declared to Paul—“your love”.

It is a vexed question, and one perhaps that can never be answered, as to whether Paul ever personally visited Colosse. There are as many reasons discoverable in the apostle’s writings for asserting that he had visited Colosse, as there are for denying it. While the apostle very definitely establishes his own apostleship and ministry in this epistle, he is also at pains to associate with himself and his teaching others, such as Timothy (i. 1), Epaphras (i. 7; iv. 12), Archippus (iv. 17), and others mentioned in chapter iv. In the ministry of Epaphras we have a glimpse of the way in which the gifts of the ascended Christ were fitted, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. iv. 7-12).

## Faith, Love, Hope.

When the apostle speaks of the ministry of Epaphras, what does he select as of paramount importance? Does he speak of the number on the Church roll? The size of the offering? Or of any of the features that so often take first place in this statistical age? No, he brings forward at once “these three”, faith, love and hope. It would seem from this that a faithful ministry will include and specially emphasize these three. When one meditates on the subject, the question comes, Is there any article of our creed that does not include faith, hope and love? And we must admit that there is not.

What the apostle commended in the ministry of Epaphras, he has exemplified himself.

Eph. i. 15-20 deals with “these three”: “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus, and *love* unto all the saints . . . . pray for you that . . . . you may know what is the *hope* of His calling.” This passage (Eph. i. 15) differs from Col. i. 4, in that the words, “your faith in Christ Jesus” in Col. i. 4 are a translation of *ten pistin humon Christo esou*, while the words, “your faith in the Lord Jesus” of Eph. i. 15 are a translation of *ten kath humas pistin en to kurio Jesou*. Colossians speaks of the believer’s trust in the Lord, whereas in Ephesians the faith is objective—that special “faith”, the “one faith” so closely associated with the “one Lord” in the unity of the Spirit. There is a possibility that the reference to love in Eph. i. 15 should be omitted, but we will not enter into this question here.

We all know the place given to faith, hope and love in I Cor. xiii. 13. They remain when spiritual gifts are done away, and spiritual gifts without them are as tinkling cymbals and sounding brass.

We meet “these three” together in I Thessalonians:--

“Remembering without ceasing your work of *faith*, and labour of *love*, and patience of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (i. 3).

They come singly in three sections of the epistle:--

FAITH.—“We sent . . . . to comfort you concerning your *faith*, . . . . I sent to know your *faith* . . . . brought us good tidings of your *faith* and love . . . . we were comforted by your *faith* . . . . praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and perfect that which is lacking in your *faith*” (iii. 1-10).

LOVE.—“The Lord make you to increase and abound in *love* . . . . as touching brotherly *love* . . . . ye are taught of God to *love* one another” (iii. 12 - iv. 12).

HOPE.—“Ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no *hope*” (iv. 13-18).

And all six words come together once more at the close:--

“Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of *faith* and *love*, and for a helmet, the *hope* of salvation . . . . And we beseech you brethren to know them which *labour* among you . . . . esteem them very highly in love for their *work’s* sake . . . . be *patient* toward all men” (v. 8-14).

Again, in Heb. x. 22-24, we find these three together:--

“Let us draw near in full assurance of *faith*.”  
“Let us hold fast the profession of our *hope*” (*elpis*).  
“Let us . . . . . provoke one another unto *love*.”

In Rom.v. 1-8 we find them in pairs:--

“Therefore being justified by *faith* . . . . . we have access by *faith* . . . . . we rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God . . . . . and *hope* maketh not ashamed because the *love* of God is shed abroad in our hearts . . . . . but God commendeth His *love* toward us.”

These are passages that come readily to the mind. There are doubtless others, but sufficient has been shown to make it clear that in the apostle’s own ministry, faith, hope and love occupy an important place, and therefore they should be prominent in the teaching of all who profess to follow him.

### **Faith in Christ Jesus.**

We must, however, leave this wider range, and make a closer approach to the teaching of Colossians. The faith here spoken of is “faith in Christ Jesus”. The first mention of this expression is found in Gal. iii. 26: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” The second reference that uses the expression “faith in” is Rom. iii. 25, where we read of “propitiation through faith in His blood”. Eph. i. 15 is practically parallel with Col. i. 4, the only difference being in the title, “the Lord Jesus”. In Col. ii. 5, the apostle rejoices because of the steadfastness of their “faith in Christ”, but we must observe here a slight difference in the wording. Literally it is “your faith into (or unto) Christ”. The expression, “faith in Christ Jesus”, occurs throughout the epistles in such a way as to attract attention by the grouping, a feature often found in connection with important themes:--

- A | Gal. iii. 26. Children of God.
- B | Col. i. 4. Since we heard.
- C | I Tim. i. 14. Paul put into the ministry (*diakonia*).
- C | I Tim. iii. 13. Those who have served as deacons (*diakoneo*).
- B | II Tim. i. 13. Which you heard of me.
- A | II Tim. iii. 15. Salvation.

“Faith in God” was not sufficiently precise to meet the situation which Paul was facing. Strictly speaking no one can have faith in God and reject His Christ, but the great conflict for the truth that was commencing at Colosse demanded an explicit recognition of the Lordship of Christ; consequently, it is not simply faith in the Word, or even faith in God, but faith in Christ that the apostle commends.

“Faith in (*epi*) God” was among the “first principles” that the Hebrews were urged to “leave” if they were to go on unto perfection (Heb. vi. 1). This cannot mean a denial of faith in God, for the same epistle tells us that without faith and belief that He is, it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6). It was necessary that these Hebrew believers

should face the fact that “faith in God” must be “faith in Christ Jesus”, for His mediation, priesthood, and sacrifice are all involved.

The language of John xiv. 1 is still true: “Ye believe in (*eis*, into or toward) God, believe *also* in (*eis*) Me.” Throughout the Gospel of John great stress is laid on believing in Christ, and believing on His name. And in the epistles, where we read of “believing God” (as in Rom. iv. 3), we know full well that the risen Christ is in view (iv. 24; x. 9).

In Galatians Paul says, “Abraham believed God” (iii. 6), but when speaking of himself and Peter he says, “We have believed in Jesus Christ” (ii. 16). We shall realize more fully the necessity to make it plain that our faith in God and His Word is faith in Christ, when we have considered the errors that Col. ii. exposes.

### **Love unto all the saints.**

Not only is faith specified, but the special aspect of love brought forward is: “that love which you have unto all the saints.” The *ten agapen ten* demands the translation, “that love which”, marking it out as something distinctive. “Love to all saints” finds an echo in the “holy and beloved” of Col. iii. 12, “saints” and “holy” being the same word, *hagios*. One reason why this aspect of love is stressed is that the error attacked in Col. ii. is a superficial sanctity, a travesty of the true sanctification of the believer in Christ, and the apostle would encourage the Colossians to remember their calling. He had addressed them as: “The saints and faithful brethren in Christ” (i. 2). They were “made meet for the inheritance of the saints in the light” (i. 12). They were “presented holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight” (i. 22), and to them as “saints” the mystery had been manifested.

All this is an echo of the teaching given in Ephesians. There the Ephesians are called “saints and faithful” (i. 1), and have been chosen that they should be “holy and without blame” (i. 4). They were to pray for light upon the “glory of His inheritance in the saints” (i. 18). They were “fellow-citizens with the saints” (ii. 19) and were being built up “an holy temple in the Lord” (ii. 21).

We can well understand that many of God’s children shrink from using this holy title. To be called by another believer “a saint” makes many a Christian feel that he must immediately refuse the title or else act hypocritically. While this is a feeling shared by all who have the slightest acquaintance with their own hearts as seen in the light of the Word, we must beware lest a false humility leads us to a denial of our blessed acceptance in the Beloved, and makes us imagine that the title “saint” is conferred only upon those who are of special “sanctity”. It is hoped that there are no readers of this magazine whose spirituality is as low as that of the Corinthians (I Cor. i. and iii.), yet they were, at the same time, “saints”, and were so addressed by the apostle who deplored their carnality (I Cor. i. 2; iii. 1). The apostle revealed to them the ground of their saint-hood: “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, as well as redemption” (I Cor. i. 30).

If we are to be presented “holy”, it will not be through any sanctification of our own, or because we have brought forth the fruits of the spirit; it will be “in the body of His flesh through death” (Col. i. 22). If the church is to be presented “without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; *holy* and *without blemish*”, it is because the Lord Himself “loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it” (Eph. v. 25-27). Not one word of what we have here quoted can possibly excuse sin in the believer. All who have such a high and holy calling are exhorted to “walk worthy”, but no amount of walking worthy will ever make the believer more fully a “saint” than he is already in Christ. If this had been held firmly by the Colossians, that false and negative sanctity of abstention could never have found a place with them. Holiness is not comprised in what we abstain from (“Touch not, taste not, handle not”), but in what we *are* in Christ. In Him we have died, been buried, and have risen again, and in that blessed identification we find our holiness, meetness and acceptance.

The third feature, “The hope”, cannot be dealt with here, but must be reserved for another article. Let us pray for fuller and deeper insight into the meaning of “faith in Christ Jesus” and “that love which is unto all the saint”.

### **#3. The hope laid up in heaven (i. 5). pp. 164 - 169**

Having spoken of faith and love parenthetically, the apostle reveals the great object of his prayer, namely, hope. Col. i. 5 commences with *dia* = because, but it is not that the Colossians had love unto all the saints because of the hope, but that hope is the reason for the apostle’s prayer:--

“Praying always for you (Since we heard of your faith . . . . and love . . . .), because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Col. i. 3-5).

#### **Reserved and preserved.**

In I Pet. i. 4 we read of “an inheritance . . . . reserved in heaven for you”, while in Col. i. 5 we read of “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven”. Do these passages speak of the same thing?

Let us first of all see the actual words used. Peter uses *tereo*, “reserved”. Paul uses *apokeimai*, “laid up”. There is not a great difference between “reserved” and “laid up”, and if these two renderings stand we must accept their testimony. We can, however, test the accuracy of translation by comparison with other passages where the word occurs. Associated with *eis*, “unto”, we find the rendering “reserved unto” in II Pet. ii. 4, 9, 17, and iii. 7. In Jude 1 we have the word translated “preserved”, and in Jude 6 & 21 both “kept” and “keep”, while in Jude 6 and 13 associated with *eis*, “unto”, it is translated “reserve”. While “reserve” appears satisfactory in some cases, it is not so in others. For example, we could not say of the angels that “they reserved not their first

estate”, neither could we translate Jude 21, “Reserve yourselves in the love of God”. The word “keep” in the sense of “preserve”, however, will fit all these passages:--

- “Kept in Jesus Christ and called” (Jude 1).
- “The angels which kept not their first estate” (Jude 6).
- “For whom is kept the blackness of darkness unto the age” (Jude 13).
- “Keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 21).

*Tereo* is translated in the majority of cases “keep”:--

- “Keep the commandment” (Matt. xix. 17).
- “Kept in prison” (Acts xii. 5).
- “Keep the unity” (Eph. iv. 3).
- “I have kept the faith” (II Tim. iv. 7).

This last reference provides a fair test of the meaning of the two words under consideration, for both occur in close association: “I have kept (*tereo*) the faith . . . . henceforth there is laid up (*apokeimai*) for me a crown” (II Tim. iv. 7, 8). The translation that expresses the difference between these two words is: “I have *preserved* the faith . . . . henceforth there is *reserved* for me a crown.”

Carrying these distinctions with us to Col. i. 5 and I Pet. i. 4 we shall observe that I Pet. i. 4 speaks of “preserving” an inheritance in heaven, while Col. i. 5 speaks of “reserving” our hope in heaven. The “preserved” inheritance is seen coming down “out of heaven” in the new Jerusalem, whereas the “reserved” hope will be enjoyed in the super-heavens, “far above all”. Peter wrote to the “dispersion” (I Pet. i. 1). Paul wrote to the Gentiles (Col. i. 27). Peter directs the hope of his hearers to “the last times” and to the “salvation of their souls” at the “revelation of Jesus Christ”, whereas Paul speaks of the manifestation of Christ, Who is our life, and of our manifestation with Him “in glory”.

We have already learned that Colossians supplements Ephesians, and it is to Ephesians that we look for definitions. There, the hope is defined as “the hope of His calling” and “the one hope of our calling”, and this, while settling the nature of the hope to all who are already graced with opened eyes and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, leads some to confuse the calling of Hebrews with that of Colossians. We must therefore consider the terms.

### **The heavenly calling, and In heaven.**

Heb. iii. 1 speaks of a “heavenly calling”, using the word *epouranios*; Colossians, however, uses the word *ouranos*. As *epouranios* has been prominently associated with the Ephesian position, some are disturbed by its presence in Heb. iii. 1, and the change to *ouranos* in Colossians.

*Ouranos*.—This word indicates the heavens in relation to the earth (Matt. v. 18), the starry heavens (Matt. xxiv. 29), the heavens as the throne of God (Matt. v. 34), the abode of angels (Matt. xviii. 10), and the atmospheric heavens (Matt. xxiv. 30). Matthew uses

the same word for the heaven that is just above the earth, and for the heavens which are the throne of God, without inconsistency. Similarly Col. i. 5 and I Pet. i. 4 use the same word “heaven”, but it does not necessarily follow that Peter spoke of the “far above all” position of Ephesians, or that Col. i. 5 places our hope in the clouds or among the stars. Peter uses the one word “heaven” for the place where Christ now is (I Pet. iii. 22) and the place from which the voice came in the holy mount (II Pet. i. 18).

*Epouranios*.—Two references in Hebrews speak of the heavenly reality of which the tabernacle was a type (Heb. viii. 5; ix. 23). Two references speak of the heavenly country or the heavenly Jerusalem (xi. 16, xii. 22). Another refers to the miraculous gifts as the “heavenly gift” (vi. 4). We should expect, therefore, the heavenly calling of Heb. iii. 1 to be closely associated with this heavenly country and city. Matthew uses the word once in the expression “heavenly Father” (xviii. 35), and John once in contrast to earthly things (John iii. 12). I Cor. xv. 40-48 shows its close affinity with that which is spiritual.

Apart from Ephesians, the prison epistles contain only two references:--

“Every knee should bow, of things in heaven” (Phil. ii. 10).

“And will save me unto His heavenly kingdom” (II Tim. iv. 18).

It will be seen that *epouranios*, like *ouranos*, has a wide scope of meaning. The word, however, in Ephesians is used with such precision, and with such added explanatory terms as to leave one with a full realization of the character and the sphere of the hope of His calling. We have in that epistle five passages which contain a phrase to be found nowhere else in the whole range of inspired truth—*en tois epouraniois*, “in the heavenlies”. This expression differs from the usage in Heb. vi. 4, for the miraculous gifts referred to though “heavenly” were not enjoyed “in the heavenlies”; the “heavenly Jerusalem” of Heb. xii. 22 is seen by John “coming down from God *out of* heaven” (Rev. xxi. 2). The heavenly calling, therefore, of Heb. iii. will not necessarily place those who are partakers of it “in the heavenlies”.

Eph. iv. 10 tells us concerning Christ that He “ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things”. This illuminates the meaning of “the heavenly places” of Eph. i. 3. These heavenly places are said to be: (1) At the right hand of God. (2) Far above all principality and power (Eph. i. 20, 21). They are inhabited by principalities and powers that are learning through the church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii. 10). We are not left in any uncertainty as to the exact locality in this super-heavenly sphere, in which the church will realize its hope, for chapter ii. 6 says: “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” The hope of the one body, therefore, is “far above all”.

When the apostle uses the simple word *ouranos* in Eph. i. 10, iii. 15, and vi. 9, there is no confusion of terms; the greater must include the less. For example, it would be true to say that these words are being penned in Essex, or alternatively, in England. The choice of term would be regulated by the object with which the information was given. It would be incongruous to place Essex over against America—that would

demand at least the term England, but if the matter were concerned with one part of England as distinct from another, the sub-division Essex would be necessary. So “heavenly” and “heaven” do not at times demand any particularizing, the word *ouranos* and *ouranios* being sufficient. Sometimes, however, it is necessary that *epouranios* should be used, to make a distinction, although this term itself is very embracive. When the apostle would speak of the sphere of the one body, he departs from the usual terms and speaks of *en tois epouraniois*, “in the heavenlies”, which are far above all and at the right hand of God. The hope, therefore, of Col. i. 5, though there said to be laid up in *heaven*, which is quite true, is particularized in Ephesians as being in the *super-heavens*, which, while leaving Colossians still true and untouched, tells us just what part of heaven is intended.

Colossians is not so much concerned with the teaching the distinct nature of our hope, as praying that such hope may be fruitful. In both passages of Col. i. fruitfulness is in view:--

“Praying always for you . . . . because of the hope which is laid up in heaven . . . . it bringeth forth fruit and increaseth” (Col. i. 3-5).

“Do not cease to pray for you . . . . being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. i. 9, 10).

The words “and increaseth” in verse 6 are found in the R.V. and are warranted by manuscripts. Verse 6 does not assert that all the world had heard the truth; it indicates that no dispensational barrier or restriction now exists. “Which is present with you”—this has the pregnant meaning, “Came to and remain with you”.

In both Eph. i. 13 and Col. i. 5, 6 there is strong emphasis upon “hearing” and “the Word of truth”. The words that opened the present dispensation were, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will *hear it*” (Acts xxviii. 28). And this in contrast to Israel’s condition: “The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing.”

### **Faith, hope and the Word.**

It is of the greatest spiritual importance for us to remember that both faith and hope are vitally connected with “hearing” and “the Word”.

FAITH.—“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. x. 17).

HOPE.—“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be” (Rom. iv. 18).

There is a close connection between these two passages. In the first, the “Word” is *rhema*, “the spoken word”; in the second it is *rheo*, “spoken”. To us, now that the Scriptures are complete, the “spoken” Word of God is the “written” Word, for II Tim. iii. 16 says, “All Scripture (written) is God-breathed (spoken)”.

Both faith and hope are terms very much abused among God's people. We hear believers saying that they have "faith" for this, or "faith" for that; yet many times there is not the slightest foundation for such faith in the "Word". Faith needs something to rest upon. Show me a promise in the Scriptures, and there my faith has a legitimate basis—but faith that rests upon the fancies of the mind, however pious, is largely doomed to disappointment.

With many, hope is almost synonymous with uncertainty. If a person "hopes so" an element of misgiving is generally implied. But hope in Scripture rests as certainly as faith upon the Word of God, for "He is faithful Who promised" (Heb. xi. 11).

While it is true that the second coming of Christ is the hope of all the redeemed, it is not true that all will realize their hope at the same time or in the same place. The word that stands for the hope of Israel and the church up to Acts xxviii. is *parousia*, which finds its definition in Matt. xxiv. and I Thess. iv. The apostle does not use this word for the hope of the church after Acts xxviii., but uses *epiphaneia* instead. This we find in Col. iii. 3, 4: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him in glory." If we bring the two statements together we shall see their connection the better:--

"The hope which is LAID UP for you in heaven."  
"Your life is HID with Christ in God."

In Titus we have a statement that unites both passages: "In hope of age-abiding life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before age times" (Titus i. 2). This is further defined in Titus ii. 13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the manifesting of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Christ Himself is the one Hope of all believers whatever their calling, but prayer and a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of the mystery, and of Christ's exalted position at the right hand of God, is necessary to make clear "that blessed hope".

The apostle in his last hours speaks of "all those who love His manifesting", and to this phase of His coming we cling. So far as the hope of the church of the mystery is concerned, there are no accompanying angels, no signs in heaven or earth; these all take place after the hope of the church is realized at the right hand of God, and are associated with the descent of the Lord "*from* heaven" (I Thess. iv. 16), whereas the calling of the one body is in "heavenly places" and can only be realized in the position "far above all". It is *this* hope that is laid up for us "in heaven". This is the "Word" upon which our hope rests. The ascended Lord is before us in faith and hope, whereas in the earlier dispensation, while the ascended Lord was seen by *faith*, hope looked forward to the Lord "descending" from heaven, and a city "coming down out of heaven". This is very different indeed from the hope of our calling which is laid up for us in heaven, to be enjoyed there "at the right hand of God".

**#4. The apostle's prayer (i. 9-12).  
pp. 205 - 209**

The three great epistles, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, contain the prayers of the apostle for the members of the body of Christ, each prayer reflecting something of the special teaching of the epistle. The prayer of Col. i. 9-12 is for a fruitful and spiritual walk. The answer to it is in measure indicated in Col. iii. 16 - iv. 1, a section which we have headed in the structure on page 57, "Indwelling Word for a spiritual walk".

Before we turn our attention to the prayer itself, we will demonstrate the balance of the two passages, and the justification for their place in the structure:--

<b>Col. i. 9-12.</b>	<b>Col. iii. 16 - iv. 1.</b>
"In all wisdom."	"In all wisdom."
"Spiritual understanding."	"Spiritual songs."
"Every good work."	"In word or work."
"Giving thanks unto the Father."	"Giving thanks to God and the Father."
"Unto all pleasing."	"This is well pleasing."
"Made meet for the inheritance."	"The reward of the inheritance."

In his prayer, Paul asks for the Colossians that they "may be filled with a knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding". That this deep and spiritual wisdom is not something separated from the Word of God itself the balancing passage shews: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16). Prayer for spiritual illumination must go hand in hand with the Word of God. To imagine a spirituality that is independent of Scripture is to entertain a false view, and is likely to lead to "excess" and self-deception.

"Spiritual understanding" and "spiritual songs" are in these two passages in correspondence. To the Corinthians the apostle wrote: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. xiv. 15). While it is true that he uses here the word *nous*, "mind" instead of *sunesis*, "understanding", the lesson is similar in the two cases. A spiritual understanding will express itself in appropriate spiritual songs. It will reject those hymns which use the name "Jesus" in too familiar a way. It will not in its hymnbook any more than in its doctrine confuse the "Bride" and the "Body", "Zion" and the "Church". It will not sing, "One Lord, one faith, one birth", when Scripture says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", for baptismal regeneration is a false doctrine. It will not confess that the dead in Christ are asleep, awaiting the awakening of resurrection, and deny this truth by singing about the activities and glories of those loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ.

The scope of this "worthy" walk is seen in the corresponding section, which embraces wives and husbands, fathers and children, servants and masters. One part of what is implied in the words "unto all pleasing" is found in the obedience of children to their

parents—“for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” It is further expressed when servants obey their masters not as “men-pleasers”, but in singleness of heart.

Thanksgiving to the Father in Col. i. is restricted to the glorious fact of meetness for the inheritance; in Col. iii. 17 it expands to the sanctifying of every word and work.

The distinctive purposes of the two sections of Colossians are clearly seen in the two references to the “inheritance”. In Col. i. we find our standing. There we rejoice that we are “made meet” for the inheritance. Col. iii. 16 - iv 1 gives our subsequent state, our manifesting now the blessed position which is already ours in Christ. There we read, not of meetness for the inheritance, but of “the reward of the inheritance”; not because we are “in Christ”, but because we “serve the Lord Jesus Christ”.

We trust it is amply demonstrated that the two members Col. i. 9-12 and Col. iii. 16 - iv. 1 are in perfect balance. Not until the prayer of Col. i. receives an answer according to Col. iii. can we rest satisfied that we have entered into its fullness. To some the high thought in Col. i. concerning the inheritance and the saints in the light may seem too lofty for domestic affairs, but it is not. It is utter folly for anyone who disdains the scriptural call to walk worthy as a wife or a husband, to contemplate the higher steps of spiritual attainment. Before a man lays claim to the spiritual wisdom and understanding and worthy walk of Col. i., let his relationship as husband and father, master or servant, be brought “into the light”; otherwise his profession of holiness and spiritual attainment may be characterized in the language of I Cor. xiii. 1-3.

### **The prayer of Col. i. 9-12.**

We now come to the prayer of Col. i. 9-12. It is concerned with the “knowledge of God”, and is divided into two parts. The first part deals with prayer “with the object that (*hina*) ye might be filled as to the knowledge of His will”; the second part using *en* and *eis* (“in” and “unto”—“means” and “end”) deals with fruit and increase as to the knowledge of God.

### **The prayer (Col. i. 9-12).**

- A | 9. Object (*hina*). | That ye may be filled as to the knowledge of His will.
- B | 9-11. Means (*en*) and end (*eis*).
  - a1 | 9. Means (*en*). *In* all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
  - b1 | 10. End (*eis*). *Unto* all pleasing. Walk.
  - a2 | 10. Means (*en*). *In* every good work being fruitful.
  - b1 | 10. End (*eis*). *Unto* the knowledge of God increasing.
  - a3 | 11. Means (*en*). *In* all might being strengthened.
  - b3 | 11. End (*eis*). *Unto* all patience and longsuffering.
- A | 12. With (*meta*). | With joy giving thanks for meetness for inheritance.

*The object.*—“That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” There are five occurrences of the verb “to fill” in Colossians, and if the one translation, “to complete”, be used, some idea of the intention of the apostle may be gathered. We do not, however, suggest this word as the best translation of *pleroo*.

- A | i. 9. That ye might be **complete** as to the knowledge of His will.  
 B | i. 25. The dispensation . . . . to **complete** the Word of God.  
 C | ii. 10. Ye are **complete** in Him.  
 A | iv. 12. That ye may stand perfect and **complete** in all the will of God.  
 B | iv. 17. Take heed to the ministry . . . . that thou **complete** it.

The prayer of Epaphras (Col. iv. 12) brings together the prayer (Col. i. 9) and the desire (Col. i. 28) of the apostle. It is important enough to justify repetition in this connection:--

Paul's prayer (Col. i. 9).—*Complete* in knowledge of His will.  
 Paul's desire (Col. i. 28).—Present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus.  
 Epaphras' prayer (Col. iv. 12).—*Perfect* and *complete* in all the will of God.

The desire of Paul (Col. i. 28) is associated with "warning": "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." This shows that the prayers of Col. i. 9-12 and of iv. 12 have in mind the great central theme of the epistle (Col. ii. 4-23) summed up in the word *Beware*.

Moreover, the first great cure for the error that was creeping into Colosse is this same thought. Why, says the apostle, be spoiled by an empty (vain) philosophy? In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete (filled full) in Him. Why be occupied with shadows? The body is of Christ (Col. ii. 16, 17).

There is a still further connection seen when we compare Col. iii. 16, 17 with Eph. v. 18-20:--

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. v. 18-20).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. iii. 16, 17).

The parallel is too obvious to require any elaboration. That which demands attention here is the truth that emerges by comparing the opening words of each quotation. In Ephesians Paul says, "Be filled with the Spirit". In Colossians he says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you". What a gigantic system of false teaching has been built upon the words, "Be filled with the Spirit"! It constitutes practically the key-text and basis of all "Pentecostal" movements, and, in spite of the context, has led to much "excess". The parallel leads us to see that to be filled with the Spirit is to be indwelt richly by the word of Christ.

An examination of the original of Eph. v. 18 not only shews the basic error of Pentecostalism, but the true meaning of the apostle. The verb *pleroo*, "to fill", in the passive, takes two cases following: (1). the genitive, which shows what the vessel is

filled with -- (2). the dative, which shows the filler of the vessel. If the "Pentecostal" interpretation is correct, then we shall find the verb followed by the genitive, and the passage will have a meaning similar to that of Acts ii. 4, where "filled with *pneuma hagion*" refers to spiritual gifts. The fact is that in Eph. v. 18 the verb is followed by the dative, indicating that the Holy Spirit is the Filler. Col. iii. 16 states that with which He fills, namely, the word of Christ. Here is sanity, and true dispensational teaching; the other leads oftentimes to a spiritual Bedlam.

Whereas in Col. i. 9 the apostle prays for a knowledge of His will, in Eph. i. 17 he prays that God may give the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. There is, of course, no conflict between the two passages, for Heb. x. 7 says: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy Will, O God." To know Christ is to know the will of God. To walk in Christ is to walk in the will of God. To be perfect in Christ is to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. This was the apostle's prayer for the Colossians: "I do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with a knowledge of His will." May it be ours, too, for ourselves and for one another.

# The Coming of the Lord.

## The O.T. foundation.

### #6. The visions of Zechariah.

pp. 22 - 24

There are allusions to the second coming in the minor prophets, such as Hab. ii. 3, 4 (with Heb. x. 37), Hag. ii. 7-9, and Joel iii. 13-16 (with Rev. xiv. 15-18), which the reader should search out in order to make full acquaintance with O.T. testimony to this important aspect of truth. For the present, however, we will turn to the visions of Zechariah:--

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech ix. 9).

There is a notable omission in the quotation of this prophecy in Matt. xxi. 5 and John xii. 15:--

“Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”

The multitudes “shouted”, they cried “Hosannah”, which means “Save now”, but not so the inspired writer. He omits the shout and the salvation. Not until the Lord comes the second time will Zion cry out and shout, or salvation be brought to her.

Following the passage quoted from Zech. ix. 9 comes the resulting peace and dominion:--

“And I will (He shall, LXX) cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

Our conception of “meekness” does not fit in with the idea of triumph and conquest, and some may object to the application of this passage to Rev. xix. and the Rider on the white horse. Psa. xlv. 4, 5, however, shows that there is no incongruity:--

“And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and *meekness* . . . . Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies.”

Jerusalem is the centre of interest in Zechariah, and is prominent in the prophetic sections that speak of the Lord’s coming. For example, chapter xii., verse 2, says: “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about.” And it is in connection with the sore straits of the besieged city that Zechariah speaks of the second coming:--

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . . and it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him” (Zech. xii. 8-14).

John xix. 34-37 leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of Him Who was thus pierced, and Rev. i. 7 reveals with equal certainty that Zech. xii. is future:--

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

There has never been a national mourning by Israel for the death of Christ, there has never been a destruction of the enemies of Jerusalem since N.T. times, and since the partial beginning at Pentecost there has never been poured out upon Israel the spirit of grace.

### **The Mount of Olives.**

Zechariah resumes the theme of Jerusalem’s trouble and the Lord’s deliverance:--

“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle . . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations . . . . and His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east . . . . and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee” (Zech. xiv. 1-6).

There can be no doubt as to the literality of the Mount of Olives. It is described geographically as being “before Jerusalem on the east”. Moreover, to question the identity of the place would be to introduce a serious problem into Acts i.:--

“A cloud received Him out of their sight . . . . This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet.”

The direct association between the second coming of Acts i. and Zech. xiv. established by the angel’s message, confirms the appropriateness of the apostles’ question as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts i. 6), and leaves no room for “the church” in this aspect of hope. It can be none other than “the hope of Israel” mentioned by Paul as still obtaining in Acts xxviii. 20.

The visions of Zechariah concerning the second coming can be summed up in his own words: “*Jerusalem, Thy King cometh.*”

From one end of his prophecy to the other, Jerusalem and its deliverance and restoration are prominent, and the coming Lord is set forth as Israel’s King when the reign of peace has commenced. This is twice given in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, “*The Kings, the Lord of Hosts*”.

What is true of Zechariah is true of all the prophets.

“He shall send Jesus Christ . . . . Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 20, 21).

## **#7. The burden of Malachi.** **pp. 64 - 66**

The last of the prophets, Malachi, anticipates the dual ministry of the two forerunners of the Messiah, John the Baptist and Elijah. The name Malachi means “My messenger”.

“Behold, I will send *My messenger*, and he shall prepare the way before Me” (Mal. iii. 1).

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send *My messenger* before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee . . . . John did baptize in the wilderness” (Mark i. 1-4).

“John . . . . sent two of his disciples . . . . Jesus began to say concerning John . . . . this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send *My messenger* before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee” (Matt. xi. 2-10).

With the purport of these passages before us, we cannot avoid seeing that in Mal. iii. 1, John the Baptist is in view, yet when we read on we are conscious of the conflicting fact that verse 2 introduces a very different atmosphere from that of the four Gospels and John’s day. Let us notice the language:--

“But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? . . . . He shall purify the sons of Levi . . . . then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Mal. iii. 2-4).

This passage most surely speaks of the second coming, yet it is closely associated with John the Baptist. In Mal. iv. 1, 2 we read:--

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud . . . . shall be stubble . . . . but unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.”

Here there is close association with another messenger and forerunner, namely, Elijah:--

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children . . . . lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. iv. 5, 6).

What, then, is the connection between these two personages and the two comings? Turning to the New Testament we shall find that the two messengers are intimately

related. When the birth of John the Baptist was announced to his father, Zacharias, the angel said of John: “Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the *spirit and power* of Elijah” (Luke i. 16, 17). When John was asked by the priests and Levites, “Art thou Elijah?” he said, “I am not” (John i. 21).

The Lord, however, when He had vindicated John the Baptist, as we have already seen in Matt. xi., spoke of the kingdom of heaven suffering violence and opposition. Then alluding to John, He says: “And if ye will receive it (i.e. the kingdom), this is Elijah, which was for to come” (Matt. xi. 14). That this was a cryptic, or parabolic, utterance seems certain by the added words, “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (verse 15).

When the Lord descended from the mount of transfiguration, the disciples raised the question of Elijah’s coming:--

“Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, And restore all things” (Matt. xvii. 10, 11).

Here is a plain answer, endorsing the belief that Elijah himself must come before the restoration of all things can take place. But the Lord then proceeds to bring the spirit of the passage to bear upon the time then present, continuing:--

“But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matt. xvii. 12, 13).

While there were, therefore, at the first coming of the Lord, provisional arrangements sufficient to remove all idea that the non-repentance of Israel was destined and therefore without responsibility, He Who knew all things in a manner we cannot even imagine, knew that the Messiah would be rejected. John the Baptist was not Elijah, but he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Except in a typical, anticipatory fashion the kingdom was not set up. The great work of redemption was accomplished, but the real coming and restoration of the kingdom await the day of days toward which all the prophets point.

We have now considered the main witnesses of the O.T. to the second coming of the Lord:--

1. The prophecy of Enoch.
2. The patience of Job.
3. The prayers of David.
4. The visions of Isaiah.
5. The dreams of Daniel
6. The visions of Zechariah.
7. The burdens of Malachi.

They unite in one grand witness to the personal return of the Lord from heaven to earth, there, upon the overthrow of Gentile dominion and Babylon, to set up a kingdom closely connected with the city of Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, and the commencement

of that period when the curse shall be removed from the earth, and also the veil from the face of all people, “beginning at Jerusalem”.

It must be obvious to all that any system of interpretation that takes up the teaching of the second coming without due regard to this consistent and far-reaching line of witnesses, is of necessity liable to lead its exponents into tremendous mistakes.

We propose examining the N.T. references in much the same way as we have those of the O.T., giving particular heed to two things:--

1. Points of agreement with O.T. prophecy, and
2. Points of departure from, or addition to, O.T. prophecy.

Not until we have so done can we feel safe in expressing our belief concerning many features of this wondrous theme that are often taken for granted.

**The N.T. fulfillment.**  
**#8. When the “any moment” coming was possible.**  
**Matthew’s Gospel.**  
**pp. 143 - 145**

Having reviewed the O.T. teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord, we turn to the N.T. to observe how far its teaching is a confirmation of the O.T. prophecy, and how far it adds to or departs from that which has been already revealed. We propose to carry out this investigation in the following order: (1) The Gospels, (2) The Acts, (3) The Epistles of the Circumcision, (4) The Revelation, (5) The Epistles of Paul, (a) before Acts xxviii., and (b) after Acts xxviii.

**The four Gospels.**

Coming to the four Gospels, we find their witness divided as follows: (1) The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and (3) John. Our present paper is devoted to the synoptics, particularly Matthew.

Just as creation of Adam and the dominion given to him necessitates the second coming (*see* Psa. viii. and Heb. ii.), so the fact that Christ was “born King of the Jews” calls for a crowning day in the future.

First let us deal with the following somewhat problematic passages:--

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye unto another, for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matt. x. 23).

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. xvi. 27, 28).

“Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (xxiii. 39).

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled” (xxiv. 34).

There is in each of these verses an untranslated particle, *an*, the effect of which is to make the sentence contingent upon something expressed or implied. We can gather from other scriptures, *e.g.*, Acts iii. 19-21, that the second coming of the Lord would not take place while Israel remained unrepentant.

In “The Prophecies of the Last Days”, by *William Ker*, a suggestion is made which is helpful when considering Matt. xxiv. 34. The author draws attention to the fact that punctuation and accent are unknown in the earliest Greek manuscripts. *Aute* and *haute* would be written exactly alike, the breathing or its absence being denoted by an accent like our apostrophe. *Aute* would have the accent turned to the left (’); *haute* to the right (‘). With the recognition of these facts all difficulty vanishes from Matt. xxiv. 34.

“Verily I say unto you, THAT generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.”

“So speedy shall then be the succession of events, so shall the days be shortened (verse 22), that the same generation which witnessed the beginning of these signs shall witness also the end.”

### **The Son of man.**

This title occurs in Matt. xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 30, 39; xxv. 31; and xxvi. 64. The last reference is decisive in its character:--

“Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Immediately these words are uttered by the Lord, the High Priest accuses Him of blasphemy. This is understood when seen in the light of Dan. vii. 13, 14:--

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the SON OF MAN came with the CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, and came unto the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

By no legitimate system of interpretation can this dominion be made to refer to “The Church”. On the contrary, the passage exactly fits into Matthew’s theme, which is pre-eminently the King and the kingdom.

Matt. xvi. 27, 28 refers to the same coming and kingdom. That coming would take place either within the lifetime of some who heard the words, or, failing that, would possibly be deferred. This is implied by the particle “*an*”, “*if*”. Israel did not repent; though granted nearly forty years in which to fulfil the implication of the “*if*”. They failed to do so, and when the longsuffering of God reached this limit, they were set aside, and the possibility of the Lord’s return during the lifetime of any of His early disciples ceased to be practical truth. The transfiguration which immediately follows Matt. xvi. is a partial fulfillment and prophetic foreshadowing, as Peter himself testifies in II Pet. i. 16-18.

These four passages must be considered together if they are to be understood:--

- A | x. 23. Not finish the cities . . . . till He may have come.
- B | xvi. 28. Not taste death till see.
- B | xxiii. 39. May not see Me till say.
- A | xxiv. 34. That generation not pass till . . . . fulfilled.

It is not our purpose to tarry long over details or difficulties in this series. However, should readers find difficulty over these passages, we shall be glad to help, but we do not wish to go over ground already covered and so unnecessarily waste time.

We have touched upon these passages together in order to leave the way clear to take up the classic passage on the second coming in the Gospels, namely, Matt. xxiv. To this we hope to give attention in our next paper.

### **#9. Matthew xxiv.**

#### **The sunteleia. The times of refreshing. The presence of the Lord. pp. 188 - 192**

The passages we have looked at in Matthew’s Gospel, while adding their quota to the teaching of the N.T. concerning the second coming of the Lord, are nevertheless isolated and fragmentary in character. Matt. xxiv. on the other hand is a discourse wholly devoted to the subject. This notable discourse is introduced by the closing verses of Matt. xxiii.:--

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (37-39).

We have here a quotation from Psa. cxviii. 25, 26:--

“Save now (Hosannah), I beseech Thee, O Lord . . . . Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord, we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.”

The Hosannah quotation is found in Matt. xxi. 9. It is important to notice that the cry, "Blessed be He that cometh" is closely associated with "the house of the Lord". This adds point to the Lord's words, "Your house is left unto you desolate", and also provides a reason for the disciples' remarks concerning the buildings of the temple. When the Lord told them that there should not be left one stone upon another, it is evident by their threefold question that this desolation was connected in their minds with the coming of the Lord.

### **The threefold question.**

This threefold question and its answer occupies the whole of Matt. xxiv. from verse 3:--

"And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us:--

- (1) When shall these things be?
- (2) And what shall be the sign of Thy coming.
- (3) And the end of the age?"

In answering the disciples' questions, the Lord deals with them in the reverse order:--

1. The end of the age (4-24).
2. The sign of the coming (25-31).
3. When these things shall be (32-42).

The answer of the Lord as to the end of the age is twofold. First, negative—"The end is not yet"; "all these are the beginning of sorrows". Second, positive—"Then shall the end come". Before going further we must notice that there are two words here translated "end". In verse 3 it is *sunteleia*. In verse 6, 13 and 14 it is *telos*. The phrase "the *sunteleia* of the age" occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew, whilst "the *sunteleia* of the ages" occurs but once, viz., in Hebrews:--

- "The harvest is the *end* of the age" (Matt. xiii. 39).  
"So shall it be at the *end* of the age" (Matt. xiii. 40, 49).  
"The *end* of the age" (Matt. xxiv. 3).  
"Even unto the *end* of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 20).  
"Once in the *end* of the ages" (Heb. ix. 26).

The first occurrence connects the term with *the harvest* and in this lies the explanation of the word, for the first occurrence of the same word in the LXX of Exod. xxiii. 16 refers to the same period:--

"The feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering (*sunteleia*) which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field."

At first it may seem that there is a discrepancy between the Lord's words in Matt. xiii. 39 and this passage. The Lord said that the harvest was the *sunteleia*, whereas

Exod. xxiii. speaks of a feast of harvest, as distinct from the feast of the *sunteleia*. The answer is suggested by the presence of the word “firstfruits”, and by the particular kind of harvest in view—“which thou hast sown in the field”. A reference to Exod. xxxiv. 22, however, makes all plain: “Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of thy wheat harvest, and the feast of the ingathering at the year’s end.”

Now, the disciples being Jews and taught in the law, knew the order of their feasts and much of their typical nature. Unless the reader has definitely studied the feasts of Israel he is at a disadvantage here, and before we can hope to appreciate the teaching of Matt. xxiv., we must supply the deficiency. There is one chapter in the law that sets out the feasts of Israel in their order, namely, Lev. xxiii., and to that we must turn.

### The feasts of the Lord.

*The sabbaths* (Lev. xxiii. 1-3). The first of the feasts to be mentioned is the weekly sabbath. This underlies the whole of God’s dealings with Israel. There are the following sabbaths mentioned:--

- Sabbath of *seven days* (Lev. xxiii. 3).
- Sabbath of *seven weeks* (Lev. xxiii. 15).
- Sabbath of *seven months* (Lev. xxiii. 34).
- Sabbath of *seven years* (Lev. xxv. 2-7).
- Sabbath of *seven seven years* (Lev. xxv. 8-17).
- Sabbath of *seventy years* (Dan. ix. 2), and finally the
- Sabbath of *seventy times seven* (Dan. ix. 24),  
in which the whole purpose of God for Israel shall be accomplished.

This emphasis is too insistent to be avoided. Underlying the whole history of Israel is this sabbatic element. From verse 4 of Lev. xxiii. feasts “in their seasons” are recorded, which also conform to the sabbatic character. We have, in verse 5, the feast of the *first* month detailed, and in verses 34 and 39 that of the *seventh* month described. Between these two all the other feasts are found, so that while Israel’s year had twelve months, with an intercalary thirteenth month at intervals, its typical year took note only of seven of these months.

We must now tabulate the feasts in order to place the *sunteleia*:--

- (1) THE SABBATH.—Impressing the character of Israel’s typical history (*See* Heb. iv. 9, Greek).
- (2) THE PASSOVER.—Redemption, “out of”.
- (3) THE UNLEAVENED BREAD.—The sheaf waved (Lev. xxiii. 10).  
A firstfruits.
- (4) PENTECOST.—Two wave loaves. Fifty days. Jubilee anticipated.  
\* \* \* \* \*
- (5) FEAST OF TRUMPETS.—Joel ii. 1 and 15; I Cor. xv. 52.
- (6) THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.—Repentance (Lev. xxiii. 29).  
Reconciliation and access.
- (7) TABERNACLES.—The *sunteleia*. Harvest and ingathering.  
The eighth day stressed (Lev. xxiii. 39).

While, experimentally, *we* must all begin with redemption—Passover, “the first month of the year to *you*” (Exod. xii. 2), God begins with the Sabbath, and the purpose of the age is to restore that which is past.

Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and the Firstfruits have received their fulfillment (I Cor. v. 7, 8; Acts ii.; I Cor. xv. 20). Between Pentecost and Trumpets (Nos. 4 and 5 in the list above) is an interval of some months, with no feast to mark it, only a reference to “the poor and the stranger”. Here, in these silent months between Pentecost and Trumpets, is where the dispensation of the mystery finds its place.

The Feast of Tabernacles, being the *sunteleia*, must be given a little closer attention. This feast celebrates both the harvests of “the corn and the wine” (Deut. xvi. 13). At the return of the captivity under Ezra, and again under Nehemiah (Ezra iii. 4 and Neh. viii. 14) this feast was observed, and this is the feast picked out by God for annual observance by all the nations that are left after the coming of the Lord (Zech. xiv. 16-19). The association of “tabernacles” and the coming of the Lord explains Peter’s suggestion on the mount of transfiguration, that he should make three tabernacles (Matt. xvii. 4).

After the detailed statement of Lev. xxiii. 34-36, the writer returns to the feast of tabernacles to give further particulars (verses 39-43), thus marking it as of great importance. Here we have the command to take boughs of trees and to dwell in booths or tabernacles. Here also is emphasized the “eighth day” which is “the last day, that great day of the feast” (John vii. 2 and 37), when the Lord spake of the full outpouring of the Spirit—upon His own glorification—partially fulfilled at Pentecost, but awaiting His second coming for its complete fulfillment.

The “eighth day” brings us to resurrection. The tabernacles speak of true “peace and safety”, and all these typical observances are covered by the word *sunteleia* used by the disciples when they came to the Lord with their question: “What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and the *end* of the age?” That “end” they knew was harvest, ingathering, rejoicing, peace; all inseparable from the coming of the Lord. Until He is “glorified” that “consummation” devoutly to be wished is as unattainable as Utopia, a mirage, the will-o’-the-wisp of politicians and reformers who have not grasped the essential relation between “the times of refreshing” and “the presence of the Lord”. That wholesome lesson it is hoped we have learned. And now, having some understanding of what the question of Matt. xxiv. 3 includes and implies, we can give more earnest heed to the answers that follow.

**#10. The Lord's threefold answer as to "When" and "What"  
(Matt. xxiv.).  
pp. 224 - 230**

Having seen the scriptural meaning of the "end", and its type in the feast of tabernacles, we now proceed to the continuation of the Lord's answers to His disciples' questions. In verses 4-24 He takes up this question of the "end". The first and last words in this section deal with *deception*:--

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in My name and shall deceive many" (verses 4, 5).

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (verse 24).

Following this opening warning concerning the false Christs the Lord tells of the feature indicative of the beginning of sorrows, but adds, "The end is not yet". Verses 6-14 are occupied with the characteristic features that lead up to the "end" (*telos*):--

*Negative*.—"The end is not yet" (verse 6).

*Explanatory*.—"All these are the beginning of sorrows" (verse 8).

*Exhortative*.—"Endure to the end . . . . be saved" (verse 13).

*Positive*.—"Then shall the end come" (verse 14).

As with the prophecies of the O.T., such as Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, "the nations" are involved in this period of the "end". Wars and rumours of wars, with nation rising against nation, form part of the beginning of sorrows. Hatred by all nations, yet the preaching of the gospel to all nations for a witness, ushers in the end.

The "end" is marked by "tribulation" in two phases. Firstly, during the "beginning of sorrows", the Lord says: "They shall deliver you up to be *tribulated*" (afflicted, as in verses 21 and 29). Secondly, there comes "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world till now, no, nor ever shall be" (verse 21).

We may now visualize the outstanding features of this first answer:--

A | xxiv. 4, 5. Warning against deception by false Christs.

B | 6-14. The beginning of sorrows. "Endure", "saved".

B | 15-22. The tribulation in full course. "Shortened", "saved".

A | 23, 24. Warning against deception by false Christs.

Intermingled with the conflict of nations we have famines, pestilences and earthquakes, as signs of the beginning of sorrows. A gleam of hope is found in these passages of gloom in the word "sorrow". *Odin* and *odino* speak, not of sorrow in general,

but pains in one particular, “pains that issue in birth”. There are altogether seven occurrences:--

“Whom God raised up, having loosed the *pains* of death” (Acts ii. 24).

“As *travail* upon a woman with child” (I Thess. v. 3).

(and in all the other references, viz., Mark xiii. 8, Gal. iv. 19, 27, and Rev. xii. 2).

This last reference is illuminated by Matt. xxiv., and sends back light in return. The birth pains of Rev. xii. 2 are followed by the rise of the beast and the false prophet, and the war on the saints of chapter xiii. There also, in Rev. xiii., is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

## A CRITICISM DEALT WITH.

### “The Super-heavenlies”, “The Three Spheres”, and “Far above all”.

An attempt to help all critics who “frankly do not know  
what the *Berean Expositor* teaches.”

#1. pp. 109 - 112

There is a true proverb that “two wrongs do not make one right”, and in contending for the faith we must ever pray to be preserved from putting out our hand to stay the ark of God, and from using carnal weapons for spiritual ends. This is specially so in the realm of criticism, and perhaps most of all when we seek to refute charges such as those made against us by A.E.K.

At the outset, therefore, we charge ourselves before the Lord to remember that truth is His, and ours is but a stewardship; to remember that in many things we offend all; also to realize that where erroneous charges are made against us, they injure those who entertain them far more than they can injure us. The believer has no warrant, so far as we can see, for attempting his own exoneration—he must leave that, as Paul did, in the hands of the Lord—but stewardship involves the faith of many others, and silence under criticism might be misconstrued. For the truth’s sake, therefore, and not for personal victory or vindication, we take up a criticism that is being circulated concerning part of our teaching. A manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ includes a striving for the faith of the gospel (Phil. i. 27). May the truth of God prevail.

Those who criticize what we have written in connection with the expression *en tois epouraniois* used in Ephesians, seem either to have ignored or to have overlooked a very definite statement published in Volume VII of *The Berean Expositor* in 1917, which gives in brief an indication of all that has been written since.

Closely associated with the translation “super-heavenlies” is the question of “the three spheres”. On this matter we quote a statement put forward by our critic:--

“To begin with, the Word of God knows nothing of the so-called ‘three spheres’. In the beginning it commences with *two*, the heavens and the earth. There is no such ‘sphere’ as the super-heavenlies. It is non-scriptural, unscriptural and misleading.”

Would it not be thought that anyone with a knowledge of the Bible would remember that, subsequent to the creation of Gen. i. 1, the heaven of Gen. i. 8 came into existence? Now let us ask our critic to say, after reading Gen. i. 1-8, whether there are still but two spheres? Is not the heaven of Gen. i. 8 something lower and destined at length to pass away? Yet even that heaven cannot be limited to the aerial heavens, where

birds fly (i. 20), for birds do not fly as far as the sun and moon (i. 15). It will be seen that in Gen. i. we have the first and original heaven, and then the heaven of the present creation, which is itself subdivided. If our critic had read what we have written, there would have been no need to ridicule the idea that the church is “far above all” heavens, and therefore outside of heaven altogether, for such an idea is quite meaningless, and not what we have taught. We have definitely associated the church of the one body\* with the “heaven” of Gen. i. 1 and with the new heavens, and have dissociated it from the heavens that pass away after the millennium. Perhaps it will be more convincing to quote a statement that has been in print for over twelve years:--

“One of the distinctive marks of the calling of the one body is its heavenly destiny. The word ‘heavenly’ is not full enough to convey all that the word used in Ephesians implies—super-celestial is nearer. In the original of the New Testament two words are employed, both translated ‘heavenly’ (*ouraniois* and *epouraniois*). The added word *epi* signifies *upon* or *over*, and refers to the heavens that are above the firmament, and beyond the limitations of the present creation (compare Gen. i. with Psalms cxlviii. 4, I Kings viii. 27, and Heb. vii. 26).”—See *Volume VII*, page 8.

These words are surely definite enough. The critic we have in mind remarks in connection with one phase of our teaching:--

“Frankly, I do not *know* what *The Berean Expositor* teaches. Neither can I find anyone else who is clear.”

What is there that is obscure in the above quotation from *Volume VII*? The same volume touches upon the subject again:--

“On many occasions the Scriptures speak of God ‘stretching out the heavens’. Psa. civ. 2, ‘Who stretched out the heavens like a curtain’; also Isa. xl. 22; xlii. 5; xlv. 12; li. 13; Jer. x. 12; li. 15; Zech. xii. 1 . . . . When we grasp the significance of the firmament, and the purpose that is carried out within its expanse, we may then see the perfect fitness of the statements of Ephesians, where in the words ‘the heavenly places’ (*epouraniois*, a word which literally means ‘upon the heavens’), we are taken beyond the firmament . . . . Ephesians always speaks of the blessings of the one body as being in the *epouraniois*, the sphere *above* the heavens. Peter, however, does not pierce the firmament, the inheritance he speaks of is reserved ‘in the heavens’, not in the sphere above the heavens” (*Volume VII*, page 45).

It is not, surely, expecting too much from any reader who realizes the value of a context to assume that our statements concerning a sphere “above the heavens” will be understood to refer to the heavens that belong to this present age, the firmament of Gen. i. 8. The critic who labours to destroy something which we do not teach may be very sincere, as the closing paragraph of this criticism assure us, and may really believe, as he says, that our teaching is “malignant” and that *The Berean Expositor* is now “committed to apostasy”, but what of his fitness to criticize?

We give another quotation on this subject from *The Berean Expositor*:--

[\* - This is also criticized, but Eph. iv. 4 is, for us, sufficient.]

“THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.—To this period belong the blessings of the mystery. The only calling or revelation that has pierced the present temporary heaven and touched that which can be spoken of as eternal is that dispensation of the grace of God which has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies far above all. This shows the unique character of the church of the one body. It is connected both by time and place with that which begins before the present heavens were made and goes on when the present heavens shall be no more. The church of the mystery is the only link during this age between the time before sin entered and the time when sin shall be no more. All other purposes are ‘under the heavens’. This one alone places those who are blessed under its terms ‘above the heavens’. If these things are so, it would be very surprising if the doctrine and practice of this peculiar people were not different from all others” (Volume XI, page 76).

If we pay regard to the context, “above the heavens” here refers to a position above those heavens associated with the six days’ creation. Taken out of its context it might possibly form the butt for an adverse critic, but such criticism, however sincere, would be harmful and untrue.

One more quotation should be enough to cause any honest critic to retract the accusation that we teach that the sphere of blessing of the church is “far above” the heavens, in the widest significance of the term. We quote the following to show that we are not misrepresenting our critic’s attack:--

“This is true of Christ’s exaltation also. He is not outside the heavens, He is highest in them.”

This is our critic’s statement. Now for our own, taken from our pamphlet *Far above all* (pages 6-8):--

“Of no other company of believers is it said their sphere of blessings is IN the super-heavenlies . . . . The special sphere of blessing which belongs alone to the church of the one body is mentioned five times in this epistle, and a study of these occurrences will supply us with valuable information. First of all we translate the word ‘super-heavenlies’ in recognition of the presence of the particle *epi* with which the word begins. It is not simply *ouraniois* which is the usual word, but *epi-ouraniois*. Secondly, the information supplied by the five references demands some such translation. Passing therefore to the second reference, we find, in i. 20, 21, that this sphere of blessing is:--

- (a) At the Father’s right hand.
- (b) Far above all principality and power.

That this tremendous height is the destined sphere of the church of the mystery ii. 6 declares. There the believer is associated with the risen Christ, ‘made to sit together in the super-heavenlies in Christ Jesus’. Christ the Head and the Church His Body are blessed together THERE.

The next two references, iii. 10 and vi. 12, show the super-heavenlies as the abode of principalities, powers and rulers. Be it noted that angels are not mentioned. Angels are heaven’s messengers. The church of the one body is blessed even above heaven’s nobility. Dominions and thrones are beneath it in its super-heavenly sphere . . . . While *epouraniois* is used outside Ephesians, no other company of believers is blessed IN these exalted regions as their sphere. The blessings of the church of the one body are not only ‘heavenly’ but ‘up in heaven’.”

As a believer in Christ who owes his all to grace, we refrain from using stronger terms with regard to our critic's statements, but surely the capital type of "IN" and "THERE", as well as the actual wording in the above quotation, give the lie direct to the false criticism that implies that our use of "super-heavenly" or "far above all" indicates some fictitious position outside and beyond the heavens altogether.

We must leave other matter for a subsequent article.

## #2. pp. 128 - 132

In our previous paper we reprinted four extracts from *The Berean Expositor*, two from Volume VII published in 1917, one from Volume XI published in 1921, and one from "Far Above All". In this paper we will consider the criticism of our teaching a little further.

Following the statement we have already quoted from our critic, that "the Word of God knows nothing of the so-called 'three spheres'," is an extract from a concordance, now in preparation, which is excellent. Every occurrence of *epouranion-os* is given and set out that *nominative, genitive, dative* and *accusative* cases, together with number and gender, may be readily distinguished. We are then asked to "note carefully that this term is not confined to the prison epistles, there are as many occurrences in Hebrews alone as in Ephesians and Philippians". Passing by the argument as to grammar, our critic continues:--

"What possible sense can there be to the occurrences in Hebrews, if the reference is to the 'third sphere', far above the heavens?"

Now, above all things, we want to be fair. We understand these words to mean that, inasmuch as *epouranios* is used of the Hebrews as well as of the church of Ephesians, the so-called third sphere is an error, and the heavenly Jerusalem and its calling are not essentially distinct from the calling and citizenship of the church. In order to confirm this, however, we will again quote our critic's own words:--

"Another remarkable statement shows how loosely and blindly this argument had been conducted. We quote: 'We rejoice that God in His grace has not given us a place in the 'heavenly city' that *comes down from God out of heaven* . . . .'"

"But the word 'heavenly' (*ouranios*) is never applied to this city, though it is mis-called 'the heavenly Jerusalem' in our versions. It is precisely the *same word*, and the *same case* as in Ephesians. Only the 'things' of Ephesians, until it descends. If Ephesians speaks of a 'super-heavenly' sphere, then the new Jerusalem must be 'super-heavenly' also."

It is quite clear from these two quotations that our critic opposes our interpretation, which seeks to differentiate between the two spheres of blessing, keeping the church "far

above all principalities and powers”, &c., and the new Jerusalem on a lower plane. He says, let us repeat: “The celestial Jerusalem *must* be *one* of the on-heavenly ‘things’ of Ephesians, until it descends.”

Moreover, in referring to Phil. iii. 20, our critic seeks to show that the destiny of those spoken of is heaven, the “second sphere” which, according to his interpretation, is the same as the “super-heavenlies”, the “third sphere”. After quoting Phil. iii. 20, Col. i. 5, and Col. iv. 1, where “heaven” is used, he continues:--

“Can language be plainer than this? The citizenship of the Philippians saints was not *above* the heavens, but belonged to them.”

It is then very evident that our critic opposes our attempted distinction. We will, however, let him explain still further. In an introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews, he writes as follows:--

“The book of the Hebrews deals with the problem of these Pentecostal believers, and takes them back to the same position as was occupied by the patriarchs and prophets of old, as explained in the eleventh chapter. They died in faith, not having received the promises.”

So Hebrews is written for the Pentecostal believers, and Heb. xi. takes them back to the position of the patriarchs and prophets of old. Inasmuch, too, as in Heb. xi., the better country is an *on-heavenly* one, and intimately connected with the city called “the *on-heavenly* Jerusalem” in xii. 22, and, further, as there is no so-called third sphere (the citizenship of Phil. iii. being in the “second sphere”, associated with the new Jerusalem), then there is no essential difference between the spheres of blessing of the church of the mystery, of Pentecostal believers, and of O.T. saints! We do not think that we misrepresent our critic when we say that he definitely opposes us on this point.

Now comes an astonishing *volte face*. Commenting on Heb. iii. 1, “Partakers of the celestial calling”, he writes:--

“It is not easy, in English, to distinguish between the celestial calling here referred to, and the ‘calling above’ (Phil. iii. 14) of Paul’s later revelation. That which is celestial as to location is often spoken of in Ephesians, as our blessing among the celestials . . . . the celestial calling is from the ascended Christ, not to heaven, but from heaven. They have no part in the calling above. Their blessings, though celestial in character, are on earth.”

We can imagine the reader rubbing his eyes on coming to this passage. He might, indeed, feel constrained to re-read the whole of the quotations, for here we have as complete and inexplicable a contradiction as can well be found.

*The Berean Expositor* endorses every word of this comment on Heb. iii. 1: it is what we have ourselves taught, and still stand for. But our critic wishes to keep both views. In controversy with his brethren, he is zealous to prove that the calling of Phil. iii. and the calling of Heb. xi. are both in “the second sphere”. But when he is dealing only with Scripture itself, he cannot help but teach the exact opposite of his previous statement.

Of course the problem was with him all the time; he says: “The celestial Jerusalem, *must be one of the on-heavenly ‘things’ of Ephesians, until it descends.*” *Until it descends!* Exactly; that is the crux of the matter. But when we express ourselves as thankful that we have not a place in that heavenly city that *comes down from God out of heaven*, that, our critic says, is heading straight for apostasy! When dealing with Heb. iii. 1 he admits the difficulty of expressing, in English, the word *epouranios*, and confesses that the English “up over all the heavens” is misleading, but hopes that, in time, “up over” the heavens will become acclimatized. No such leniency must be extended to the writer of *The Berean Expositor*, however, even if he but quotes the A.V. so as to avoid the difficulty. Our critic has said, “Frankly, I do not *know* what *The Berean Expositor* teaches”. Surely some of our readers, after reading the above statements may, with justice, feel similarly about the writings of our critic.

We will not let the matter rest here, however, but will give, positively, not merely what we *would reply* now, but what *we have* already written. We quote from *The Berean Expositor*, Volume XI, pages 189, 190:--

“A superficial exposition, which is ever ready to seize upon some verse to refute ‘Ultra-dispensationalism’, whatever that may mean, says:--

‘Here is the same word that is used in Ephesians, therefore the Hebrews were members of the One Body, and the whole dispensational distinction is exploded.’

Readers of *The Berean Expositor* know full well that the peculiar and exclusive character of the dispensation of the mystery rests upon *positive* Scripture (e.g., Eph. iii.) and not inference, and further that the words of Eph. i. 3, 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; and vi. 12, have a special feature to be found nowhere else—but this we leave.

It is essentially in harmony with the perfecting of the pilgrim character, that those addressed should be called ‘partakers of the heavenly calling’, and that heavenly calling needs no further exposition than is given in Hebrews itself to make its scope and position clear to us.

#### ‘Heavenly.’\*

- A | Partakers.—Now.
  - a | iii. 1. Partakers of heavenly calling. Christ not ashamed.
  - b | vi. 4. Partakers of holy spirit.
- B | Place. The Tabernacle.
  - c | viii. 5. The shadow of heavenly things.
  - d | ix. 23. The heavenly things themselves.
- A | Partakers.—Then.
  - a | xi. 16. The better country--a heavenly, God not ashamed.
  - b | xii. 22. The heavenly Jerusalem (Holy City).

[\* - We have already intimated that this is the same word as is used in Ephesians. The word ‘heavenly’, here, simply adheres to the A.V.]

If we trace the teaching associated with this word, we are led on through participation of the ‘gifts’, which were anticipations of the world to come (vi.), and from the shadow to

the real tabernacle 'heaven itself', to the heavenly country, and heavenly Jerusalem. Heb. xii. 18-21 speaks of Moses, verses 22, 24 of 'Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant'. Connected with the latter is the perfecting of those who were sanctified. There we see them, 'the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven'. These are associated with 'the spirits of perfect righteous ones' and the 'innumerable company of angels'. How any can confuse such a description with the right hand of God *far above* all principality and power is beyond our understanding. So far as we are concerned we see a decided difference and keep it so."

Our critic, when he penned a comment on Heb. iii. 1, saw a decided difference too; he definitely says: "They (the Hebrews) have no part in the calling above." We stated this twenty years ago, and we believe it to-day. Our critic said it himself some years ago, yet calls our teaching hard names to-day. Of course he has every right to alter his opinion completely if he believes further knowledge of the Scriptures calls for it. We trust we shall do so whenever we see differently. But we cannot help but feel and regret that to any unbiased reader our critic's testimony is damaged, and those who oppose any attempt to apply II Tim. ii. 15 will be rejoicing.

### #3. pp. 148 - 152

Our readers know that we have drawn attention to the fact that while *epouraniois* occurs in many books of the N.T., the phrase *en tois epuraniois* is limited to the Epistle to the Ephesians. We have further drawn attention to the fact that the five occurrences of this phrase indicate the sphere of blessing for the church as being:--

- (a) At the Father's right hand
- (b) Far above all principality and power, and consequently higher than the New Jerusalem and all the heavenly host.

Criticising this teaching our critic speaks as follows:--

"A change in the grammatical form certainly does not change *super*-heavenly to *sub*-heavenly!"

We certainly have never thought such transformation possible, but the ordinary reader may receive the impression that we have done so. We have laboured to show that the whole point of the references in Ephesians is that this company of believers are the only ones who will ever enter into their blessings "up in heaven" or "in the super-heavens"; all others, though having "heavenly" blessings, will enjoy them elsewhere:--

"It is the same heaven, but the direction of the action is different. So the Ephesians are going *to* heaven. The Hebrews get their blessings *from* heaven and enjoy them on earth."

We feel tempted to give no hint as to the source of this last quotation. We believe it to be true. It teaches what we ourselves teach as to the difference between the "heavenly

calling” of Heb. iii. 1—“heavenly” in character but not enjoyed “in heaven”—and the blessings of the church which are to be enjoyed “far above all principality and power” at the right hand of God “*in the heavenlies*”. The above quotation might have been given by our critic from one of our own volumes. The remarkable fact is that it is his own recent statement. According to our critic *The Berean Expositor* is definitely “committed to apostasy”, yet his teaching on this point is the same as our own. He differentiates between two callings, both of which are “heavenly”; one “heavenly” company going *to* heaven, the other receiving its blessings *from* heaven, but enjoying them on earth. With all these things we are in complete agreement, and it seems that we are perfectly right to emphasize the distinctive sphere of blessing of the church of the mystery *in the super-heavenlies*.

When dealing with other occurrences of the word *epuratiois*, our critic, speaking of the “celestial body” referred to by Paul in I Cor. xv. 40, says:--

“According to this division of the word of truth, Corinthians is concerned with the lower *heavenly* sphere. Now, in speaking of the resurrection, those who are to be in this second sphere are provided with bodies for the third! How are my dear brethren, who claim the ‘super-heavenlies’ for themselves, going to keep me out if I am given a ‘super-heavenly’ body?”

The writer of this statement knows as well as we do that the present system, including the “heavens” of the present creation, are destined to *pass away*. Some things are to be shaken; some will endure and remain. A resurrection body that is going to pass unscathed through the final conflagration at the end of this system must be connected not with the heavens that pass away with a great noise, and roll up like a scroll, but with the super-heavens, the heavens of Gen. i. 1, the “heaven of heavens” of the O.T., the new heavens of Rev. xxi.

The answer to our critic’s question as to how he will be kept out of the super-heavenlies which we claim for ourselves is found in his own words: “It is the same heaven, but the direction of the action is different. So the Ephesians are going *to* heaven. The Hebrews get their blessings *from* heaven and enjoy them on earth.”

He approaches the answer to his own question when he refers to II Cor. v. 2 and its “home which is *from heaven*”.

If our brother is a member of the body of Christ, nothing can exclude him from his sphere of blessing, not even his own denials or ignorance. If our brother is not a member of that body, the possession of an *epuratiois* body will not, on the principle which he himself warrants, be sufficient passport to enable him to go *to* heaven; he may find that this body *from* heaven is to enable him to enjoy the *epuratiois* city that comes down out of heaven. *If*, we do not say it is so, but *if* there be any analogy between Kadesh Barnea and the revelation of Ephesians, if we despise the highest and the best that love has provided, and attempt to stone our brethren who bring back a good report, surely we should not be surprised if, according to our faith, or rather unbelief, it shall be unto us.

“Far above all” seems, in the eyes of our critic, to be an awful mistranslation of Scripture; we are told that its presence is “a blot on the A.V. translation” and “a corrupting canker that ought to be removed”. We note in passing that the R.V. retains the offensive word. We are told, and rightly so, that distance is denoted in Greek by *makros* and *makran*. This, however, is beside the mark. The English language has developed during the course of centuries and acquitted many idiomatic expressions which are an intimate part of every speech. When Dickens wrote the words: “I go to do a *far, far* better thing” he needed, according to our critic, correction in the use of a language of which he is reckoned to be a master. When Paul, in Phil. i. 23, speaks of something “far better”, we are to be robbed of our accepted idiomatic use of the word simply because “far” also stands for distance. So in such passages as: “Suffer ye thus *far*” (Luke xxii. 51); “The day is *far* spent” (Mark vi. 35). Looking back to the second paragraph of No. 1, we find that we have used the word there: “*far* more than can hurt us”, and “so *far* as we can see”. To our ears certain accepted phrases in use in America are displeasing. Should we be justified in speaking against them in the manner of our critic? He himself uses the word “far” with no thought of distance in his own comment on II Cor. v. 2: “Even the apostle, in his infirmity and distress, never chooses death, but always suggests a *far* better alternative.” Should we be justified in pulling this to pieces because “far” means distance? The expressions, “far above all principalities” and “far above all heavens” represent a justifiable use of the idiom expressing a sense of greatness, distance in feet or miles being entirely absent from the mind. If any sphere of blessing can legitimately be called “above” or “up above” or “over above”, by what argument can the addition of “far” turn such truth into a *corrupting canker*?

Our critic has no mean opinion of his own judgment in these matters:--

“No teacher who deliberately continues quoting the phrase ‘*far* above all’ after having been apprized of the fact that there is no warrant for the word *far*, is worthy of our confidence . . . . Withdraw the literature which flaunts this phrase and retract all the false deductions which have been drawn from it.”

But suppose this teacher has no regard for the confidence of any man compared with a good conscience that seeks to be unashamed before God? Then the literature will not be withdrawn. The apostle Paul was called “a heretic”; those for whom he suffered in the truth left him, but he remained unmoved; he was still unashamed, he knew Whom he had believed. He recognized the good deposit of the truth that had been entrusted, and though at times, as he said, he became a fool in his boasting, and answered his critics, for the most part he committed his cause to the Lord he served.

One further statement must suffice:--

“Romans has been wrecked and some of its stones taken to patch up an Ephesian temple.”

The booklet referred to—*Roman Stones for the Ephesian Temple*—and the series in *The Berean Expositor* under the heading “The Epistle to the Romans”, provide a sufficient refutation. We refrain from using stronger terms in the hope that our critic has

never actually troubled to read these articles. Quoting from the opening article in Volume XVI, page 33, we read:--

“Perhaps no one book in the whole of the Scriptures may be considered to have a claim upon all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, more than the Epistle to the Romans. Where all exhibit the hall-mark of inspiration comparisons are odious, but inasmuch as a building needs foundations as well as top stones, so we may speak of the epistle to the Romans as essentially fundamental in character . . . . To those who are vitally concerned with the teaching of Ephesians, Rom. v. 12 - viii. 39 is of supreme importance, for Eph. ii. 1 proceeds upon the assumption that Rom. vi. is practical truth. Philipians, too, does not teach but assumes knowledge of justification by faith (Phil. iii. 9).”

Are these the words of a “wrecker”? If not, what are the words of this critic? Are they words of truth and soberness? The opening page of *Roman Stones for the Ephesian Temple* contains this paragraph:--

“May we ask the reader to consider the intimate connection that exists between Romans and Ephesians, so far as doctrine is concerned, even though the dispensational teaching of these same epistles is sundered as far apart as the heavens are above the earth.”

Let the reader observe that we definitely teach that the Ephesian dispensational structure is built upon the Roman doctrinal foundation. The only parts of Romans that we set aside are such features as the priority of the Jew—“the Jew first”, the teaching of “the olive tree” and similar matters of dispensational significance. Would the reader believe that the self-same critic who accuses us of “wrecking” Romans, on the testimony of his own writings completely sets aside some of the principles pertaining to the Romans period?

Commenting upon Eph. iv. he says:--

“The saints among the nations (were brought) from the position of proselytes of Judaism to a place entirely independent of Israel.”

“Entirely independent of Israel”—yet when we teach the same thing in connection with Eph. ii. and the creation of the new man, this critic tells us that:--

“Eph. ii. 12 distinctly states that the members of the ‘one body’ of the mystery, in the era when the Corinthians was written, were ‘guests of the promised *covenants*’. This word ‘covenants’ definitely *links* Corinthians and Ephesians, instead of putting an impassable barrier between them. *Those to whom Ephesians was written had been guests of a covenant.*”

We, who are accused of wrecking Romans, teach that Ephesians is built upon the doctrinal foundation of Romans, whilst he, the critic, distinctly states:--

“We should not build upon all the doctrines of that transitional era, but only such as accord with the present grace. In Romans, ‘To the Jew first’ (Rom. ii. 10) is now obsolete.”

Is this just criticism? If we say that certain features in Romans are transitional, we are said to be “wrecking” the book, even though we “build” upon it. Yet our critic can say that “we should *not build* upon all the doctrines of the transitional era”.

Our critic has also something to say concerning our articles on Satan and the Mystery. He is apparently unable to distinguish between our *position* in Christ, which is unassailable, the *possibility* of stepping out into the flesh, where we can give place to the devil, and the conflict that must be endured by those who are engaged in the *service* of the Lord.

We now conclude this “defence” with the suggestion that we unite in prayer that the Lord will open the eyes of us all, his as well as ours.

## **The testimony of Daniel, or The time of the end.**

### **#1. “The Scripture of truth” (x. 21). pp. 1 - 4**

A peculiar Gentile interest belongs to the book of Daniel, for, although it never fails to keep in view the two great foci of all prophecy, namely (1) Israel and Jerusalem, and (2) the kingdom of Christ at His second coming, nevertheless, its prophecies are largely occupied with a period when Israel are set aside, and during which dominion over the earth is held by Gentile powers. This period is known as the “times of the Gentiles”, and if the witness of the book was important when the times of the Gentiles were in their infancy, it is certainly not less so for us when those times have nearly reached their close.

Before taking up the prophecy as a whole, it may be as well to face some of the critical attacks upon the book so that we may all, without hesitation or reserve, follow its teaching as a true revelation from heaven. *De Wette* speaks of it as “fiction”; *Cornill* calculates that it was written in 164B.C., while modern critics generally hold that it should be dated from the period of the Maccabean wars. This means, if it is true, that the book is but a “pious fraud”, that some of its “prophecies” were not written until after the event, and that, consequently, while it may be an interesting relic of Jewish apocalyptic literature, it is that and nothing more. Among other arguments for the lateness of the book *Dean Farrar* brought forward:--

1. The mention of Greek musical instruments in chapter iii.
2. The mention of Belshazzar as king of Babylon.
3. The use of some official titles.

### **The critic criticized.**

As to the first of these, who does not know that the Phoenicians linked up the known world by the medium of their merchandise, and that the tin of our own Cornwall might equally as well have found its way into Babylon as musical instruments from Greece? Since *Dean Farrar* wrote, however, excavations at Nippur have shown that commercial communications was established between Babylon and Greece *900 years before Daniel!*

As to the second, a visit to the British Museum will prove that king Nabonidus associated his son Bel-sar-utsur (i.e., Belshazzar) with himself upon the throne, which incidentally shows why Belshazzar was able to offer Daniel only the third place in the kingdom (Dan. v. 16).

With regard to the third argument, the allegation is that the word “master” (*rab-saris*) in Dan. i. 3 indicates a late date, yet the monuments have now yielded this very title. So also the word “herald” (*karoza*) in Dan. iii. 4 was said to be identical with the Greek

word *kerux*, thus showing the lateness of the book; but again the monuments by their silent witness have since shown it to be a proper Semitic title.

### **The testimony of language.**

We now turn from these vain and refuted criticisms to the testimony of the book itself, and the first feature we deal with is its language. Most students are aware of the peculiarity that it is written partly in Hebrew (like the rest of the O.T.), and partly in Aramaic. The Hebrew portions are Dan. i. - ii. 4, and Dan. viii.-xii., the Aramaic portions being Dan. ii. 4 - vii.

The words: "Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack" are not a strict translation of the passage. The literal rendering is: "Then spake the Chaldeans—*Aramith*—O king, live for ever", the word *Aramith* indicating that from thence the language ceases to be Hebrew and becomes Aramaic. Now Aramaic was the language of mart and chancellory throughout the known world at the time Daniel was in Babylon; its fitness as a vehicle of inspiration for this portion of the book will be better appreciated when we have seen the strong Gentile character of Dan. ii.-vii. At the moment, however, we are thinking more of the evidence, which this language constitutes, of the historic accuracy of Daniel, than of its bearing upon the subject of the book.

Daniel must have been written in a period when *both* Hebrew and Aramaic were understood by the people. In the days of Hezekiah Israel, as a people, did not understand Aramaic.

"Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language (Aramaic); for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall" (II Kings xviii. 26).

Here, Hebrew was known by the common people, but Aramaic was unknown. When Ezra read the law of Moses publicly, after the return from captivity, we learn that, "they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. viii. 8). The Talmud explains that Ezra, after reading the passage in Hebrew, translated it into Aramaic, thus making what became known as the Chaldee paraphrase.

The book of Daniel, therefore, must have been written at a time *after* Hezekiah, and *before* Hebrew ceased to be spoken among Israel, and this simple evidence of language forces us to place the period of Daniel's prophecy exactly where orthodox teaching places it, namely, during the period of the Babylonian captivity and onward.

### **Positive testimony.**

But after all is said there remains for the believer a higher Authority than the testimony of the monuments or the deductions of men. Daniel's prophecy finds its goal in the kingdom of Christ, and, moreover, its strongest proof in the testimony of Christ Himself:--

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” (Matt. xxiv. 15).

Notice the nature of this testimony—“Daniel THE prophet”. While Matthew speaks of Isaiah the prophet, Christ Himself speaks of but two in this way—and, significantly, two whose integrity is most challenged and whose witness was directed to the Gentiles, “Daniel the prophet”, and “Jonah the prophet” (Matt. xii. 39).

We are asked by the modernist to believe that Christ spoke only the language of His day. Be it so. But what shall we do with the majestic assertion recorded within the space of twenty verses from the Lord’s confirmation of Daniel’s prophecy?

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. xxiv. 35).

Is this truth, or is it bombast, aye and worse—blasphemy? Again, when the Lord was brought before Caiaphas the High Priest, He bore testimony to the prophetic truth of Daniel:--

“I adjure thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64).

This, said Caiaphas, was blasphemy, for he realized that in so saying, Christ, was appropriating to Himself the prophecy of Dan. vii. So that once again, in that solemn hour of trial, and with death near at hand, the Saviour bears personal testimony to the truth of the book of Daniel. If Christ could by any means prove to be mistaken, all would fall to the ground. It would not matter to us who wrote Daniel’s prophecy, or what it contained—for it could be meaningless, and its fulfillment could never be accomplished. If Christ should prove to be fallible, Bible study would be a waste of time; things far more important than the visions of Nebuchadnezzar would concern us; our very salvation would become a myth and a dream; and we should be of all men most miserable.

But such, happily, is not the case. Daniel’s prophecy will stand when the last of his critics have perished, and as we consider together its inspired pages, there will be found ample intrinsic proof of its truth. He who could preserve Daniel from the lions, can, and will, shut the mouths of all his critics, and in the day of Christ bring forth His Word in all its triumph and glory. May we ever be kept heart-whole regarding all His Word!

## #2. The times of the Gentiles begin (i. 1, 2). pp. 33 - 36

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god” (Dan. i. 1, 2).

With these words the book of Daniel opens, and it may not be too much to say that they are only paralleled by the words of Acts xxviii. in their burden of crisis and dispensational change. With such vast issues hanging upon these momentous words, vast because they cover the whole sweep of Gentile dominion, and vaster still because they lead steadily on to that kingdom of Christ which is to last for ever, with such issues and such a burden, no pains should be spared in acquainting ourselves with all that God has written for our learning in relation to this crisis in the history of man. Space will not permit of the full quotation of Jer. xxv. 1-26. We can but point out one or two features that connect this passage with the opening words of Daniel.

The reader will be struck by the fact that whereas Dan. i. 1 speaks of the “third” year of Jehoiakim, Jer. xxv. 1 speaks of the “fourth” year of that same king in connection with the coming of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem. This apparent discrepancy has not passed unnoticed by the critic, and is one of his many “proofs” of the untrustworthiness of the book of Daniel.

The Hebrew word translated “came” in Dan. i. 1 is *bo*, and it frequently has the sense of “went” or “marched”. This, however, has been denied. *Dr. Samuel Davidson* says: “The verb *bo* does not mean *to set out* . . . . but *to arrive at*” (*Introduction to the O.T., Vol. III., page 181*), and, when men of such standing and authority speak thus, who are we to oppose them? Humility is indeed a grace to seek and preserve, but while Gal. ii. remains for our encouragement, we may still dare to bring all statements to the touchstone of the Word. *Dr. Davidson’s* statement but illustrates the uncritical character of so-called “higher criticism”, for it has been computed that the Hebrew word *bo* is used in the sense of “to set out” in each of the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and six out of the twelve minor prophets!

Let us look at Jonah i. 3 and translate it as *Dr. Davidson* would have it: “And Jonah . . . . went down to Joppa, and he found a ship *arriving* at Tarshish!” If this could be sense, then in some miraculous way Jonah would have no sooner set foot on board at Joppa than he would have “arrived” at Tarshish. Doubtless this would have made the journey far more pleasant than it actually was, but the simple fact is that the Hebrew word *bo* does mean that the ship was “going” or “setting out” for Tarshish. The plain fact of Dan. i. and Jer. xxv. is that the former writer tells us the year in which Nebuchadnezzar “set out” from Babylon, while the latter tells us when he arrived. Moreover, Jeremiah tells us what occupied Nebuchadnezzar on his journey from one capital to the other:--

“Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim* the son of Josiah king of Judah” (Jer. xlvi. 2).

Instead therefore of discovering a discrepancy in the narrative of Scripture, we have the obvious fact that Nebuchadnezzar took time to accomplish his march from Babylon to Jerusalem, and was obliged to meet and overcame Pharaoh at Carchemish by the Euphrates before he could arrive.

In Jer. xxv. 3 the prophet reminded Israel that since the thirteenth year of Josiah (*see* Jer. i. 1, 2) the word of the Lord had come urging them to turn from their evil, and because they had not turned He said:--

“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land . . . . and this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jer. xxv. 9-11).

What God therefore had threatened, He brought to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and the historic record of the captivity of Jehoiakim is found in II Chron. xxxvi., *the last chapter of the Hebrew Bible!*

Yet with all this apparent on the surface of Scripture, and needing no more scholarship than ability to read in one's mother tongue, *Kuenen* in his *Historic Critique de l'Ancien Testamen* has the audacity to say:--

“We know by the Book of Jeremiah that no such event (as the siege of Jerusalem, Dan. i. 1) took place in the reign of Jehoiakim.”

“We know”! We also know that it is written: “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools”, and by such statements they demonstrate that they are but “blind leaders of the blind”.

Jehoiakim was appointed king of Judah by Pharaoh-necho in the place of Jehoahaz (II Kings xxiii. 34). He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. He was succeeded by Jehoiachin. In the reign of the latter, Nebuchadnezzar carried out thence *all* the treasures of the house of the Lord, whereas Dan. i. 1, 2 tells us that at the first he only carried away *a part*.

Jehoiachin or Jeconiah is deprived of the Jehovah element in his name, and as Coniah is utterly rejected by the Lord:--

“Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah” (Jer. xxii. 30).

It is evident that Israel is passing: dominion is leaving them and is being transferred for the time being to the Gentiles. This is emphasized by such statements as Dan. i. 2: “And the Lord gave . . . . into his hand”, or Jer. xxv. 1: “The fourth year of Jehoiakim . . . . that was the *first* year of Nebuchadnezzar.” The times of the Gentiles had therefore begun. And so with Zedekiah the glory departs, and Ezek. xxi. reveals the condition of things that will obtain “until He come”:

“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come Whose right it is, and I will give it Him” (xxi. 25-27).

Daniel’s prophecies are occupied with this period of overturning, of the exalting of the base and abasing of the high. “This shall not be the same”, saith the Lord—“This shall not be this” as the Hebrew reads, i.e., Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion and dynasty would not be a real continuance of the throne of David. It would be in character rather a rule and dominion of wild beasts. The words: “It shall be no more, until He come” leave us in no doubt that the throne thus vacated shall be occupied by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The times of the Gentiles are characterized by one great feature, marked by the Lord in Luke xxi. 24: “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” The kingdoms that succeeded Babylon may have been larger or smaller, more powerful or weaker, more autocratic or less so, but the one essential characteristic of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Turkey, and the present mandatory power, is the Gentile domination of Jerusalem. *That* is the great distinguishing feature, and will only be removed when “He comes Whose right it is”.

### **#3. Historic foreshadowings (i., iii., vi.). pp. 73 - 78**

While the prophetic section of Daniel necessarily makes the great appeal of the book, lovers of the Word remember that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable”, so that the narrative portions, giving details of the lives and experiences of Daniel and his friends, must have their place in the book and its witness. Let us therefore seek to gather the lesson of chapter i.

We have already seen that the times of the Gentiles began with the fourth year of Jehoiakim, for that is said to be the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 1). We see also that a new dispensation must have begun when we compare Dan. i. 1, 2 with I Sam. v.:

“And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod . . . . and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face before the ark of the Lord” (I Sam. v. 1-3).

No such thing takes place at Babylon, however. Times have changed and, in agreement with that change, Nebuchadnezzar could take the sacred vessels from the house of *God*, and put them in the treasure house of his *god* without drawing upon himself any visible sign of disapproval.

While this may have been so, God’s attitude towards the evil nature of idolatry remained unaltered, and uncompromising opposition to it in all its aspects was manifested by Daniel and his three brethren. This we shall see set forth in three ways:--

1. The refusal to eat or drink food that had been offered to idols (chapter i.).
2. The refusal to bow down to the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar (chapter iii.).
3. The refusal to offer prayer to the king of Persia (chapter vi.).

The names of four of the captives of Judah who were chosen for preparation to stand before the king were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Each of these names contains a reference to the one true God, El, or Jehovah. The prince of the eunuchs changed these names, introducing the nomenclature of heathen deities in the place of the names of the Lord. Changed names, however, do not necessarily indicate changed hearts, and so we read: “but Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat” (i. 8). Daniel’s purpose and his choice of “pulse” had no reference to vegetarianism; it went deeper and constituted a protest against idolatry.

There were two ways in which Daniel would have become defiled by eating the king’s meat. The first relates to the case of slaughtered animals, in connection with which it is written:--

“Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel . . . . that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people . . . . for it is the blood that maketh an ATONEMENT” (Lev. xvii. 10, 11).

Here is the first great exposure of Babylonian error—it has no regard for the atonement: it perpetuates, in its doctrine, the way of Cain.

The second reason for Daniel’s action was that it was forbidden for the Israelites to eat meat which had been offered to idols (Exod. xxxiv. 15). Note also the following:--

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons” (I Cor. x. 20).

That this wicked practice will be re-introduced with the revival of Babylon at the time of the end, Rev. ii. 20 testifies: “That woman Jezebel, that teaches . . . . to eat things sacrifice to idols.”

The noble stand of Daniel and his fellows is the more remarkable, and shows the wonder of the grace of God, when we remember that they were eunuchs. This maltreatment had been foretold by Isaiah:--

“Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (Isa. xxxix. 6, 7).

This chapter closes the first half of Isaiah, and indicates the period of Gentile dominion before the cry of restoration is sounded, with which Isa. xl. opens.

### **Worship or fire.**

As a perverted result of the dream and interpretation of Dan. ii., Nebuchadnezzar proceeds to establish emperor-worship and state idolatry. The image of gold that he set up in the plain of Dura may or may not have been the figure of a man; we are not told. But when we know something of the obscenity of paganism, and read the hints given in Ezek. xvi. 17; xxiii. 14 and vii. 20, we can be fairly certain of the character of this abomination. While it does not seem necessary or fitting to enlarge upon this awful subject here, the reader will find much food for solemn thought in the 42<sup>nd</sup> appendix to *The Companion Bible*, which would suggest that Dan. i. and iii., taken together, are associated with the devilish doctrine of Jezebel, “fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols”.

Something of the symbolic meaning of the image is indicated in its dimensions. Its height was 60 cubits, its breadth was 6 cubits, and its worship was accompanied by music played upon six different kinds of instruments, all of which are specified in Dan. iii. 5, 10 and 15. At the opening of Gentile times, therefore, we meet with the significant numbers 60 and 6.

The same is true of the opening of Israel’s kingdom. Goliath of Gath is described in I Sam. xvii. 4-7. His height was 6 cubits and a span, his armour was made up of 6 pieces, namely, helmet, coat, greaves, target, spear and shield, the weight of the spear’s head being 600 shekels of iron.

Later we are to learn that the great image representing Gentile dominion is to be destroyed by the impact of a stone (Dan. ii. 34), a fact which removes all need for speculation as to why David, Israel’s king, decided to go out against Goliath with sling and stone, or why God used that one smooth stone to bring down the enemy of His people. David was but foreshadowing what Daniel was to interpret.

Who can read the words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in their reply to the king, without feeling impelled to pray for like precious faith?

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king,

that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up”  
(Dan. iii. 16-18).

“*We are not careful.*”—If we argue long enough, we can often “prove” anything. It is sometimes the truest course resolutely to refuse to debate a question. If it is wrong, it is wrong, and that should suffice. James i. 22 throw light upon this point: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (*paralogizomai = arguing yourselves aside*).

“*But if not.*”—Here is the supreme stand of faith. It is one thing to serve God Who promises as a return to provide food, raiment, health and protection—there is sometimes too much of this bargaining element in our faith and service—but it is another thing, and comes as a shock to some, to face the fact that some of God’s most faithful children have suffered hunger, shipwreck, cruel scourgings and mockings, even death itself. Yet none can read Rom. viii. 35-37 or Heb. xi. without seeing that from the days of the first martyr Abel, or of the first apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, the noble words of the three friends have always had their place.

Just how far the church of the One Body will come into contact with the outer fringe of anti-Christian days is not revealed, but it is quite within the range of possibility that some readers of this magazine may have to stand against both the inducements and the persecution of incipient Babylonianism; if any do, let them remember Dan. iii. and take courage.

The one thing that remains throughout the ages is the presence of the Lord. These men may not escape the fire, but Nebuchadnezzar will have to testify:--

“Lo, I see four men, loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like a son of God . . . . Who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him” (Dan. iii. 25-28).

For the comfort and encouragement of Israel in the time of their trouble, Isa. xliii. 1-3 is written: “When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned”, for as in passing through the waters, the Lord can say, “I will be with thee”.

### **The den of lions.**

While no explanation is given by Daniel as to how it was that he was not included in the order to worship the golden image or how he escaped the penalty for refusing, there is, notwithstanding, a full exhibition of Daniel’s faithfulness under trial recorded in Dan. vi. As we read the story we are impressed with the fact that here is a kingdom inferior to that of Babylon, though the king himself is far more humane than the earlier monarch. Nebuchadnezzar was an autocrat, “whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive” (v. 19), but Darius, king of the Medes and Persians, is shackled by the power of his servants. Playing upon the personal vanity that could hardly in those days absent from an Eastern king, these servants set a trap for Daniel. As was expected, Daniel quietly ignores the decree concerning prayer, and is apprehended. We know the

story well. In the issue an angel closes the mouths of the lions, and Daniel's faithfulness is acknowledged. Just as the fire slew those men who bound the three Hebrew friends (Dan. iii.), so the lions slay the men who had plotted against Daniel. A word of comfort and encouragement from these two records of tested faithfulness has been published in an earlier volume and is worth repetition here.

Nebuchadnezzar represents absolute autocracy. The king in whose hand was the power of life and death, *tried to kill these three friends*, and could not. Darius represents a limited monarchy. Here we have a king *who wanted to save Daniel*, but could not! These two aspects of the subject will reprove a tendency which sometimes arises to think that one system of government would be safer or better for the Christian than another. Scripture likens all Gentile governments to wild beasts; one is not much better than another, and in the two cases before us, both were powerless for either good or ill. Members of the One Body can find no warrant in Scripture for concluding that they will not be called upon to suffer, to endure, and, if needs be, to die for the truth. When the time of trouble arrives, they will fare no better and no worse under one system of government than under another—in God's hand alone will be the deciding factor, and blessed will be all those who can say, "But if not . . . . we will not" (Dan. iii. 18).

### **Idolatry.**

The presence and continuance of idolatry to the very end is a matter of solemn concern to all children of God. Although in the present series the subject only arises naturally out of the threefold conflict with those who would impose idol worship upon the captive Hebrews, we dare not, in view of the depth and scope of the truth, try to compress reference to the subject into a closing paragraph. We shall, however, be brought face to face with it when we consider, as a counterpart of these three passages dealing with idolatry, the three decrees published by the idolatrous kings in which they speak of the God of Israel, and we can then devote a little more space to its consideration.

## **#4. The God of Heaven. pp. 133 - 139**

The series of confessions by the rulers of the people, recorded in this book, shows a growing acknowledgment, on their part, of the one true God. The first of these is recounted in chapter ii. 46, 47, after Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It is not a clear testimony, and is mixed with idolatrous practices, but it marks a step in the direction of light and truth:--

"Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation, and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a GOD OF GODS, AND A LORD OF KINGS, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret."

## The three decrees.

Chapter ii. records Nebuchadnezzar's own action and confession. They were not of a very deep nature: they were not accompanied by any change of heart or life, nor did they cause Nebuchadnezzar to refrain from idolatry. Chapter iii. records the setting up of the golden image and the attempt upon the lives of the three captives. As a result of God's intervention on their behalf, Nebuchadnezzar published a decree in the following terms:--

“Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort” (iii. 29).

In addition to this public decree we have the private confession of Nebuchadnezzar himself:--

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God” (Dan. iii. 28).

This is an advance on the confession of chapter ii. In it Nebuchadnezzar himself blesses God, and prohibits, under severe penalties, any word against Him. But it is in chapter iv. that we get the fullest and most complete recognition of God.

The whole of this chapter is the proclamation of king Nebuchadnezzar. When one has waded through a series of royal proclamations made by kings of Assyria, Babylon or Egypt, full of idolatry, cruelty, and human pride, this proclamation of so mighty a king is seen to be all the more remarkable. It is the one solitary contribution to Holy Scripture made by a Gentile king. In thus becoming a contributor to these holy writings, Nebuchadnezzar must be allowed a place with David, Solomon and Hezekiah. The careful student will, moreover, realize that, in its limited compass, Dan. iv. accomplishes for Nebuchadnezzar what Ecclesiastes does for Solomon who as we know had lapsed into idolatry and worldliness.

Dan. iv. is a long passage to quote in full in these limited pages, yet its value and unique character almost justify our doing so. We refrain, however, and give only the opening and closing section, trusting that any reader not fully acquainted with the passage will read it throughout before proceeding further:--

“NEBUCHADNEZZAR, the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders, that the Most High God hath wrought toward me. How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“And at the end of the days I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed The Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, Whose dominion is an everlasting

dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all Whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

What a testimony was this to be published throughout the domain of this great king. Here is recognition of the greatness of the *heavenly* King and kingdom, and, more than that, the light of moral truth breaks in and God is praised not merely in view of His power, but because all His works are *truth*, and His ways *judgment*, His *will* supreme in heaven and among men.

How this revolution was accomplished occupies the bulk of Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation, Dan. iv. 4-36. Summarizing the verses we find the king disturbed by a dream, which none of the wise men of his realm can interpret. Daniel, however, is empowered to do so, and his interpretation reveals that angelic watchers had decreed that Nebuchadnezzar, because of his pride, should suffer a great humiliation. A disease, partly mental, and resembling what is known as *lycanthropy*, falls upon him in the height of his pride. He imagines that he is an ox, and is driven out into the fields where he suffers this shameful ignominy for "seven times" with the avowed object:--

"Till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will . . . . Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

### **The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens.**

Daniel, in this passage, unfolds *one* of the mysteries ("secret" in iv. 9 is translated "mysteries" in the LXX). Following *His rejection* by Israel, in Matt. xiii., the Lord reveals a series of mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which includes a fuller development of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great tree.

Let the reader compare the vision of the great tree, which gave lodging-place to the fowls of the heaven, with the parable of the Mustard Seed. Dan. iv. confines itself to Nebuchadnezzar's aspect of the question, while Matt. xiii. traces the transition from the small seed (Israel's kingdom) to the great tree that supported the types of Satanic agency, the fowls of the heaven (Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom). In face of the clear testimony of Dan. iv. it is inexcusable on the part of expositors to try to drag the church into the parables of the kingdom of the heavens. Nebuchadnezzar could have put right most Christian writers in the interpretation of this well-known, but much misunderstood, chapter of Matthew.

There is one more royal proclamation in this book; it occurs at the end of chapter vi. Just as the deliverance of Shadrach and his companions moved Nebuchadnezzar to make

a proclamation throughout the realm, so also the deliverance of Daniel from the lions moved Darius to make a proclamation:--

“Then king Darius wrote unto all peoples, nations and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: FOR HE IS THE LIVING GOD, and stedfast for ever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions” (Dan. vi. 25-27).

To this testimony we ought to add that of Cyrus, as recorded in Ezra i. 1-4:--

“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, *The Lord God of heaven* hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth: and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah . . . . HE is the God . . . .”

Out of the mouths of kings who were Gentiles by nature, and idolaters by practice, the Lord brought this testimony to Himself:--

“A God of gods, and a Lord of kings.”  
“A revealer of secrets.”  
“A God Who can deliver His servants.”  
“The Most High God, that liveth for ever.”  
“The King of heaven.”  
“The Living God, and One Who works signs and wonders in heaven and earth.”  
“Whose will is done in the army of heaven.”  
“Who setteth up kings and putteth them down.”  
“Whose dominion and kingdom is everlasting.”

Yet the men who made these public testimonies had doubtless uttered many a prayer like the following portion of a hymn to the Moon God:--

“In heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!  
On earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!”  
“As for thee thy word is proclaimed in heaven, and the angels bow down their faces.”  
\* \* \* \* \*  
“O Lord, in heaven is thy Lordship, on earth is thy dominion.”

The father of Belshazzar has left on record a prayer to the Moon God, opening with these words:--

“O Sin (i.e., the Moon God), thou Lord of the gods, thou king of the gods of heaven and earth, and the god of the gods, who dwellest in heaven.”

In the decrees and proclamations of Nebuchadnezzar we can, at length, see these ascriptions of praise and honour transferred from false gods and rendered to the Living God. If his successors did not profit by his example, we have every reason to believe that Nebuchadnezzar, the first head of Gentile dominion, is numbered among the redeemed.

It is evident from the record of Daniel that there is a very definite recognition of idolatry as being deeply rooted in the affairs of man. We find this not only in the beginning of Israel's national existence, but in the very genesis of human race itself. What was the bait used in the garden of Eden? "Ye shall be as gods (or as God) knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5). When God would deliver Israel from Egypt, He dealt not only with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but directed His plagues and judgments "against all the gods of Egypt" (Exod. xii. 12). The Nile, the frogs, the flies, the ashes, and the locusts that figure in the plagues had definite reference to Egyptian idolatry.

At the very beginning of the great covenant which God made at Sinai, stands the commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exod. xx. 3). It was by an act of idolatry that Israel caused the tables of stone to be broken by Moses (Exod. xxxii. 19). At least thirty false gods are named in Scripture, such as Dagon, Bel, Diana, Rimmon, &c.

Idolatry was prevalent throughout the world at the time of Christ and the apostles. Acts xiv., xvii., and xix. give three diverse examples of the idolatry of the times, to which must be added sorcery (Acts viii. 9-11; xiii. 6-8; xix. 13-20), and divination (Acts xvi. 16-18). In confirmation of this statement let us take Paul's epistles. It might be thought that in setting out the gospel of grace, the nature and object of faith and hope, the regulation of church discipline and ministry, idolatry, as such, would not need to be mentioned. Yet what do we find? Rom. i. 18-23 reveals the close connection between Gentile reprobation and idolatry, which is only overcome by the glorious reconciliation which Paul preached. Gal. iv. 8 alludes to the bondage of idolatry and shows the astonishing fact that when a believer draws back from the glorious liberty of the gospel to the servitude of the law, he is really acting in the spirit of idolatry. In chapter v. 20 idolatry is included in the list of the works of the flesh.

I Corinthians devotes more than one passage to the question of idolatry (viii., x., and xii.). II Cor. vi. 16 asks, What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? I Thess. i. speaks of the repentant Thessalonians as "turning to God from idols". And II Thess. ii. reveals the goal of all idolatry, the man of sin. John in his first epistle does not hesitate to say: "My little children, keep yourselves from idols." Peter warns against "banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (I Pet. iv. 3), while the Revelation shows that, at the time of the end, idolatry with all its obscenity and demonism will be again dominant in the earth (Rev. ii. 14-20; ix. 20; xxi. 8; xxii. 15). In Eph. v. 5 the covetous man is said to be an idolater, and in Col. iii. 5 covetousness is said to be idolatry.

While, therefore, in this land, actual and literal idolatry may not be so evident, the spirit of idolatry as revealed in the pride, vain wisdom and thanklessness of Rom. i. 20-23, in the legalizing of the gospel as shown in Gal. iv., and the magnifying of self as contained in the word covetousness, and revealed in the prophetic utterance, "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God", shows that it would be a simple process of devolution to bring back idolatry in all its hideousness, even upon a so-called civilized community.

Rev. xiii. reveals that Nebuchadnezzar's attempt as recorded in Dan. ii. will be repeated, and, blessed be God, xv. 2 reveals that there will, once again, be the Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abed-negos, who will not bow the knee to this image of Baal.

It is only necessary to visit a country fair, or a world-famous exhibition, to see the booths occupied by the palmist, the fortune-teller and the like. One has only to question the motorist, the professional actor, and others, to learn how much trust is placed in lucky mascots, charms, &c. At intervals the newspaper records the objection of someone to the allotment of the number thirteen to his house or place at table and the like. Even when one would hardly feel it right to attribute ignorance, superstition is by no means dead. Then, further, the rapid strides that spiritism is making, the holding of séances, by the thousand, in this land and others, the prevalent idolatry still openly practiced in India and other lands, all show the deep-rooted nature of this systematic perversion of truth. All idolatry usurps the place of Christ. He, and He alone, is the true *image* of God. No man can worship God unassisted, for He is Spirit, and can be neither seen, heard nor conceived by man. But God has come down to us in the person of Christ, and idolatry, the worship of one other than our Lord Jesus Christ, is the devil's great anti-Christian attack. There can be little doubt that idolatry sprang into being, full-fledged, at Babel, and from that source can be traced the chief idolatrous practices of the whole earth. The controversy over the Prayer Book in the Church of England is largely centred around the Lord's Supper, which some would approximate to the blasphemous fable of the Mass, which, again, involves idolatry.

Idolatry, therefore, touches the person and work of the Son of God; in its mystery of iniquity, which culminates in a man claiming divine worship, it travesties the mystery of godliness, "God was manifested in the flesh". We have said that we could go back to the beginning of Israel's national history and to the beginning of the history of the human race, and find idolatry—but the full truth is that we can go back until revelation ceases, and there learn that before man was created, idolatry was already the first great sin in the universe of God (*see* Exek. xxviii. 1-19), and from it, and because of it, springs every other form of evil. Conversely, it is equally true that acceptable worship (translated "godliness" in I Timothy), lies at the root of all righteousness, goodness and truth, for no man *can* be either righteous, good, or true, who is in error concerning God Himself.

Let us keep *ourselves* from idols—covetousness, selfishness, and legalism on the one hand, and any approach to outward symbols such as charms, mascots or superstitious practices. If we must believe that some things are "lucky", let us take *Wycliffe's* translation of Gen. xxxix. 2: "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a luckie fellow."

**#5. Babylon weighed and found wanting.  
pp. 179 - 184**

We have looked at the witness maintained against idolatry in Dan. i., iii., & vi., and also the witness for the living God in Dan. ii., iv., and vi. There remains but one more historic feature to be considered before we pass on to prophecy itself, and that is the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. Here, then, may be a fit place to show the relationship which exists between the historic and prophetic sections. Nothing is recorded in the historic portion that does not anticipate the future prophecy. This may be illustrated by turning for a moment to a companion prophecy, that of Isaiah. In the midst of the prophecy, and standing in literal correspondence, will be found two historic sections, Isa. vii.-xii., Ahaz, and Isa. xxxvi.-xxxix., Hezekiah.

Events in the life of Ahaz enshrine the great Messianic foreshadowings of Isa. vii. 14 and ix. 7, while episodes in the history of Hezekiah take their place in the prophecy, foreshadowing, in Sennacherib, the anti-Christ, and giving, in his doom, an assurance of Jerusalem's final deliverance.

So is it in Daniel. History foreshadows prophecy. The golden image and the furnace of fire find their antitype in Rev. xiii. We can see this relation of historic type to prophetic reality in the following simple outline:--

<b>Daniel as a whole.</b>	
<b>The historic type.</b>	<b>The prophetic reality.</b>
Reign of Nebuchadnezzar foreshadows the duration and character of Gentile dominion (i.-iv.). Reign of Belshazzar foreshadows the doom of Gentile dominion (v.). Reign of Darius foreshadows the last days (vi.).	During of Belshazzar's reign—end of Gentile dominion and the setting up of the kingdom of the Lord (vii. and viii.). During Darius' reign—end of desolations and the final restoration of Israel (ix.). During reign of Cyrus (Darius being a title of Cyrus)—the time of the end more clearly detailed (x.-xii.).

This will suffice for our present study; a fuller structure indicating the very complete inter-relation of the parts of the book will be given when the strictly prophetic section is reached.

**The writing on the wall.**

“O sin (i.e. the moon god), thou lord of the gods, thou king of the gods of heaven and earth . . . . in the heart of Belshazzar, my firstborn son, the off-spring of my loins, set the fear of thine exalted godhead, so that he may commit no sin and that he may satisfied with the fullness of life.”

This prayer of Nabonidus was all in vain, for, offered as it was to a god who could neither hear nor see, Belshazzar found in his service no spiritual strength. It is pathetic to read the petition that Belshazzar may be satisfied with the fullness of life, when, as a fact, like the wicked, he did not live out half his days.

In Dan. v. 2 Nebuchadnezzar is called his “father”, and the critics have not failed to make capital out of this. Their efforts, however, reflect upon their own intelligence rather than Daniel’s veracity, for as there is no equivalent in either Chaldee or Hebrew for our English word “grandfather”, and, as even the little-instructed reader knows, the Hebrew idiom uses the word “father” for “ancestor”, these critics should first of all tell us what other word Daniel could have used. We know that Daniel had access to Jeremiah’s prophecy, to say nothing of his personal knowledge of the exact relationship that Belshazzar bore to Nebuchadnezzar. Jer. xxvii. 7 says of Nebuchadnezzar: “All nations shall serve him (Nebuchadnezzar), and his son (Nabonidus, who offered the prayer cited above), and his son’s (Belshazzar), until the very time of his land come.”

The banqueting hall in which Belshazzar held his iniquitous feast has been discovered. It is 60 feet wide by 172 feet long, with beautifully decorated walls. Here this last of Babylon’s kings made a great feast. Away on a military expedition against Cyrus, his father, Nabonidus, had left his son as co-regent, but instead of looking after the defences of the city he planned this great carousal. We read that he “drank wine before the thousand”, and this apparently worked upon his vanity and innate wickedness, so that “whiles he tasted the wine, he commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein” (Dan. v. 2). This was done, and the name of the great Jehovah was contemned, as they praised the gods of gold, and silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, but “in the same hour came forth the fingers of a man’s hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace” (Dan. v. 5).

This emphasizes the fact that the life of the last king of Babylon ends in a blasphemous act, an historic foreshadowing of what is foretold in later chapters:--

“And he shall speak great words against the most High” (Dan. vii. 25).

“He magnified himself even to the prince of the host” (Dan. viii. 11).

“He shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods” (Dan. xi. 36).

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies”  
(Rev. xiii. 5).

Goliath, it will be remembered, defied the armies of the living God, and the God of those armies (I Sam. xvii. 10 and 45), and David slew him with a small smooth stone. Sennacherib “blasphemed” and “reproached the living God” (Isa. xxxvii. 4 and 23), and the angel of the Lord smote the camp of the Assyrians, Sennacherib himself perishing at the hand of his sons. So will it be at the end when the last great blasphemer occupies the throne.

The mysterious message written on the wall filled the king with deadly fear. He cried aloud for the Chaldeans and soothsayers, offering the highest place in the realm to any who could show the meaning of the mystic words. But none was able to interpret the message of doom. At this juncture “the queen” came into the banqueting house. Evidently she had not associated herself with the impious carousal, and she it was who remembered Daniel. Daniel, with true spiritual nobility, tells the king to give his rewards where he will, but says that he will interpret the writing. Before doing so Daniel rehearses the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and humbling: “till he knew that the most high God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will” (Dan. v. 21). Belshazzar’s sin was against light and knowledge: “And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified” (Dan.v. 22, 23).

Belshazzar not only stands condemned as an individual, but he is, in turn, a type both of the last Babylonian ruler and of the Gentile world. Look at the parallels that there are between the indictment of Belshazzar by Daniel, and the indictment of the Gentiles world by Paul:--

<b>Dan. v. 22-28.</b>	<b>Rom. i. 21-26.</b>
“Thou knewest all this.” “Hast thou not glorified.” “Gods of silver and gold, . . . . which neither see, hear or know.”  “Thou hast not humbled thine heart.”  “The Lord God of heaven.” “Numbered, weighed, divided.”	“When they knew God.” “They glorified Him not as God.” “An image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” “Their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.” “His eternal power and Godhead.” “God also gave them up.”

The words written on the wall were in the ordinary Chaldaic language. It was not therefore their literal meaning but their significance that baffled the king and his wise men.

*Mene*.—The word occurs in Dan. ii. 24, 49 and iii. 12 where it is translated “ordained” and “set”, and in i. 5, 10 & 11 “appoint” and “set”. It is possible that Belshazzar and his wise men, when they looked at the word *Mene*, could associate it with none other than the god of that name, which meant the god of destiny, and is written *Manu* on the Assyrian inscriptions. Isa. lxx. 11, 12 says: “But ye are they that forsake the Lord . . . . and furnish the drink offering unto *Meni* (see margin); therefore will I number (Heb. *manithi*) you to the sword.” Here we have a *paronomasia* on the two words *Meni* and *manithi*, similar to Dan. v. where a double reference may have been intended. There was a “wonderful Numberer” (*Palmoni*) (Dan. viii. 13), of Whom the

god *Meni* was but a pagan shadow, Who indeed had numbered the days of Belshazzar: “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it” (Dan. v. 26).

*Tekel* is the Chaldee equivalent of the Hebrew *shakal*, to weigh, from which comes *shekel*, a weight. With the prefix “m” the word becomes *mishkolet*, “the plummet”, as in Isa. xxviii. 17: “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.” “Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting” (Dan. v. 27).

*Peres*.—Many readers of the English Version are somewhat puzzled when they come to this third word. The actual writing on the wall being *upharsin*, how is it that Daniel says *peres*? The answer is simple. The actual words translated as they stand are “Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided”. “And” is represented by the letter “u”, and this letter coming before the letter “p” softens it, making it for the time being “ph”. The letters *in* are merely an ending, equivalent, so far as our language can afford a parallel, to “en”, as in broken, or “ing” as in dividing. Now no one would look in the dictionary for the word “and divided”, the “and” would naturally be omitted. Again, it is usual to look for the infinitive, “to divide”, rather than, for instance, “dividing” or “divided”. This is what Daniel did. He omitted the *vav*, “and”, let the “ph” go back to “p”, omitted the ending “in”, and took the true word *peres*.

Just as we saw in Isa. lxxv. 11, 12 that *meni*, as well as being a verb, was a proper noun, so we find *peres* not only means “divided”, but is the name for “Persian”, the word thereby revealing by whom the kingdom was to be divided or taken. A parallel might be put in these terms, “You will be scotched”, thus conveying the idea that a Scot would do the scotching. Similarly, play could be made upon the names China, Japan, Greece, Turkey, etc. So it was that Daniel who, it must be remembered, was interpreting, not merely repeating, the words written, took the word *peres* in its double significance:--

“Thy kingdom is *divided*, and given to the Medes and Persians” (Dan. v. 28).

“In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old” (Dan. v. 30, 31).

Just as Belshazzar was co-regent with his father, so Cyrus, the son of Darius, was acting in a like capacity. His general, Gobryas, took Babylon in the name of Cyrus, who was then about 40 years of age (*see* Herodotus). Isaiah and Jeremiah had prophesied:--

“Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings (*see* Dan. v.6, ‘the joints of his loins were loosed’); to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut” (Isa. xlv. 1).

“The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for His device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple” (Jer. li. 11) (*see* Dan. v. 2-4).

“The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds . . . . one post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one (or each) end” (Jer. li. 30, 31).

Herodotus tells us that the Babylonians retired to the city. Cyrus, having diverted the waters of the Euphrates, entered the city by the bed of the river at each end (*Companion*

*Bible note*). A tablet is in existence on which is recorded the words: “On the sixteenth day of Tammuz, Gobryas, governor of the land of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus, without fighting, to Babylon descended.”

God is the God of heaven. He ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will. We may not always see the hand of the Lord, but He has never vacated His throne nor ceased to guide and overrule in order that all His purpose may be accomplished.

## **#6. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (ii).** **pp. 213 - 220**

Having acquainted ourselves with some of the outstanding features of the first half of the book of Daniel, and having observed that the historic section foreshadows the greater prophetic portion, we now turn our attention to the prophecies themselves, and commence with the vision of Nebuchadnezzar which occupies chapter ii.

The Gentile character of this vision is indicated by the change of language that occurs at verse 4: “Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac.” The words “in Syriac” mark the place where Daniel ceases to write in Hebrew, and thenceforth to the end of chapter vii. employs the Syriac or Aramaic language.

Before going into detail it may be well to consider one or two interpretations that have been put forward, so that the way may be cleared and our study pursued unhindered.

1. *Four kingdoms*.—One school of interpretation speaks of the image as representing four kingdoms only—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The legs represent the two divisions of the Roman Empire, the eastern and western, and the ten toes, the kingdoms into which it will finally be divided, thus making Rome’s dominion either in its full power or in its divided form cover the whole period from before Christ to the present time, and necessitating a revival of ancient Rome at the time of the end. Some who endorse this view believe Rome to be the Babylon of the Apocalypse, whilst others believe that literal Babylon will be rebuilt.

2. *The fourth kingdom regarded as Satanic*.—Another view of the purport of the vision does not include Rome at all. The view is that Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece followed one another, but that by the time the Lord was here upon earth, the devil could claim that the kingdoms of the world had been delivered unto him (Luke iv. 6). Moreover, another objection to Rome having a place in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision is said to be the fact that she never really had possession of Babylon itself. We would add, however, that this is not strictly true.

These two points of view are maintained with some recognition of the principles of prophetic interpretation. There are other views, but they are too far removed from the way of truth to justify space for consideration here.

We do not propose analyzing the two methods of interpretation mentioned above, but shall proceed at once to definite exposition, and where such exposition causes us to depart from the views expressed in these interpretations, we shall make any necessary criticism. All that we would say here is that we believe neither to be correct.

### **The latter days.**

To quote the verses that record both the vision and the interpretation would occupy more space than we can afford, but we trust that no reader will be satisfied to read these notes without personal reference to the Scriptures themselves.

From the urgency with which he demanded the interpretation, and the extreme measures he adopted to punish inability to comply with that demand, it is clear that Nebuchadnezzar considered the vision to be of supreme importance. It is blessed to see Daniel and his friends confidently laying the matter before “the God of heaven”, and to read the gracious answer given.

After a passing reference to the utter failure of the wise men of Babylon to help the king, Daniel said:--

“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days*” (Dan. ii. 28).

Evidently the king himself had been seriously thinking about the future of the dominion committed to him, for Daniel continues:--

“As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed *what should come to pass hereafter*” (ii. 29).

Now while, in one sense, the succession of Medo-Persia to the dominion was something that should come to pass “hereafter”, as also was that of Greece, these successive monarchies are, nevertheless, not in mind, except as steps leading to the goal. In ii. 45 Daniel becomes more explicit:--

“Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold: the great God hath made known to the king *what shall come to pass hereafter.*”

“The latter days” and “hereafter” have particular reference to “the days of these kings” of verse 44, when the stone shatters the image and the kingdom of the Lord is set up.

When we come to study chapter vii. we shall find the same concentration on the “end” and a rapid passing over of the steps leading to that end, as witness the words: “I would know the truth of the *fourth* beast” (vii. 19).

The student should be informed as to the occurrences of these expressions, “latter days” and “hereafter” in the book of Daniel, and we therefore give them:--

#### **Hereafter.**

- “What should come to pass *hereafter*” (ii. 29).
- “What shall come to pass *hereafter*” (ii. 45).
- “Another shall come *after* them” (vii. 24).

#### **Latter days.**

- “What shall be in the *latter* days” (ii. 28).
- “What shall be *in the last end* of the indignation” (viii. 19).
- “*In the latter time* of their kingdom” (viii. 23).
- “What shall befall thy people *in the latter* days” (x. 14).
- “What shall be *the end* of these things?” (xii. 8).

Daniel stood at the end of a long line of prophets, and the expressions “latter days” and “last days” had a very clear meaning. Their use can be studied in Gen. xlix. 1, Numb. xxiv. 14, Deut. iv. 30, viii. 16, xxxi. 29, xxxii. 20, 29, Isa. ii. 2, Micah iv. 1, and other passages.

#### **Gentile dominion.**

The succeeding kingdoms symbolized in the great image of Dan. ii. show a marked depreciation. Gold gives place to silver, silver to brass (or copper), brass to iron, iron to clay. Because we are far more likely to have handled a solid piece of lead than a bar of gold, many of us would place lead as the heaviest of metals. This, however, would be inaccurate, the specific gravity of lead being 11.4, whereas that of gold is as high as 19.3. Gold is the heaviest metal mentioned in Dan. ii., and it is of that metal that the head is constructed, so that the image of Gentile dominion is top-heavy from the commencement. This can be seen by observing the relative specific gravity of each material:--

Gold . . . . .	19.3
Silver . . . . .	10.51
Brass . . . . .	8.5 (Copper 8.78)
Iron . . . . .	7.6
Clay . . . . .	1.9

The arrangement of these metals in the structure of the image indicates depreciation not only in weight, but also in the characteristics of the kingdom. The kingdom of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold was an absolute monarchy. Of him it could be said, “Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive”. The Medo-Persia kingdom, represented by silver, was not absolute, as was Nebuchadnezzar’s. Darius was limited by the presidents and princes, and by his own laws “that could not be broken”. The Grecian kingdom of brass was a military kingdom, and consequently lower still in the scale. We will not here speak of Rome, as we have not yet dealt with the question of the fourth kingdom. We see enough, however, to realize that this prophetic image

prevents us from ever believing that the kingdom of heaven will come upon earth as a result of Gentile rule; rather are we clearly told that Gentile rule must be ground to powder before the kingdom of the Lord can be set up.

### **Principles of interpretation.**

Let us now seek the key to the understanding of the unexplained portions of the image. First we will examine what is clearly revealed. Babylon was succeeded by Medo-Persia, Medo-Persia by Greece, and Greece by some kingdom unnamed. Babylon passed off the scene, but the kingdom of Persia has remained to this day, and so has Greece. This leads us to our first point. It is not a necessity that the dispossessed kingdom should be either destroyed or absorbed by its successor, and therefore the idea that Rome is still existing in a weakened condition, and that the ten kings at the end must be found in the Roman earth is, on this ground, without foundation. Some other principle is at work and must be discovered.

We devoted the second article of this series to the question of the “Times of the Gentiles”, and we there showed that these were characterized by one essential feature, indicated by the Lord in Luke xxi. 24: “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Here is the essential prophetic character of the times of the Gentiles. Babylon dominated Jerusalem, and every power that has succeeded to the control of Jerusalem has taken its place in the image of Dan. ii. Does Rome take its place according to this canon of interpretation? Who was it that sent out a decree that all the inhabited earth should be taxed, and so unwittingly compelled the birth of the Lord Jesus to take place at Bethlehem? It was Caesar Augustus (Luke ii. 1). Who was exercising dominion over Jerusalem when John the Baptist pointed out the Messiah of Israel? The answer is Tiberius Caesar (Luke iii. 1). Who was Governor of Jerusalem, with the power of life and death, when the Lord Jesus was crucified? Again, it was a Roman, Pontius Pilate (Luke xxiii.). To whom did the Jewish nation pay tribute at this time? To none but Caesar (Luke xxiii. 2). It is, then, very evident that the Roman Empire is in the line of Gentile succession, and if historians are true and Rome’s sovereignty over the earth lasted for the space of 666 years, we may, in its typical character, find food for further thought.

This brings us to another important point. Believers in the Word of God are as certain that God knew the rise and fall of Rome as that He knew the rise and fall of Babylon or Persia. Why did He not definitely name Rome as he had Persia and Greece? For the self-same reason that, in O.T. prophecy, He veiled the rejection of Christ by Israel, the ensuing long interval between the “suffering” and the “glory” and the “times and the seasons” of Israel’s restoration.

The principle is brought out in Matt. xi. 14: “If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Now John the Baptist declared most emphatically that he was not Elias (John i. 21). The Lord declared that Elias must first come and restore all things, as Malachi had already prophesied (Matt. xvii. 11, Mal. iv. 5, 6), and that this should herald the great and dreadful day of the Lord. At the birth of John the Baptist it was said

of him that he should go before the Lord “in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke i. 17). If Israel had received the King and the kingdom, then Rome would have rapidly developed into the beast, and Herod was already at hand, a potential antichrist (*see* Acts xii. 20-23). We are not, however, called upon to discuss what might have been, for that leaves God out of the question. What actually took place was foreknown and provided for: Israel rejected their King and postponed their own restoration. In consequence of their folly a dispensation of hitherto unrevealed grace to an election from among the Gentiles was instituted and no dominating power in the line of Gentile dominion is revealed which would cover this period. Indeed, such would conflict with the fact that, while Israel are not reckoned as God’s people, the prophetic calendar is unchecked and the prophetic voice silent. Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, however, spans the whole period from his own accession until the coming of the Lord, and Rome, by its manifest sovereignty over Jerusalem, falls into line with the other powers. Rome’s dominion over Jerusalem, however, has not lasted throughout this long period. What power succeeded Rome in its hold upon Jerusalem? We know that at the time of the Crusades, in which one of our own kings, Richard I., took part, the city of Jerusalem was held by the Mohammedan power, and so, though unnamed, that power succeeds Rome in the line of Gentile dominion.

It has been objected that the Mohammedan power was never a “kingdom” in the same sense as were Babylon, Persia or Greece. This is so, but instead of that fact being against its inclusion, it is rather in favour of it, because from the time of Israel’s rejection, and the revelation of the dispensation of the mystery, the image of Daniel enters a protracted period of indefinite length and character, and not until the time of the end does the image emerge with any precision. The same features characterize gentile dominion at the present moment. The next development will be tragic in its reality.

Does the Mohammedan power still dominate Jerusalem? No, another change has taken place in our own days. When General Allenby received the keys of Jerusalem on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1917, the dominion passed from the Mohammedan power to the present Gentile domination of Jerusalem, the British mandate under the League of Nations.

Let us now see what these events mean, and how far they coincide with the prophetic interpretation of the course of Gentile dominion given by Daniel:--

- |                                     |  |   |                   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| 1. Head of Gold . . .               | BABYLON (Dan. ii.).                    | \ |                   |
| 2. Breast of silver . . .           | MEDO-PERSIA (Dan. v. 31).              | \ | “Five are fallen” |
| 3. Belly and thighs of brass . . .  | GREECE (Dan. viii. 21).                | } | (Rev. xvii. 10).  |
| 4. Legs of iron . . .               | ROME (Luke ii.).                       | / |                   |
| 5. Feet of iron and clay . . .      | TURKEY (A.D.636-1917)                  | / |                   |
|                                     | This line indicates the present moment | \ |                   |
| 6. Toes of clay . . .               | LEAGUE OF NATIONS.                     | } | “One is”          |
| 7. The stone cut out without hands. |  | / | (Rev. xvii. 10).  |

Here we have the whole Gentile dominion represented as being *six*-fold, stamped with the number of man and the beast. We stand to-day at the junction of the feet and the ten toes, which are ten kings, and which, presumably, will come out of the League of Nations. When John wrote the book of Revelation he was “in spirit” writing from the

Day of the Lord; consequently he could say, “five are fallen”, namely, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and Turkey, and “One is”, viz., the dominion of the ten kings. The seventh is the kingdom of the Lord, but antichrist will present himself as the seventh—“The order is not yet come”; “he is of the seven and goeth into perdition.”

Much that is mysterious in these verses is to be understood only in the light of the fact that at the time of the end the human merges into the superhuman and satanic. Although we have already occupied considerable space in this article, the solemnity of the subject and need for clearness forbids undue brevity, and we shall therefore continue for a little.

### **The ten toes of the image.**

The word “broken” in Dan. ii. 42 should be “brittle”, and shows that the “clay” is pottery. Pottery of sufficient thickness would stand the weight of the image, but would shiver to pieces at a blow. It is impossible to fuse iron and pottery together in the same way that two metals may be fused, yet when we reach the feet of the Gentile image, metal gives place to pottery. Some radical change is here indicated. The feet are composed of both iron and clay:--

“But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay” (Dan. ii. 43).

This does not mean that the communist will not mingle with the monarchist or the democrat with the autocrat, for this same verse in Dan. ii. contains a deeper explanation:--

“They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another.”

“The seed of men.”—Are not communists and kings the seed of men? Are democrats only the seed of men and the ruling classes not? To ask the question is to answer it. Gold is a metal superior to silver, but of like nature. So also silver is superior to brass, brass to iron, yet all are metals. But at the feet of the image the altogether different materials used indicate that the “they” of ii. 43 and “the seed of men” are beings of two different orders.

Now the Lord revealed that at the time of the end it should be as it was in the days of Noah. Gen. vi. contains enough to enable us to see in the clay feet of the image the revival of the seed of the wicked one. There are two seeds in view, and the book of the Revelation makes it clear that at the end demon-possessed rulers under the satanic beast and antichrist will have full, though brief, sway.

In Dan. ii. 44 the prophet says: “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” In the days of what kings? Are they Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, or Alexander? Any one of the three is historically impossible. What kings reign at the time when the kingdom of the Lord is set up? We find from Dan. vii. 24 that ten kings shall arise at the time of the end. We read in Rev. xvii. 12:--

“The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

The ten horns of the beast and the ten toes of the image speak of the same ten kings:--

“And as the toes of the feet . . . . in the days of these kings” (Dan. ii. 42-44).

We have said nothing of the seventh feature, the stone cut out without hands. This foreshadows the kingdom of the Lord, and demands an article to itself. The subject comes into view later on in Daniel, and we shall be better able to deal with it then. Meanwhile let us be thankful for the sure word of prophecy. As members of the body of Christ with a calling, hope and inheritance “far above all”, these things only remotely touch us. They belong, however, to the Christ we delight to honour, and, though far removed from the scene of His earthly triumphs, we can, with full heart, pray: “*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*”.

**Who are the “deceased” that shall not rise?  
(Isa. xxvi. 14).  
pp. 193 - 196**

Part of a lengthy correspondence with one of our readers included a reference to Isa. xxvi. 14 & 19, and as the subject is of importance we give it consideration here.

“They are dead, they shall not live: they are deceased, they shall not rise . . . . Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa. xxvi. 14, 19).

The first statement is one that we must not lightly pass over: “They are dead, they shall not live.” Let us make sure of each expression so that our conclusions also may be sure. Is the word “dead” the normal one for death? It is the word used of Sarah in Gen. xxiii. 4 and Joseph in Gen. i. 24. In the future tense it is used of Adam in Gen. ii. 17. It is of Noah in Gen. ix. 29, and of Abraham in Gen. xxv. 8. With Heb. xi. as our guide we can be very sure that all these “dead” *shall* live. Isa. xxvi. 14 speaks of some of the “dead” who shall *not* live.

*They shall not live.*—Does this refer to resurrection life? Job uses the same word when he asks, “If a man die, shall he *live* (again)?” (Job xiv. 14). Hosea vi. 12 uses it for resurrection life: “After two days He will *revive* us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall *live* in His sight.” The same word is used in Hosea xiv. 7: “They will *revive* as the corn.” Quite apart from these references, however, it is obvious that if dead men are to live, that life must be life from the dead or life in resurrection.

There is a very definite contrast in Isa. xxvi. 19: “Thy dead shall live, my dead body (plural or collective) shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs.” Here we have the same word for “dead” as in verse 14, and the same word for “live”. In addition we have the word “awake”, which is used in connection with resurrection in Psa. xvii. 15: “I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with Thy likeness”, and also in Dan. xii. 2, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall *awake*”.

It is categorically asserted in Scripture that all who are in Adam must be raised from the dead: “For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive” (I Cor. xv. 22). Both I Cor. xv. and Isa. xxvi. are inspired Scripture and beyond argument. Both passages are true. There is but one conclusion possible, that the dead referred to in Isa. xxvi. were never “in Adam”; otherwise they must live again in resurrection.

Can this be substantiated from Scripture? The answer is yes, and its basis is Isa. xxvi. 14 and 19. Let us continue. “They are deceased, they shall not rise.” At first sight this seems but a repetition, but upon examination we discover that the word “deceased” is a strange one. It is “The Rephaim”. Who were the Rephaim? Were they the seed of Adam? We meet them first in Gen. xiv. 5 in company with Zuzims and the

Emims. The Emims are described in Deut. ii. 10, 11: “The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall as the Anakims, which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims.”

Zamzummims are mentioned in Deut. ii. 20, and these too were “giants”. It is important to realize that the word “giants” here is the word “Rephaim”—the Emims were also accounted Rephaim. In the A.V. the words are used interchangeably. In Josh xv. 8 we read of the “valley of the *giants*”; in xvii. 15 of the “land of the Perrizites and of the *giants*”; and in I Chron. xi. 15 and xiv. 9 the same word is found in the expression, “the valley of the Rephaim”. In I Chron. xx. 4, 6 and 8, we read of “giants” or “Rephaim” born in Gath, the birthplace of Goliath, whose brother also was a giant (*see* verse 5). One of these Rephaim had four and twenty fingers and toes, six on each hand and six on each foot, a living symbol of the beast of Rev. xiii.

*The earth shall cast out the dead.*—Here the word “dead” is the same as the word “deceased”, namely, “the giants” or “the Rephaim”. They shall not rise, but they are cast out of the earth. What does that mean? The word translated “cast out” is *naphal*, and is the causative, “cause to fall” as in Gen. ii. 21. “And the Lord God *caused* a deep sleep *to fall* upon Adam.”

This word *naphal* gives a name to another race of Giants who come into record of Scripture in Gen. vi. 4, where they are called “the giants”. They appear again in Numb. xiii. 33, and are there also called, “the sons of Anak”. In the days of Noah no provision was made for the salvation of one of this seed of the wicked one, so serious in the eyes of the Lord was this awful intermingling. In the days of Israel no command was given concerning the Canaanite except that of extermination, and according to Isa. xxvi. they are dead and done with, never to awake, arise or live again.

The Lord plainly tells us that the “tares” sown by the wicked one are not evil doctrines, but the “children of the wicked one”. These are bound in bundles and burned before the children of the kingdom shine forth in glory. Did the Lord use a true figure when He spoke of the tares, if the purpose of God is that these “tares” or “children of the wicked one” are to come forth from the lake of fire the redeemed of the Lord? Surely such a mighty doctrine would not be left to hang upon poor human inferences, and we accordingly reject it as being as much a lie as the words, “Ye shall not surely die”, uttered in Gen. iii. 4.

As every word in this battle for the truth is of consequence, and as even an unintentional omission may be misconstrued, we must consider one more expression, viz., “They shall not rise”. Does this mean resurrection? Job uses the word in xiv. 12 with very definite reference to resurrection: “Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised from out of their sleep.” The word is the Hebrew *qum*, which is found in the Aramaic form in Mark v. 41: “And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, *Talitha cumi*: which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.”

Isa. xxvi. 14 is written as the partial explanation of a great theme, viz., the question of “dominion”:-

“O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name” (Isa. xxvi. 13).

At the creation of Adam dominion was given to him. This he lost, but it is to be restored in Christ:-

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whether we speak . . . . Thou madest Him for a little lower than the angels . . . . we see Jesus, Who was made for a little lower than the angels . . . . the children are partakers of flesh and blood . . . . He laid not hold on angels” (Heb. ii. 5-16).

It is the character of the present age that evil triumphs and truth suffers. Cain slew his brother, built a city, and Nimrod his successor assumed dominion over the earth. This principle is true to the end, for Babylon at the close is spoken of as having dominion over the earth. The true seed remain in subjection now, but they shall reign and rule, when these “other lords” shall be no more. The purpose of the ages shall be accomplished in spite of all the opposition of the wicked one, and in spite of the fall and failure of Adam and his sons. Blessed be God for Him Who is the “last Adam”. He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

## Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth.

### #71. The sabbath. A sign and a covenant (Exod. xxxi.). pp. 24 - 30

With the reference in Exod. xxxi. 1-6 to the two men who were specially endowed with wisdom for the making of the tabernacle, and the enumeration of its furniture in Exod. xxxi. 7-11, the description of the tabernacle and its parts comes to an end. Upon the close of the description of the place of worship follows the sign and covenant of the sabbath, the giving of the law on the two tables of stone, and the lapse into idolatry during the absence of Moses.

*The Companion Bible* shows the inter-relation of these parts very clearly; we give a somewhat condensed copy of the structure here:--

#### Exod. xxiv. 9 - xxxii. 14.

- A | xxiv. 9-11. The worship of the seventy elders.
- B | xxiv. 12-14. The tables of stone promised.
- C | xxiv. 15-18. The six days and the seventh.
- D | xxv. 1 - xxxi. 11. The tabernacle and its furniture.
- C | xxxi. 12-17. The six days and the seventh.
- B | xxxi. 18. The tables of stone given.
- A | xxxii. 1-14. The idolatry of the people.

It has sometimes been felt that the making of such a structure as the tabernacle demanded greater skill than it can be supposed a nation of slaves, whose labour was in the brick fields, could possess, but we must leave God out of our reckoning. He not only gave Moses detailed instructions and a perfect pattern, but fitted specially appointed workers for their task:--

“I have called by name Bezaleel . . . . I have filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.”

“And I behold, I have given unto him Aholiab . . . . and in their hearts I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee” (Exod. xxxi. 1-6).

This covers the whole question: the God who gave the command provides the wisdom and skill necessary for its accomplishment. Bezaleel means, “In the shadow of God”; Aholiab means, “The tent of my Father”—two precious and fitting names for men who were to be used of God in the construction of the tabernacle.

While we would make no pretensions to supernatural endowment to-day, we do most certainly believe that when God calls a man to a service He equips him for the work. He may be but a fisherman or a gatherer of sycamore fruit. He may be the wisest of kings or the most learned of pharisees, but, be he whom he may, his fitness for service will be given by the One Who called him to the work.

What a blessed thought, too, is conveyed to the heart of the worker by the name Bezaleel, “In the shadow of God”. There is the place where wisdom, knowledge and understanding are first received, and ever after maintained—“Not by might, nor by power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord.” There is also a note of instruction in the name Aholiab, “The tent of my Father”. Paul stresses the necessity to be occupied with “God’s building” when building upon the one foundation: all else passes away in smoke and fire (I Cor. iii.). Just as the tabernacle imaged the person of the Lord when He was made flesh and “tabernacled” among men (John i. 14), so we find the “shadowing” suggested in Luke i. 35: “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.”

The second half of Exod. xxxi. is devoted to the question of the sabbath, so that, in some sense, we have in this chapter the six days’ work (1-11), and the one day sabbath (12-18). This, as the structure shows, falls exactly into correspondence with one special week recorded in Exod. xxiv. 15-18:--

“And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.”

The placing of the covenant of the sabbath immediately after the appointment of the workers of the tabernacle would be a reminder that even work for God must be allowed to crowd out worship. We may all profit by this lesson.

### **The sabbath.**

We will now look into the teaching of Scripture regarding the sabbath.

In the first place it is important to remember that not only is there the weekly sabbath day enjoined upon Israel, but that a system of sevens, from days to years, is found in Scripture. Creation is stamped with the number seven. In the Hebrew of Gen. i. 1 we find seven words, *Bereshith bara elohim eth hashshamayin beth haerets*—and twenty-eight letters, 7\*4. This cannot be shown in English because in that language separate letters for the sounds “th”, “sh”, &c., must be used.

The present creation is introduced by the word of God: “And God said.” In this phrase there are ten Hebrew letters having the following numerical equivalents: *Vav 6, Yod 10, Aleph 1, Mem 40, Rosh 200, Aleph 1, Lamed 30, He 5, Yod 10, Mem 40*. These figures total 343, which is 7\*7\*7, or raised to the superlative. If, moreover, the reader will look at this series he will see that exactly seven different letters are used.

The present creation occupies a double set of three days followed by a seventh rest. These sets of three perfectly correspond with each other:--

1 <sup>st</sup> Day . . . . .	Light.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Day . . . . .	Firmament and waters.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Day . . . . .	Dry land. PLANT LIFE.
4 <sup>th</sup> Day . . . . .	Light bearers.
5 <sup>th</sup> Day . . . . .	Fowls in the firmament. Fish in the waters.
6 <sup>th</sup> Day . . . . .	Beasts of field. HUMAN LIFE.

## Then the 7<sup>th</sup> day . . . . . rest.

This sevenfold character lies behind the whole purpose of the ages, and Peter's comment: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. iii. 8) suggests that the whole range of time, from the Adamic creation until and including Millennium, will be a series of seven days, each measuring one thousand years. The feasts of Israel, specified in Lev. xxiii., fill up the interval between Creation and Millennium, and foreshadow the purpose of the ages.

We find the following use of "seven" in the scriptures that deal with Israel:--

Seven DAYS.—"The seventh day is a sabbath of rest" (Lev. xxiii. 3).  
Seven WEEKS.—"Seven sabbaths shall be complete" (Lev. xxiii. 15).  
Seven MONTHS.—"In the seventh month" (Lev. xxiii. 24).  
So far as feasts are concerned the year ends here.  
Seven YEARS.—"The seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest" (Lev. xxv. 4).  
Seven times seven YEARS.—"It shall be a Jubilee unto you" (Lev. xxv. 8-13).  
Seventy times seven YEARS.—"Seventy weeks are determined" (Dan. ix. 24).  
Seven TIMES.—"I will chasten you seven times" (Dan. iv. 16).  
Israel's chastisement the same length of time as Gentile madness.

Here we have a progressive series of seven features, showing that the weekly sabbath was one of a series of ordinances enjoined upon this people.

## The sign and the covenant.

Just as blood of the passover lamb (Exod. xii. 13), the unleavened bread (xiii. 9), and the redemption of the firstborn (xiii. 13) were "signs" or "tokens", so the sabbath was a special "sign" to Israel of their separation unto the Lord from all other nations. This sanctification is expressed in Lev. xx. 24-26:--

"I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put a difference between clean beasts and unclean . . . . ye shall be holy unto Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

The scruples discussed in Rom. xiv. as to "days" and "meats" arose out of the relationship of such things to Israel's exclusive position.

The observation of the sabbath was given for an "age-abiding covenant", but it is well to notice that in Exod. xxxi. both the "sign" and the "covenant" are restricted to Israel:--

"Wherefore *the children of Israel* shall keep the sabbath . . . . an age-abiding covenant. It is a sign between Me and *the children of Israel* for the age"  
(Exod. xxxi. 16, 17).

There can be no intrusion of others into this covenant. It belongs to Israel, and to those who, by becoming proselytes, are reckoned with Israel. The breaking of the

sabbath by the performance of work was punishable by death, and anyone who thus transgressed the commandment was cut off from the people of God; he had broken the covenant. The sabbath, moreover, was to be observed and kept as an age-abiding covenant.

There are reasons for observing the sabbath attached to the various commands that we should notice. The first passage is that which occurs in the ten commandments. The reason given there for sabbath observance is that the Lord, after the six days' creation, "rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it." So long as Israel observed the sabbath day, they were a witness to the God of creation, and the creation narrative of Gen. i. and ii.

In Exod. xxiii. 12 the sabbath is enjoined so that ox, ass and servant may be refreshed. The words are echoed in Exod. xxxi. 17:--

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."

The word "refreshed" is *naphas*, and could almost be translated "had time to breathe". We do not entertain the thought that the mighty Creator becomes weary with work, but it is helpful to see how He stoops to the needs of the creatures made in His image.

Attached to the command to keep the sabbath is a reminder that Israel was once a servant in the land of bondage, so that the institution of the day showed God's mercy to Israel and His concern for others (Deut. v. 12-15). Reverence for the sanctuary of God, also, was associated with the sabbath (Lev. xxiii. 32). Though shrouded in type and symbol, the sabbath, nevertheless, was an opportunity of experiencing and expressing something of the grace of God:--

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words" (Isa. lviii. 13)

Both the true spirit of the sabbath, and the false representation of it, as it had become by the tradition of the elders, are very vividly brought to view in the Gospels. When the disciples plucked a few ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands, they broke the sabbath according to the tradition of the Pharisees. Of course reaping and threshing on the sabbath were forbidden by the law, but these formalists taught that to pluck an ear of corn was "reaping", and to rub it in the hand was "threshing", even as walking on grass was a species of threshing!

The persecution of the Lord, and the crucifixion itself, may be traced to His attitude toward the sabbath day:--

"Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the sabbath day" (John v. 16).

In spite of the fact that the Lord kept every jot and tittle of the law, the Pharisees refused to recognize in His actions any observance of the sabbath. They said: "This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day" (John ix. 16). While these things are important, and have in view the great sabbath rest that awaits the children of God (Heb. iv. 9-11), we must not omit the statements concerning the sabbath and other holy days and feasts that are found in Paul's epistles.

### **The Sabbath, Sunday and the Church.**

It is evident that Paul could not have written Rom. xiv. had the sabbath day been binding upon the church. The law of the sabbath does not leave room for "esteeming every day alike" (Rom. xiv. 5), and if this be true regarding such an established institution as the sabbath, it is also most true regarding the first day of the week. When Paul said to the Galatians:--

"Ye observe days, and months, and times and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. iv. 10, 11).

he made no exception of the sabbath day. His words in Col. ii., however, leave one without a doubt as to the purport of his teaching:--

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of good things to come: but the body is of Christ" (Col. ii. 16, 17).

With the coming of the full truth of the mystery, there passed off the scene all types and shadows. The inclusion of the "sabbaths" in such a context as Col. ii. should make us doubly on our guard against any specious arguments that "have a show of wisdom", but which lead away from our full and complete position in Christ.

We respect the conscience of the weaker brother regarding the observance of days, the abstaining from meats, and other items that have no longer any value for us. Sunday is not the sabbath, and no manipulation of the references to the first day of the week can make it so. Moreover, we do not seek to impose Sunday observance upon the world of the ungodly, for we realize that no such claim belongs to our calling, or to them. We thankfully accept Sunday as an opportunity for obtaining that necessary one day's rest in seven which our physical nature demands. We, moreover, welcome the opportunity it provides for more completely turning aside from the things of everyday life to the worship of God, and the ministry of His Word, but *we see no special sanctity* in a meeting held on Sunday, neither would we allow any thought of the "day" to influence our attitude or witness. Concern for the conscience of others is the only bondage to which we are willing to submit in this matter. The bondage of "holy days" is "not after Christ" and is to be rejected.

Whatever the sabbath meant to Israel a rest, a delight, a prophecy of the rest that remaineth, a sign, a covenant, a mark of the high calling of God, this, like circumcision and other rites, we find in full measure in Christ. *He is our Sabbath*, and we need no

shadows of good things to come. We have the blessed substance. While we walk in Him, we need no holy days.

**#72. The golden calf (Exod. xxxi. 18 - xxxii. 14).  
pp. 67 - 72**

The worship of the golden calf and the breaking of the two tables of stone are the closing incidents of this great section of the book of Exodus.

The worship of the calf is in exact correspondence with the worship of the God of Israel by the seventy (Exod. xxiv. 9-11), and the promise of the two tables of stone with their reception by Moses (Exod. xxiv. 12-14 and xxxi. 18):--

A | xxiv. 9-11. Worship of God of Israel.  
B | xxiv. 12-14. Tables of stone promised.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
B | xxxi. 18. Tables of stone given.  
A | xxxii. 1-14. Worship of golden calf.

When Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ascended the mountain, we are told that “they saw the God of Israel . . . . and they did eat and drink”. Then it was that the Lord spoke of the tables of stone:--

“Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and the law, and the commandment WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN, that thou mayest teach them” (Exod. xxiv. 12). (The R.V. corrects the A.V. here, for the Lord spoke of *the* law, not “a” law and *the* commandment, not “commandments”).

If this passage stood alone it would be sufficient for all who bow before the authority of the Scriptures. The verse distinctly affirms that, before Moses ascended into the Mount, the Lord had already written the tables of stone. It is of course possible to explain the passage as being merely a figure of speech, but the number of times the fact is mentioned leaves no room for doubt. The subject is important enough to warrant a careful tabulation of all the references, which will now be given.

**Did God actually write the Law?**

Let us read further evidence on this vital question:--

1. Exod. xxiv. 12.—Already quoted above.
2. Exod. xxxi. 18.—“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD.”
3. Exod. xxxii. 15, 16.—“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both sides;

on the one side and the other were they written. And the tables were THE WORK OF GOD, and the writing was THE WRITING OF GOD, graven upon the tables.”

4. Exod. xxxiv. 1, 28 (also Deut. x. 1-14).—“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I WILL WRITE upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou breakest . . . . And he was there with the Lord forty days and nights: he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And HE WROTE upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”
5. Deut. iv. 13.—“And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments: and HE WROTE them upon two tables of stone.”
6. Deut. v. 22.—“These words (i.e. the ten commandments quoted in verses 6-21) the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more. And HE WROTE them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.”
7. Deut. ix. 9, 10.—“When I was gone up into the Mount to RECEIVE the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you . . . . the Lord DELIVERED unto me two tables of stone WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD.”

Here are seven separate passages of Scripture. One makes promise of the bestowal of the tables, three record the receiving of them, and three more rehearse the fact years after the event.

### **The testimony is clear and complete.**

The ten commandments which formed the “covenant” between Israel and the Lord were written by none other than God Himself. The remaining commandments, statutes and judgments, all spring from these basic commandments and were given to Moses during the forty days, commencing with the law given in the Mount. We may therefore declare that God has not only *spoken*, but He has written, and thereby made it plain to all His people that He will communicate in written word His will for them. In the language of Paul in I Cor. xv. 3 the reader will doubtless perceive a reflection of Deut. ix. 9, 10: “For I *delivered* unto you first of all that which I also *received*.”

### **Worship.**

This section, as we have seen, begins and ends in worship, and what is true of this small section is true of the whole age-purpose. The somewhat veiled story of Ezek. xxviii. revolves around the thought of worship. The temptation of the Lord in Matt. iv. reaches its climax in worship. The Beast, at the last, enables Satan to attain his end—worship (Rev. xiii). The times of the Gentiles begin and end with false worship (Dan. iii., Rev. xiii.). Worship is the goal of the mystery of iniquity (II Thess. ii. 4), and the word “godliness” in the phrase “the mystery of godliness” (I Tim. iii. 16) is “good or accepted worship” (*eusebeia*). The Gentile apostacy was connected with worship (Rom. i. 21-23) at the beginning, and will be so at the end—“a form of worship” (II Tim. iii. 5). The last of all gospels stresses worship (Rev. xiv. 7).

The first and all-embracing term of the covenant of Sinai was: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” (Exod. xx. 3), and the first step in transgression is the making of

“any graven image, or any likeness of anything . . . . thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them” (Exod. xx. 4, 5). Idol worship is demon worship:--

“What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God” (I Cor. x. 19, 20).

The gods of Egypt, as well as the Egyptians themselves, were the objects of God’s wrath in the plagues (Exod. xii. 12).

### **The worship of the golden calf.**

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him” (Exod. xxxii. 1).

There are two points of great importance in this verse. The first has reference to the word “delayed”. The word is the *piel* form of the verb, which generally indicates intensity. The verb itself is *bosh*, meaning “to be, or to feel, shame”, and at first sight the translation “delayed” seems to have no connection. That *bosh* does mean “to be ashamed” the following passages will show: Gen. ii. 25; Psa. vi. 10; Isa. i. 39, and the A.V. so translates it seventy-one times. Once, the verb is translated “become dry” (Hos. xiii. 15), and *yabesh* is used in Gen. i. 9 and Exod. xiv. 16 of the “dry land”. This, rather than “ashamed”, is at the root of the word, and the transition of the meaning is as follows: “To flag, fail, grow flaccid, limp, spiritless”, then “to languish at long delay, to feel ashamed, confounded.” There is one other reference in the A.V. where the *piel preterite* is found, viz., Judg. v. 28: “Why *is* the chariot so *long* in coming?” Here the mother of Sisera betrays her uneasiness and confusion at the delay of her son.

Exod. xxxii. 1 therefore tells us that Israel began to flag, to dry up, to feel somewhat ashamed at the long delay—they felt that something ought to have been done by then, much as we may feel at being kept waiting for an interview beyond what we may think a reasonable time. Israel did not realize that one of the first phases of worship is expressed in the word “wait”:--

“Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake” (Psa. lxi. 6).

“Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed” (Psa. xxv. 3).

“Let me not be ashamed of my hope” (Psa. cxix. 116).

“Hope maketh not ashamed” (Rom. v. 5).

“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed” (Phil. i. 20).

Habakkuk had to learn the importance of waiting God’s time (Hab. ii. 1-4), and the same lesson is rehearsed in Heb. x. 37-39. It was the evil servant who said, “MY Lord delayeth His coming” (Matt. xxiv. 48).

Rom. i. reveals an affinity between idolatry and ingratitude:--

“They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful . . . . and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image . . . .” (Rom. i. 21-23).

Exod. xxxii. 1 shews the same connection:--

“Up, make us gods, which shall go before us, for as this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him.”

“As for this Moses”—It does not sound very respectful; the people fail in their attitude both to God and man.

The idol that was made by Aaron from the golden earrings of the women was in the form of a calf. Memphis, which was near to Goshen, and On, which was in the midst of Goshen, were both famous for the worship of the Sacred Bull. At the death of the Bull, whose name was *Apis*, it was called *Osiris*, *Apis* or *Serapis*, and a new calf, born of a cow that could have no more young, became the new god. There is a mixture here of the false and the true:--

“These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord” (Exod. xxxii. 4, 5).

Here is confusion—“gods” and “the Lord”, and Aaron in his answer to Moses manifests that he is a temporizer:--

“And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods . . . . and there came out this calf” (Exod. xxxii. 21-24).

We are warned in Scripture to judge not lest we be judged. With all humility and full consciousness of our own weakness and liability to err, we feel that nothing can be put forward to justify Aarons’ action. Three thousand men lost their lives, the whole of the people were shamed, the precious tables of stone written by the finger of God shattered, and the initial term of the covenant broken, all largely because one man did not stand firm for God and His revealed will. What a blessed contrast it is to turn to Gal. ii. and see there the magnificent stand of the apostle for the truth of the gospel, and his subjection to the popular voice “no, not for an hour”.

The statement that the people “rose up to play”, that they were “dancing” round the golden calf, and that Aaron had made them “naked unto their shame among their enemies”, reveals the lascivious character of their worship. Many have found a difficulty in understanding verse 20: “And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.” The modern chemist would probably use tartaric acid in accomplishing this, but the ancient Egyptians used *natron*. The resulting powder has a nauseous taste, and the action would be symbolical of the bitter result of their folly.

Should any, moreover, feel any difficulty about the amount of gold indicated, he should acquaint himself with the statements of archaeologist and historian. “The rich frequently had ornamental works, statues, and furniture of solid gold. *Diodoros* mentions a golden statue at Babylon, forty feet high, weighing one thousand Babylonian talents”, and a list is given of other similar effigies “making a total of at least 690 talents, reckoned equal to L11,000,000 sterling”. Thus *Wilkinson* in *Ancient Egyptians*.

Not only did Israel turn back in heart to the leeks and the fish which they did eat in Egypt, they also turned to their gods—yes, even after the majesty of Sinai and the meditation of Moses. The lapse of forty days was a test, and under that test Israel failed. The number forty is often associated with a test. How wonderfully the Lord Jesus entered into Israel’s position, triumphing where they failed. He, too, waited for forty days; He, too, was tempted to worship Satan, but He gloriously triumphed, giving glory to God and honouring His Word. The spies searched the land of Canaan forty days, and again Israel failed, and for forty years wandered in the wilderness.

There is a sad parallel with Exod. xxxii. even to-day. The great Mediator has ascended, the time seems long; ministers appointed by God yield to the pressure of the people; they effect a compromise: “gods” and “the Lord” are brought together, and the One Who accomplished their redemption is slighted.

The outcome of this awful departure from the covenant of God we must consider in our next paper. Meanwhile, let us not miss the solemn lessons that everywhere are apparent in this chapter, for in the scriptures written to us and about us is the warning concerning “heaping to themselves teachers”, and “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”. The added word, “From such turn away”, is, in measure, an echo of Exod. xxxii. 26, where Moses stood in the gate of the camp and cried: “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.”

**#73. The mediation of Moses (Exod. xxxii. - xxxiii. 3).  
pp. 113 - 117**

In connection with the worship of the golden calf, there are some solemn features that could not be dealt with in the previous article. The language used by the Lord concerning Israel indicates a change in their relationship: “Go, get thee down, for *thy* people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves” (Exod. xxxii. 7). The Lord does not speak of “My” people, but “thy” people. He does not say that He, the Lord, brought Israel from Egypt, but speaks of Moses as their leader. Israel had, for the time, fallen out of covenant with God and had become *lo ammi*, “not My people”. There is much the same intention in these words as in those of the Lord Jesus concerning Jerusalem: “*Your* house is left unto you desolate.”

Israel had corrupted themselves. The word used here occurs also in Hosea xiii. 9 where we read: “O Israel, thou hast *destroyed* thyself.” We first meet the word in Gen. vi.—an ominous context: “The earth also was corrupt before God . . . . And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. vi. 11, 12). We have some small conception of the depth of corruption that filled the earth at the time of the flood—the same word is used of Israel in Exod. xxxii. It is also rendered “destroy” in Genesis: “I will *destroy* them with the earth”; “I will *destroy* all flesh” (Gen. vi. 13-17).

The relation between “corruption”, “destruction”, “idolatry” and the “covenant” is seen in Deut. iv.:--

“Lest ye *corrupt* yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.”

“Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image or likeness of any thing, which the Lord Thy God hath forbidden thee . . . . and shall *corrupt* yourselves, and make a graven image . . . . if thou shalt seek Him . . . . He will not forsake thee, neither *destroy* thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them” (Deut. iv. 16, 23, 25, 29, 31).

Here we have the same word, *shachath*, translated both “corrupt” and “destroy”. We expect our readers to prove all statements made in these pages, and therefore anticipate the findings of some who may consult *The Companion Bible* on verse 31. The word there is marked with the reference figure to verse 26, as though *shamad* is used in verse 31. This is not correct, however, and users of the C.B. would be well advised to cross out the reference to 26 in verse 31. [This comment is in the cause of truth, and entirely after the heart of the editor of the C.B.; it is made by a sincere admirer of this valuable work. We say this lest any should think that we have anything but admiration for the witness of the late Dr. Bullinger].

As we read Deut. iv., we see how Israel’s corruption of true worship reverted in its corrupting and destroying effect upon themselves. The inspiration that governs all

Scripture led Paul, in Rom. i., to speak of “the incorruptible God” in a context of idolatry and personal degradation (verses 23-25).

When dealing with Rom. i. we drew attention to the close parallel that exists between the histories of the Gentile and of Israel. It is so important to realize this that we repeat the following quotations:--

<b>Gentile (Rom. i.).</b>	<b>Israel (Psa. cvi.).</b>
“They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image . . . . man . . . . birds, beasts and creeping things” (23).	“They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass” (19, 20).
“They did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (28).	“They forget God their Saviour” (21).
“Wherefore God also gave them up” (24).	“Therefore He said that He would destroy them” (23).
“Uncleanness . . . . . vile affections” (24-27).	“They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead” (28).
“Inventors of evil things” (30).	“They provoked Him to anger with their inventions” (29).

Rom. i. 18-32 has much in common with II Thess. ii. 1-12 and II Tim. iii. 1-8, and the link with Gen. vi. shows that we have the same evil at work in the patriarchal age with Israel as at the end of this dispensation. In like manner we have in II Pet. ii. “destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them”, and soon “lascivious ways”. Then follows the sin of the angels, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, a reference to the brute beasts that perish in their own corruption, eyes full of adultery, the way of Balaam, and finally servants of corruption, likened to dogs and sows. Here we have the degeneration that sets in upon departure from the truth.

It is because of the close affinity between the glory of the incorruptible God, and the blessing of man, that we find in the covenant of the ten commandments, written by the finger of God, that which preserves not only pure worship, but pure family life. As surely as man corrupts the worship of God, so surely will he corrupt himself, and in seeking to “worship God in spirit and truth” he is at the same time pursuing his own truest interests. The Millennium itself is characterized by the “knowledge of the Lord”.

In the tenth verse of our chapter we have the repudiation of Israel: “Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; *and I will make of thee a great nation*” (Exod. xxxii. 10). This leads us back to Gen. xii. where the Lord made the promise to Abraham.

**Promise versus Law.**

Moses makes no reference to this suggestion, but throws himself and his people upon the grace of God. He will not even repeat the Lord’s word with reference to himself, “thy people, which thou broughtest out”, but boldly says: “Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against *Thy* people, which *Thou* has brought forth out of the land of Egypt?” (verse 11).

Moses reminds the Lord that He is Israel's Redeemer. This sinful, stiff-necked people are the Lord's redeemed, typically, by the blood of the Lamb, "with great power and a mighty hand". Moses further pleads for the name of God among the enemy: "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" (verse 12). Finally he reminds the Lord of the covenant established before the law of Sinai. He anticipates the argument of the apostle in Galatians:--

"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. iii. 17-19).

Moses, the man of law, and Paul, the man of grace, speak alike. Moses does not plead the covenant of Sinai—he goes back "four hundred and thirty years" earlier to the covenant with Abraham: "Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swearest by Thine Own Self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever" (verse 13).

In response to this prayer, the Lord repented of the evil He had purposed against Israel. Over against the Lord's repudiation, Moses had placed the Lord's redemption; against their own corruption, the degrading of the Lord's name among the heathen; against making of Moses himself a great nation, the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

### **Levi and Phinehas.**

Moses' intercession with God did not by any means indicate a hiding or minimizing of Israel's sin. We read that "Moses' anger waxed hot", and that, seeing that the covenant was already broken, he cast the tables of stone to the ground, breaking them on the mount. He cause Israel to realize their sin by compelling them to drink the bitter fluid compounded of the calcined image, and made Aaron to understand that he had brought a great sin upon Israel.

When Moses saw the extent of their corruption—"they were naked"—he, who had interceded for them with God, now reveals that covenant promises do not mean indulgence for sin, and three thousand men were slain by the sword of Levi, who were spared the wrath of God.

Psalm cvi. brings together the worship of the golden calf, and the sin of Baal-peor, recorded in Numb. xxv. There are several features that are common to the two records. The hint of uncleanness in Exod. xxxii. becomes an obvious fact in Numb. xxv. 1-3, 6-8. The execution by the sons of Levi in Exod. xxxii. corresponds to the command of Numb. xxv. 5: "Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." The added

zeal of Phinehas in some measure counterbalances the sin and fall of Aaron, for the Lord says:--

“Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him for an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel” (Numb. xxv. 12, 13).

This passage illuminates the true meaning of atonement; it is no “covering up” of sin: “Phinehas . . . . hath turned My wrath away . . . . and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” *In this case* the atonement did not save; *in our case* wrath is turned away, but the atonement is made by death other than our own. In both cases plague follows the idolatry and uncleanness, and with the solemn words of Rom. i. 27 in mind, some medical men believe this is to be the origin of one disease that is spreading among mankind to-day. The sons of Levi had an awful consecration that day (Exod. xxxii. 29). Moses had called: “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me”, and there followed the slaughter of the three thousand men by the sword of Levi.

Once more Moses is the intercessor, this time going so far as to say: “And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.” But, just as he himself had pleaded the grace of God to save Israel from being blotted out, so the Lord in His turn rejects Moses’ suggestion, saying: “Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” Whether Moses had the thought in mind that he could thereby make an atonement, we do not know—he had said to the people: “Peradventure, I shall make an atonement for your sin”—but the passage foreshadows the greater Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all.

Israel’s sin, while it did not bring about their extinction, yet put them at a greater distance from the Lord: “Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, My angel shall go before thee . . . . *I will send* an angel before thee . . . . *I will not go* up in the midst of thee” (xxxii. 34 - xxxiii. 3). While angelic leading may be blessed, it was by comparison a severe loss to Israel, for they had forfeited the Lord’s presence in their midst. We shall see more of this as we consider chapter xxxiii. The lessons are so many and so solemn that reiteration and application seem out of place. Exod. xxxii. is a chapter to read before the Lord, praying that there may be no present-day parallel with the position of Aaron and the people in our own walk.

Let us not say that the Lord delayeth; let us watch and pray; let us worship God in spirit, boasting in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

**#74. The presence and the glory (Exod. xxxiii.).  
pp. 173 - 179**

We take up the narrative at the point where the Lord promised to send His angel to go before Israel, but said that He Himself would not go up in the midst of them, lest He consumed them in the way. These were “evil tidings”, which brought about a general mourning. No man put on his ornaments, for the wearing of these was a sign of rejoicing, as abstention therefrom was of mourning. The Lord said to Moses: “Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people; if I had come one instant among you, I had destroyed you (*Horsley* and *De Wett*): therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do with thee” (Exod. xxxiii. 5). Here we have, set forth in symbol, the necessity for *repentance*.

Following this manifestation of repentance came the removal of the “tent” without the camp, indicating the necessity for separation from the prevailing ungodliness, a witness-bearing by active association. This “tabernacle” must not be confounded with the tabernacle already so fully described, for that was not then made. This one is called “The tabernacle of the congregation” (or “assembly”). The LXX translates this, “The tabernacle of witness”, and although there is no apparent connection between “congregation” and “witness”, we do not get the full intention of the Hebrew word *moed* unless we include the idea of testimony. *Ed* is the Hebrew word translated “witness” in Exod. xx. 16; *eduth* is the word translated, “the tabernacle of witness” in Numb. xvii. 7. *Moed*, translated “congregation” in Exod. xxxiii. 7, is rendered in Gen. i. 14 “for seasons”, and in Gen. xvii. 21 “at this set time”; also “feasts”, set feasts”, “solemnly”, etc.

This removal of the tabernacle “without the camp” was itself a witness, and the congregation that worshipped there was no longer “all Israel”, but “every one that sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation which was without the camp”. It is plainly around this feature that Heb. xiii. 13 is written, and about this self-same separation that the great cloud of “witnesses” are arrayed in Heb. xi. In this separated congregation we have in germ the idea of a church, “a called-out company” as *ekklesia* means. Exod. xxxiii. 8-11 must be read as a description of what happened subsequently, that is, when the true seeker after God had given his testimony by going without the camp. Then, each time after that, when Moses entered the tabernacle to commune with the Lord, these same men (and possibly others following their example) rose and worshipped, every man in his tent door. There is a precious lesson here. By his act of separation and devotion, each man turned his own dwelling-place into a sanctuary, much as the early church worshipped in houses, remembering all the time that their great Mediator was in the presence of God, and outside the camp.

There is strong emphasis here upon communion with God: “And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exod. xxxiii. 11). What a

glorious contrast to the obscene worship of the golden calf! Here is no visible image, just a small tent, and the cloudy pillar to indicate the presence of the Lord.

This peculiar prerogative of Moses is mentioned more than once, to show how specially favoured and honoured he was:--

“If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and I will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold” (Numb. xii. 6-8).

It is among the last things said of Moses, at his death, that “there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deut. xxxiv. 10).

Moses now faces the altered conditions, and seeks of the Lord guidance and renewed assurance: “See Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people, and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight” (Exod. xxxiii. 12). Here we are permitted to hear the communion of Moses with his God. How blessedly simple, intimate and direct it is! Moses neither overrated his own abilities, nor under-estimated the task before him. How was it possible, he argued, to reconcile such a task with the favour in which he stood with the Lord? So he continues: “Now, therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people” (verse 13).

Let us observe that Moses does not tell the Lord what to do, nor does he even voice his own conscious need of the Lord’s presence, but just asks, “Show me now Thy way”, adding, as an additional plea, “Consider that this nation is Thy people”.

There is no reference in the Lord’s first answer to the “way” or the “people”, but He met Moses’ initial fear and need by saying: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (verse 14). Moses had before him, perhaps a task more gigantic than has ever since fallen to man to perform, but here, at the outset, he is assured of rest. From now onward he may enjoy a continual sabbath, for the word for rest here is used by the Lord in Exod. xx. 11. So, when Moses responded to this gracious word of God, he did not speak of “bringing” up the people of Israel himself, but of the Lord “carrying” them: “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (verse 15).

### **“I will give you rest.”**

Here service takes on a new form—a more blessed form—it becomes fellowship. We cannot do better than turn to Matt. xi. to obtain an illustration of the principle set forth here. The whole setting of this chapter is one of doubt, disappointment and triumphant trust, John the Baptist had sent from prison saying: “Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?” The generation that had seen the Lord’s miracles and heard His words is next compared to fractious children who will neither mourn at funerals nor rejoice at weddings. The cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida are rebuked for their unbelief,

and it is then, at that time, and in these circumstances, that we read: “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (verses 25, 26). It is in this setting and context that the words of comfort follow: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (verses 28-30).

The following sentences taken from *With Christ in Palestine*, by A. T. Schofield, M.D., are suggestive:--

“I was looking at a very good commentary as to what ‘yoke’ is supposed to mean here, and I found it means ‘fellowship, restraint, and subjection’. No doubt these are three minor uses of a yoke . . . . but the chief great primary use of a ‘yoke’ is seldom grasped by Christian people; most are so occupied with the secondary uses I have named that its great purpose is entirely missed. A yoke first of all is a contrivance to enable oxen to pull a load along the road or across the field; ‘yoke’ is simply another word for ‘harness’. Harness is not put upon an animal primarily for subjection or restraint or fellowship; it is put on to enable it to draw a load.

Speaking now for a moment as a physician, who sees a great many nervous and broken-down people of all sorts, I find that the greater number are not only sick in their bodies, but also sick in their minds, and what they mostly suffer from is a complaint which I call ‘sore neck’.

What, then, had made the neck sore? It is that the collar either does not fit, or it has not been properly padded . . . . Christ has come to us and says, It is not enough for you to come to Me as weary and heavy laden and find rest for your conscience in Myself: you want some means of shielding your heart from all the petty worries and troubles . . . . and all the contrariety and meaningless vexations of this world of sorrow . . . . When the *yoke* is easy then the burden is light.

What, then, is this yoke padded with? The two materials mentioned are meekness and lowliness of heart . . . . I take it, meekness is our attitude towards man, and lowliness is the attitude towards God.”

It is something of this that we find in Exod. xxxiii. 15: “And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” Now it is in connection with the very fact that the Lord had spoken to Moses face to face, that we meet the statement: “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numb. xii. 3). It is evident that this meekness is displayed on many occasions when lesser souls would have given way to impatience. But alas for human nature! the meekest man on earth spoke unadvisedly with his lips and failed; *One* only could ever be the “perfecter of faith”. Moses reasoned that the presence of the Lord was the great evidence of His favour:--

“For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth” (Exod. xxxiii. 16).

### **The positive side of sanctification.**

“*So shall we be separated.*”—Here is a word in season for us all. Separation is, too often, a matter of “separation *from*”, a negative thing, whereas it should be “separation *to*”, the positive truth. Fellowship with the Lord is the great antidote to worldliness, but separation from worldliness alone has produced Pharisees and founded monasteries. Heb. xiii. 13, the oft-quoted passage, does *not* merely say: “Let us go forth therefore without the camp.” What it does say is: “Let us go forth therefore *unto Him* without the camp.”

Israel’s separation from the nations was evidence by their observance of clean and unclean meats: “I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put a difference between clean and unclean” (Lev. xx. 24, 25). Israel’s separation brought about this observance. It was because the Lord *had separated* them, that “therefore” they made the difference. Israel were not permitted to intermarry with the Canaanite, but this abstention did not make them separate. They abstained because they had been separated: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them . . . . for the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. vii. 1-6).

The sanctification which is summed up in a series of negatives is not the real thing. That is not scriptural sanctification which merely does *not* do this, does *not* go there, does *not* drink this, for we are solemnly warned against the false system which says: “Touch not, taste not, handle not.” Our positive sanctification is found in Him, and proceeds from this alone.

The Lord’s answer to Moses reveals the value, in His sight, of true intercession: “I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name” (Exod. xxxiii. 17).

### **Show me Thyself!**

Answered prayer beget prayer. The Lord’s promise of His presence stimulates Moses to a further request: “And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” What is the true burden of Moses’ request? Together with Israel, he had seen the glory of the Lord manifest upon Sinai, and in the cloud. Moreover, he had entered into the presence of the Lord, and the Lord had talked with him face to face, and the similitude of the Lord he had seen. Yet, upon the gracious promise of the Lord’s presence with him, he is emboldened to press further and say: “Show me Thy glory.”

The word “show” involves seeing. A similar request is found in Song of Sol. ii. 14, “*Let me see Thy countenance*”. Moses said, “*Let me see Thy glory*”. He evidently sought something fuller than he had experienced hitherto. He had been “shewed” the pattern of the tabernacle; this was something he had “seen”, and in the Lord’s answer to this request he uses the same word, saying, “My face *shall not be seen*” (Exod. xxxiii. 23). Earlier in Exodus we have means adopted “lest the people break

through . . . . *to gaze*". When Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders ascended the Mount, we read that "they *saw* the God of Israel". In the passage we are considering Moses must have desired something more than had been vouchsafed on the earlier occasion. Moses said, "Let me see *Thy glory*". The Lord answered:--

"Thou canst not see *My face*" (Exod. xxxiii. 20).

"While My glory passeth by, I will put thee in a clift in the rock, and will cover thee with My hand, while I pass by: And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen" (Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23).

Does it seem evident that in this passage "glory" and "face" are interchangeable in some way? *Spurrell* translates Exod.xxxiii. 18-23 as follows:--

"Furthermore he said: O show me, I pray Thee, THINE OWN SELF! . . . . then will I turn aside . . . . this the hollow of My hand, and thou shalt behold Me retiring, but My face shall not be seen."

This was the fullest revelation that could then be given to any mortal man.

The prayer of Moses is answered for us all in II Cor. iv. 4 and 6:--

"The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God . . . . the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the FACE OF JESUS CHRIST."

That this is connected with Exod. xxxiii. and xxxiv. is seen by a reference to II Cor. iii. There we read of the passing glory of the old covenant, and the failing glory of the *face of Moses* (II Cor. iii. 7). All that the Lord could do for Moses was to let His goodness pass before him and proclaim the Name of the Lord before him. Moses needed protection from the fuller personal revelation of the Lord, and the clift in the rock and covering hand might well speak to Moses of his need of Christ. The glory of the law fades in the presence of "the glory that excelleth" (II Cor. iii. 10, 11). It was nevertheless a gracious revelation to Moses. The proclamation of the Name, its effect upon Moses, the altered covenant, and the summary of its terms given in Exod. xxxiv., must be reserved for our next paper.

## The Epistle to the Hebrews.

### #62. The birthright (xii. 15-25). pp. 10 - 14

We now pass from that which is common to all sons to that which is peculiar to the firstborn, namely, the birthright. It will help us in the approach to this section to see the structure first:--

#### Heb. xii. 15-25.

- A | 15. | a | Looking diligently.
  - b | Lest any man fall back.
- B | 16, 17. The birthright bartered (*Prototokia*).
- C | 18-21. Ye are not come. Six "ands". SINAI.
  - C | 22, 23. But ye are not come. Seven "ands". SION.
- B | 23, 24. The birthright enjoyed (*Prototokos*).
- A | 25. | a | See.
  - b | Lest ye refuse.

The section opens with a warning: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." It does not say "fall from the grace of God", but "*fail* of the grace of God". *Hustereo*, "to come short", occurs in Heb. iv. 1, and that passage partially explains what we are considering here: "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." The context speaks of Israel's forty years' wandering in the wilderness, and their failure, though redeemed, to "go on unto perfection". We are not dealing with sonship, but with birthright; not salvation, but possession, not deliverance from Egypt, but entry into Canaan. The warning is threefold:--

1. Lest any fail (come short) of the grace of God.
2. Lest any root of bitterness spring up.
3. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau.

What is this root of bitterness? The apostle is quoting from Deut. xxix., and a reference to that passage will show his meaning clearly. Moses is addressing the people of Israel before his death, at the close of forty years' wandering in the wilderness, and in verse 18 says:--

"Lest there be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood."

Here is the "root of bitterness", a heart that turns away from God, or, in the language of Heb. iii. 12:--

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

The words of Amos vi. 12 seem to have some reflection upon the “peaceable *fruit* of righteousness” and the “*root* of bitterness”; “Ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.” The effect of this root of bitterness is “trouble” and “defilement”. A reference to John xviii. 28 will show the nature of the defilement—something that was profane, something from which a Jew would shrink.

We have next to learn in what sense Esau was a fornicator, and what bearing it has upon the teaching of this passage. There are two outstanding events in Esau’s history that are recorded against him. One is the selling of his birthright for a mess of pottage; the other his marriage with women outside the covenant:--

“And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?” (Gen. xxvii. 46).

The word “fornication” is not to be taken literally, but is rather explained by the apostle to refer to “a profane person”. Now this word profane (*bebelos*) is made up of the particle *be*, denoting privation, and *belos*, a *threshold of a temple*; hence one who was debarred from entry into a holy place. In the same way the Latin word *profanus* means one who stand *pro fano*—at a distance from a temple; hence, too, our English word “fane”, a church. Esau had no appreciation of either his birthright or the holy nature of the covenant of God. He becomes a warning to the Hebrews who were being tempted to cast away the precious and enduring substance of their heavenly birthright for the mess of pottage of present carnal ease.

Verse 17 is a complete explanation of the difficult passage in Heb. vi. There the exhortation is to go on unto perfection. “But”, says the apostle, “it is impossible for those who were once enlightened . . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance”. So, of Esau it is written: “For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” Esau and his example stand out in the closing portion of Hebrews, as the children of Israel in the wilderness stand out in the opening section (chaps iii. and iv.). The warning is for the Hebrews who, like their fathers and like Esau, were in danger of drawing back, turning aside, losing the heavenly for the sake of the earthly. Heb. viii. 7 continues, “Then should no place have been sought for the second”, showing that the two covenants are here in view. The apostle now brings before the mind the two mountains, Sinai and Sion, which are explained in Gal. iv. as representing the two covenants, Sinai standing for “Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children”, and Sion for “Jerusalem that is above, which is free, and the mother of us all” (Gal. iv. 21-23).

We have in Heb. xii. 18-21 Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, and in Heb. xii. 22-24 Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and it is under the new covenant, and not under the old, that the birthright can be enjoyed.

The figure called *polysyndeton* (or “many ands”) is employed in the description of both covenants. Let us notice it:--

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, AND that burned with fire, AND unto blackness, AND darkness, AND tempest, AND the sound of a trumpet, AND the voice of words.”

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, AND unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, AND to myriads of angels, a full assembly, AND to a church of firstborn ones having been enrolled in heaven, AND to God the Judge of all, AND to the spirits of righteous ones having been perfected, AND to the Mediator of the new covenant—Jesus, AND to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

It will be seen that a due observation of these “ands” will help us to keep each feature in its place.

The A.V. leads one to read: “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn”, as though it were one company. *Paneguris*, the word translated “general assembly”, means an assembly met together for some festal or joyful occasion, and the construction of the passage necessitates the translation: “And to myriads, a festal assembly of angels.”

We learn that myriads of angels were associated with Sinai and the giving of the law; “The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Psa. lxxviii. 17; *see also* Deut. xxxiii. 2). If these angels were at mount Sinai, they shall also be at Mount Sion, and there they will be a “festal assembly”, for “marriage of the Lamb” will have come.

This church is the church of the firstborn, a special company, those who did not despise their birthright, nor barter it away for a morsel of meat. This same company is referred to as: “The spirits of just men made perfect”, each expression having been used in the context of chapters xi. or xii. In xii. 9 we read of “The Father of spirits”; in xi. “the righteous” are in view (x. 38; xi. 4, 7, 8), and in xi. 40 it is the perfecting: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be perfected.”

The close association of the “better thing”, the “better country”, and the “better resurrection”, with this perfecting shows that here in Heb. xii. we are taken to that time when the church of the firstborn shall complete and enter into its inheritance. Here Abraham will set foot in that city for which he looked; Moses will receive that reward unto which he had respect; all who believed, yet died, not having received the promise, shall enter into their birthright. The mediator is not Moses, neither is the blood the blood of bulls and goats: “Jesus” is the Mediator of the new covenant, and this blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel.

This heavenly Sion is before the apostle right through the epistle. The “so great salvation” of ii. 3 is connected with the “world to come” of which the apostle spoke in ii. 5, and the “glory” unto which the Captain of salvation was leading (ii. 10). The words: “He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (ii. 11), the thought of the Captain being “perfected” through sufferings (ii. 10), find their echo in the words: “God is not



**#63. Love and accepted service (xii. 25 - xiii. 6).**  
**pp. 41 - 47**

The epistle now draws to its conclusion. Much that these Hebrews had prized and valued as permanent has been shattered and is passing away. This element is introduced in the opening chapter. Speaking of the creation, the works of the Lord's hands, it says: "They shall perish, but Thou remainest" (Heb. i. 10, 11). This finds its echo in Heb. xii. 27: "The removing of things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that are not shaken may remain."

All through the epistle there is the exchange of the passing for the permanent. The law concerning the Aaronic priesthood is disannulled and gives place to Christ, the Priest after the power of an endless life (Heb. vii. 16-18). The tabernacle made with hands gives place to the true tabernacle not made with hands, which the Lord pitched and not man (Heb. viii. 1, 2; ix. 24). The old covenant is not found faultless, and is ready to vanish away, giving place to the new covenant of which the Lord is the Mediator (Heb. viii. 7-13; ix. 15). The sacrifices and offerings of the old system pass away in the presence of that one sacrifice offered once for all (Heb. x. 1-14). The Hebrews were to learn that the Mosaic law was transient, and that the kingdom that remains and which cannot be moved is found alone under the sway of the true King-Priest, of the order of Melchisedec, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Flowing from the contemplation of these solemn issues comes a series of practical exhortations. The first is: "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 28, 29). The words: "for our God is a consuming fire" are taken from Deut. iv. 24, and come in a context of deepest solemnity. Chapter iv. opens with a warning concerning adding to or diminishing from the Word of God, and then refers to the evil of Baal-Peor. What took place there is described in Numb. xxv. The close relationship between idolatry and immoral practices will explain the sudden reference to marriage, &c., in Heb. xiii. In Deut. iv. 11, 12 also is the reference to the mountain that burned with fire, and "the voice of the words".

The Hebrews would be warned that the service of God was not something within the authority of man to arrange. God Himself had set aside the visible, external and typical; let them therefore remember that acceptable worship would now be concerned with the heavenly, the true and antitypical. The word "acceptably" is *euarestos*. It occurs as follows:--

"With such sacrifices God is *well pleased*" (Heb. xiii. 16).

"Working in you that which is *well pleasing*" (Heb. xiii. 21).

These references look back to the example of Enoch, and to the divine comment: "Without faith it is impossible to *please* Him."

In close and startling proximity to the need for acceptable service and the fact that God is a consuming fire come the words:--

- “Let brotherly love remain” (Heb. xiii. 1).
- “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers” (Heb. xiii. 2).
- “Remember them that are in bonds” (Heb. xiii. 3).
- “Marriage is honourable in all” (Heb. xiii. 4).

When we remember that the glorious doctrine of Ephesians is linked by the apostle with its practical outworking expressed in the relationship of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, and that similar warnings concerning immoral acts are included (*see* Eph. v. and vi.), we are the more prepared to learn that our whole life, with its complete circle of outgoings, is involved in this blessed and glorious service. Carnal ordinances, baptisms, fasts, feasts and ceremonies have given place to hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, bodies washed with pure water, and heart service in every sphere of life.

Brotherly love and the entertainment of strangers are a part of acceptable service to God. This is seen by a further reference to xiii. 15, 16: “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” If we stop here, however, we are not rendering *acceptable* service. Brotherly love and hospitality must be added; therefore the passage continues: “But to do good and to have fellowship, forget not.” The words “forget not” are the structural link with Heb. xiii. 1, 2:--

- “Be not forgetful” (verse 2).
- “For with SUCH sacrifices God is *well pleased*” (verse 16).

This close connection between God and the brotherhood in service has been expressed in Heb. x. 19-24:--

“Let us draw near . . . . Let us hold fast . . . . Let us consider one another.”

While we have no room for “humanism”, we are also sure that a mere doctrinal exactness is not acceptable with God. The true service embraces the Lord and His people, and is sound both in doctrine and practice. So the third reference to “acceptable” stresses “doing”:--

“Now the God of peace (literally ‘of the peace’, something already mentioned and understood, Heb. vii. 2; xii. 11, 14), that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the age-abiding covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, doing in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

Philippians, the parallel epistle of the mystery, has the same emphasis:--

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and *the God of peace* be with you” (Phil. iv. 9).

Hospitality (*philoxenia*), “the entertainment of strangers” is urged upon believer more than once in the epistle. Rom. xii. 10 and 13 unite “brotherly love” with “hospitality” as does Heb. xiii. 1, 2. One of the qualifications of the bishop was that he should be “given to hospitality” (I Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 8), and I Pet. iv. 9 says: “Use hospitality one to another, without grudging”, for an element of unwillingness blights service to the Lord. The onus of hospitality in our present mode of life often falls upon the woman. Here is an act of acceptable service, as truly rendered to God as the prayer, praise and pulpit utterance of her husband. Indeed, Heb. xiii. 15, 16 shows that worship in the assembly may be vitiated by the lack of consideration for others afterwards. The times for true acceptable service are not only 11 and 6:30, but they may have as much to do with clean sheets as with robes of righteousness, and in dispensing the bread that perisheth as with the Word of truth.

We have had brotherly love and love of strangers (*philadelphia* and *philoxemia*). We are now reminded of love that goes out to those who, though not present with us, need our sympathy: “Remember them which are bound” (Heb. xiii. 3). God is ever “mindful” (same word) of man “and visitest him”. We are neither to forget hospitality nor to omit sympathy, for the full quotation of verse 3 is much beyond mere remembrance.

“Remember them which are bound, AS BOUND WITH THEM, and them which suffer adversity, AS BEING YOURSELVES ALSO IN THE BODY.”

This sympathy has been spoken of earlier: “Ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassions of me in my bonds” (Heb. x. 33, 34). The intimate relationship between believers has been expressed in I Cor. xii. 13, 14, 26: “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.” So sympathy goes out to those in bonds, as bound with them, and to those in adversity, as being equally in the body. There is much to be said for the interpretation that makes the passage equivalent to, “For you also are still in the flesh, and liable at any moment to similar adversity”.

The statement in verse 4 that marriage is honourable, and its most intimate relationships undefiled, seems to have been necessitated by the presence of those who, like the Essenes, taught that marriage should be shunned. The word “undefiled” in this particular is noteworthy, for it occurs in but one other place, namely, in Heb. vii. 26, where it speaks of our “undefiled” High Priest. This is a sufficient answer to those who would impose celibacy upon God’s ministers, and is a word in season for us on whom the night of I Tim. iv. 1-3 is fast descending. The danger is all the other way. The decrying of marriage cannot but lead many into the paths of Baal-Peor, the doctrine of Balaam and the teaching of that woman Jezebel. *George Bernard Shaw* writes on page 666 of *John O’ London’s Weekly* under the heading *The Right to Motherhood*:--

“No political constitution will ever succeed unless it includes the recognition of an absolute right to sexual experience, and is untainted by the Pauline or romantic view of such experience as simple in itself . . . . legalizing polygamy, because there are more adult women in the country than men.”

Over against this insidious propaganda that fills the columns of certain periodicals, we must place with the utmost resolution the words of Holy Scripture, remembering that Heb. xiii. 4 is not “Pauline”, but “given by inspiration of God”. And however the evils that are advocated may be glossed under the titles “Free love”, “Liberty of the Sexes”, &c., it still stands written: “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” We are still in sight of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, and there we have already seen is “God, the Judge of all”. And of that city it is written:--

“The fearful, and unwatching, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstones: which is the second death . . . . And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth . . . . but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. xxi. 8, 27).

“The church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (Heb. xii. 23).

“Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. xii. 29).

For certain purposes we speak of some sins as social sins. Some acts are crimes, some as civil offences, but for the believer (as in the case of David) murder and adultery become sins against heaven and against God (Psa. li. 4). This but anticipates the kingdom of God on earth, when God’s will shall then be law as it is in heaven.

We drew attention just now to Deut. iv. with its twofold sin, and we have seen that marriage and its travesty are brought before us in Heb. xiii. Where is idolatry? Were the Hebrews warned against that sin? And were they in any danger of falling into it? The answer is that idolatry is mentioned, and the Hebrews were in danger of committing it.

“Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have” (Heb. xiii. 5).

“Without covetousness” is *philarguros* = “not loving silver”. We have, therefore, *philadelphia*, *philoxenia*, and *philarguros* in sequence, with true married love implied in verse 3. True service turns on love, and love out of place or spent on the wrong object is at the bottom of all evil. “The love of money (*philarguria*) is a root of all evil” (I Tim. vi. 10).

“Men shall be lovers of their own selves . . .	<i>philautoi.</i>
Covetous . . .	<i>philarguroi.</i>
Haters of good men . . .	<i>aphilagathoi.</i>
Lovers of pleasures . . .	<i>philedonoi.</i>
Rather than lovers of God” (II Tim. iii. 2-4). . .	<i>philotheioi.</i>

This catalogue of the evils that shall characterize the “last days” or the “perilous times” begins and ends with false love, and has at its centre lack of love for the good.

Now this covetousness under the form of *pleonexia* (“the wish to have more”) is condemned as “idolatry” (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5). The corrective for “the wish to have more” and for “covetousness” and “the love of money” is the conscious presence of the Lord:--

“Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. xiii. 5, 6).

At the risk of wearying the reader with the truth that “Philippians is parallel with Hebrews” we draw attention once more to the teaching of Phil. iv.:-

“Let your moderation be known unto all men, *The Lord is near* . . . . I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *to be content* . . . . Ye have well done, that ye did *communicate* with my affliction” (Phil. iv. 5, 11, 14).

Covetousness and contentment cannot thrive together. Phil. ii. 13, 14 makes the inworking of God parallel with Heb. xiii. 21, and absence of murmuring parallel with the contentment of Heb. xiii. 5.

Murmuring, fornication and idolatry are brought together in I Cor. x. 7-10, which together with “tempting” the Lord in the wilderness is similar teaching to that of Heb. iii. & iv. and also to the theme of the book. Further, I Cor. ix. 24, x. 1-14, Phil. iii., and Hebrews as a whole, all dealing with running for a prize, being perfected, becoming a “castaway” or disqualified by drawing back to “perdition” or ending in “destruction”, with the citizenship, the heavenly city, and inter-related themes are a stronger witness to the peculiar teaching and purpose of these epistles than any criticism can overthrow.

We can spare no more space in this article to go further into the chapter, but before we close we will give the structure of the section so that what had been seen, and what is yet to be studied, may be kept in their right relationship.

#### **Heb. xii. 25 - xiii. 21.**

- A | xii. 25 - xiii. 4. | a | Things that remain.
  - b | Acceptable service (*euarestos*).
  - c | Forget not hospitality (*epilanthanomai*).
- B | xiii. 5-8. | d | Conversation (*tropos*, manner of life).
  - e | Remember them that have the rule over you.
- C | xiii. 9-13. | f | Established with grace, not meats.
  - g | His own blood.
  - h | Bearing His reproach.
- A | xiii. 14-16. | a | No remaining city.
  - c | Forget not to have fellowship (*epilanthanomai*).
  - b | Acceptable sacrifice (*euaresteo*).
- B | xiii. 17-19. | e | Obey them that have the rule over you.
  - d | Live honestly (*anastrepho*).
- C | xiii. 20, 21. | g | Through the blood of the *aionian* covenant.
  - f | Perfect you.
    - h | Doing that which is well pleasing (*euarestos*).

**#64. Without the camp (xiii. 7-17).**  
**pp. 84 - 90**

There are two passages of the O.T. in which appears the promise quoted in Heb. xiii. 5: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The first is Deut. xxxi. 6; the second, I Chron. xxviii. 20. In the former Moses is addressing the children of Israel, saying:--

"The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee, and He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said . . . . Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. xxxi. 3-6).

This is exactly in line with the theme of Hebrews—the pressing on into the land of promise, and triumph over opposing forces, encouraged by the presence of the Lord (Joshua here is a type of Christ, the true Captain of salvation).

The latter passage deals with the building of the temple by Solomon:--

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord" (I Chron. xxviii. 20).

This typifies the house built by Christ, "the Son", as contrasted with that in which Moses was a servant (Heb. iii. 5, 6).

The reader may remember the line of the hymn: "I'll never, no never, no never, forsake." This iteration and reiteration of negatives may be employed merely to meet the demands of metre and rhythm, but even so, it is outdone by the passage, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee", which contains in the original, no less than five negatives. Literally rendered it reads:--

"*No*, I will *not* leave thee; *nor* yet *not* by *no* means I forsake thee."

This is the ground of contentment, the antidote for covetousness, the secret of perseverance.

The great Leader (*archegos*, ii. 10; and xii. 2), the true Joshua, appointed others as subordinates, who also are called "leaders", for the words "them which have the rule over you" are literally "your leaders" in both verses 7 and 17 of chapter xiii. Let us observe what is said of the leaders:--

“Remember them which are your leaders, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and unto the ages.”

“Obey them that are your leaders, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.”

Some very important characteristics of the true leader are given here:--

1. They speak the Word of God.
2. Their faith is such that it is worth imitating.
3. The issue of their conversation is Christ.
4. They watch on behalf of your souls.
5. They will have to render an account.

The reference to “imitating” makes one think of Phil. iii. 17-19: “Be joint-imitators of me, and mark those who walk . . . . whose end is perdition.”

A great variety of opinion has been expressed by writers on the meaning of the word “end” in Heb. xiii. 7. Some take it to refer to the martyrdom or death of these leaders. The word is *ekbasis*, and occurs in but one other place in the N.T., namely, I Cor. x. 13, where the A.V. translates it “a way of escape”. Has it ever struck the reader that it is somewhat strange to read of “a way of escape” being provided, “that ye may be able to bear it”? If we escape the temptation, how do we bear it? A more accurate rendering and one which seems to give the apostle’s meaning is, “God . . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will the temptation *make the issue*, that ye may be able to bear it.”

This verse in I Cor. x. is in a context exactly parallel with Heb. iii. and iv. Just as the trial of the Corinthians was bearable because they knew that God held the issues in His hand, because the trials had an object and a purpose of which they had been made aware, so in Heb. xiii. 7 we hear once again the words of Heb. xii. 11, “nevertheless afterward”.

In Heb. xiii. 17 the Hebrew believers are exhorted to obey their leaders. *Hegeomai*, the word for a leader, means to think or esteem, then to lead and to rule. We read in Acts xv. 22 that Judas and Silas were “chief” men among the brethren. In Acts xiv. 12 Paul was reckoned the “chief” speaker. The apostle enjoined a ready obedience and submission to any who were scripturally qualified to lead, and this would be readily yielded by a believer to any who manifested the mark of the true pastor. “They watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” The leader who answers to this description has no sinecure. He has a position of utmost responsibility; He is accountable to the Lord, and must continually act in the light of this: “that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Some connect the words, “that they may do it”, with the rendering of an account at the judgment seat of Christ. Others connect the words with the present watching. Possibly the double thought is intended, for whatever is true here has its counterpart when the

account is given: “Look to yourselves, that ye destroy not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward” (II John 8, R.V.). This reference in II John 8 is followed by a warning concerning the doctrine of Christ.

In Heb. xiii. 8, immediately following the reference to the leaders, and immediately before the warning not to be carried away with divers and strange doctrines, comes the glorious passage: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and unto the ages.” The same truth lies at the threshold of the epistle: “They shall perish: but Thou remainest . . . . They shall be changed, but Thou art the same” (Heb. i. 11, 12). Through all the changes in this creation, both past and future, the Lord remains unchanged; throughout all changes in the dealings of God with men, the decaying and waning of the old covenant, as well as of the old creation, there is One Who remains the same. This is the bed-rock of our faith. This was the issue of the conversation of the leaders whose faith was to be followed. This was the corrective against the divers and strange doctrines which they were to avoid.

These words are parallel with the titles “Alpha and Omega”, “Which was and which is, and which is to come”. In the “yesterday” we know that Abraham saw the day of Christ, that Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: in the “to-day” He is still the same. He is still the one great Counter-attraction that more than compensates for all reproach or loss, and this will remain unalterably true throughout the ages.

The divers and strange doctrines that were likely to “carry these believers about” as by adverse currents, were evidently closely connected with “meats”, and these can but refer to all those things that had been left behind:--

“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience: which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Heb. ix. 9, 10).

The glorious standing given to the believer in Christ by the gospel has no room for the shadowy sanctity pertaining to “meats”:--

“But meat commendeth us not to God; for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse” (I Cor. viii. 8).

These things of the past are on the same level as circumcision:--

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (I Cor. vii. 19).

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Rom. xiv. 17, 18).

We saw in a preceding article that the thought of “acceptable service” runs through the closing chapter of Hebrews, and his passage from Romans follows the same theme.

To us, at the present time, this scruple regarding meats seems to have no parallel. We are not concerned about food having been offered to idols, neither are we under any law that divides meats into clean and unclean. At the same time it will not take us long to discover that a great deal passes as “holiness” and “privilege” which rests, not upon Christ, but upon accessories that have their basis in the flesh. Let us have none of them. All distinctions have been buried in the tomb, and in the new creation they cannot exist:--

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. xiii. 10-14).

We may be assisted in the understanding of this passage by the following subdivision:--

- A1 | Grace not meats. We have an altar.
- B1 | Bodies . . . . . blood . . . . . without the camp.
- A2 | Jesus, that He might sanctify.
- B2 | His own blood, suffered without the gate.
- A3 | Let us go forth unto Him.
- B3 | Without the camp.
- A4 | His reproach bearing.
- B4 | We have no continuing city.

We have here two alternating themes, one dealing with sanctification, the other pointing outside the camp or gate. Sanctification is dealt as something beyond the ceremonial and typical separation involved in “meats”: it has to do with “grace” and an altar totally distinct from Israel after the flesh. Some have taught that the words, “we have an altar”, refer to the Lord’s Table and the Lord’s Supper, a doctrine we do not think there is any need to use space in confuting. Others teach that our altar is the cross. The cross throughout the N.T. is spoken of as a symbol of shame, and in Gal. iii. 13 the death on the tree is a death under the curse of the law. Matt. xxiii. 19 declares that the altar is greater than the gift upon it, and that the altar sanctifies the gift. We never read that the cross was greater than the glorious offering of Christ, neither is there the remotest suggestion that the cross sanctified the sacrifice of Christ. Full well we know the reverse is the case.

When we read the O.T. directions concerning the altar and its treatment, we are not left in doubt as to the altar that “we have”. The altar built of stone had to be left untouched by the tool of man, for that would pollute it (Exod. xx. 25). The altar was cleansed, atoned for, anointed and sanctified, and it was most holy ( Exod. xxix. 36, 37). There is no difficulty to faith in believing both that the Lord, in the offering of that one Sacrifice, became both the redeeming Passover Lamb, the whole Burnt Offering for acceptance, and the Sin Offering under the curse, and, not only so, but that He, at once the Sacrifice and Sin Bearer, was at the same time High Priest, Altar and Mercy Seat,

combining the Sin Offering, burnt to ashes without the camp, with the blood of atonement taken within the veil.

The apostle here in Heb. xiii. 11 refers to the offering on the day of atonement, which also figures in Heb. ix., and he quotes Lev. xvi. 27. The actual law upon which the apostle builds his argument is expressed in Lev. vi. 30: “And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt with fire.”

The position “without the camp” and “without the gate” puts an end to Judaism and the old covenant. Those who have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. x. 19) will also have grace given to go with Him without the camp, leaving behind the types and shadows that could never perfect nor touch the conscience.

There is a word of warning here that it may not be unprofitable to give and to heed. Heb. xiii. 13 does not say: “Let us go forth without the camp.” There are many who, by temperament, are “separatists”. Three clauses need to be added to the above quotation to make it true:--

1. The addition of “therefore”.
2. The placing of “unto Him” before “without the camp”.
3. The closing phrase, “bearing His reproach”.

“*Therefore.*”—Our removal from “the camp” of organized and carnal must be based upon the work of Christ, and not upon our own inclinations. Further, we go out “unto Him”; if He is rejected and outside the camp, then we go there too, but in itself, the position of being “outside” has no attractions for us; we go there because it is “unto Him”. Then, the added clause, “bearing His reproach”, teaches us that we are not dealing with words, but realities, and Heb. xi. 24-27 reveals the seriousness of the step. The experiences of Heb. x. 32-35 are the experiences of His “reproach” and are not to be entered upon lightly.

The statement in verse 14: “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come” turns us back to Heb. xi. 8-16, where Abraham and his seed, though heirs of God, voluntarily became strangers and pilgrims on the earth, declaring plainly by their withdrawal outside the camp, “that they seek a country, wherefore God hath prepared for them a city”.

This is true separation and sanctity, and is set over against the “meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances” that obtained during the time of type and shadow.

“Christ being come” (Heb. ix. 11) has made the difference. Christ has ascended to the right hand of God, Christ suffered without the gate. These facts give us our twofold position: “Let us draw near!” “Let us go forth!” Hebrews recognizes no middle course.

“Outside the camp” and “within the veil” find their equivalent in the prison epistles where we are seated together in the heavenlies, we find our citizenship in heaven, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, having no room for the elements of the world, or for its attempts at sanctity. We, too, shall find that as we set our mind on things above, where Christ is sitteth at the right hand of God, there will be a corresponding mortifying of the members that are on the earth.

**#65. The Great Shepherd, and the adjusting of the believer  
(xiii. 18-25).  
pp. 123 - 128**

We now consider the closing portion of this wonderful epistle: “Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.” Paul continually expressed a desire for the prayers of the saints on this behalf. The following may be taken as samples:--

“Ye also helping together by *prayer*” (II Cor. i. 11).

“*Praying* . . . . for all saints and for me” (Eph. vi. 18, 19).

“Finally, brethren, *pray* for us” (II Thess. iii. 1).

His reference to a “good conscience” is also quite characteristic, and especially when he has been touching upon the passing of the faith of his fathers:--

“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day”  
(Acts xxiii. 1).

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers . . . . I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts xxiv. 14-16).

Paul has much to say concerning the conscience, but this is better dealt with as a separate subject.

His request that these Hebrews should pray for him that he might be restored the sooner, and the reference to Timothy being “set at liberty”, or “dismissed”, show that those to whom the epistle was written knew who the writer was and the circumstances in which he was then placed. We do not, and it is evident that such knowledge is unnecessary for the understanding of the epistle.

The writer of the epistle calls it a “word of exhortation” and “a letter in few words”. Whether the word *apoluo* should be interpreted as “set at liberty”, as from prison, or “dismissed” in the sense of being sent on a journey, we cannot decide. The salutation from those of Italy (verse 24) would express the desire for unity between those who were

Jews by nature and those who were Gentiles, but whether the writer was actually in Italy at the time of writing cannot be decided from these words.

We now give our attention, in closing, to the prayer of the apostle for the Hebrews to whom he had written this word of exhortation.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the *aitonian* covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to Whom be glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen” (Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

The apostle often speaks of the God of peace toward the close of an epistle:--

“Now the God of *peace* be with you all. Amen” (Rom. xv. 33).

“And the God of *peace* shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. xvi. 20).

“Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in *peace*; and the God of love and of *peace* shall be with you” (II Cor. xiii. 11).

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of *peace* shall be with you” (Phil. iv. 9).

“And the very God of *peace* sanctify you wholly” (I Thess. v. 23).

“Now the Lord of *peace* Himself, give you *peace* always, by all means” (II Thess. iii. 16).

It was the lot of the apostle Paul continually to stir up strife. He likens his whole life's ministry to a conflict, yet he ever desired, and hoped for peace.

The emphasis here in Heb. xiii. 20 is upon the resurrection, “that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus”. This is the only place in the epistle where the resurrection of Christ is specifically mentioned. In Romans the resurrection is prominent, and this is so in I & II Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, but in Hebrews the emphasis is upon the ascension; the seated Priest Who has passed through the heavens to the right hand of God. That there should be no occasion to say that the epistle to the Hebrews takes no cognizance of the resurrection, however, this passage stands written. That resurrection is acknowledged and essential to the doctrine of the epistle, a reference to Heb. vii. 16, 23, 24 and 28 will show, and its presence in the great examples of faith (xi. 19, 22 and 35) confirms its place in the scheme of the epistle.

Christ is here called “that great Shepherd of the sheep”. This, it is suggested, is an allusion to Moses: “Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock?” (Isa. lxiii. 11). Moses was the shepherd of the sheep, Christ the *great* Shepherd of the sheep. Moses was brought up out of the sea, Christ was brought up again from the *dead*.

As the Shepherd, Christ is presented to us in a threefold capacity in the N.T. As the *good* Shepherd He gives His *life* for the sheep (John x. 11). [The word “life” being strictly “soul” has reference to the shedding of blood]. As the *great* Shepherd He is seen as the One brought again from the dead (Heb. xiii. 20). As the *chief* Shepherd He is yet to appear and give a crown of glory to the faithful under-shepherds left in charge of the

flock of God (I Pet. v. 2, 4). These three titles correspond with the three “appearings” of Heb. ix. 23-28, the order of the first two being changed.

The word “great” of Heb. xiii. 20 may read with the clause, “through the blood of the *aionian* covenant”, or it may indicate that Christ was raised from the dead because the blood of the covenant had been shed and all things pertaining to sin and salvation had been dealt with.

“Make you perfect” (*katarizo*) has in it the idea of adjusting to new circumstances. For example, it is used for “mending” nets (Matt. iv. 21). It is rendered, “perfectly joined together”, in connection with “divisions”, in I Cor. i. 10, Gal. vi. 1 renders it “restore” where a fall or rupture had occurred. *Katartismos* is the word used in Eph. iv. 12 to explain the work of the new ministry given after the great change of Acts xxviii. This is the intention in Heb. xi. 3, where the “ages were adjusted”, and in Heb. x. 5, “the body prepared” for the Lord when the time came for the setting aside of sacrifices and offerings. To offer acceptable service these Hebrew believers were under the necessity of being “fitted”, “mended”, “restored”, or “adjusted” to the new dispensation and to the terms of the new covenant. This is also true of ourselves. If we are members of the one body, blessed under the terms of the mystery, we must be adjusted or fitted to our new calling before we shall be acceptable. Hence the prayer of Eph. i. and Col. i. with this in view. Hence, also, the special ministry of Eph. iv.

This acceptable service is summed up in the words of Heb. xiii. 21, “to do His will”, and this is true for every dispensation and phase of the divine plan. It is true of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. vi. 10), as well as of the mystery (Eph. i. 9). It is the goal of all prayer (Col. i. 9, iv. 12). The will of God comprises the whole work for which Christ came, lived and died (Heb. x. 7, 9, 10). The will of God sums up all service (Heb. x. 36; xiii. 21).

All is “through Christ, to Whom be glory unto the ages of the ages, Amen”. Here is the purging of the conscience from dead works in order that service to the living God may begin (Heb. ix. 14). This alone makes service acceptable. Throughout the epistle there has been one movement, away from all else to Christ, and it will refresh us to go over the epistle with this in mind before we finish.

(1) SPEAKING OF THE WORD HE SAITH:

“God, Who at sundry times . . . . spake in time past . . . . by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us in Son” (Heb. i. 1, 2).

(2) SPEAKING OF ANGELS HE SAITH:

“To which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?” (Heb. i. 5).

“Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits . . . . But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Heb. i. 7, 8).

(3) SPEAKING OF CREATION HE SAITH:

“They shall perish, but Thou remainest . . . . They shall be changed, but Thou art the same” (Heb. i. 11, 12).

(4) SPEAKING OF ADAM HE SAITH:

“But now we see not all things put under Him, but we see Jesus . . . . crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. ii. 8, 9).

(5) SPEAKING OF MOSES HE SAITH:

“Moses was verily faithful . . . . as a servant . . . . But Christ as a Son over His own house” (Heb. iii. 5, 6).

(6) SPEAKING OF JOSHUA HE SAITH:

“For if Joshua had given them rest, then he would not afterward have spoken of another day” (Heb. iv. 8).

(7) SPEAKING OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD HE SAITH:

“They were truly many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood” (Heb. vii. 23, 24).

(8) SPEAKING OF THE HIGH PRIEST’S WORK HE SAITH:

“Into the second (tabernacle) went the high priest alone every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.”

“But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having found *aionian* redemption for us” (Heb. ix. 7-12).

(9) SPEAKING OF THE SACRIFICES HE SAITH:

“Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me . . . . we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. x. 1-10).

(10) SPEAKING OF FAITH HE SAITH:

“By faith Abel, Enoch, Noah,” &c.

“Looking off unto Jesus the Captain and Perfecter of faith” (Heb. xi., xii. 1, 2).

(11) SPEAKING OF THE MEDIATOR HE SAITH:

“Israel entreated that the Word should not be spoken to them any more (through Moses the mediator).”

“But ye are come . . . . to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. xii. 18-24).

(12) SPEAKING OF THE LEADERS HE SAITH:

“Remember your leaders. Obey your leaders.”

“The Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. xiii. 7-21).

Shadow gives place to substance, the transient to the abiding, the old to the new, and, throughout, “Christ is all”.

Throughout this series we have given structures in fairly full detail. We now give, in barest outline, the structure of the epistle as a whole, the details of which can be placed together by the student from the articles dealing with the passages themselves:--

## Hebrews as a whole.

- A | i., ii. THE WORD SPOKEN.  
Thou remainest.  
Thou art the same.  
How escape if neglect?  
Bring in again the first begotten.
- B | iii.-vi. ON TO PERFECTION.  
Let us come boldly.  
Example of unbelief.  
Perfect v. babes.  
No renewal unto repentance.  
Senses exercised.  
Crucify afresh the Son.
- C | vii. - x. 18. PERFECTION, WHERE FOUND.  
But this man.  
No perfection in priesthood.  
No perfection in law.  
No perfection in ordinances.  
No perfection in sacrifices.  
But this man.
- B | x. 19 - xii. 25 BACK TO PERDITION.  
Let us draw near.  
Example of faith.  
Sons v. firstborn.  
Found no place for repentance.  
Discipline exercised.  
Trod under foot the Son.
- A | xii. 25 - xiii. HIM THAT SPEAKETH.  
Things that remain.  
Jesus Christ the same.  
Not escape if refuse.  
Brought again from the death.

# The dispensational place of John's Gospel.

## #1. pp. 17 - 22

Many phases of scriptural truth have not found a place in these pages simply because *The Berean Expositor* was published to make known the dispensation of the mystery committed to the apostle Paul, and its limited size allowed no margin for outside subjects. For some time, however, it has been clear to us that we have a responsibility to *all believers* who are called during this present dispensation, and while we do not entertain the hope that our circulation will be increased by this series, we do hope that our readers will be thereby enabled to minister more intelligently and sympathetically to that great company who give no evidence that they are members of the body of Christ.

Believer's to-day seem to fall into three groups:--

1. Those who believe and stand by all the revelation contained in the prison epistles.
2. Those who have realized the teaching of the apostle Paul up to the central theme of Romans.
3. Those who, while most certainly believing on the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, give no evidence that the great doctrines associated with the apostle Paul have much place in their apprehension.

Such as are included in the second group are often in a preparatory state, and pass on into the fuller light of the mystery as the truth becomes known to them.

Rom. vi. lays the great foundation upon which the mystery is built. It reveals the identification of the believer with Christ—the truth that we have been crucified with Christ, that we have died with Him, been buried, quickened and raised with Him. This great doctrinal foundation is necessary for the added, dispensational feature of Eph. ii.—“seated with Him”.

In the present series, we have not the second but the third group before us, the widest circle of believers. What is their calling? What is their place in the present dispensation? What is the word for them? Before seeking a scriptural answer to these questions, it will be necessary to consider briefly to these objections and suggestions. In view of past misunderstanding, we also wish to make it plain in dealing with these that no individual writer is in mind.

What is the exact position of the great company of believers who are called during the dispensation of the mystery, and yet are not of it? Are they enjoying the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant? Are they in the same position and calling as the Pentecostal church? Do they come under the new covenant?

## 1. Are believers to-day enjoying the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant?

We do not believe that the covenant with Abraham is in force to-day, for as a covenant is dependent upon the keeping of its terms, and as this covenant has special reference to a land and a nation, both of which have been for the time being virtually set aside, the operation of the covenant is impossible, except in some spiritualized sense.

The terms of the covenant of God with Abraham are as follows:--

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. xii. 1-3).

Here we have a land and a nation vitally connected with the outflow of blessing to other nations.

To Isaac this covenant was repeated (Gen. xxvi. 3), as it was subsequently to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 3, 4). In each case the *land*, as well as the *seed*, form an integral part of it.

In the fullness of time Christ is born, and Matthew writes his Gospel showing that the Christ is the Son of David and of Abraham (Matt. i. 1). Zacharias, filled with Holy Spirit, refers to the fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham (Luke i. 68-79), and Peter, upon the renewed calling of Israel to repentance, makes it very plain that the Gentiles can only enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant upon the fulfillment of its conditions:--

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities’ (Acts iii. 25, 26).

The epistle to the Galatians makes it plain that justification by faith, and sonship, belong to the believing Gentile as to the believing Jew, but it also most emphatically repeats the sentiment of Acts iii. 25, 26:--

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

Israel was the appointed channel through whom would flow the blessing of Abraham to all nations. While they remained *a nation in their land*, even though they were not all truly converted, the Gentiles were able to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Rom. xi.), but when Israel were set aside in blindness and unbelief (Acts xxviii. 22-31), and subsequently scattered among all nations and temporarily dispossessed of their land, it became obvious that the full enjoyment of the Abrahamic blessing must be postponed

until the day when “all Israel” shall be saved, their “receiving back” bringing with it “life” (Rom. xi. 15-26).

## **2. Are believers to-day enjoying the blessings of Pentecost and the conditions and status of I Cor. xii.?**

In Gal. iii. 14 “the promise of the Spirit” is directly connected with the coming of the blessing of Abraham upon the Gentiles, and while Israel remained a nation in their own land, these spiritual gifts were enjoyed and partaken of by the Gentile churches. We are not left in doubt, however, as to the purpose of God in thus allowing the Gentiles to anticipate that day which could only come with Israel’s conversion.

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord” (I Cor. xiv. 21).

The Gentile believers were reminded that they had been grafted into the stock of the true olive, contrary to nature, with the express purpose of “provoking emulation” and “provoking to jealousy” the people of Israel. Israel, however, were not provoked to emulation. Isa. vi. 10, quoted by the apostle in Acts xxviii., showed that the olive tree of Israel was cut down. It is true that Isa. vi. 13 prophesies that, though cut down, it will yet sprout again; that in God’s good time “all Israel” shall be saved, but this does not take place until “the fullness of the Gentiles” has come in. (The words, “Cast their leaves” in Isa. vi. 13 should be rendered, “are felled”).

Rom. xi. makes it plain that in the first instance the olive tree was entirely Israelitish. At the time of writing that epistle “some” only of the natural branches had been broken off, but during the present time there does not exist the counterpart of this olive tree, that is, an Israelitish calling with a smaller Gentile addition. To-day Israel does not count. Only a false spirituality can attempt to prove that the olive tree now stands. During this present time Gentiles are blessed without association with Israel. Should anyone interpose the suggestion that Gentile believers are still blessed by the Scriptures which came through Israel, are still saved by that salvation which is “of the Jews”, are still accepted in Him Who is of the seed of David, and therefore are still partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree, we would reply that this, if allowed, proves too much, for the epistles of the mystery, though distinct and peculiar, are necessarily linked with *all* that has gone before, and so the mystery itself could be “proved” to be a continuation of Rom. xi., as some actually interpret Eph. ii. 19.

It throws light upon Rom. xi. and the dispensational position of the Gentile during the Acts period, to remember that Paul is not employing fiction when he speaks of the unusual action of grafting a wild branch upon a cultivated stock, for at the time the apostle was writing it was a process actually used to “provoke” the flagging fruitfulness of an aged olive tree. The enjoyment by the Gentiles of spiritual gifts, “the fatness of the olive tree”, during this time was not because the blessing that will result from the promise to Abraham was then actually flowing out to all nations, but because the Gentiles were being used to “provoke to jealousy and emulation” the fast-failing olive tree of Israel. But Israel did not respond, they did not repent, and in due course were set aside.

If the position of the believing Gentiles is truly described as a graft into the olive tree, it follows that when at Acts xxviii. the tree was cut down, a very drastic change must have come over the world of Gentile believers. Pentecostal conditions will be resumed only when the time for Israel's restoration draws near, and in consequence the present interval is marked by other characteristics.

This brief note is, of course, entirely inadequate as an examination of this second position, but we write for those who are fully acquainted with the whole argument. The bearing of I Cor. xii. also has been discussed in these pages, and it is obvious to all who have eyes to see and who refuse to accept substitutes for realities that the conditions of I Cor. xii. do not exist to-day.

### **3. Are believers to-day blessed under the terms of the new covenant?**

Equally with the covenant made with Abraham, this covenant, while finding in Christ the complete ratification of all its terms, nevertheless necessitates a restored Israel as a nation before the Lord. This can be seen by reading the original terms of the new covenant given in Jer. xxxi. 27-49.

The new covenant was in operation during the Acts, as II Cor. iii. and iv. indicate, but, like the covenant with Abraham, its full outflow awaits the day when all Israel shall be saved.

### **4. Are believers in Christ, who do not believe the revelation of the mystery, necessarily "Christendom"?**

This is difficult to answer, for "Christendom" is not a scriptural name, and consequently we can never be sure that we use it exactly as another may intend. Speaking broadly, Christendom stands for that great mass of professing Christians, largely leavened with false doctrine and finally developing into the apostacy, that precedes the end. Accepting this definition we are compelled to say that it would be most uncharitable as well as untrue unceremoniously to sweep aside all those men of God who fail to see the truth of the mystery, and who indeed are sometimes antagonistic to it. Just as it was not necessarily true during the Acts that if Paul was right Peter was wrong, so it does not follow that every believer to-day should be a believer of the truth of the mystery—he cannot be unless chosen of the Lord, and his calling and election may place him in an entirely different company. This, of course, remains to be proved.

### **5. Are all believers to-day members of the church which is His body, whether they know it or not?**

To refute this position we should have to reprint the bulk of the last twenty years' witness concerning the dispensation of the mystery. We cannot find justification for assuming that any believer is a member of the body of Christ unless he believes the Word

of God given to make that blessed position known. As that word is found in the testimony of the Lord's prisoner, and is the revelation of a mystery, membership of that body will be manifested by belief of the truth revealed concerning it, as surely as salvation is manifested by the belief of the gospel.

Without, therefore, pretending to have given anything more than a cursory glance at these varied views, we proceed to the examination of Scripture to discover whether there has been written a book, an epistle, or section of the New Testament that embraces all the peculiar conditions that characterize the outer circle of faith among Gentiles to-day. This will necessarily be the subject of another article.

## **#2. The ministry for the many. An eightfold proof.**

**pp. 58 - 64**

We concluded our opening article with the statement that we should now proceed to the examination of Scripture to discover whether there has been written a book, epistle, or a section of the New Testament that embraces all the peculiar conditions that characterize the outer circle of faith among the Gentiles to-day. What are these peculiar conditions?

1. During the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, He limited Himself to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and at the close commanded His disciples to go into all the world. One of the conditions that belong to the present enquiry is that the message shall be pre-eminently *world-wide*.

2. It is evident to the most casual reader that the bulk of the Bible was written for Jews. The present condition, however, demands a book that shall give evidence that non-Jewish readers are in view.

3. The Gospel of Matthew does not speak of the rejection of Christ by Israel until chapter xii.; Paul's earlier epistles give considerable prominence to Israel, whilst Peter at Pentecost calls upon the nation to repent and be saved. The book we seek should take it for granted, or should early state that Christ was rejected by Israel, and that its message is addressed to those who have believed after that rejection has reached its climax.

4. The Lord's Supper is directly connected with "the new covenant" (Matt. xxvi. 28; I Cor. xi. 25), so that the message we seek will of necessity omit this feast of remembrance, seeing that its terms cannot be put into operation until Israel as a nation are restored (Jer. xxxi.).

5. The present position of the Lord Jesus is that of ascension, ascribed to Him in the prison epistles, and we must find our message in a book giving due prominence to this exalted position.

6. The epistles of the mystery do not speak of Christ as the Son of Abraham, or the Son of man, but go back behind all these to the wondrous title of the Image of the invisible God, Who is, moreover, the Creator of all things visible and invisible. This revelation of His Person will colour the message that is addressed to the outer circle to-day.

7. We shall find in that message the great desire expressed by the Lord, that, though He was rejected by His own, the world might yet believe and know that He was the Sent One of God.

8. There will be an indication that the gift of “miracles” possessed by the church, as at Corinth, no longer obtains.

By common consent the Gospel according to John was written when Paul’s ministry was finished, and corresponds fully to the conditions suggested above, as well as to many more to be entered into later. Let us for the present, however, confine ourselves to noticing how John’s Gospel deals with these peculiar conditions.

### 1. The world.

“The *world* was made by Him” (John i. 10).

“The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the *world*” (John i. 29).

“For God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son” (John iii. 16).

“The Christ, the Saviour of the *world*” (John iv. 42).

“Giveth life unto the *world*” (John vi. 33).

“I am the light of the *world*” (John ix. 5).

These and many more come immediately to the mind, and it is common knowledge with students of the Word that John’s Gospel is pre-eminently the presentation of Christ to the world.

*Kosmos* (world) occurs in Matthew’s Gospel nine times, in Mark three times, in Luke three times, but in John it occurs about seventy-nine times. Matthew’s Gospel tells us concerning the Lord that He was called “Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. i. 21). Luke’s Gospel records the Lord’s instructions to His disciples that “remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke xxiv. 47). John, however, speaks of, “sin” not “sins”, “the sin of the *world*” and “the sins of His people”.

The reader will remember the wide scope in the standpoint of the first Epistle of John: “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole *world*” (I John ii. 2). John’s Epistles account for another twenty-one occurrences of *kosmos*, so that out of a total of one hundred and eighty-eight occurrences in the whole N.T., John’s Gospels and Epistles use one hundred of them. If we seek for a message that has the world in view, can we find one more suitable than this Gospel according to John?

## 2. Not written for Jews.

Our next condition was that the matter should be tested not only by the positive address to the world, but by parallel internal evidence that Jews were definitely not in the writer's mind. Every Jew knew the purpose of the six water pots at the wedding feast of Cana, but John informs us that they were "after the manner of the Jews" (John ii. 6). Every Jew knew the history and import of the Passover, but John writes: "The Jews' Passover was at hand"; "the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh"; "the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand" (John ii. 13, vi. 4, xi. 55). Added to these are the further informative statements: "There was a feast of the Jews" (v. 1), "the Jews' feast of tabernacles" (vii. 2). Again, note John x. 22: "It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication *and it was winter*", which is as though we should write, "It was Christmas day in London *and it was winter*".

Further, what Jewish reader of John's Gospel, though he lived at the ends of the earth, would need the explanation given in iv. 9: "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans"? Would a Jewish reader need the added interpretation given to the name of the pool of Siloam—"which is by interpretation, Sent" (John ix. 7)? Would they not know, too, the meaning of the name Cephas, "stone"? (John i. 42).

We have abundant evidence therefore that John wrote his Gospel with the world of non-Jewish readers specially in view.

## 3. The rejection.

The message that fits the wider circle of believers during the present time must recognize the fact that the Lord was rejected by His own people. This we find at the very forefront of the Gospel by John: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him . . . ." (John i. 11, 12). Here it is evident that the "many" who received Him are a different company from "His own" who received Him not. Matthew's Gospel waits until the twelfth chapter before rejection is reached, but John opens with it. There is a foreshadowing of Acts xxviii. at the close of John ix: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." The critical passage (Isa. vi. 10) is quoted immediately after the warning to walk while the light lasts, lest darkness come upon them, and towards the close of the passage come the solemn words: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him" (John xii. 48).

It will be remembered that where Matthew quotes Isa. vi. 10, we find the parables of the kingdom of heaven, which, while revealing the interval of failure and corruption, nevertheless look forward to the day when, under the new covenant, the word of the kingdom shall be received in an honest and good heart (Jer. xxxi. 27-33). The quotation of Isa. vi. 10 in John xii. is not accompanied by the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but focuses attention upon the rejection of the Lord by His own people.

#### **4. The Lord's Supper.**

It is not our purpose to discuss the vital association of the Lord's Supper with the new covenant—that can be seen both in Matt. xxvi. and I Cor. xi. The terms and parties of the covenant are distinctly set out in Jer. xxxi. and repeated in Heb. viii. It is not a matter for discussion, but of believing what God has said. The Gospel according to John makes no mention of the Lord's Supper, and the omission is as eloquent as the non-Jewish and world-wide evidences already brought forward. During the Acts period Gentile churches observed this feast of remembrance, but with the setting aside of the covenant people, the covenant feast was discontinued, and John, who was present and knew all about it, was as inspired to *omit* it as Matthew, Mark and Luke were inspired to include it.

#### **5. The ascended Lord.**

Paul's prison ministry is impossible apart from the ascension "far above all". Matthew's record ends without reference to the ascension; Mark and Luke close their accounts with it, but John speaks of it as early as the third chapter: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). Again, in John vi., the Jews objected to the Lord's statement that He was the true bread that came down from heaven, saying: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?" (John vi. 42). Also, when the disciples were offended with His teaching He said: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" (John vi. 62). It is John alone who tells us the Lord's first message after His resurrection, and that He ascended to the Father on that first day of the week, forty days before the visible ascension from the Mount of Olives. "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God" (John xx. 17).

The reader should add to the above the passages which use the phrase: "Because I go unto the Father", and similar expressions.

#### **6. "The image of the invisible God . . . . the Creator."**

John's Gospel is distinguished from the synoptics by the opening words:--

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . . All things were made by Him . . . . No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 1-18).  
"Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58).

Here also, in close harmony with the standpoint of the dispensation of the mystery, are the wondrous words of John xvii. 24:--

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

True, beholding this glory, and being manifested with Him in glory, having this body of humiliation fashioned like unto the body of His glory (Col. iii. 4 and Phil. iii. 21) are very different; yet if there is a circle of believers, called into blessing during this parenthetical period, but not constituting the body, it is appropriate that their blessings should in some way be associated with the ascended Christ, and the glory that was His before the world was. The distinction to be observed between the glory of John xvii. 24 and that of the epistles of the mystery must be considered in some future article, for it is too great a subject for the present survey.

### **7. The prayer that the world may know.**

If the standpoint of John's Gospel be as we have indicated, we can understand the burden of the Lord's prayer in John xvii., in which He asks that though "His own" refused Him as the Sent One, yet that the world might believe and that the world might know that the Father had sent Him.

### **8. Discontinuance of miracles.**

The word usually translated "miracle" (*dunamis*) is entirely absent from John's Gospel, and in its place we have a series of "signs".

While the unity of the body is not mentioned in John, there is a unity which is very close. This and many other items of importance must now be reviewed, and we trust that the result of these studies will be not only a deeper appreciation of the supreme blessedness of the calling that places us "far above all" at the right hand of God, but further ability to speak with no uncertain sound to saints and sinners who while giving no evidence of being destined to this high calling, yet cannot, by reason of the dispensational conditions in which they find themselves, yield faith or obedience to Pentecostal and new covenant messages.

### **#3. Christ, the Image and the Word.** **pp. 103 - 108**

We have arrived at the conclusion that the Gospel according to John very specially meets the need and position of that great company of believers who, though called during this present time, do not seem to come under the dispensation of the mystery. Naturally our present findings will modify some statements made in earlier volumes. For this we feel there is no need to apologize, but rather give thanks for added light. However, it may be well to repeat, without detail or proof, the eight features found upon the surface for John's Gospel, which reveals the special fitness of his message for the time:--

1. The message must be world-wide in its scope.
2. It must give evidence that it is written for non-Jewish readers.
3. It must start with the fact that Christ came and was rejected.
4. It will omit the Lord's Supper.
5. It will give prominence to the ascension.
6. It will give a title to the Lord, which is in some way parallel with "The Image" and the "Creator" of Col. i.
7. It will convey the Lord's desire that, though rejected by "His own", the world may yet believe and know Him as the Sent One.
8. It will not use the word "miracle", but will substitute some other word in recognition of the fact that Pentecostal conditions have passed.

We believe that the distinctive nature of these prominent features carry the matter beyond debate into the region of fact and faith. We therefore spend no time in "proofs", but proceed to the more edifying labours connected with exposition.

#### **The Word.**

This Gospel opens with a wonderful revelation concerning Christ as the Word. Now there is a principle (found fairly constantly throughout the N.T.) that in harmony with the line of blessing which is to be developed in any one Gospel or Epistle, there will be found either in that Epistle or Gospel, or in a book connected therewith, some special aspect of the person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. This must be so, for there are no blessings, promises, callings, or hopes apart from Him, and before we can be told of either earthly or heavenly hopes, we must first be assured and instructed as to the position of Him on Whom all our hopes must rest.

Ordinarily we should leave this statement unelaborated and pass on, but as we trust these studies will be useful to those who may be engaged in ministering the Word to the wider circle of which we speak, we will give one or two illustrations of the principle.

*Matthew.*—The opening chapter is occupied with the genealogy (Son of David, Son of Abraham, and Son of the virgin), birth and work ("for He shall save His people from their sins"), of the Lord Jesus, which lays the foundation for all that is subsequently written in the Gospel.

*Romans.*—Here the Lord is the Seed of David according to the flesh, declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. The opening thought is the presentation of Christ as the risen One.

*Ephesians.*—In the opening chapter Christ is shown as the One in Whom all who form the Body were chosen before the foundation (or overthrow) of the world, and Who was not only raised, but seated at the right hand of God far above all. That revelation concerning Christ Himself made possible the associated revelation concerning the Church which is His Body.

*Revelation.*—The Lord says, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen”. Here in the vision of chapter i. we have the great Priest-King after the order of Melchisedec.

The presentation of Christ by John, however, differs from that of the synoptic Gospels. Before He is presented as either Son of God, Son of man, Son of David, or Son of Abraham, He is revealed as “The Word”. While the repeated use of the name “Word” by the Targumists (paraphrase of the Hebrew in Chaldee) could be adduced to illustrate the way in which this word had become generally recognized as a title of the Lord, the meaning is evident by a comparison of verses 1 and 18 of John i.:--

a | In the beginning was the *Word*.  
 b | The *Word* was *with* God.  
 c | The *Word* was *God*.  
       \* \* \* \* \*  
 c | No man hath seen *God*.  
 b | In the *bosom* of the Father.  
 a | He hath *declared* Him.

It is the function of a word to make manifest the inaudible thought, and this is plainly seen in the last clause, “He hath *declared* Him”. *Exegeomai* means to lead or bring out, and is translated “declared” and “tell”. There is a parallel here with the revelation of Col. i. 15, but the latter is upon a higher plane. This we may set out as follows:--

<b>John i.</b>	<b>Colossians i.</b>
The Word.	The Image.
The Only Begotten.	The Firstborn.
All things made.	All things created.
His fullness-full of grace and truth.	All fullness.
The Word made flesh.	The body of His flesh.
Preferred before . . . . was before.	He is before all things.
	He has pre-eminence.

First, let us observe that there is no such parallel as this discoverable in the other Gospels. Here John is evidently ministering truth that approximates to the dispensation of the Mystery, without actually touching it. Having observed the likeness we must also note the difference.

*The Word and The Image.*—The Word deals with sound, the Image with light, and most know enough of elementary physics to understand the difference. Even when John writes: “No man hath *seen* God at any time”, he does not continue: “The Only Begotten Son hath made Him visible”, but passing by the thought of invisibility, he adheres to the figure that belongs to the Word—“hath declared Him”.

*The Only Begotten and The Firstborn.*—Care must be exercised when dealing with these different titles. The one, “the Firstborn”, goes back to “the beginning”; the other, “the Only Begotten”, begins at Bethlehem.

*Prototokes*, “firstborn”, occurs in Matt. i. 25; Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15, 18; Heb. i. 6, xi. 28, and xii. 23.

*Monogenes*, “Only Begotten”, occurs in Luke vii. 12; viii. 42, ix. 38; John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18; Heb. xi. 17, and I John iv. 9.

*Monogenes* is limited to the flesh; Christ is never named “the only begotten Son” until it is declared that “the Word became flesh”.

*Prototokes* is, however, used with wider significance. In Heb. xi. 28 it has the meaning of the first-born after the manner of men, but it is readily seen that a fuller meaning attaches to it in Col. i. 15, 18. If “Firstborn” in verse 15 is to mean that Christ had no existence before He became the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, how will this interpretation answer in verse 18? Had He no existence before resurrection? The assumption is impossible and reveals the folly of the argument. Let us adhere closely to the language of Scripture. Before Bethlehem, Christ is called “The Word” and “The Image”, but after, when He had become flesh, He is called “The Only Begotten Son”, “The Son of God”, “The Son of man”.

*All things made and All things created.*—There is a deeper significance in the word “create” of Col. i. than in the word “made” in John i. In John, moreover, nothing is specified: “He made all things”; “The world was made by Him.” That is all that the dispensational teaching of John necessitates. Colossians, however, is addressed to a people who have a high calling, so high that it goes far above principalities and powers into the highest heavens. Consequently Col. i. gives a fuller enumeration concerning creation, and emphasizes the heavenly and invisible side, where John emphasizes the visible, earthly side:--

“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consists.”

The language of II Cor. iii. 10 seems almost necessary as we compare these two records.

*His fullness and All the fullness.*—The fullness of John i. is that fullness of grace and truth which was seen in Christ as the Only Begotten of the Father. John’s usage of “true” and “truth” gives to the words “grace and truth” the thought of “real grace”. See his usage in the expressions “the *true* light” (i. 9), “the *true* bread” (vi. 32), and “the *true* vine” (xv. 1). Shadow and typical grace had come through Moses, for the law had a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image or substance, so John says: “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth (i.e., real grace) came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). This is the meaning of the expression, “grace for grace”, where the word “for” is *anti*—“in the room of”, “in the stead of”. So: “Of His fullness have all we received”—real antitypical grace in the room of the shadowy grace of the law.

This is indeed wonderful, but the fullness of Colossians transcend it. There it is “all the fullness”, which is further enlarged in Col. ii. 9, 10 as: “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of Godhead bodily, and ye are filled to the full in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Fullness of grace, as opposed to types and shadows, is one thing—this is the message both of John and Paul (*see* Col. ii. 16, 17), but Paul’s ministry goes deeper: all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, the church filled full in Him, and He, not only Head of the church, but also of principalities and powers—this is a revelation necessitated by the high glory of the dispensation of the mystery.

*Preferred before and He is before.*—John the Baptist recognized something of the pre-eminence of the Lord, and there are several statements to this effect in the opening chapters of John’s Gospel:--

“He was not that light” (I. 8).

“He is preferred before me, for He was before me” (I. 15).

“I am not the Christ . . . . I am a voice” (i. 20-23).

“He must increase, I must decrease . . . . He that cometh from heaven is above all”  
(iii. 31).

Let us not miss the beauty of verse 23. Christ was The Word; John was but a voice. Christ was The Light, John was but a bright and shining lamp (John v. 35). John glimpsed something of the glory when he said: “He that cometh from heaven is above all”, but, in the main, the position is that Christ is greater than John the Baptist. When we come to Ephesians and Colossians, however, the greatness of the Lord is beyond the flight of imagination. He is before all things; thrones, dominions, principalities, powers. He has pre-eminence over all. It will be seen that while John ministers things that are associated with Christ during His rejection by Israel, and reveals the Lord in a light quite different from that of the other Gospels, he by no means deals with the mystery, neither does he speak of Christ in terms that compare with the revelation of Ephesians and Colossians. There is, however, sufficient likeness to enable us to see that the teaching found in John’s Gospel fits the condition of many children of God to-day.

We do not pretend to have given an exposition of John i. 1-18; the matters contained therein are too weighty for such slight treatment. There is perhaps need for one word on John i. 1 before closing, and that is a reference to the translation sometimes suggested, “The Word was *a* god”. The following are the occurrences in John i. 1-18 of *Theos* =

God, without the article “the”, and we have but to adopt the translation “A god” to manifest its inaccuracy when used of John i. 1:--

- “The Word was A god” (verse 1).
- “There was a man sent from A god” (verse 6).
- “Power to become children of A god” (verse 12).
- “Which were born of A god” (verse 13).
- “No man hath seen A god at any time” (verse 18).

It is also well to remember that some MSS, namely, Lm., Tr., WH., Rom., with the Syriac, read “God, only begotten” in John i. 18: this is found, moreover, in the confession of the church of Antioch. While therefore much more should be considered were we purposing an exposition of John’s Gospel, or of the doctrine of the deity of Christ, sufficient for our present purpose has been brought forward to establish the link and yet to manifest the difference between John’s ministry and the prison ministry of the apostle Paul. Other phases of truth we must leave for future studies.

#### **#4. Three relationships in which believers who are not members of the One Body stand to-day. pp. 139 - 142**

Let us look at some of the figures that are used in John’s Gospel to indicate the relationship that exists between the believer and His Lord. We know that in the dispensation of the mystery, the believer forms part of the church which is the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. No such figure of course occurs in John, but there are in it certain symbols of relationship indicative of the calling of those to whom it ministers.

*Bridal relationships.*—It must not be inferred that we deny the occurrence of bridal relationships in the other Gospels; they are there, and we recognize them, but what we wish to draw attention to is that bridal relationships are perpetuated *now* among that great company of believers outside the Body at the present time:--

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled” (John iii. 29).

Now it is nowhere said, either in the synoptic Gospels, or in John, that those addressed actually formed part of the bride; neither, therefore, do we. John the Baptist makes it clear that he formed no part of the bride, his being a special relationship as, “the friend of the bridegroom”. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke the disciples are spoken of as “children of the bride-chamber”, who, of course, are not the bride, and in Matt. xxv. virgins go out to meet the approaching bridegroom, not as brides, but to be present at the marriage feast.

The bride is distinguished from those blessed ones who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb in Rev. xix. 7, 9, as also in Matt. xxii., so that all we can say here is, that while the bride herself may not be in process of formation during this present period, the great company who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are being gathered out.

Light on the subject may be obtained from the parable of Matt. xxii. We have first of all the invitation to the wedding of those “who had been bidden”. Following their refusal the invitation is repeated, with the urgent addition, “All things are ready”. This they made light of. The word translated “made light” here is rendered “neglect” in Heb. ii. 3. As a consequence these refusers are destroyed and their city burned. This clearly refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70.

But after this date, and consequently after the ministry of Peter and Paul in the Acts, a further invitation is sent out, this time into the highways, with the result that the wedding is furnished with guests. This exactly corresponds with the subsequent ministry of John in his Gospel, which extends the marriage feast invitation to believers now.

Again, the first of the eight signs of John’s Gospel is that given at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. There the water was turned into wine, and there the Lord manifested forth His glory. At this feast Christ is not the bridegroom, both He and His disciples being present as “guests”. This first sign therefore suggests that those who came under John’s ministry here form the great company who shall be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

*The other sheep.*—The Lord’s people are never called sheep in the epistles of the mystery, neither is the Lord called their Shepherd. It is Israel who say: “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture” (Psa. c. 3). During our Lord’s earthly ministry He said: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. xv. 24). John’s Gospel, however, contains a revelation concerning “other sheep” which the Lord had and which He would gather:--

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I will bring, and they will hear My voice; and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd” (John x. 16).

Who are those other sheep? The answer that comes most readily and acceptably is, “Israel of the Dispersion”, but is this the right answer? The other sheep are declared “not out of (*ek*) this fold”.

We must distinguish between the two words translated “fold” in the A.V. of verse 16. *Aule* is “fold”, while *poimne* is “flock”. *Aule* is most probably derived from the Hebrew *ohel*, tent or tabernacle. Primarily it means an open courtyard, and John himself uses the word in xviii. 15, where it is translated “palace”. Originally sheepfolds were in the open court of the house, and the word is so used in II Chron. iv. 9; Psa. lxxv. 4; cxxxv. 1; Isa. i. 12, and many other passages. These other sheep were not “of this fold”, were not connected with those courts of the Lord into which it was the peculiar prerogative of Israel to enter. The dispersion could hardly be so designated.

The word *poimne*, flock, is intimately associated with *poimen*, shepherd, the flock being viewed not so much as so many sheep, but as so many sheep under one shepherd. *Poimnion*, the diminutive, is found in Acts xx. 28, 29 where it most certainly is used of the church of God:--

“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

If Paul could use the word “flock” in its diminutive sense for the church as constituted in Acts xx., the Lord could use the words, “one flock” of a company composed of the gathered sheep of the house of Israel, and of the “other sheep” who, though not of Israel’s fold, would, nevertheless, under the one great Shepherd, constitute one flock. While this is far removed from the unity expressed by the One Body, with the Lord as Head, it nevertheless is in consonance with that blessing which must necessarily take its character from the present position of the ascended Lord, and while not being in the full blaze of that central glory, nevertheless basks, as it were, in its penumbra.

Peter was definitely commissioned to feed the Lord’s sheep and lambs, but his curiosity was not satisfied when, concerning John, he asked: “And what shall this man do?” Peter and John are associated very closely in their early ministry with the Lord and the twelve, and it looks as though both were to be under-shepherds, though tending different folds. Gal. ii. 9 indicates that John, like Peter, had a ministry to the circumcision, but we are not thereby justified in concluding that God could not send John to another company—such a conjecture is beyond our right or ken.

We know that Paul had a twofold ministry. Why, then, should not John be similarly commissioned? In the same way there is no more difficulty in believing that Gentile believers may be called “other sheep” than they are likened to a “wild olive”. And if Gentiles could be grafted on to the stock of Israel, there is nothing to render it impossible that they should form part of that great “flock”, though never of the “fold of Israel”.

*Partakers of the true bread.*—None but those who came out of Egypt ate the manna in the wilderness:--

“Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (John vi. 31).

The Lord, when replying to this, and declaring Himself to be the true bread that came down from heaven, speaks of the *world* as recipients:--

“For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the *world*.”

“The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the *world*.”

Here then are three relationships in which, we hold, believing Gentiles stand to-day who are outside the sphere of the dispensation of the mystery. They are associated with the Bride, they are associated with the Flock, and they partake of the Living Bread, and so of a common life.

## **#5. Nicodemus and heavenly things. pp. 184 - 188**

“If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?” (John iii. 12).

The record of the Lord’s dealings with Nicodemus may throw some light upon the way in which seekers after truth belonging to the great outer circle may be led on and encouraged. Nicodemus appears three times in this Gospel, viz., John iii. 1-12, vii. 50-52 and xix. 39. In each case the reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that he came by night:--

“The same came to Jesus by *night*” (iii. 2).

“He that came to Jesus by *night*” (vii. 50).

“Which at the first came to Jesus by *night*” (xix. 39).

In the first case Nicodemus approached the Lord with evident desire to learn of Him, but very probably with no other really fixed idea. Considering the greatness of Nicodemus, who is described as “the teacher of Israel”, and the great wealth which Rabbinical tradition ascribes to him, his manner of addressing the Lord, Who was, externally, but a Galilean peasant, was respectful and conciliating. He called Him “Rabbi”, and admitted that God must be with Him.

The occasion of his second appearance is less peaceful. A division was coming among the people because of the Lord. Some said, “Of a truth this is The Prophet”, others said, “This is The Christ”, whilst some asked, “Shall Christ come out of Galilee?” (vii. 40, 41). This division among the common people, however, was not a matter likely to move a man of the standing of Nicodemus, for the attitude of the rulers to common people was one of contempt, as is expressed in vii. 49, “But this people that knoweth not the Law are cursed”. But what does seem to indicate a move in the direction of faith on this second occasion is the fact that, in spite of the Pharisees having asked, “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?” (vii. 48), Nicodemus had dared to interpose the question, “Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth” (vii. 51).

Again, while he shared the same unbelief concerning the resurrection of the Lord as was common among the disciples, his third appearance finds him coming into the open as a self-confessed disciple, bringing his offering of myrrh and aloes. Certainly we may

cherish the thought that Nicodemus was numbered among the 120 who met together in the upper room of Acts i.

Now, this is the man to whom the Lord said, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?” It is evident from these words that all that the Lord has said to Nicodemus up to that point was concerning “earthly things”, “If I have told you earthly things”. What had the Lord told Nicodemus? He had said:--

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh; and that which hath been born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John iii. 3-8).

This new birth therefore belongs to earthly things. The Greek word *gennaō* is used in the N.T. for both begetting and birth. This dual use may be seen in Matt. i. 16: “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom (i.e., Mary, *whom* being feminine) was *born* Jesus.” Nicodemus evidently understood the Lord to speak of birth, but the Lord’s words are better understood of the begetting of the Father. “Again” is *anothen* = “from above”. It is so translated in iii. 31. No sense is made of the verse by translating it, “he that cometh again”. So we hear of authority given “from above” (xix. 11), of the Lord’s coat woven “from the top” (xix. 23), and many other instances. “Ye must be *begotten* from above” is a better rendering of the Lord’s words.

In answer to Nicodemus’ question, “How?” the Lord expands His statement, the words “from above” being omitted and “of water and spirit” substituted. From this passage baptismal regeneration has been taught, the baptism being that of water. A reference to John vii. 38, 39 gives guidance: “He that believeth on *Me*, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, but this spake He of the Spirit.” Here we have Scripture for in that “living water” can be a type of “Spirit”. We did not quote fully John vii. 39 above, which we now do: “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” This combines the two thoughts “from above” and “Spirit” referred to in John iii.

In what way are we justified in speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as an “earthly thing?” We cannot use it if we mean by “earthly” anything that is sinful or base. But this is not the meaning of the expression “earthly things” in John iii. 12. The word so translated is *epigeios*, and is found in I Cor. xv. 40, “There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial”. The subject of this passage is “the resurrection body”. “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” In the answer we learnt that some resurrection bodies will be celestial, or heavenly (*epourania*), while some will be terrestrial or earthly (*epigeia*), but far from the earthly being despised the apostle declares that, like the heavenly, they have their distinct “glory”.

Verse 44 adds a further pair of words, “a natural body”, and, “a spiritual body”, “natural” being *psuchikon*, pertaining to the soul. Inasmuch as the purpose of the ages embraces things in the heavens and things on earth, and both spheres of blessedness are to be occupied by a redeemed people, it follows that for “spiritual blessings in heavenly places”, “spiritual” and “heavenly” resurrection bodies will be necessary, while for the meek, who are to inherit the earth and enjoy the delights of Paradise with its twelve manner of fruits, earthly and physical bodies will be required.

Birth from above, therefore, may well be one of the many “earthly things” which the Lord had to tell Nicodemus.

Peter who wrote to the “Dispersion”, whose salvation was the salvation of their “souls”, a salvation spoken of by the O.T. prophets, and whose destiny was to be “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people”, speaks of this birth from above, “Being begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (I Pet. i. 23). James, who writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, says, “Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James i. 18). John, in his first epistle, has much to say about those who are “born of God” (see I John ii. 29, iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 1-4 and 18). Peter, James and John looked forward to sitting upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Paul’s use of the term in I Cor. iv. 14, 15, and Philemon 10 is not strictly parallel:--

“As my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.”

The distinctive teaching of Paul’s epistles is not the new birth, but a new creation. Some may set this aside as a quibble, but we record it as one of the many distinctions that must be observed between things earthly and heavenly.

We learn from John iii. that the new birth belongs to the outer circle of truth to-day. It may be perfectly right to emphasize the necessity for this new birth when preaching the gospel, so long as we are clear that such does not belong to the ministry of the apostle Paul, nor afford an entrance into the church of the One Body. New creation and identification “with Christ” in His death and resurrection is something deeper and higher.

“Ye must be begotten from above” belongs to earthly things.

**#6. The Samaritan woman and true worship (iv.).**  
**pp. 221 - 224**

We have seen that Nicodemus was warned that unbelief concerning earthly things would prevent him from hearing of heavenly things, these heavenly things being intimately associated with the Lord's ascension (John iii. 12, 13). In John iv. a very different character is introduced, a Samaritan woman, yet to her was made a marvelous revelation concerning true worship. The statement in John iv. 21-24 resembles the words of Paul in Phil. iii. 3:--

“Believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John iv. 21-24).

“We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 3).

To Nicodemus the “must” concerned the new birth. To the Samaritan woman the “must” dealt with worship.

In the record of the Lord's dealings with this poor woman we find that He speaks to her seven times, gently leading on to the final revelation of Himself as the Messiah. The woman's first reply was:--

“How is it that THOU, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?” (verse 9).

Upon the Lord's reply she asks:--

“Art THOU greater than our father Jacob?” (verse 12).

Following the conviction she receives concerning her mode of life, light begins to break in, and she says:--

“Sir, I perceive that THOU art a prophet” (verse 19).

At first sight we may be disposed to think that the sudden introduction into the conversation of the question of worship was a ruse adopted by the woman to avoid further reference to her own manner of life. As we pursue the story, however, it becomes evident that the simple revelation of her sinful life created a deep impression. Though the Lord unfolded to her the wondrous prospect of a spiritual worship that would set aside both Samaria's mountain and Jerusalem's temple, she says not a word about it, but, as though still holding on to the one great fact of the Lord's knowledge of her dark life, she interjects a further remark concerning the Lord's prophetic knowledge. And by her use

of the title *Messiah* it is easy to see that already the thought was forming in her mind, “Can this Prophet be indeed the Messiah?”

“The woman said unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things” (verse 25).

Then comes the Lord’s revelation of Himself:--

“I that speak unto thee am He” (verse 26).

The impression and conviction wrought in this woman’s heart abides. It is the burden of her testimony to her friends and neighbours:--

“Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?” (verse 29).

This simple testimony of a repenting soul was owned by the Lord:--

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did” (verse 39).

The conclusion of this witness leads once more to the world-wide aspect of the Saviour’s mission:--

“We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (verse 42).

We cannot help seeing in the repentance, confession and evangelistic testimony of this woman, a contrast with Israel’s lack of repentance, and consequent failure to recognize their Messiah and to fulfil their ministry among the nations.

The insistence upon the Lord’s knowledge of the human heart is not confined to this chapter. It is found in chapter i., and prefaces chapter iii. Nathaniel is converted and acknowledges the Lord largely because of this divine knowledge. “Whence knowest Thou me?”—and upon his confession the Lord again asserts His intimate knowledge:--

“Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree believest thou?” (John i. 48-50).

Immediately preceding the conversation with Nicodemus are the words of John ii. 24 - iii. 1:--

“He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus.”

In all probability Nicodemus could have maintained a good argument concerning the question of worship, but he was not permitted to do so. To this great doctor of the law, the Saviour speaks of the new birth. To a poor ignorant and sinful woman the Lord

reveals the truth concerning spiritual worship. Whether the Samaritan woman grasped His teaching is not our concern—let us not miss its import.

*“The hour cometh and now is.”*—We have here a period that follows on the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, the reference to the place of worship at Jerusalem being read in the light of Matt. xxiii. 37 - xxiv. 2. This passage covers the present interval.

*“True worshippers.”*—There is no allusion here to the false worship of idols—John uses “true” and “truth” many times with the sense of “real”: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). Here “grace and truth” means “true grace” or “real grace” in contrast with the “type and shadow” grace of the law. “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” (John vi. 32). Here the use of the words “true bread” does not mean that the manna in the wilderness was false, but that it was in itself a type or shadow of the “real bread”—the Lord Himself.

Perhaps the most precious word in the whole statement is the word “seeketh”—“The Father seeketh such”. Is not this a revelation of the heart of God? The Father seeks the true worshipper as the Son seeks the lost. The Father goes out to us in our worship perhaps more than we can ever go out to Him. What a blessed thought, that as surely as we draw near to Him, He is drawing near to us!

Worship lies behind the original purpose of Satan’s creation and underlies his terrible fall (Ezek. xxviii.). Worship is the first cause in the covenant with Israel. Worship was the desire of the tempter in the wilderness (Matt. iv.), and worship is the goal of the great antichristian apostacy at the end (Rev. xiii.).

The church of the mystery, and its association with heavenly places, is intimately connected with worship. This church is itself a holy temple (Eph. ii.). As the true circumcision its worship is entirely spiritual (Phil. iii.), and its members, holding the Head, repudiate any imposition upon them of the worship of angels (Col. ii.). The oft-recurring word “godliness” in the epistles to Timothy, literally means “good or acceptable worship”.

If John’s Gospel ministers to the needs of believers who are to-day on the outer fringe of the dispensation of the mystery, then the Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman are words in season. Just as the Lord told Nicodemus that to stumble at the revelation concerning earthly things precluded all reference to heavenly things, so we shall find that where believers are entangled with “places” of worship, ensnared in denominational jealousies, subscribing to carnal ordinances, ceremonials and the like, they are unlikely to hear the truth committed to the apostle Paul.

## The leading of the Lord.

### #2. pp. 14 - 16

A—Seeing that the Lord’s leading is so intimately connected both with redemption and atonement, it seems to be important enough to warrant a further talk. I shall be glad of further help.

B—When we speak of “leading” we use a word that suggests a path or a way. Let us see what the Scriptures have to say on that phase:--

“He led them forth by the RIGHT WAY” (Psa. cvii. 7).

I take the truth of this passage to be fundamental. Wherever, however, whoever; if the Lord is leading, the way is right. To question this is to overthrow the whole issue of redemption. Now it is fairly certain that the way of the Lord will often appear *wrong* in the eyes of men.

A—Scripture says:--

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes” (Prov. xxi. 2).

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. xvi. 25).

B—The fact that the ways of the Lord are so different from the ways of the world will often cause us to pray like Ezra:--

“To seek of Him a right way . . . . . for I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers” (Ezra viii. 21, 22).

That is a “shame” that is enviable.

There are two principles which we may link together: (1) The Lord’s way is right always; (2) Seek of the Lord that right way, and seek it of *Him*.

The next feature I feel we should notice is that the Lord leads not only in a *right* way, but often in a *roundabout* way, for reasons unknown to us at the time:--

“God led them not through the way of the Philistines, *although that was near* . . . . . but God led them ABOUT through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea” (Exod. xiii. 17, 18).

Here the Lord was leading them “not into temptation”, but by the roundabout path, “delivering them from evil”.

A—This is true, and fits any case. How we chafe because the Lord does not take us by the short cut! It was “near”, but it was not the “right way”. Unknown to us there may lurk in that near way the Philistine who would cause us to repent of our calling and turn back. This I have seen in my own small measure, and I trust that this reminder may keep me patient and willing.

B—Yes, we are all too eager for the “near” way, and far too unconcerned that it shall be the “right way”.

There is, however, another important lesson to learn from this record of the roundabout way. It was not only to save Israel from too early contact with war, but for their own good also:--

“The Lord thy God led these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart . . . . that He may make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone” (Deut. viii. 2, 3).

To humble, to prove, to know! to know what is in our heart! How the leading of the Lord brings us face to face with the man within! We say, “Lord, we will lay down our lives for Thy sake”, but He knows that we shall take but one more step along the road to hear the cock crow over our denial. And yet the knowledge is not all sad, for we gain a knowledge of the Lord and learn that man does not live by bread alone:--

“Thy raiment waxed not old, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.”

The Lord may lead us to Elim, with its twelve wells, or into the midst of famine, but if He does, He can also lead us to a poor widow whose barrel of meal and cruise of oil shall not fail. Depend upon it, the “roundabout” way is often the “right” way.

A—There is something sobering about all this. Is our general experience in this life to be that of discipline, privation, self-denial, humbling? It seems a hard pitch to look forward to.

B—Scripture does not hide the fact that the path is not always easy; in fact a little further on in Deut. viii. we read not only of a wilderness, but of

“That great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water” (Deut. viii. 15).

But there is compensation, for it is recorded:--

“Who brought forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna” (Deut. viii. 15, 16).

A—Yes, I see the end:--

“To do thee good at thy latter end” (Deut. viii. 16).

B—And so we may sum up in the words of Isa. lvii. 17, 18:--

“He went on frowardly in the way of his own heart, I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will *lead* him and RESTORE COMFORTS unto him.”

### #3. pp. 31, 32

A—We have had two interesting talks on the leading of the Lord, and the knowledge gained makes me thirsty for more.

B—Let us take note of some of the characteristics of the path we have to tread. The Psalmist says: “Show me Thy ways, O Lord: teach me Thy paths: Lead me in Thy truth and teach me” (Psa. xxv. 4, 5). *Thy ways, Thy paths, Thy truth.*

We have already learned that all the paths of the Lord are “right”. We now see that they are all in truth, and as this truth is connected with teaching, all the paths of the Lord are in harmony with His Word. This being so we must unhesitatingly reject any tendency to believe that the Lord is leading to any action that contradicts His Word. True, the child of God is led by “the Spirit”, but that Spirit is the “Spirit of truth”, and it was He Who inspired the Word. The words: “In all thy ways acknowledge Him”, will often settle the problem of the path we should take.

A—Tell me more of this. I want to see the point clearly.

B—You must let me give the passage, with one alteration, taken from the Greek version:-

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall *rightly divide* thy paths” (Prov. iii. 6).

In our life’s walk we often come to a place where the road divides. Sometimes the way is clear and we have no hesitation as to which road to take. Sometimes, however, we are far from certain. Now in such circumstances we can make a right decision if we know the path we are *not* to take. If we perceive that by taking the one path we cannot acknowledge Him in all our ways, it may be sufficient guidance to enable us to take the other, if there be no evident compromise in that direction.

A—Are there any other prayers like that in Psa. xxv. 4, 5? They seem to supply me with a petition for my own case. At times the way seems so tangled, and one is very conscious that every stumble is marked and criticized by unfriendly eyes.

B—Stay, your words are but a paraphrase of Psa. xxvii. 11:--

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a PLAIN PATH, because of those which observe me.”

How truly up-to-date are these words of old! How they fit the most modern of men in his latest circumstance!

A—This is indeed a help; it gives one fresh courage to see one’s condition anticipated and provided for.

B—We have had two prayers: “Lead me in Thy truth”, and “Lead me in a plain path”. Let us add a third to complete the story:--

“Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I” (Psa. lxi. 2).

If we need a plain path because of our enemies, we need also this Rock, when the heart is overwhelmed:--

“From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”

We can safely add: “and *that* Rock was Christ.”

“To whom shall we go?”  
“Whom have I in heaven but Thee?”

The way of the Lord is *right*, however, *roundabout*, and it is not only in *truth*, but it leads to *Christ*, and to a Christ higher than the highest, a Rock in the sea, a Rock in a weary land. If, as we saw, the leading of the Lord is to do us good at the latter end, here we see that the source of all that good is Christ.

#### #4. pp. 90 - 92

A—While I suppose the words we have before us: “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I”, practically sum up the Lord’s leading, there must be other aspects that would be profitable for us to consider.

B—Yes, there are, and I think we might look at some of the agencies that are used in the leading of the Lord’s people. Take Psa. xliii. 3, where we read: “O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me.” Darkness and deceit come from Satan, and the blessedness of the Lord’s leading can be appreciated when one contrasts it with the horror of being led astray by Satan sending out his darkness and lies. The Lord’s leading, moreover, always has one goal: “Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles.” Satan’s objective is not holiness, but the reverse.

A—You will not understand me in what I am going to say, I trust, but we have had leading in truth, and now we have leading by truth, yet I seem to feel a desire for something more intimate, something, may I say it? more human.

B—I think I know what you desire, and I believe it is a right desire, and provided for. The Lord not only says, “I will guide thee—through the Scriptures”, but “I will guide thee with *Mine eye*” (Psa. xxxii. 8). This is not divorced from the teaching of the Word, but arises out of it, for the complete verse reads: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.”

A—I remember once being in the maze of Hampton Court, and when unable to discover the right path, an attendant, standing on a central platform, just indicated by a nod which turn to take.

B—It is good to feel that the intricate maze of life also is like an open book to the Lord, and while you were speaking I remembered that *Spurrell's* version gives, as an alternative to “guide”, the words “nod to”, which makes the figure more complete.

“I will guide thee with mine eye.” This necessitates at least one thing in the person guided: he must be looking up to the Lord: “Unto thee lift I up mine eyes” (Psa. cxxiii. 1). Verse 2 of the same Psalm continues: “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters . . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.” It seems therefore that to be guided by the eye implies something more than relationship; it appears to suggest some measure of service.

Being guided by the eye is put in contrast with the guidance of the horse with bit and bridle: “Be not like the uninstructed horse and mule, whose jaws must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee” (Psa. xxxii. 9). How much better to be guided by the Lord’s eye, than to be held in by bit and bridle.

A—I suppose one of the reasons why the Lord’s leading is so often hard is that we are behaving like an obstinate mule instead of a willing servant. Is there any help in Scripture that would enable us to attain to this higher level?

B—There was a child of God who was envious at the foolish, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He had a wretched time of it, until, to use his own words, “he went into the sanctuary of God”. That changed his point of view. He then saw things from a new and true angle, and came out of that sanctuary saying: “*Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel* (instead of the counsel of the ungodly that had began to weigh with him), and afterward receive me to glory” (Psa. lxxiii. 24).

The single eye presupposes the single heart, and the single heart can be found only where Asaph found it:--

“Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee”  
(Psa. cxliii. 8).

## #5. pp. 145 - 147

A—I am rather afraid this will be the last opportunity we shall have together for some while, and therefore I should like, before we close this subject, to have a word or two from the N.T.

B—As a connecting link let us turn to John x. where the great figure of Psa. xxiii. is carried over. The Shepherd speaks: “He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice” (John x. 3, 4). The sheep are “His own”, they are redeemed by His blood as the Lamb, before they are led by Himself as the Shepherd. Psa. xxii. comes before Psa. xxiii.

“When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them”. This statement receives illumination from the preceding chapter. There, one of His sheep, the man born blind, had been “cast out”. Now this is the same word that is used in x. 4, translated “putteth forth”. It is blessed to know that while the hatred of men was casting this follower of Christ out of their fellowship, the Lord was using that very action to put forth one of His sheep, that he might follow Him. For if the sheep are thus treated, it is a comfort to remember that the Shepherd Himself was cast out, too. In all things “He goeth before”. This is the most intimate form of guidance, the personal. “They know His voice”, and His voice still speak in the Word. This is the simplest reference to leading in the N.T.

A—I suppose we must expect to find the N.T. references more definitely linked with doctrine than those of the O.T. and we must use the one to help in the understanding of the other.

B—The most important passages on the subject in the N.T. are found in Paul’s epistles, the very nature of which makes their presentation of truth more complex than that which enters the Gospels or the O.T. Scriptures. Let us look at Rom. viii. 14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The context of this passage is profound. From the first verse there is established a contrast between “flesh” and “Spirit”. We have “the law of the spirit of life”, and “the law of sin and death”. The Spirit is called “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit of Christ”, “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead”, and “the indwelling Spirit”. It would take a volume to attempt an exposition of these differences, and yet they are all in view in the verse we have quoted. To be led by the Spirit means, at least, that we are led by the risen Christ away from the things of the flesh, and a glance at verse 13 will show that the leading here is a direct outcome of the work of the Spirit in mortifying the deeds of the body—“for as many as are led by the Spirit”, etc.

A—As one faces the depths of teaching that precede this mention of being led by the Spirit, it is easier to understand your attitude towards those who speak rather glibly of

“feeling led”. The mortifying of the deeds of the body will prove a sufficient reason for keeping my own silence on the subject for some time to come.

B—When we squarely face this deep and solemn aspect we may then appreciate the fact that holiness and liberty are nearer together than we may at first have believed. “If we are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. v. 18). This passage is followed by two contrasting lists, the one of the works of the flesh, the other of the fruit of the Spirit, and concerning those who produce this fruit, the apostle adds, “against such there is no law”. To be led by the Spirit, therefore, will manifest itself in the fruit of the Spirit, or as verse 25 concludes: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”, the walk being the sphere of the leading.

A—It seems that these two passages exhaust the actual references in the N.T., but I can quite see that they are very full.

B—They practically focus the whole teaching of the O.T. In these two passages we may discern the pillar of cloud, the presence of the Lord, the leading in, and by, truth, the humbling and proving: in other words the “mortifying” experiences of Israel, and the Rock that is higher.

What remains in the N.T. on the subject is by way of example, and particularly the example of Paul.

Seeing that this example has been specially given, we must give it a place in our survey:--

“Be ye followers of me” (I Cor. iv. 16).

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. xi. 1).

“Be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example” (Phil. iii. 17).

A—I Cor. iv. contains some arresting statements. The apostle says: “We are fools for Christ’s sake . . . . we are weak . . . . we are despised.” He gives a list of unequalled sufferings and indignities which reach their climax in the words: “We are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.”

B—And yet, at the end of such a list, he says, “Follow me”! Can we dare to trifle with the question of the Lord’s leading with this chapter before us? The context of I Cor. xi. manifests a spirit ready to give up rights and pleasures, “Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many . . . . be ye followers of me”.

A—And what a contrast in Phil. iii.—Paul counting all things loss for Christ, and the others making a god of their belly and glorying in their shame.

B—If sin and death meant the cross for Christ, the leading of His Spirit can be in one direction only. We are not here in this world to “have a good time”, we are here found as sinners, saved by grace, with a wilderness path to tread and glory on before. He leads us

out that He may lead us in. He leads from death that He may lead to life. He leads from the pleasures of sin for a season to the pleasures that are for evermore.

## The “out-resurrection”.

### #1. The scope of Philippians seen in its parallel with the epistle to the Hebrews. pp. 209 - 212

Quite a number of readers have expressed either by letter or in conversation differing points of view, problems or theories regarding the “out-resurrection” of Phil. iii., but in no instance has the bearing of the epistle *as a whole* been given its true place. If the scope of an epistle be ignored, isolated verses can soon be found to substantiate a theory which cuts across the true scope, but if the scope of the epistle be given its full place, a positive contribution to the exposition of any one verse is obtained and the accuracy or falsity of an interpretation is more surely detected.

We are happy in the knowledge that no reader of *The Berean Expositor* requires proof of this assertion. It has been our continuous practice in all studies to place before the reader the structure of any part of Scripture under review, so that the true scope of the passage shall be discovered. Much light can also be obtained by observing parallel passages. Putting this into practice, as a side-light upon the question of the distinctive purpose of the epistle to the Philippians, we draw attention to the evident parallel that is found between Philippians and Hebrews.

To avoid possible misunderstanding, let us say at once that we do not believe that Hebrews ministers to the One Body, neither do we teach that Philippians and Hebrews deal with the same thing. What we do see is that in both epistles there is the outworking of a common principle found both in old and new testaments, in kingdom and in church, and to discover this is the surest and first step to the understanding of any one verse in either epistle.

#### Focal points common to both.

Both the epistles to the Philippians and to the Hebrews revolve round two common focal points, viz., PERFECTION and PERDITION, and these alternatives dominate the whole message. Salvation from sin is not in view in Hebrews; the gospel is not preached in Philippians. In both epistles it is assumed that those addressed are saved people, and the epistle urge them to “go on”, not to “draw back”, to “work out” and attain to those things that “accompany salvation”.

The key references in Hebrews are vi. 1 and x. 39. Those of Philippians are iii. 11, 18 and 19.

Some readers may fail to find “perdition” in Phil. iii., and we therefore draw attention to the fact that “perdition” in Heb. x. 39 and “destruction” in Phil. iii. 19 are translations of the one Greek word *apoleia*. The primitive meaning of *apoleia* is seen in Matt. xxvi. 8 where it is translated “waste”. Perfection, *teleiotes*, conveys the concept,

“going on to the end”, and the alternatives put before the reader of these epistles are either the leaving of the elements and the pressing on to the full personal realization of all that Christ can mean, or the drawing back, for a variety of specified reasons, unto “waste”:-

“Leaving . . . . let us go on unto *perfection*” (Heb. vi. 1).

“We are not of them who draw back unto *perdition*” (Heb. x. 39).

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already *perfect*, but I follow after . . . . forgetting the things which are behind” (Phil. iii. 11-13).

“Many walk . . . . whose end is *destruction*” (Phil. iii. 18, 19).

### **Things associated with perfection and perdition.**

Linked with these two focal terms are a series of others which find parallels in each epistle. Closely associated with the overcoming faith of Abraham is the fact of a heavenly citizenship:-

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. xi. 10).

“Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. xii. 22).

“Our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. iii. 20).

Both epistles have a “prize” or a “reward” in view. Both speak of “pressing toward the mark” or of “running the race set before them”, and in both epistles Christ, and His endurance of the cross, are used, not so much as the basis of redemption, but as an example in attaining the reward. Corresponding with this it will be seen that in both epistles Christ’s exaltation to the right hand of God is viewed as in the nature of a reward:-

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author (Captain) and Finisher (Perfecter) of faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. xii. 1, 2).

“Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him” (Phil. ii. 8, 9).

“Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

Both epistles foster the spirit that willingly gives up the present for the future, and that weighs over against present “loss” future “gain”:-

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. iii. 8).

“Ye endured a great fight of afflictions . . . . cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb. x. 32-35).

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Heb. xi. 26).

Both epistles inculcate the spirit of “moderation”:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. xi. 13).

“Let your moderation (yieldingness) be known unto all men” (Phil. iv. 5).

There is also a parallel in such passages as the following where the cross of Christ is spoken of in a special way:

“I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the *cross* of Christ” (Phil. iii. 18).

“They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. vi. 6).

The words: “Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright” (Heb. xii. 16), and the Philippian passage, “Whose God is their belly” (Phil. iii. 19) are closely parallel.

Both Hebrews and Philippians use athletic terms:

“Ye endured a great fight of (*athlesis*) of afflictions” (Heb. x. 32).

“Striving together (*sunathleo*) for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. i. 27).

“Help those women which laboured (*sunathleo*) with me in the gospel” (Phil. iv. 3).

There is a parallel also between Heb. xiii. 21 and Phil. i. 6, and between Heb. xiii. 21 and Phil. ii. 13:

“Make you perfect in every good work to do His will” (Heb. xiii. 21).

“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. i. 6).

“Working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight” (Heb. xiii. 21).

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. ii. 13).

There is a number of other minor details which we omit here, but which the reader may discover, all of which help to increase the total evidence and make the parallel too complete to be ignored.

*(To be concluded).*

**1. (concluded).**  
**The scope of Philippians seen in its parallel with  
the epistle to the Hebrews.**  
**pp. 230 - 232**

We conclude with one more parallel which lies near the very heart of Philippians, namely, the “out-resurrection”:

“If by any means I may attain unto the out-resurrection, out from the dead ones”  
(Phil. iii. 11).

“Therefore leaving . . . . not laying again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection . . . . these all died in faith, not having received the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect . . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect”  
(Heb. xi. 35, 40, xii. 23).

Heb. xi. 35 makes it abundantly clear that the “better resurrection” which was “obtained” was in the nature of a recognition of willing suffering for the Lord, and the special mention of the spirits of “perfected righteous ones” is associated with the “first-born”, and the contrast with Esau’s temporizing. These all contribute to the very evident parallel.

The “out-resurrection” of Phil. iii. is *not the hope* of the church, but is an *added prize*. The hope of the church can neither be lost nor won. Just as the revelation of the heavenly city is something over and above the inheritance revealed in Genesis, so the “out-resurrection” is the means of attaining to some “better thing” for those who have diligently followed on unto perfection.

We set out the parallel between the two epistles as follows:

<b>Hebrews.</b>		<b>Philippians.</b>	
Things accompanying salvation Heavenly city	vi. 9. xi. 10, xii. 22.	Work out salvation Citizenship in heaven	ii. 12. iii. 20,
Reproach	xi. 26, xiii. 13.	Fellowship of sufferings	iii. 10.
Reward	x. 35, xi. 26.	Prize	iii. 14.
The race set before us	xii. 1.	I press toward the mark	iii. 14.
Leaving . . . let us go on	vi. 1, 2.	Forgetting things behind	iii. 13.
Obtain a better resurrection (Condition attached)	xi. 35.	Attain unto an out-resurrection (Condition attached)	iii. 11.
Power of His resurrection	xiii. 20.	Power of His resurrection	iii. 10.
Work in . . . His will	xiii. 21.	Work in . . . His will	ii. 13.
Christ the Image	i. 3.	Christ the Form	ii. 6.
Angels worship Him	i. 6.	Every knee bow	ii. 10.
Thou Lord, in beginning	i. 10.	Jesus Christ is Lord	ii. 11.
A little lower than angels	ii. 9.	No reputation . . . He humbled Himself	ii. 7, 8.
Cross endured for the joy and used as example	xii. 1, 2.	Cross suffered . . . wherefore . . . exalted . . . Let this mind be in you	ii. 5, 9.
Crucify to themselves afresh	vi. 6.	Enemies of the cross of Christ	iii. 18.
<b>PERFECTION</b> (vi. 1, x. 39).		<b>or</b>	<b>PERDITION</b> (iii. 12, 19).
Fight of afflictions ( <i>athlesis</i> )	x. 32.	Strive together ( <i>sunathleo</i> )	i. 27, iv. 3.
Discernment	v. 14.	Discernment . . . differ	i. 9, 10.
Look diligently lest . . . Esau	xii. 15.	Mark them that walk	iii. 17.
For one morsel of meat sold his birthright	xii. 16.	Whose God is their belly	iii. 19.
That generation—tempted God in the wilderness	iii. 7-10.	Perverse generation . . . do without murmurings	ii. 14, 15.
Be content with such as ye have	xiii. 5.	Whatsoever state . . . content	iv. 11.
Communicate	xiii. 16.	Communicate	iv. 14, 15.
With such sacrifices well-pleased	xiii. 16.	Sacrifice . . . sweet smell, well-pleasing	iv. 18.
Fruit of righteousness	xii. 11.	Fruit of righteousness	i. 11.
Compassion in bonds	x. 34.	Partakers in bonds	i. 7.
Whose faith follow ( <i>mimeomai</i> )	xiii. 7.	Be followers together of me ( <i>summimetes</i> )	iii. 17.
Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods	x. 34.	Let your moderation be known unto all men	iv. 5.
You have in heaven an enduring substance ( <i>huparchonta</i> )	x. 34.	Our citizenship is in heaven ( <i>huparcho</i> )	iii. 20.
Salutation from Italy	xiii. 24.	Salutation from Caesar's household	iv. 22.
Paul's sign manual	xiii. 25.	Paul's sign manual	iv. 23.

Need we repeat that Hebrews does not minister to the church which is the body of Christ? What we have learned is that there is a parallel in the ways of God with His redeemed people, whether they are members of the bride or the body, the kingdom or the church. And as the principle of Hebrews has been so fully developed, it is necessary that we should acquaint ourselves with it, so that we shall perceive the true place which Philippians has in regard to the church.

The hope of the church cannot be taught from Philippians. There is no room for the words, "If by any means I might attain" in connection with our blessed hope. Philippians deals with those things which *accompany* salvation, and is therefore rightly associated with a prize, with pursuing, with examples.

Here for the moment we must stay. We hope to give further notes on this important theme, and to analyse, with some degree of fullness, the important words that are translated, "the resurrection of the dead", "this vile body" and other related expressions.

To some, this article and its fellows may seem devoid of "life" and spiritual application. This we leave to the Lord Himself, our part being to put the Word of truth in as clear a light as grace will permit, and to look to God to give the increase.

## **PREFACES to PRAYER.**

**pp. 170 - 172**

It is the custom in most meetings to “open with prayer”, and this is well, for it manifests the sense of dependence that all should feel. It expresses the utter need of the Lord’s guidance, teaching and blessing, without which service is vain, and it does, or should, bring every heart into loyal and loving subjection to the Lord of life and glory, that from unfeigned lips may ascend the prayer: “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”

There have been occasions, however, when it has been felt that those who were engaging in prayer needed some check, some anchor, some leading, and it will often be found a great help if, before prayer is actually made, some portion of the Scriptures be read which shall steady and direct the thoughts in a true and right channel.

It may help some of our readers who have the responsibility of meetings if we briefly record one or two passages of Scripture which we have used when circumstances seemed to call for such assistance.

### **Phil. i. 1-21.**

- (a) Verse 6.—God will “finish”. Remember this promise; it will modify any tendency to undue anxiety. We start with a consciousness of God and His faithfulness.
- (b) Verse 7.—This promise of verse 6 is not incompatible with our responsibility. We have a blessed privilege as fellow-workers of God.
- (c) Verse 9.—The actual prayer of the apostle is enlightening. Do we in our measure pray in a similar wisdom and spirit?
- (d) Verses 12-18.—Notice the spirit of Paul, and his one ground of rejoicing—“notwithstanding, every way, Christ is preached.”
- (e) Verses 19, 20.—How Paul expected answer to prayer: (1) *Your* prayer, (2) *The Lord’s* supply, (3) *My* expectation.

### **Psalm lxxiii.**

To catch the sense, translate the words “Truly”, “Verily”, and “Surely” of verses 1, 13 and 18, by the colloquial, “After all”. Verse 1 is only to be learned “in the sanctuary” (verse 17). Note the change in point of view (verses 3-12, and 24-26). Prayer can lead us into this sanctuary experience.

**Phil. iv. 5-7.**

- (a) Moderation means “yieldingness”, if such a word is permissible. This quality must not of course be shown in stewardship—in such a capacity we may yield nothing, “no, not for an hour”. But in the matter of our own rights and liberties we can afford to let much go for the sake of Christ and His people, as did Paul.
- (b) Prayer is not worry, it is a committal to God.
- (c) God assures one answer to every true prayer: “The peace of God . . . . shall garrison your hearts and minds.”

**Psalm lxi.**

- (a) What is prayer? . . . . . It is a cry.
- (b) Where may I pray? . . . . . From the ends of the earth.
- (c) When may I pray? . . . . . When heart is overwhelmed.
- (d) What shall I say? . . . . . Lead me to Christ; higher than I.
- (e) What is my assurances? . . . . . Thou hast been . . . . . I will trust.

**Numb. vii. 89.**

“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then He heard the voice of one speaking with him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim: and he spoke unto Him.”

The basis of prayer is the offering of Christ, for without the “sacrifice of peace offerings” of verse 88, Moses would not have drawn near. Since “He is our peace” we have “access” (Eph. ii. 14-18).

The association of prayer is the recognition of “all saints”. It was in “the tabernacle of the congregation”. The goal of prayer is the same as the symbolic teaching of the cherubim “from between the two cherubim”. This of course must be learned from Scripture. The cherubim at the gate of the garden of Eden, on the mercy seat, leaving and returning with the glory of the Lord, as described by Ezekiel, and present during the book of the Revelation, where the A.V. calls them “the four beasts”, are pledges of the restoration of man and his lost dominion. “We see not yet all things put under him (Adam, Psa. viii.), but we see Jesus.” These features being present and recognized, the prayers of the Lord’s people will be less likely to wander and miss their mark.

**Eph. ii. 16, 18, 22; iii. 1, 14 and 17.**

“That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.”

“Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

“In Whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God in Spirit. For this cause . . . . I bow my knees unto the Father . . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.”

The idea in selecting these verses is that of personal realization of what is already ours in Christ. The passage before us suggests this in two ways. First, taking Eph. ii. 16 and 18. What has been already accomplished through the cross of Christ is the reconciliation of the church in one body to God. What awaits the individual response is the access of each reconciled member in one Spirit to the Father. The corresponding terms, “reconcile” and “access”, “body” and “spirit”, “God” and “Father” tell their own story. Secondly, the same truth is given point in Eph. ii. 22, iii. 1, 14 and 17.

The believers of this dispensation are being built together as the dwelling place of God, therefore the apostle prayed that the individual member of that temple should himself attain unto some experimental acquaintance with such a privilege and realize, by faith, the dwelling of Christ also in the heart. In both examples, the idea of being merely content with what is true of the mass is seen to be insufficient for full robust Christian profession.

The above are a few passages that have been used before meetings. Each servant will of course use those scriptures which fit the occasion. The above are but examples that may illustrate a possible course where a steadying of those gathered seems necessary.

“Take heed you words and turn to the Lord” (Hos. xiv. 2).

## The Epistle to the Romans.

### #22. The promise *versus* the law (iii. 30 - iv. 25). pp. 4 – 9

In Rom. iii. 31 the apostle meets the charge of making void the law through faith. He now retorts, with effect, that law and works make faith void and the promise of none effect (iv. 14).

Our study will largely be the relation of promise to law. In the first place let us take note what is said concerning the promise of God:--

“The promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. iv. 13).

“For if they which are of the law be heirs is made void, and the promise made of none effect” (Rom. iv. 14).

“Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed” (Rom. iv. 16).

“Being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. iv.21).

We see here certain important connections. The promise is essentially associated with inheritance, but not by the operation of law, for this is contrary to both faith and promise. The reason why faith is the principle is that the whole may be by grace, and grace and works of law cannot agree. The fact that the promise rests on the principle of grace and faith, and not works of law, makes it sure, and at the last the certainty of the promise is derived not from the faith of the believer, but the faithfulness of the *Promiser*. In this group of passages promise, grace and faith are ranged against law, instability and works.

The next group is found in Rom. ix.:--

“To whom pertain the adoption . . . . and the promises” (verse 4).

“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (verse 8).

“For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son” (verse 9).

The relation of adoption to promise is clearly established by the structure of the passage.

### Romans ix. 3-5.

- A | According to the flesh.—Brethren.
- B | Who are Israelites.
- C | To whom pertaineth the ADOPTION.
- D | And the glory.
- E | And the covenants.
- E | And the giving of the law.
- D | And the service of God.
- C | And the PROMISES.
- B | Whose are the fathers.
- A | As concerning the flesh, Christ came.

The reason for this connection will more easily be appreciated after we have seen the teaching of Galatians. The other references repudiates the flesh. This is the item added to those already seen in Rom. iv.

The third group of passages is found in Galatians:--

“Christ has redeemed us from the *curse* of the law . . . . that the *blessing* of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made” (Gal. iii. 16).

“This I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise . . . . the law . . . . was added . . . . till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. iii. 17-19).

“Is the law against the promise of God? Let it not be! The Scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given unto them that believe” (Gal. iii. 21, 22).

“If ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29).

“Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman, but he who was after the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise . . . . these are the two covenants” (Gal. iv. 22-24).

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gal. iv. 28).

The theme in this group is related to the covenant, and upon examination the following items come to light. The law has a curse, and is therefore quite contrary to *the blessing* of Abraham. The latter is related to the promise of the Spirit through faith. This is a partial answer to the question of Gal. iii. 3: “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” The remaining references are to be understood in the light of the Greek law of adoption in force in Galatia at the time the epistle was written. The existence of this law and its application is not within the range of pure exegesis, and under God we owe the knowledge of its bearing upon the theme to the research of *Sir William Ramsay, D.C.L.* The following is a condensation of his remarks upon the passage in Gal. iii.

### **A man's will, *diatheke* (Gal. iii. 15-18).**

An illustration from the ordinary laws of society, as they existed in Galatian cities, is here used: "I speak after the manner of men." While *diatheke* in other places refers to the covenant, old or new, here, "after the manner of men", it refers to the Galatian will.

The word is often found in this sense in the inscriptions. Paul speaks of this will as though it were irrevocable, and it is this difficulty that has made the commentators on the passage reject, almost unanimously, the sense implied by the figure of a will. They do not try to determine what was the nature of a will among the Galatians, but assume that it was much the same as it is to-day. Here, however, we are confronted with a legal idea that the duly executed will cannot be revoked by a subsequent act of the testator. Such irrevocability was a characteristic feature of Greek law. The appointment of an heir was the *adoption* and was irrevocable. The testator, after adopting an heir, could not subsequently take away from him his share in the inheritance or impose new conditions on his succession.

*Sir William Ramsay* gives an array of proofs which we do not here stay to quote. We pass on rather to the bearing of the law on the argument of Gal. iii. If, says the apostle, a man's will among you is unalterable and never changed by circumstances that may come about later, how much more God's Will!

"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirm before of God in Christ, *the law which was four hundred and thirty years after* cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. iii. 17).

Under the law, the heir and lord of all is likened to a child under tutors and governors, but when the time arrives for him to enter into his possessions, he reaches his "adoption". Now let us put together the two references to redemption that come on either side of this argument concerning the covenant, promise and the law:--

"Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law . . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on *the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the *Spirit* through faith" (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

"God sent His Son . . . . to redeem *them* that were under the law, that *we* might receive the adoption . . . . God hath sent forth the *Spirit* of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 4-6).

All dispute as to the meaning of "the promise of the Spirit" is settled in the light of this parallelism. "The promise of the Spirit" is "the Spirit of His Son", which is explained in Rom. viii. 15 to be "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father". This is placed over against "the spirit of bondage", and so is closely allied to the theme before us.

### **Faith and the Word.**

We now return to Rom. iv., realizing that promise is in an entirely different category from law, works, flesh, and bondage. The introduction of law brings about instability, for

the law worketh wrath where the flesh is concerned. Faith is always associated with grace: “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.” Grace alone can make anything sure, for the flesh of man is weak and untrustworthy. “To the end the promise may be sure.” Let us not omit the place that the Word has in all this: “Who against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: according to *that which was spoken*, So shall thy seed be” (Rom. iv. 18). What God *had promised*, Abraham *believed*. The same was true of Sarah: “She judge Him faithful who had promised” (Heb. xi. 11).

Again, in Rom. iv. 17 the promise to Abraham is introduced by the words: “As it is written.” This is a truth for all time, and cannot be uttered too often, that: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. x. 17).

### **If we believe.**

The apostle draws to a conclusion, telling us that these things were not written for Abraham’s sake alone, but for us also “if we believe”.

“The gospel is the power of God *to every one that believeth*” (Rom. i. 16).

“The righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all them that *believe*” (Rom. iii. 22).

“He is just and the Justifier of *him which believeth* (is of the faith of) Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26).

“Abraham *believed God* and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 3).

“It shall also be counted to us if we *believe*” (Rom. iv. 24).

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that *believeth*” (Rom. x. 4).

“With the heart man *believeth* unto righteousness” (Rom. x. 10).

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. xi. 6).

“Ant they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 6).

In addition to the Word, faith is closely associated with resurrection. This is evident in Gen. xv. 6, for the one who believed was “as good as dead”. Rom. iv. defines Abraham’s faith as faith in “God Who quickeneth the dead”. The faith that justifies now is the same:--

“It shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Rom. iv. 24).

“If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9).

Rom. iv. 4-25 had been one long exposition of Gen. xv. 6. The heads under which this exposition may be profitably studied or brought before others are:--

### **Gen. xv. 6 in Rom. iv. 4-25.**

1. *The negative.—How Abraham was not justified.*

(i.) Not by works (Rom. iv. 4-8).

(ii.) Not by circumcision (Rom. iv. 9-12).

(iii.) Not by law (Rom. iv. 13-16).

2. *The positive.—How Abraham was justified.*

- (i.) Faith as related to resurrection power of God (iv. 17).
- (ii.) Faith as it faced human inability (iv. 19).
- (iii.) Faith as it is related to the promise and the word (iv. 17, 18, 20).
- 3. *The personal.—How may I be justified?*
  - (i.) Not for his sake alone. The analogy of Scripture (iv. 23).
  - (ii.) If we believe. The importance of faith (iv. 24).
  - (iii.) Raised again for our justification. The place of resurrection in the gospel (iv. 25).

The structural outline of Rom. iv. 17-25 is as follows:--

**Rom. iv. 17-25.**

- A | Faith and resurrection (iv. 17, 18).
    - a | As it is written.
      - b | Father of many nations.
        - c | Before Him Whom he believed.
          - d | God Who quickeneth the dead.
            - d | Called things that are not.
              - c | Against hope believed in hope.
                - b | Father of many nations.
                  - a | As that which was spoken.
  - B | Faith and the death of self (iv. 19-21).
    - g | Now weak in faith.
      - f | Considered his own body as dead.
        - f | Also deadness of Sarah's womb.
          - e | Not stagger through unbelief.
            - e | Strong in faith (*eudunamao*).
              - f | Glory to God.
                - f | Fully persuaded.
                  - g | Strong to perform (*dunatos*).
  - B | The analogy of faith (iv. 22-24).
    - e | It was imputed to him.
      - f | Not written for his sake alone.
        - f | But for us also.
          - e | It shall be imputed to us.
- A | Faith and the purpose of resurrection (iv. 24, 25).
  - a | Who was delivered.
    - b | For our offences.
      - a | And raised again.
        - b | For our justification.

**#23. Boasting in hope of the glory of God (v. 1-11).  
pp. 36 – 41**

We now approach the closing section of this great opening up of the basic doctrine of the gospel, viz., Justification by faith. The battle for the first important phase of the truth has been fought, and now the blessed fruits are brought to light. Upon the basis of justification by faith the apostle proceeds to show its result in the blessed fruit of the Spirit:--

“PEACE with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
“ACCESS by faith into grace.”  
“STANDING.”—“Wherein we stand.”  
“HOPE.”—“We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Fortified therefore by all that this new relationship means, the believer finds new strength. He can even rejoice in tribulation, for he has learned that “all things work together for good, to them that love God”. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and he begins his first lesson in the school of divine logic: “Much more therefore”; “For if when we were enemies . . . . much more . . . .” He begins to taste the blessedness of an ever-present salvation flowing from an ever-living Saviour:--

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10).

Perhaps the most important, or at least the first lesson to learn, is the essential relation between the two states suggested by the verbs “to be”, “to have”, and “to receive”.

“Therefore BEING justified by faith, we HAVE peace . . . . we HAVE access”  
(Rom. v. 1, 2).  
“Much more, BEING reconciled . . . . we HAVE now received the reconciliation”  
(Rom. v. 10, 11).

There in MS authority for the R.V. rendering of Rom. v. 1: “Let us have peace with God.” If this rendering be accepted, the teaching of the apostle instead of being weakened is strengthened, for he now assumes justification by faith to be establish beyond argument, and is exhorting the believer to press forward and enjoy its fruits. There are a good many reasons, however, for rejecting it, one, that can be followed by most, being the coupling of *di'ou kai* (“through whom also”) with the words *ten prosagogen* (“we have access”), which would demand the words, “let us have access” for which no MS authority exists. It is truth for which we can never be too grateful that as a result of being justified by faith, we *have* peace with God, and can well heed the exhortation, “Let us have peace” (experimentally).

Rom. v. 1-11 (the closing portion of this outer section) accomplishes a transition by introducing reconciliation. While it is unwise to generalize, speaking broadly we might say that Rom. i.-iv. deals with the justification of sinners, the transition; Rom. v. 1-11



come short of the glory of God”, while here it is written that we “rejoice *in hope* of the glory of God”. For an examination of the meaning of “glory” in Rom. iii. 23 and v. 2 we must refer our readers to article #15 of this series. All that we need do here is to remind the reader of the three passages (Rom. iii. 23; iv. 20-22; and v. 2) which form a connected line of teaching:--

1. Man by nature through sin has come short of the *glory* of God.
2. Abraham by faith that justified gave *glory* to God.
3. Believers similarly justified rejoice in hope of the *glory* of God.

Where sin and legal works of the flesh failed to pass the “test”, the righteousness of faith is fully accepted. So Rom. v. 1 opens with the fact of justification, and proceeds to develop its fruits.

It is essential that we observe the order of words here: “Being . . . . we have . . . . we stand . . . . we rejoice.” “Being” comes first. What we “are” in Christ lies at the root of all we “have” in Him. Peace and access are related together as cause and effect, and both are phases of reconciliation. This is seen by comparing Rom. v. 1-11 with Eph. ii.:--

| <b>Romans v.</b>           | <b>Ephesians ii.</b>                     |
|----------------------------|--|
| Boasting only in the Lord. | Not of works, lest any man should boast. |
| Hope of glory.             | Having no hope.                          |
| Peace.                     | He is our peace.                         |
| Enemies reconciled.        | Enmity slain.                            |
| Access.                    | Access in one Spirit.                    |
| Reconciliation.            | Reconciled both in one body by cross.    |

The first result of justification by faith is stated in Rom. v. 1: “We have peace.” The English idea conveyed by the word “peace” is not quite the same as that of the Hebrew word *shalom* or the Greek word *eirene*. Our first thought concerning peace is “calm”, “repose”, “tranquility”, but God’s thought goes deeper and is expressed in Isa. xxxii. 17: “The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” “Work” here signifies the thing made, and “effect” indicates the service that results from it. The two words “work” and “effect” are used together in Isa. xxviii. 21: “His strange *work* . . . . His strange *act*.”

Peace is not quietness, but produces it. The underlying idea of peace is found in the word *shalom*, which is translated: “be at peace”, “finished”, “restore”, “pay”, “recompence”, “make good”, and “perfect”. The idea is expressed in the one word “completeness”. Instead of peace being a mere cessation of hostilities, ready to break out again, it indicates a complete settlement of the issue by restoration, finishing, perfecting. It is the work of righteousness: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Sin with its guilt and condemnation can never again intrude, and the consciousness of this blessed standing leads to “quietness and assurance”. Paul, who knew the meaning of Hebrew, could therefore rightly substitute the “bond of perfectness” in Col. iii. for the “bond of peace” in Eph. iv. While their own special meanings they are nevertheless closely allied. The usage of the word “peace” in the Greek Scriptures

indicates that it means something more than the absence of strife. It is opposed to *kaka* = “evil” in Isa. xlv. 7, Jer. xxix. 11. It is also opposed to *thlipsis* = “tribulation” in Zech. viii. 10; John xvi. 33. In Rom. v., Eph. ii. and Col. i. the usage leads us to see that it indicates:--

“The new relationship between man and God brought about by the atonement (reconciliation).”—*Cremer*.

The word “with” in the expression “peace with God” is not *meta* = “in association with”, implying something held in common, or *para* = “by the side of”, but *pros* = “towards”, implying that God is the great object before the renewed mind, which is reaching out for fullest fellowship. It is the word used by John in that glorious passage: “The Word was *with* God”; not only “with” in the sense of place, but “with” in the completeness of personal choice and agreement.

*Pros* reappears in the word “access” of Rom. v. 2, where the original reads *prosagoge*. Peter has expressed similar truth in I Pet. iii. 18: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us (*prosago*) to God.” Here, righteousness provided by the great sacrifice of Christ is the procuring cause of this “access”. So in Heb. x. the perfect acceptance of the believer because, of the one sacrifice offered for sins for ever, leads to “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”.

The access of Rom. v. is “into this grace wherein we stand”. The believer’s “standing” is no longer in Adam, but in Christ, no longer in law, but in grace, and because of the fulness of the Saviour’s work, and the grace of God that is his in Christ, he, the erstwhile sinner who had come short of the glory of God, is now enabled to “rejoice upon hope of the glory of God”. “In hope” is not exact enough, for in verse 3 we have the expression: “we boast *in* tribulations also.” We need to distinguish the boasting that is resting upon (*epi*) hope of the glory of God, and that boasting which is in (*en*) tribulations. There is an allusion here to Abraham, who against hope, *on (epi)* hope believed” (Rom. iv. 18).

Rom. i. 1 - v. 2 is expressed as follows in the figurative language of the Psalms:--

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God” (Psa. xl. 2, 3).

“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and boast upon hope of the glory of God” (Rom. v. 1, 2).

Here is our ground of boasting, here is our “standing”, here is our “introduction” (as access has been translated); here is peace, the completely finished thing. Not one word has been uttered of experiences; all rests upon Christ and the grace of God. Not until this has been established does anything experimental come into view. Only the one who is rejoicing *upon* hope can rejoice *in* tribulations also.

The second boasting of the structure must next be examined. Meanwhile let us not forget that those who have been thus “made nigh” should “draw near”, and let us glory in the completeness of our acceptance in Christ which gives us “boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (Eph. iii. 12).

## **#24. Patience and proof (v. 1-11). pp. 78 – 83**

To quote, detachedly, the words of Rom. v. 3, “we glory in tribulations”, is to misrepresent Scripture: at the very least we must go on to say, “we glory in tribulations *also*”. No sane man boasts in tribulations for their own sake; this boasting depends upon the earlier one:--

“We boast *on* hope of the glory of God.”  
“We boast *in* tribulations also.”

The hope is our foundation and rock upon which we stand secure. Tribulation is but an environment, the storm that tests but never moves us from our strong tower.

In II Cor. xii. 9 Paul says that he boasts in his infirmities, but again such a statement, apart from its context, does not convey the truth. Paul was not a man who nursed his misery, who was only happy when he was ill or sad; the context reveals the reason of his strange boast:--

“He said unto me, MY grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

In Rom. iv. 18 hope resting upon the flesh is placed over against hope that trusts in the God that quickeneth the dead: “Who against hope believed on hope.” In Rom. v. we start with hope securely fixed in the grace of God, and then, by tribulation and trial, make that hope experimentally ours. “We boast on *hope* of the glory of God . . . . tribulations . . . . patience . . . . experience . . . . *hope*.” Hope is depicted as an anchor, and the storms of tribulations test and prove that true hope “enters into that within the veil” (Heb. vi. 19). An anchored ship stems the current; the unanchored ship drifts.

### **Tribulation.**

It will be necessary to survey the teaching of Scripture as to tribulation. *Thlipsis* is translated “tribulation”, “affliction”, “persecution”, etc., and comes from a word meaning to squeeze or press. The contrast between tribulation and peace, seen in the two aspects of teaching in Rom. v., are found in John xvi. 33: “in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

Affliction, or tribulation, accompanying the reception of the Word is an indication of the election of God: “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God, for our gospel came not unto you in word only . . . . having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (I Thess. i. 4-6).

Tribulation because of the Word is a test: “Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, immediately he is offended” (Matt. xiii. 21).

Tribulation will never be allowed to separate the believer from his Lord: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation . . . .? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. viii. 35-37).

Tribulation, if endured in a true Christian spirit, appears light, for it has a real relation with the glory yet to be: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, age-abiding, weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen’ (II Cor. iv. 17, 18).

Tribulation, being a part of the appointed process of Christian development, should not move us: “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereto” (I Thess. iii. 3).

Rom. xii. 12 says: “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation.” Just as Heb. xii. declares that chastening and discipline are the necessary accompaniment of true sonship, and that though, for the time being, discipline seemeth “not joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”, so Rom. v. shows that, though tribulation may come as a test to the believer who is justified by faith, yet it will work patience and give proof that shall establish him in this blessed position of grace and acceptance. Just as II Cor. iv. 17 tells us that affliction works out for us a weight of glory, so Rom. v. 3 tells us that tribulation works out patience.

### **Patience and proof.**

Patience is closely connected with hope. The well-known prayer in I Thess. i. 3 comes to mind immediately: “Your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Just as “faith without works is dead, being alone”, so hope without patience becomes barren and fruitless. The man who has the blessed hope in his heart will not be so concerned with the ups and downs of life. Gains or losses, success or failure, that would have meant so much while unsaved, now become, relatively, of small consequence.

By comparing Rom. v. 3 with James i. 3 we get light upon both tribulation and patience:--

“Knowing that *tribulation* worketh patience.”

“Knowing that *the trying of your faith* worketh patience.”

The passage in James sheds light on another part of Rom. v.: “Patience works experience.” Now the word “experience” is *dokime*, and the word “trying” is *dokimion*, which indicates that there is a process of testing going on all the way. Tribulation, when it tests faith and finds it true, works patience. Patience, when it is tested, manifests this proof and leads on to experimental appreciation of that hope which is ours already, by grace.

Peter expresses similar truth in his first epistle, chapter i. 2-9. There, as in Romans, is the “living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”. There, too, is the hope of glory, “an inheritance incorruptible . . . . reserved in heaven for you”. There, again, are accompanying trials, “for a season, if need be”, and these manifold temptations are “that the trial (*dokimion*) of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, by means of fire being tried (*dokimazo*), may be found unto praise and honour and glory (*doxa*) at the revelation of Jesus Christ”. Here another item of truth is added, the words “trial”, *dokimion*, and “glory”, *doxa*, being allied.

The teaching of Rom. v., then, may be expressed in some such terms as these:--

“By being justified by faith through Christ, you have a perfect standing, and, in Him, you can even boast upon the hope of a full approval after the most searching test of God (*doxa*). Let not this future acceptableness be wasted, let it have its full effect now upon your life and service. Tribulation and the trial of faith will be like fire that *tries* gold, and the experimental proof (*dokime*) thus made will produce in you a blessed assurance.”

There is, however, no false introspection advocated here. We are to be thankful for the trial that reveals the true gold, but we are not to look to experiences to justify us before God. When we do look within it is to see, not self, but “the love of God shed abroad”: not the work of the flesh, but the fruit of the work of “the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” This is the spirit of sonship, as we shall learn later. The believer who thus has the answer of a good conscience, and who sees the fruit of the spirit, “faith, love, patience” (I Tim. vi. 11; II Tim. iii. 10; Titus ii. 2) is nevertheless brought back swiftly and surely to the great foundation of all his hope, and is once again told, uncompromisingly, that this whole standing is in grace, is by pure, unmerited, favour. So it is that, immediately following this experimental passage, we read: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for us”, and the argument proceeds to a double “much more”:-

“Much more, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”  
“Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

### **The one great basis.**

Readers who have the volume entitled *The Apostle of the Reconciliation* will find the structure of Rom. v. 6-10 set out in it on page 205. We set it out afresh here, omitting some detail in the last member, in order that the contrast between the “scarcely” and “peradventure” of man’s love may be the better contrasted with the “much more” of the love of God. We make this comment lest any reader should be disturbed at finding an

*apparent* difference in the two structures. We may here state that we shall not hesitate to modify, alter, or extend any published structure, as closer search reveals clearer outlines, and we are sure that our readers will appreciate the Berean spirit actuating this purpose.

**Rom. v. 3-10.**

- A | 3-6. | a | God's love shed abroad.  
          b | YET without strength.  
          c | Christ died for ungodly.
- B | 7. Scarcely. \ Man's attitude to "righteous"  
          Peradventure. / and "good".
- A | 8. | a | God's love commended.  
          b | YET sinners.  
          c | Christ died for us.
- B | 9, 10. Much more. \ God's attitude to "enemies"  
          Much more. / and "reconciled".

This passage is often made the basis of a gospel address to the unsaved, and it is truly a blessed message of saving grace, but what we want to remember here is that it was primarily written by the apostle to those who were already justified and saved. They are reminded that when they were *yet* without strength, Christ died for them, and that if they have "begun in the spirit, they are not now to be perfected in the flesh" (Gal. iii. 3). They were received by Christ as they were, "sinners and ungodly", "without strength" and "enemies". Here there can be no room for the flesh or its distinctions.

The apostle has this fact in mind, when, having disposed of the "doubtful disputations" that arose solely from fleshly distinctions, he says: "Wherefore receive ye one another, *as* Christ also received us to the *glory of God*" (Rom. xv. 6, 7), and this "glory of God" is, by Rom. v. 2 and 3, seen to be the "hope of the glory of God". "Now the God of the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13).

The love of God, as "poured out" and "commended", which enters into the argument of Romans for the first time in chapter v., is in view right through the heights and depths of doctrine in chapters vii. & viii., and emerges once more, when the very foundations have been laid bare, in the glorious burst of praise.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall *tribulation*? (the very argument of Rom. v.). Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 35-39).

Between these two utterances we are to plumb the depths of original sin, and creature failure. We are to hear uttered, in almost the same breath, "O wretched man that I am" and "There is therefore now no condemnation", but the great basis of all our hope remains the same, viz., "Christ died for us". We may learn more of what that death involves as we read Rom. vi., but at the end we still "look off unto Jesus" rather than look within.

Rom. v. prepares us for Rom. viii. in this, that it speaks of a salvation not only through the death of Christ, but “by His life”, which truth finds its echo in the glorious words of Rom. viii. 34: “Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.”

There is a descending scale in the description of sinners in Rom. v. 6-10 that is instructive. Four titles are used, two being negative, saying what men are not, or have not, and two being positive, expressing what they are in nature and practice:--

|           |   |                                 |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|
| Negative. | \ | WITHOUT strength.—To save self. |
|           | / | Ungodly.—To serve God.          |
| Positive. | \ | Sinners.—by nature.             |
|           | / | Enemies.—In practice.           |

For all men, in all their needs, without making any distinctions, Christ died. Their justification is in His blood, their salvation by His death and risen life, their reconciliation through the death of God’s Son.

### **Reconciliation.**

It is here that the transition between Rom. i.-iv. and Rom. v. 12 - viii. is effected. We pass on from the justification and forgiveness of sinners and ungodly to the reconciliation of enemies and the victory over sin and death.

This must be our theme when next we deal with this wonderful epistle.

### **#25. The reconciliation received (v. 1-11). pp. 118 – 122**

We must now give our attention to the teaching of Rom. v. on the subject of reconciliation, and as a preface to the study we must obtain a scriptural understanding of (1) the meaning of the different words translated “reconciliation”; and (2) the associations of the doctrine of reconciliation. The following Greek words enter into the make-up of the word considered: *katallasso*, *apokatallasso*, *katallage*, *allasso* and *allos*. The root of the word is *allos*, which means “other”, and indicates a change. *Allasso* is translated “change”, as follows:--

ALLASSO.—  
“Change the customs” (Acts vi. 14).  
“Changed the glory” (Rom. i. 23).  
“We shall be *changed*” (I Cor. xv. 51, 52).

As can be seen by the three examples given, the word indicates a change of a very radical kind. The change from law to grace was profound; the changing of the glory of

God to the likeness of animals was a terrible departure; while the changing of the body at the resurrection is beyond our understanding.

KATALLASSO.—

- “Enemies *reconciled* . . . . being *reconciled*” (Rom. v. 10).
- “*Reconciled* to her husband” (I Cor. vii. 11).
- “God hath *reconciled* us” (II Cor. v. 18).
- “God was in Christ *reconciling*” (II Cor. v. 19).
- “Be ye *reconciled* to God” (II Cor. v. 20).

KATALLAGE.—

- “The *atonement*” (Rom. v. 11).
- “The *reconciling* of the world” (Rom. xi. 15).
- “The word of *reconciliation*” (II Cor. v. 18, 19).

APOKATALLASSO.—

- “*Reconcile* the both” (Eph. ii. 16).
- “*Reconcile* all things” (Col. i. 20).
- “You . . . . hath He *reconciled*” (Col. i. 21).

The translation of *katallage* by “atonement” in the A.V. is confusing, for the number of occurrences of the word in the O.T. has already fixed its meaning. There it corresponds to the word translated “propitiation” in Rom. iii. 25. It is safe to say that no one can receive the “atonement” in the O.T. sense of the word, for that propitiation was offered to God, not man. The reconciliation flows out of the atonement or propitiation, and this is the meaning of Rom. v. 11. The R.V. has corrected the error, reading: “through Whom we now received the reconciliation.”

This matter is so close to the heart of the gospel that we would be at pains not to be misunderstood. Because for the truth’s sake we prefer the translation “reconciliation” to “atonement”, let no one misconstrue our motives into a denial of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. That atonement so fully and carefully set forth in O.T. type is assured in its N.T. reality by the word translated “propitiation”, which comes to us from the Greek version of the O.T. The blood of bulls and goats never took away sin or touched the conscience. The blood of Christ has “covered by canceling”, and has made the one and only true atonement for our sins. The reader is directed to the series entitled *Redemption* in previous volumes for fuller teaching upon this wondrous theme.

*Cremer’s* note on the two words *katallasso* and *apokatallasso* is suggestive:--

“*Apo*, referring to the state to be left, and *kata* to the state to be sought after . . . . *katallasso* is the setting up of a relationship of peace not before existing; *apokatallasso* is the restoration of a relationship of peace which has been disturbed; c.f. *apokathistemi*, *apokatorthoo*.”

**Exclusive to Paul.**

Of all the N.T. writers, it will be observed that the words *katallasso*, *katallage* and *apokatallasso* are used only by Paul, for to him was committed the fulness of grace that

provided for the sinner and the ungodly complete acceptance in Christ. Moreover, to Paul was entrusted that stewardship toward the Gentiles which

- (1) Dealt with their alienation from God in Adam, apart from personal sins (Rom. v. 12).
- (2) Dealt with their alienation from God as Gentile nations (Rom. i. 8 and xi.).
- (3) Dealt with their alienation from God by sins committed (II Cor. v.).
- (4) Dealt with the alienation perpetuated by the distinctions of circumcision and uncircumcision, which was abolished in the new man of the mystery (Eph. ii.).
- (5) Dealt with the alienation of the whole church of the one body from its destined sphere "in the heavenlies far above principalities and powers" (Col. i.).

The study of the first of these, the reconciliation that set aside the alienation introduced by Adam, lies immediately before us in Rom. v. 12 in the general course of the series. For the moment, therefore, we pass on to consider the remaining four items.

### **The reconciliation of the Gentile nations as such.**

The question of reconciliation takes us back to the days of Abraham. Up to Gen. xi. no one nation was more favoured than another, but in the days of Nimrod and Babel it appears that the nations gave up God by plunging into idolatry, and that God gave up the nations, leaving them to walk in darkness. This is not only taught in Rom. i. 18-32, but in Acts xvii. 30, where the apostle speaks of a period when the nations walked in darkness and ignorance, while Israel had light and law. In Gen. xii. we have the call of Abraham and the promise that of him the Lord would make a great nation. While this had ultimate Gentile blessing in view, it operated for the time in restricting the purpose of God to Israelitish channels, and as Israel came into prominence and favour the Gentile nations lapsed more and more into ignorance. This aspect of truth is treated at some length in Volume XVII, page 129.

Just as the giving of the nations coincided with the taking up of Israel, so, in its turn, the reconciling of the nations is made known as Israel fall into ignorance and are set aside: "For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them (Israel) be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15). This is the reconciliation viewed nationally.

### **The reconciliation of the Gentile viewed as sinners.**

"So that, if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, it has become new! Yet all things are of that God Who is reconciling us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the ministry of the reconciliation (same word as 'atonement' in Rom. v. 11); how that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning their offences to them, and placing in us the word of reconciliation. On behalf of Christ, therefore, are we ambassadors for Christ, as if God were beseeching through us, we pray on behalf of Christ, Be ye reconciled to God. For Him Who knew no sin, on behalf of us He made (to be) sin, in order that we might become (the) righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. v. 17-21).

These words are a great depth: they must either be studied with some measure of fulness, or left in all their grace. For our present purpose they speak for themselves, and the parallels with Rom. iv. that suggest themselves will be sufficient comment.

### **The full reconciliation as pertaining to the mystery.**

The word *apokatalasso* is reserved for the revelation of the mystery. Eph. ii. establishes the complete and full agreement between every member of the body of Christ by totally destroying all fleshly distinctions and creating one new man in Christ. This church is reconciled to God in one body, complete and perfect. Col. i. brings reconciliation to its goal, by the final adjustment of the church of the one body in the new creation, with its heavenly associates—the principalities, powers, and invisible yet mighty dwellers in the super-heavenlies.

If Rom. v. speaks of boasting in the hope of the glory of God, Col. i. overwhelms us with it. There, as in Rom. v., aliens and enemies are fully reconciled. “The access” of Rom. v. is filled out to the full in Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12. The “grace wherein we stand” of Rom. v. is eclipsed by the “meetness for the inheritance of the saints in the light”, and the presentation of the reconciled believer “holy, and blameless, and irreproachable, in His presence” is a marvelous expansion of the believer’s perfect standing in Christ. The hope of glory of Rom. v. finds its echo in Christ, “the hope of glory”, in Col. i. 27. Just as tribulations are closely associated with access and reconciliation in Rom. v., so we find them in Col. i. 24: “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and am filling up the remainder of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, on behalf of His body, which is the church.”

Paul’s apostleship to the Gentiles is first of all indicated in Gal. i. & ii., and II Cor. xi. & xii. The stress upon Abraham and the Gentile in Galatians and Romans shows the reconciliation in progress. A great preparation for its acceptance is made in I Corinthians, followed by its proclamation in II Corinthians, and it underlies the whole of the teaching in the epistle to the Romans, which we summarize as follows:--

### **Romans and reconciliation.**

#### **(1) RECONCILIATION AND THE NATIONS.**

Rom. i. 18-32 shows the Gentiles’ utter need. Rom. iii. 29, 30 shows the leveling effect of the gospel, and Rom. xi. 15 the reconciliation in its dispensational character.

#### **(2) RECONCILIATION AND THE LAW.**

The presence of the law, and its connection with the old covenant and works of the flesh, emphasized fleshly distinctions as between circumcision and uncircumcision, and barred reconciliation (Rom. iii. 10-20; iv. 15; v. 20; vii. 7).

#### **(3) RECONCILIATION AND PRACTICE.**

The acceptance of the Gentiles by God is seen in Rom. xv. 16, and, in turn, their acceptance by believing Hebrews is prayed for in Rom. xv. 30, 32. All were to be received as Christ had received them, so that with “one mouth” both Jewish and Gentile believers might glorify God” (Rom. xv. 6, 7).

(4) RECONCILIATION AND THE SECRETS.

The secret of Rom. xvi. does not refer to Eph. iii., but to the inner teaching of Rom. v. 12 - viii. The relationship of Adam to the race provides a type of the relationship of Christ to the race, and leads on as a direct result of the reconciliation of Rom. v. 11: "We have now received the reconciliation"; "Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10, 11).

Reconciliation operates now, as a basis, not a goal in itself. Reconciliation is to be received, to be enjoyed, as the ambassador beseeches us to be reconciled to God. The reconciliation of the world came into operation when the national privileges and distinctions of Israel passed away, but it must not be confused with the resulting blessings that have come in its train. There is "much more" than reconciliation.

If we have received this reconciliation, we have entered into peace with God. No sin is reckoned against us. We have become the righteousness of God in Christ; before us is the hope of glory, and for our present and continuous salvation He Who died for us now lives for us. The argument of Rom. v. 10 is echoed in Rom. viii. 31, 32:--

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10).

"What shall we then say to these things? If God for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 31, 32).

**#26. Adam and Christ (v. 12-21).  
pp. 155 – 158**

We now enter the great central section of this epistle, and deal with that revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since age-times (Rom. xvi. 25). We leave behind the question of sins for the deeper question of sin, the disobedience to the law of Sinai for the one transgression of the garden of Eden. Moses and Abraham fade from view, and Adam is revealed as the channel of sin and death and its dominion. Here we are to learn the utter ruin of the creature as something deeper than the failure of the Gentile under the law of conscience, or of the Jew under the law of Moses. Here we shall plumb the depths of the depravity of our nature, here we shall come face to face with the dread fact that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. This is a more terrible revelation than that of Rom. iii. 12. There we read that there is none that *doeth* good; here we are to learn that, apart from deeds altogether, there is none that *is* good or that has any hope or possibility, in himself, of pleasing God.

The cry of Rom. vii. 24: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" will startle us, as though we heard the echo of our own heart's cry beat back to us. One great dominant theme runs through Rom. v. 12 - viii. 39, and this may expressed in the language of Rom. viii. 2: "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Our studies will reveal what is

the nature and effect of this law of sin and death, and what is the nature and effect of this law of the spirit of life. The one we shall see is derived from Adam, the first man, the other comes alone from Christ as the last Adam, and the second Man. Both of these titles of Christ belong to Him in resurrection triumph, and lead up to the words: “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. xv. 56, 57).

Here, in this quotation of I Cor. xv. is written the first summary of Rom. v. 12 - viii. 39. Rom. v. 12-21 shows that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin—“The sting of death is sin.” Rom. vi.-viii. proclaims that sin shall not have dominion over those who are not under the law, but under grace, and that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth, which dominion can be broken only by death and resurrection—“The strength of sin is the law.” Rom. vii. ends in the cry for deliverance, which is answered, in Rom. viii., by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the spirit of sonship, whereby we cry Abba, Father, the present intercession of Christ—“saved by His life”—ending with the triumphant words, “more than conquerors”, echoing I Cor. xv. 57: “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We enter, therefore, upon the study of Rom. v. in no unchastened spirit of curiosity. Too often the deep things revealed in Rom. v. have been abused by immature reasonings concerning election and predestination, all of which partake somewhat of the spirit of rebellion rather than humility. Here we are going to be told simple facts, not the underlying principles hidden in the heart of God. And yet, in His condescension, Rom. v. 12 does open with a revelation of the grace that included all in Adam that they may be included in Christ. This gracious purpose is found in the words of Rom. v. 12: “Wherefore as” (*Dis touto hosper*). *Dia touto* means “because of this”, “on this account”, and is translated “wherefore” in Eph. i. 15 and vi. 13, where the connection with that which goes before is obvious.

The Ephesian saints were sealed until the redemption of the purchased possession, and had the earnest of their inheritance in the spirit of promise. *Because of this* Paul could pray that they might know what is the hope and the glory of this inheritance, and the power of present anticipation. So in Eph. vi. 13, the wrestling—not being with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness—the necessity for the whole armour of God is introduced by the words, “because of this”. In Romans itself *dia touto* is found in i. 26, xiii. 6, and xv. 9 translated “for this cause”, and in iv. 16, “therefore”, where the reader will find that the full sense is given by rendering the words each time “because of this”. *Hosper*, “as”, is translated “like as” in Rom. vi. 4, and when read with Rom. v. 12 brings into vivid contrast the two chief actors in the scene, Adam and Christ:--

“As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin” (Rom. v. 12).

“We are buried with Him by baptism into death, that *like as* Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. vi. 4).

The theme introduced by “as” in Rom. v. 12 is continued in verses 19 and 21:--

“For *as* by one man’s disobedience” (Rom. v. 19).

“That *as* sin hath reigned unto death” (Rom. v. 21).

We now return to Rom. v. 12 and ask why this section is introduced by the word translated “because of this”, “like as”. The answer is “reconciliation”—the last word of Rom. v. 1-11. Enemies reconciled by the death of Christ, and saved by His life—“because of this reconciliation, as Adam . . . . so Christ.” Because one man’s one sin could involve all, in him, in death, so one Man’s one act of righteousness could involve all, in Him, in life. That is the simple issue. It is further developed to prove that the work of Christ goes further, and deals with “many offences” as well. Moreover, there is no act of faith in being involved in either Adam’s one act, or Christ’s one act, but there is, in addition, “the receiving” of the gift and consequent “reigning in life”. All this we have yet to see.

Before we go further, however, it will be necessary to have Rom. v. 12-21 before us, as without some guide we shall find the argument very involved. Moreover, it is vital to our peace and victory to see the teaching of this passage with some degree of clearness, and we shall not consider the space ill-used if we give the entire passage instead of the mere outline. It would further complicate this already complicated passage to depart from the A.V. here, or to insert any notes whatever: all this we reserve and subordinate to the one necessity—a survey and large view of Rom. v. 12-21 as a whole.

**\* \* Rom. v. 12-21 (Structure - see next page). \* \***

It will be seen that verses 15-17 form a large parenthesis, the theme of verses 12-14 being resumed and restated in verses 18-21. *Conybeare and Howson* in a note to Rom. v. 12 say:--

“Much difficulty has been caused to interpreters here by the *hosper* (which introduces the first member of the parallel) having no answering *houtos* (nor anything equivalent to it) to introduce the second.”

The difficulty vanishes when we perceive by the structure that the argument is restated in verses 18-21, where the needed “even so”, that is absent in verses 12-14, is found in its proper place. We shall make fewer exegetical errors and practice a truer humility, if, as our guiding principle, we take the words of Psa. cxix. 128: “I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”

**Rom. v. 12-21.**

- A | 12-14. | a | “Wherefore, as, through one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.
- b | For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
- c | Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.
- B | 15. | d | But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.
- e | For if through the offence of one many be dead.
- f | Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
- B | 16, 17. | d | And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
- e | For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one.
- f | Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
- A | 18-21. | a | Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
- b | Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.
- c | That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

**#27. The one man (v. 12).  
pp. 196 – 200**

The first item of teaching in Rom. v. 12 is contained in the reference to Adam—“By one man.” The most casual perusal of the chapter can hardly fail to bring under notice the repetition of this feature, and a careful examination shows that in the ten verses 12-21, there are no less than twelve occurrences of this word “one” in various connections:--

- “By **one** man sin entered into the world” (Rom. v. 12).
- “If through the offence of **one** many be dead” (Rom. v. 15).
- “The gift by grace, which is by **one** man, Jesus Christ” (Rom. v. 15).
- “Not as it was by **one** that sinned” (Rom. v. 16).
- “The judgment was by **one** to condemnation” (Rom. v. 16).
- “For if by **one** man’s offence, death reigned by **one**” (Rom. v. 17).
- “They which receive . . . shall reign in life by **one**” (Rom. v. 17).
- “By the offence of **one** judgment came upon all men” (Rom. v. 18).
- “By the righteousness of **one** the free gift came upon all men” (Rom. v. 18).
- “As by **one** man’s disobedience” (Rom. v. 19).
- “So by the obedience of **one**” (Rom. v. 19).

Emphasis to the extent of twelve references to one subject in ten verses can hardly be equaled in passages dealing with any other doctrine. What is there in chapters vi.-viii. to demand this forceful preparation? It is found in Rom. vi., for there we shall learn that there is something deeper and fuller than *substitution*, and that is *identification*, a truth that is vital to this section of the epistle. Statements such as “Baptized into His death”, “planted together in the likeness of His death”, “our old man crucified with Him”, “if we be dead with Christ”, which are found in chapter vi., require substantiation by something more intimate than substitution. Justification is related to the death of Christ “for us”, but “newness of life”, and freedom from “the dominion of sin”, are more strictly the result of identification with Christ.

This doctrine of identification, if it is to be something more than a legal fiction, must be shown to exist as a fact, and this is demonstrated by the scriptural doctrine of the organic unity of the human race. Just as we found Gen. i. essential to the teaching of Ephesians and Colossians, so shall we find the literal facts of the creation of man vital to the teaching of Rom. v. and viii. The essential oneness of the race with Adam is the insistent note of Rom. v. 12-21. It re-appears in Rom. vi. in the reference to the “old man”; we have it in Rom. vii. 14 in the confession “sold under sin”, and it is plainly visible in Rom. viii. 19-21 in the references to the groaning creation and its subjection to vanity. Eve was created in such a way that she should share this essential oneness of the race with Adam. The careful genealogies of Gen. v. and x. are vital to this truth. Looked at from this standpoint salvation hangs upon the genealogies of Matt. i. and Luke iii., and Paul found this truth important enough to include in his address to the Athenians—“He hath made of one (blood) all nations of men.”

From time to time the theory is revived that the account of the creation of man in Gen. i. does not refer to the same man as does Gen. ii. The reference to the "image of God" in Gen. i. is an allusion to Gen. ii. In Gen. v., there is an explicit statement concerning the identity of the Adam of Gen. i. with the Adam of Gen. ii.:-

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them and blessed them and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. v. 1, 2).

This is a direct reference to Gen. i. The passage proceeds:-

"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Gen. v. 3).

This is a most positive reference to the Adam of Gen. ii. & iii., and the teaching that has recently been revived that there are two Adams in view must be repudiated as mischievous error.

The organic unity of the race with the first man Adam being established, we must next ascertain whether Christ, as the Second Man and the Last Adam has any vital and real union with the race. If we find it to be so, identification becomes a glorious fact. Underlying this doctrine lies the Hebrew conception of the Kinsman-Redeemer (which has been dealt with in our *Redemption Series*, Volume XII) which makes it imperative that Christ should have been made partaker of flesh and blood. The truth is set forth most clearly in Heb. ii. 14, 15:-

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Christ, to fulfil all His great mission, must come as the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of David, the Son of man and the Son of God. The kingdom purpose required that His genealogy should go back to David and Abraham (Matt. i. 1), but the gospel committed to Paul necessitated that He should have a lineage that went back to Adam (Luke iii.). The virgin birth of Christ made it possible for Him to be related to man, without partaking of the awful entail that came to the race from Adam. The genealogy of Luke iii. goes back, and back, until we read that Adam was a son of God. There is not the slightest difference between the wording of the last clause of this genealogy and those that go before: "*Tou Kainan, tou Enos, tou Seth, tou Adam, tou Theou.*"

There is no warrant for hiding, or slurring, this great truth, in order to emphasize the sinfulness and the fall of man. The same Bible that teaches the one teaches the other, and we shall never understand redemption aright, or appreciate the relation of redeemed man to Christ, if we reject any item of truth regarding man himself. The doctrine of Rom. v. is impossible apart from the organic unity of the human race, the headship of Adam and the new headship of Christ. This doctrine we express in the one word Identification.

What this identification carries with it we learn in chapters vi. and vii.; here we are but learning the basic fact.

Closely associated with this unity and headship is the scriptural revelation of the two seeds in the earth. This is seen in Gen. iv., for I John iii. 12 says, "Cain was of that wicked one". Physical connection with Adam does not constitute participation in his headship or prove inclusion in his seed:--

"They are not ALL ISRAEL, which are OF ISRAEL, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, they are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for a seed" (Rom. ix. 6-8).

Cain, Ishmael and Esau were "children of the flesh", but that does not constitute them the true seed. The true seed are the children of promise, they are "in Isaac" if true Israelites, and "in Christ" in the wider application of the figure. The Lord had dealings with men who were literal descendants of Abraham, yet children of the devil. He allowed that they were Abraham's seed, yet He denied that Abraham was their father:--

"We be Abraham's seed . . . . I know that ye are Abraham's seed . . . . Abraham is our father . . . . If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham . . . . ye do the deeds of your father . . . . ye are of your father the devil" (John viii. 33-44).

There are men who, though "of Adam", are not "in Adam"; such was Cain. For all "in Adam" Christ became Kinsman-Redeemer, and their names are in the book of life. We shall find in Rom. v. that the interchange in the use of "all" and "many" is because at one time the whole of the true seed are in view by themselves, "all", and, at another, the whole of the physical descendants of Adam, when the true seed are differentiated and spoken of as "the many". There are, moreover, differences observable among the true seed. Just as one star differs from another, though both be in glory, so we shall find that, when it is a question of "receiving" and "reigning", "many" is used, but when it is a matter of justification unto life "all" is the word employed.

When once we see that "all in Adam" does not include all that are "of Adam" every text of Scripture can be accepted at its full value. We do not become Universalists and spoil the insistent teaching of Scripture concerning the Kinsman-Redeemer. We have no need to alter the wording of I Cor. xv. 22. All "in Adam" and all "in Christ" are co-extensive. Only by closing our eyes to the divine principle of Rom. ix. 5-7 can we assert that "all Israel" of Rom. xi. is as universal as the physical connection. If the objection is put forward that Rom. ix. 5-7 refers to an election, we have only to read on in Rom. xi. 28 to find that "all Israel" is an election, too. The same is true of all "in Adam". As a whole they are an election, a seed of promise, while at the same time different destinies and callings await them by that "election within an election" of which we have spoken before.\*

[\* - See Dispensational Truth, chapter xv.]

When we examine Rom. v. 12 - viii. 39, it is evident that we are pursuing a very different phase of truth from that which occupies Rom. i. - v. 11. In the opening section the words “faith” and “believe” occur 35 times, whereas there is but one reference to them in the whole inner section v. 12 - viii. 39, and that in quite a different sense from the doctrinal use in i.-iv. “We believe that we shall live with Him” (Rom. vi. 8). This is because we are dealing, not with faith, but with headship, representation, and identification. Adam’s sin and death cover me with all their hopeless misery, whether I “believe” it or not, and Christ is the new Head of all the true seed, quite irrespective of their faith. Faith lays hold of added blessings; it has to do with sins committed, not the one sin of Adam, and with reigning in life. But of all this we shall see more presently.

Some find a place of blessing in the millennial kingdom, corresponding to those who “reign in life”. Some are not raised from the dead until the thousand years are finished, yet it is evident from Rev. xx. that some of these have their names in the book of *life*, even though they have missed the *reign*. Personal overcoming is connected with reigning, whether in Rev. xx. or in Rom. vi.-viii., and we need to distinguish things that differ if we are fully to understand the great work of the Lord.

Let us not allow doctrine belonging to other aspects of our need to intrude into Rom. v. There we are prepared to learn the truth concerning the “one man”, whether of Adam, and his legacy of sin and death, or of Christ, and His blessed legacy of righteousness and life. Let us be glad and rejoice that “because of this,”—the great principle of reconciliation—God shut up all the seed in Adam’s guilt that He might just as surely shut them all up in Christ’s righteousness.

## Satan's two lies.

**pertaining to (i.) The first death (Gen. iii. 4),  
and (ii.) The second death (Rev. xx. 15).  
pp. 153, 154**

Every student of the Scriptures who has the smallest acquaintance with their structure and plan, knows how fully Genesis finds its complement in Revelation. We will not take up space in setting out what is generally accepted, but pass on to its application in one important feature. When we read Gen. iii. we have revealed to us the liar and his methods. Satan meddled with the word of God relative to death:--

“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. iii. 1).

“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (or God), knowing good and evil” (Gen. iii. 4, 5).

What Satan has done with regard to the *first death* he has also done regarding the *second*. God has said:--

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . . Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. xx. 15 - xxi. 5).

This lake of fire is called “the second death” (Rev. xx. 14), and so complete is its destructive power that when death and hades are cast into it they shall be no more (xxi. 4). No other part of Scripture describes the judgment of the great white throne; all we know about it is revealed here. We are solemnly warned in Rev. xxii. 18, 19 against either adding to or taking away from the words of this book. Inferences and deductions from other Scriptures may be true or false. We cannot build up an elaborate and far-reaching doctrine upon the sandy foundation of mere inference.

Had it not been for the fact of resurrection, the first death would have been total and complete destruction, for, says the apostle, if the dead rise not, “then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (I Cor. xv. 18). What is true of the first death is true also of the second. Apart from resurrection the second death, with its brimstone and its fire, must be utter destruction.

Whence, in spite of all the positive testimony to the contrary, comes the teaching that those whose names are not found written in the book of life, who are cast into the lake of fire, the second death, will ultimately emerge, the redeemed of the Lord? From none other than the liar, who is again employing methods once so terribly effective in the garden of Eden.

First he says: “*Yea, hath God said?*” He uses specious arguments about the love of God, the nature of sin, the sovereignty of God, the idea that unless all are saved God has

failed: as if the salvation of all must of necessity be the purpose of the ages. When he has sufficiently played upon the sentiments of his dupes, he brings forward his second line of attack, "*Ye shall not surely die*", by bluntly denying the completeness of the revelation concerning the second death, and by wresting from I Cor. xv. teaching specially written to enlighten the Corinthians concerning the death brought in by Adam. What Scripture says concerning the wheat, Satan misapplies to the tares. Eve was deceived, and she has many followers. She thought that Cain, who was of that wicked one, was "the man Jehovah", and multitudes are being prepared to receive the man of sin as the true Christ.

We have never felt called upon to undertake a campaign, nor to attack all the false teaching that is springing up around us, but we do feel it incumbent upon us to call upon those who have perceived the truth of the mystery, not to allow this specious lie to spoil their witness. It is with great reluctance that we have publicly to make known that in loyalty to the Lord, His work and His word, it is impossible for us to be associated in ministry with any who advocate this lie concerning the second death, known as "Universal reconciliation". Reconciliation, redemption, resurrection and restoration pertain to the true seed, and not to the seed of the wicked one, which seed is set forth in Scripture under the types of Cain, the giants, the Canaanites, and the tares, and summed up in the last dread statement, "whose names were not written in the book of life".

## The volume of the Book.

### #1. Christ Himself the Faithful Witness.

pp. 53 - 56

Throughout the twenty years ministry of *The Berean Expositor* it has been taken for granted that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. Of late it has been impressed upon us that we should do well to give the matter some space. There is nothing so fundamental as the inspiration of Scripture. Apart from the Word of God we know nothing of God, Christ, gospel, grace or glory. The ages, if they have a purpose, are dumb concerning it; we know it not apart from revelation. Creation itself, while it bears its limited testimony to the invisible power and deity of the Creator, never reveals to the most patient scientist the sublime message of John iii. 16.

Those who are fully persuaded as to the inspiration of Scripture will rejoice to see some testimony to that blessed fact in these pages, and those who are sorely pressed by the evil age in which we live may be strengthened for the conflict by seeing more clearly the rock foundation of our faith. We believe that we should in our day and generation give our witness concerning this vital subject.

Having concluded that it is a right and necessary thing to do, we have next to consider by what means we shall seek the truth concerning the inspiration of Scripture.

It is open to us to attempt to prove the inspiration of Scripture *a priori*, that is by demonstrating the necessity for an inspired revelation to be authoritative in matters so vital and far-reaching. We might first of all wade through the sea of proofs that belong to the question of the canonicity of the books that make up the Scriptures. We might attempt an argument based on the marvels of prophetic fulfillment, the sublimity of scriptural doctrine, the mighty sweep of the purpose of the ages. We pass all these by, however, for an argument that is nearer to the heart of things.

The readers of these pages are not infidels but believers—believers in Christ, and we know no argument so final or so full as a presentation of what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught concerning the truth, accuracy and authority of the Scriptures. If we admit that He could possibly be mistaken in this or any matter, all argument is at an end. What do we care whether Moses is fact or fiction if Christ be fallible? How does it concern us that Paul held such ravishing views of the person and glory of his Lord, if that Lord did not know a tithe of what the youngest student in our Higher Critical Colleges takes for granted? For us in this matter, as in all others, Christ is all, and we are fully prepared to allow the whole question of the inspiration and authority of Scripture to be settled for us by the attitude and teaching of our Lord:--

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord” (Matt. x. 24, 25).

What, therefore, is viewed as Scripture by Christ our Lord, is Scripture to His servants. If in the estimation of Christ our Master Scripture cannot be broken, then it shall remain impregnable to His disciples. If we must trust to Him alone for justification and peace, for present grace and future glory, we must equally trust Him to tell us what our attitude must be toward the Scriptures. In His presence we bow, and with unfeigned meekness say: "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

We now come to the first great fact to be faced. Setting aside for the moment any conception we may have of the deity of Christ, we learn from His own statements that the words He spoke and the doctrine He gave were not His own personally, but the Father's. Consequently if we reject His testimony concerning the truth of the Old Testament, we are either indirectly charging Him with blasphemy, or we must believe that the Father endorsed erroneous teaching and mere human tradition. The fact is set out for us with overwhelming clearness in the Gospel of John:--

"The Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"  
(John vii. 15).

The word "knoweth" is *oida*, and differs from *ginosko* in that it means to know intuitively, and without effort. "Letters" (Greek *gramma*) is used of the five books of Moses (John v. 47), and of all Scripture (II Tim. iii. 15). How did the Lord attain to so profound a knowledge of the Scriptures without ever becoming a disciple of one of the great Rabbis of His day? Let Him answer: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John vii. 16). This doctrine includes the very point before us, for in the self-same context the Lord Who declared His doctrine to be given by the Father, asserted that Moses gave the law, and the law of circumcision (John vii. 15-23). Let us hear further:--

"I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things"  
(John viii. 28).

"He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken for Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John xiii. 48, 49).

Can words be set in a more solemn context? In view of the judgment of the last day, the Lord avers that the words He speaks are the Father's commandment: "He gave Me a commandment, what I should say", and we have no alternative but to believe that He obeyed that commandment implicitly:--

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me" (John xiv. 10).

Here the claim of the Lord passes our understanding. Here, unlike the prophets of old, is One not only sent from the Father, but One in perfect union with the Father, so that it can be said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In connection with that mystic union the Lord declares He speaks the Word of God: "The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John xiv. 24).

Lastly, in that holy communion of the Son with His Father, in view of approaching death, resurrection and ascension, in full consciousness of the glory that He had before the world was and the glory that was yet to be, we hear once more the emphatic statement:--

“Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me . . . . I have given then Thy Word” (John xvii. 7, 8, 14).

Surely this is enough for any servant, disciple or believer in Christ. If after this most wonderful revelation we find the Lord endorsing the Mosaic authorship of the five books of the law, that for us is no longer an open question, and however uncharitable it may appear, we must refuse the title “Christian” to anyone or any system that runs counter to the express testimony of Christ.

What is that testimony? What was His attitude—nay, what did the Father command Him to speak concerning the Scriptures? We know before we proceed further with the subject, for from cradle to cross, in childhood and manhood, always, the O.T. Scriptures were to Him the written unbreakable Word of God, and so shall they be to us.

The examination of the Lord’s utterances concerning the Scriptures will occupy our attention in the subsequent article; meanwhile we conclude with the pointed words of John v. 46, 47:--

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believed not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?”

## **#2. The testimony of Christ. pp. 93 - 98**

In the opening article of this series we concentrated our attention upon the teaching of Scripture concerning Christ Himself, and the fact that the words He spoke and the doctrine He taught were not “from Himself” but were “given” and “commanded” by the Father. We would now direct attention to the Lord’s testimony to the Scriptures, being fully assured that the attitude of Him Whom we call Master and Lord, must be ours also towards the Word of God.

Let us take up the theme at the solemn passage with which we closed the last article: “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John v. 46, 47). It is clear that Christ recognized Moses as an individual and not as a mythical personage. He believed that Moses “wrote” and speaks of “his writings”. Moreover, He believed that Moses was a prophet—“He wrote of Me.” In chapter vii. the Lord is more explicit. Not only does He affirm that Moses wrote, and wrote as a prophet, but He declares that

Moses gave the law, and refers to one of the commandments, "Thou shalt not kill": "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me" (John vii. 19).

At the end of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the Lord says: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31). Here the standing testimony of the written Word is presented as greater evidence of truth than the mighty miracle of raising the dead. Let the written revelation of God take the supreme place with us that it had with our Lord.

In the foregoing quotation, not only is Moses mentioned, but with him, "the prophets". When we deal with the question of the canon of Scripture, we shall find that "the prophets", according to the accepted arrangement, is the title of the second portion of the O.T. Scriptures. Christ does not speak of the prophet merely in a collective way: He refers to several individual prophets and quotes their writings. He speaks of Isaiah the prophet, of the fulfillment of his prophecy both in Himself, and the people, and characterizes the prophecy as Scripture:--

"In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah" (Matt. xiii. 14).

"The book of the prophet Isaiah . . . . He found the place where it was written . . . .

This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 17-21).

"Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites" (Mark vii. 6).

The Lord also speaks of Daniel the prophet: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place" (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16). The second quotation of Daniel in Matthew is set in a scene of the utmost solemnity. The high priest before whom Christ stands upon trial for His life speaks: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64).

At this solemn moment Christ quotes from Dan. vii., and surely the charge of blasphemy is not too severe against those who would dare to say that the Lord in the hour of His trial quoted with approval the writings of a forger?

He speaks also of Jonah the prophet: "The sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights . . . . so shall the Son of man . . . . the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment . . . . they repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matt. xii. 39-41). We are told that the book of Jonah is allegory and myth. Could the Lord have declared that men who had no existence except in myth would rise in the judgment, and that these mythical men repented at the preaching of a mythical prophet? Moreover, if the three days and three nights of Jonah's experience be but fiction and not fact, what of the resurrection? The "as" and the "so" go together.

The third division of the O.T. is called “The Psalms”, including not only the Psalms themselves, but such books as Proverbs and Job. This third section is not without testimony from the Lord:--

“And David himself saith in the book of the Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord”  
(Luke xx. 42).

“How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord” (Matt. xxii. 43).

The Lord on one occasion when quoting the Psalms refers to them as “the law”: “Is it not written in your law?” (John x. 34—quoting Psa. lxxxii.). He pauses in the midst of His explanation to warn His hearers that “the Scriptures cannot be broken”. Here the Lord is teaching and maintaining the most marvelous doctrine of Scripture, His Own deity, and using the poetry of the Psalms with as much confidence as we should the testimony of Col. i. 15, calling this Psalm the “law” and pausing to interpolate that “the Scriptures cannot be broken”.

From the very earliest days the Lord knew and revered the written Word of God. See Him at the age of twelve years sitting in the temple and astonishing the doctors of the law with His knowledge of the Scriptures (Luke ii. 46). See Him at the commencement of His ministry “opening the book” and finding His full commission in its pages (Luke iv. 17-21). See Him meeting the temptation of the devil in the wilderness with three quotations from the law of Moses (Matt. iv. 1-11). Hear Him in the “sermon on the mount” tell the people that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them: “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. v. 18). The “jot” is the Hebrew *yod*, and equivalent to the Greek *iota* and the English “i” or “y”. It is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The “tittle” is a small decoration added to certain letters, and carefully tabulated by the Massorah. Modern scholars confess they do not know their purpose, but our ignorance does not justify the conclusion that these tittles are meaningless; the Lord assures us that the smallest letter and even the Massoretic notation shall not fail of fulfillment.

John the Baptist’s enquiry, “Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?” is another by an appeal to Scripture (Matt. xi. 1-10; Isa. xxix. 18; xxxv. 4-6, lxi. 1). The Sadducees’ quibble regarding the resurrection is stilled by the use of a single word in the O.T., “I *am* the God of Abraham”, the argument depending upon the tense of the verb. God did not say, “I was”, but “I *am*”—He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matt. xii. 23-33).

Everywhere and at all times we find Christ and the Scriptures at one. Not one word ever escaped His lips that cast the faintest shadow of doubt upon the Old Testament Scriptures. He Whose birth fulfilled the words of the prophets, Whose ministry was full of the Word of God fulfilled that Word in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to glory.

His betrayal by Judas was already known to the Lord in the Scriptures:--

“Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John xvii. 12).

“I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled: He that eateth bread with Me, hath lifted up his heel against Me” (John xiii. 18).

His crucifixion between the thieves was in harmony with the word of prophecy: “And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors” (Mark xv. 27, 28).

The giving of the wine mingled with gall, the parting of His vesture and the casting of lots, the very words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. xxvii. 34, 35, 46) all set their seal to the truth of the Word of God.

Perhaps the Lord’s most striking testimony to the supreme place the Scriptures held in His sight is found in John xix. 28-30:--

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst . . . . When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”

As by faith we gaze at that cross, as we see indissolubly linked together the finished work of Calvary and the finished Word of God, there we take our stand, and with heart and life declare that our Saviour’s Bible is our Bible, that His deep reverence for the written Scriptures shall be our example, and that we shall look upon all adverse criticism or denial in the light of that cross, and see behind the pen of the critic the hand of the wicked one.

Fulfillment of Scripture did not end with the Lord’s death. The Roman soldiers did not break His bones—they could not, for Scripture had declared otherwise. They pierced His side—they could not refrain, for Scripture had declared that they should look upon Him Whom they had pierced. Joseph of Arimathea comes out of obscurity and buries the Lord in his sepulchre, for Scripture had associated the Lord’s death not only with the wicked, but also with the rich.

The crowning testimony is yet to be considered. He Who died with the Word of God in His heart rose again. Did He rise from the dead to teach His disciples that He had now revised His opinions of the Jewish Scriptures? The testimony of the risen Christ is more complete and definite than before:--

“O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke xxiv. 25-27).

Christ, risen from the dead, believed *all* that the prophets had spoken. He did not speak words of wisdom and power independently, but “expounded” the Scriptures. Beginning at Moses, and pursuing His study through all the prophets, He found in them all “things concerning Himself”. Here is our example.

On one occasion He appeared to His disciples in such a way that they were terrified, thinking they had seen a spirit. Was Christ, raised from the dead, possessing the spiritual body of resurrection, still as loyal to these books of Scripture?

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day” (Luke xxiv. 44-46).

Surely everyone upon whom that blessed Name is called will realize that the inspiration, authority and infallibility of the Scriptures is no longer an open question. It is as settled and fixed as is the doctrine of salvation or any other revelation from God.

We welcome all efforts to ascertain the exact meaning of every word used by God, we welcome textual criticism that seeks to remove human accretions from the text of Scripture, and in subsequent articles of this series we hope to show something of what has been accomplished along these lines. The textual critic, however, is not sitting in judgment upon the Word. He has no more warrant to set one verse aside because, forsooth, he cannot see its purpose, than has a surgeon to put into practice his views that certain organs of the body are superfluous. Some of the glands now regarded so highly were but a short time ago considered merely vestiges of former condition from which we were supposed to have “evolved”.

Here once more we must stay. We trust every reader has felt the weight of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Word of God, and that this testimony from henceforth shall be ours, to maintain until we finish our course.

### **#3. The inspiration of Scripture. pp. 159 - 164**

The personal testimony of Christ to the truth of Scripture is so complete, full, and direct, that for the rest of our study we shall have no need to “prove” anything, but simply learn what has been written for our guidance.

How were the Scriptures written? How did they come? Paul supplies an answer to the first question, and Peter to the second:--

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim. iii. 16).

“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. i. 21).

HOW WAS SCRIPTURE GIVEN?—“By inspiration of God.”

HOW DID SCRIPTURE COME?—“Holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Let us give earnest heed to these statements and examine them in the light of their contexts. Both are the utterances of men in view of death, and there is a suitable solemnity about the two epistles containing them that pervades their whole doctrine. In both instances the immediate contexts speak of death:--

“The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (II Tim. iv. 6, 7).

“Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle as the Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me” (II Pet. i. 14).

Thus, on the eve of martyrdom, both Paul and Peter give unambiguous testimony to the absolutely divine origin of the Scriptures. How, then, can we hope to finish our course, how keep the faith, how entertain the hope of a crown or a “well done” if we deny or trifle with the Scriptures held so dear by these two servants of the Lord?

“From a child thou hast known the *holy scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All *scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. iii. 15-17).

Two titles are here given to the Scriptures:--(1) “HOLY SCRIPTURES”, *Hiera grammata* = “Sacred letters” (the reader will call to mind the *hiera-glyphics* of Egyptian monuments). (2) “SCRIPTURE”, *Graphe* = “Writing”.

*Hieros* stands for that which is sacred, revered, related to God. The neuter, *to hieron*, indicates a sacred place, the temple or sacred thing, the sacrifice (I Cor. ix. 13). *Hiereus* is a priest. *Grammata* indicates a letter of the alphabet (Gal. vi. 11), or a letter (Acts xxviii. 21), but among the Jews it had a special significance, meaning the Holy Scriptures themselves. “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (John vii. 15). As the word *hieros* gives us the word “priest” (*hierus*), so *grammata* gives us the companion word, “scribe” (*grammateus*).

*Graphe* is practically an English word, having been in use in our language for a great while. It occurs in such words as *photography*, *geography*, *graphic*, etc., and always means something *written*. While *graphe* could, of course, refer to anything written at any time by anyone, it assumes a special meaning in the Word of God, and when used without qualification always means “The Scriptures”, The Writings *par excellence*. So *gegrapti*—“It is, or hath been, written” is a phrase that indicates the Scriptures. We trust that no more need be said to stress the fact that we are dealing, not with thoughts, ideas, or even spoken words, but something *written*. As will be seen in the sequel this is most important.

The O.T. abounds in references to writing and to books. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord in a book (Exod. xxiv. 4). So did Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 26). Over and over again appeal is made to the *written* law (Exod. xxxi. 18; Deut. xxviii. 58; Josh. viii. 31). The foundation of our faith is *written* testimony.

What does Scripture say as to the way in which the subject matter of these holy writings was given? Paul answers in one word, *Theopneustos*. *Theos* is the Greek word for "God" and is too well known to need comment here. *Pneustos* is the third person singular, perfect, passive, of *pneo*, to breathe. This also gives us *pneuma*, which is usually translated "spirit". The close association of *pneuma* with breath is seen in our words pneumatic and pneumonia, while to inspire, to respire, to perspire and to transpire are all processes of breathing either in or out by nostril, pore or cell. Let us now put together the two parts of Paul's great utterance. All Scripture that is *written*, is given by inspiration of God, that is *God-breathed*.

Now if what is *written* is what was *breathed* by God, there is no interval for the prophet or the writer to give a vision of his own heart. However intelligently the writer might cooperate with the divine Spirit, or however mystified he might be by the words given him to write, when it was a question of the making of Scripture, and the receiving of the oracles of God, the writers ceased to act merely in the capacity of thinkers, theologians or philosophers, and became instruments. Thus while personality is stamped upon every page of Scripture, Moses differing from Isaiah, Paul from Peter, Matthew from Luke, yet all its writers are instruments in the hand of God. The reader of *The Berean Expositor* will never see the actual words written by the Editor that later appear on its pages, neither will the printer nor the proof readers. The manuscript will be turned into type-script, to save the time and temper of the compositors, and the type-script into the printed page. Each stage will have had its peculiar characteristics, yet each will convey the same thing. It would be but a quibble to say that the Editor did not actually write the article.

So with the writing of Scripture, "God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1). However divers the manners, one thing remained constant, it was God Who spoke. Moses was peculiarly favoured by God. "Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Numb. xii. 6-8).

Into the question of how the revelation of truth was given we will not enter further here, but turn to the testimony of Peter, as given in II Pet. i. Speaking of the second coming of the Lord, Peter declares first of all: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. i. 16). His testimony now divides into two parts: (1) His own personal experience, and (2) The testimony of the word of prophecy.

Peter's experience on the mount of transfiguration was blessedly real and true. So far as Peter was concerned nothing could remove the impression he there received. But he was commissioned to preach, not his experiences, but the Word. Experiences are worthless, compared with one clear statement of Scripture. Yet many a child of God is misleading himself and others by experiences. While we may be ready to grant that the experience is real and true, the fallibility of the interpreter of those experiences is

generally too obvious to allow us to trust them. And, strictly speaking, the experiences themselves often become very small when stripped of all associations and sentiments, and submitted to a cross-examination. Peter, therefore, turns even from the true experience of the mount of transfiguration to something “more sure”:-

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise” (II Pet. i. 19).

The word of prophecy is “sure”, sure as the promise (Rom. iv. 16), steadfast as the word spoken by angels (Heb. ii. 2), fast as the anchor of hope (Heb. vi. 19).

As the passage stands in the A.V. the day star is to arise in our hearts, which is precisely what many teach who deny the personal return of the Lord. “In your hearts” should be read with the words “take heed”, and not connected with the rising of the day star. What does Peter put forward to show why this prophetic word is “more sure” than the sublimest “experience”? It is that, in the matter of prophetic inspiration the human element is entirely sub-servient—all is of God.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. i. 20, 21).

What are we to understand by the words “private interpretation”? Does Peter impose upon us the bondage of Romanism? Are we to surrender to the approved interpretation of Scripture by the “Church”? “Private” is *idios*, a word occurring 114 times. It is nearly always rendered “own”. Only once is *idios* rendered “private”. The word translated “interpretation” occurs nowhere else in Scripture. It is *epilusis*. In a verbal form it is found in the N.T. twice (Mark iv. 34 and Acts xix. 39). In the LXX it is found in Gen. xli. 12, and “interpretation”, therefore, is a good rendering. It means “to interpret” in the sense of “letting loose”, “breaking open”, or “unfolding”. It is found in classical Greek with the meaning of letting loose dogs to chase a hare, or breaking open a letter. In this verse, moreover, the word “is” is not the verb to be, but *ginomai*, which means “to come into being”. Peter is not speaking about systems of interpretation, but of the trustworthiness of Scripture itself, which, he says, is found in this fact: “No prophecy of Scripture came into being of its own unfolding.” He then proceeds to show why this is so, by adding: “for prophecy was not brought at any time by the will of man.”

It is important to keep the rendering “brought” in this passage, as *phero* occurs again in the passage that follows. We therefore have the subject negatively and positively; how it *was not* brought, and how it *was* brought. “But being borne along (*phero*) by holy spirit, holy men of God spake.” If we would see something of the force of this word *phero* we should read through Acts xxvii., with its vivid description of the storm, the wreck, and the utter helplessness of man in the tempest. Look at the words of verse 15: “We let here *drive*”, *phero*, and again in verse 17, “strake sail, and so were *driven*”, *phero*. The human element was of no avail in that driving euroclydon, and was brushed aside. Even so is it with the mighty driving power of inspiration.

The word “interpretation” could remain in this passage, so long as the reader understands that prophecy did not arise from the attempt of the individual prophet to interpret or unfold the purpose of the ages. Such a thing was impossible. The matters were all too vast. God alone could, and did, make them known. The position is somewhat parallel with the teaching of Heb. xi. 3, where we read: “By faith we understand the ages to have been fitted together by the declaration of God, to the end that, not out of things appearing should that which is seen have come into existence.”

Apart from revelation, the wisest men are baffled and but blind leaders of the blind. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” (Job xi. 7). This is a question we do well to ponder, and to read with it the statement of the wise men: “He hath set the age in their heart, so that no man can find out the word that God maketh from the beginning to the end” (Eccles. iii. 11). No eye can see far enough, no human foot climb high enough, no brain or mind has the capacity to grasp or express the purpose of the ages and the way and will of God.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ears heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him: but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit” (I Cor. ii. 9, 10).

Like all doctrines of Scripture, the blessed doctrine of the inspiration of the Word of God humbles the pride of man and exalts the Most High. “*And God spake all these words.*”

#### **#4. “God hath spoken . . . . by the prophets.” pp. 201 - 204**

We have sat at the feet of Christ and heard His testimony to the truth of the Scriptures. We have also heard the teaching of Paul and Peter upon the same theme, and from these two servants of God we learn that:--

1. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and
2. That holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

There is no formal statement in Scripture as to the precise mode of inspiration. We are assured that the Scriptures are inspired and that the writers were irresistibly move by the Holy Spirit, but further than that we are not told. It does not follow that because all Scripture is inspired that all the writers were led in the same way. Indeed the words of Heb. i. 1, “diverse manners”, point to “a diversity of operations”, while the remainder of the verse, “God spake . . . . by the prophets”, assures us that, however diverse the mode of inspiration, the result was in all cases the same. The chief consideration for us is the fact that “God hath spoken”, and that, in His sovereignty, He has ensured that all the truth He intended should be recorded has been recorded, and that without human admixture.

It may strengthen our grasp of this important fact if we survey the evidence of Scripture and consider the many claims it contains to divine authorship. First let us collect some of the passages where Scripture declares that the Lord hath spoken:--

“And God spake unto Noah” (Gen. viii. 15).  
“And the Lord talked with Moses” (Exod. xxxiii. 9).  
“And God spake all these words” (Exod. xx. 1).  
“Speak unto the children of Israel” (Lev. i. 2).

This is the recurring burden of the books of Moses, and not only of the books of Moses, but of all the O.T. Scriptures. “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Micah iv. 4; Jer. ix. 12) is the recurring statement of the prophets. “Hear the word of the Lord” is the way in which many prophecies are introduced (Isa. xxviii. 14, Jer. x. 1). Again and again we read that “the word of the Lord came” to the prophets:--

“The word of the Lord came to Nathan” (II Sam. vii. 4).  
“The word of the Lord came to Shemaiah” (I Kings xii. 22).  
“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord” (Jer. xi. 1).

Then we have more specific statements, like the following:--

“Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Exod. iv. 12).  
“With him will I speak mouth to mouth” (Numb. xii. 8).  
“The Lord put a word in Balaam’s mouth” (Numb. xxiii. 5).  
“That the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be accomplished” (II Chron. xxxvi. 22).  
“I have put my words in thy mouth” (Isa. li. 16).  
“The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth” (Jer. i. 9).

The testimony of Peter, recorded in the Acts, is very emphatic on this point:--

“This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas” (Acts i. 16).

Here we have reference to a Psalm in which David records in the first instance his own sorrows and afflictions; yet is the writer so under the control of the Holy Ghost that what he writes is “Scripture”, words “which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David” indicted. This is no isolated instance. What is true here of David is also true of all the prophets:--

“But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled” (Acts iii. 18).  
“The time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 21).

It is evident from this testimony that, whoever the individual speaker may have been, the mighty Moses, or the lowly Amos, the royal seer, or the runaway Jonah, the ungodly Balaam, or the wicked Caiaphas, it was God Who spoke and it is His word that we hear.

The inspiration of Scripture is ascribed to God in each of His three manifestations or Persons:--

“God spake all these words” (Exod. xx. 1).

“God hath spoke” (Acts iii. 21).

“Searching what . . . . the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” (I Pet. i. 11).

“Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith” (Heb. iii. 7).

However varied the mode of inspiration may have been, we see that by the time the message was uttered and recorded it was in the fullest sense the word of God. Some of the ways in which the Lord gave His word are revealed, but many may have received His message in ways that are unrecorded. The fact of inspiration is blessed and needful, but the general manner of inspiration is not a subject of revelation; it might but minister to our curiosity to be told, and possibly it belongs to a realm the workings of which cannot be expressed in human terms. We do, however, read that visions were sometimes employed, for Abraham received the word of the Lord in a vision (Gen. xv. 1), also Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Habakkuk and others, not forgetting the apostles Paul and John (II Cor. xii. 1, Rev. i. 1). Dreams were another means used by the Lord in the cases of Joseph, Pharaoh, Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar, which are examples that come readily to mind.

There may be indications in other parts of Scripture as to other ways in which the Lord gave His word, but we are not concerned about the matter. What we do rejoice in is that we have in the Scriptures the inspired Word of God. Prophets, priests and kings may have uttered the words, yet they were but the mouthpieces of the Most High.

There are ten passages in Matthew which, in the Greek, put this matter of the instrumentality of the prophets beyond dispute. The subject is of such importance that we shall give each reference in full, inserting also in each case the vital Greek prepositions:--

“Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken BY (*hupo*) the Lord THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet saying” (Matt. i. 22).

“For thus it hath been written THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. ii. 5).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken BY (*hupo*) the Lord, THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. ii. 15).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. ii. 23).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. xiii. 35).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. xxi. 4).

In these six references, the prophets' names are not mentioned, but we name them below to show how the same formula is applied to men of widely different times and character:--

|                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Matt. i. 22 quotes    | Isaiah.                    |
| Matt. ii. 5 quotes    | Micah.                     |
| Matt. ii. 15 quotes   | Hosea.                     |
| Matt. ii. 23 speaks   | of prophets in the plural. |
| Matt. xiii. 35 quotes | a Psalm of Asaph, and      |
| Matt. xxi. 4 quotes   | Zechariah.                 |

The remaining four references give the name of the prophet quoted. They are as follows:--

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) Isaiah the prophet”  
(Matt. iv. 14, viii. 17 and xii. 17).

“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) Jeremiah the prophet”  
(Matt. xxvii. 9).

This last reference we hope to deal with when we come to some of the alleged inaccuracies of Scripture. We believe that we shall be able to show that the passage is true as it stands. The general argument is that the prophet referred to is Zechariah, and various attempts have been made to meet the difficulty.

As we face these ten references to that which was *spoken through* the various prophets, it will be realized that there is no way of evading the problem by saying that the passage was not “written” either by Jeremiah or Zechariah, but “spoken” by Jeremiah, because such comment could similarly be made upon the other nine references. It can, therefore, be set aside. At present, however, our endeavour is to gather from the Scriptures their own testimony to their inspiration. Difficulties and alleged errors will come under consideration in their place. We have seen enough to remove all difficulty from the acceptance of the claim of inspiration for any book in the Scriptures, while it remains written, “The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake”.

In the light of this and parallel statements, all difficulty is removed, and assurance given that our faith and hope rest, “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (I Cor. ii. 13).