

# 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,

This issue of *The Berean Expositor* completes Volume XLIV. As we look back over the past two years, we have been saddened by the loss of its founder, Charles H. Welch, yet his long life, his vigorous and faithful witness to a rightly divided Word, is an eloquent testimony to the abounding grace of God, and we are thankful for every remembrance of him. We have his written and taped expositions which are a concrete and permanent expression of his monumental labours in the study of the Scriptures.

We mourn the loss too, of Mrs. E. R. Billington of West Kirby, who for so many years so staunchly supported this witness behind the scenes and maintained a testimony to the Truth in her beautiful home in the Wirral. We are glad to say, however, that others have joined us, mostly young people, who are being gripped by the Word of God and already are taking an active part in the work and witness represented by *The Berean Expositor*. We are thankful for them and take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation of their efforts, and not only them, but all who lead and labour in the various groups in this country and abroad. Truly it is in “the effectual working in the measure of every part” (Eph iv. 16) that the whole Body of Christ grows and progresses to its goal.

As we look around the world scene and the deepening darkness and apostasy, let us all re-dedicate ourselves and serve to the full while opportunity lasts.

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November 1968.

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## *The Funeral of Mr. C. H. Welch.*

This took place at the Crystal Palace and District Cemetery, Beckenham, at 3p.m. on Thursday, November 9th 1967. Besides the family, there were about thirty friends present. Two had made the long journey from Scotland, traveling overnight, and one friend came up from Somerset. The service was kept short and simple. The Principal read part of I Cor. xv., and then, in a few words, reminded each one of how much we owe to the Lord and to our brother for his long and loyal witness to the truth. The Assistant Principal closed in prayer, and at the graveside the Principal gave the committal.

The memory of our late President will long be with us for inspiration and encouragement.

## Things that be of God.

### ROMANS

#### Separated unto the gospel of God (Rom. i. 1). p. 100

“Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts xiii. 2).

Here the word ‘separate’ is the Greek *aphorizo*, and it is the identical word that is used by Paul in his epistles regarding his own peculiar apostleship.

“*Separated* unto the gospel of God” (Rom. i. 1).

“It pleased God Who *separated* me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles (heathen)” (Gal. i. 15, 16).

Neither Paul, Peter, John nor any of the apostles ‘sent’ their epistles, rather they ‘delivered’ them as “sent” from God. While for convenience we speak of Pauline or Petrine doctrine, that only means that God made choice of His ministers, making Paul “the Apostle of the Gentiles” and Peter the minister and “Apostle of the Circumcision”. At Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost “there were ‘Jews’ out of every nation under heaven”, and Peter addressed the gathering as “men of Judea, and all that dwell at Jerusalem”, referring them to the prophet Joel for an explanation of the out-pouring of the Spirit. The earthly ministry of the Saviour Himself was limited to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” and no messenger was sent to “the Gentiles” until He had finished the redemptive work of the Cross, and even then this was not independent of Israel.

Stephen’s speech is addressed entirely to “Men, brethren, and fathers”, and God is the God of the O.T. Peter refers to “our beloved brother Paul” as having written one epistle to the same Hebrew Christians to whom he was writing, although it contained “some things hard to be understood”. The expression “The Apostles” which occurs 21 times in Acts i. - xi. refers only to “The Twelve”. Paul comes into the apostolic order in the thirteenth chapter.

# The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

No.1. pp. 28 - 32

One peculiar characteristic of this epistle is that it commences without a customary salutation, or giving the name of the writer and those to whom it was addressed. This has caused, from the earliest times, considerable research and debate as to who the human author was, even though the epistle is accepted as canonical without question, and part of the inspired Word of God. The A.V. heading: "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews" is only found in late Greek manuscripts; it is not found in the oldest manuscripts, which simply read *Pros Hebraious*, To Hebrews, and it is not certain that even this formed part of the original document, but it must have been given to the epistle at an early date in the second century, when it first came into public use as part of a collection of apostolic letters. That this title was undoubtedly right, the internal testimony clearly shows, for its setting forth of the types and shadows given to the fathers of Israel, finally finding their fulfillment in Christ, would have no meaning to the pagan Gentile world to whom the Apostle Paul ministered. It might have had some meaning to the number of God-fearing Gentiles (as Cornelius) who attended the Jewish Synagogue, but there is no evidence whatsoever that these are in the mind of the author of this epistle. It is much more natural to see those addressed as being a number of Hebrew Christians, to whom the Mosaic tabernacle and Levitical offerings would have real meaning, although their residence cannot be determined with absolute certainty.

It is a peculiar fact that, from the first, the Eastern Church decided that the epistle was the Apostle Paul's, if not directly, then mediately, either as a free translation of his words or a reproduction of his thoughts and teaching; whereas the Western Church did not reckon it among the Pauline epistles or recognize its canonical authority until the fourth century A.D.

The first witness is Clement of Rome who shows clear evidence that he was acquainted with it, in the letter he wrote to the Corinthian church about 96A.D., but he nowhere names the epistle or its author. The most explicit testimony is that of the Alexandrian church preserved by Eusebius (264-340) from the lost writings of Clement of Alexandria (about 190-203) and Origen (185-254). Eusebius relates that Clement in his *Hypotyposes* (sketches or outlines) says: ". . . . that the epistle is Paul's, and that it was written to Hebrews in the Hebrews (Aramaic) language, and that Luke translated it with zealous care and published it to the Greeks, whence it is that the same complexion of style is found in the translation of this epistle and the Acts". He states further that ". . . . the phrase, 'Paul an Apostle', was not placed at the head of the epistle for good reason; in writing to the Hebrews who had formed a prejudice against him and viewed him with suspicion, he was wise not to repel them at the beginning by setting his name there". It is possible, from another quotation of Clement, that he derived the idea of an Aramaic original from his master, 'the blessed presbyter', Pantaenus.

Coming to the testimony of Origen, Eusebius gives it in Origen's own words:

“If I were to express my own opinion I should say that the thoughts are the thoughts of the Apostle, but the language and the composition that of one who recalled from memory and, as it were, made notes of what was said by his master. If therefore any church holds this epistle as Paul’s, let it be approved for this also for it was not without reason that men of old time have handed it down as Paul’s (that is as substantially expressing his thoughts). But who wrote the epistle God only knows certainly. The account that has reached us is twofold: some say that Clement, who became bishop of the Romans, wrote the epistle; others that Luke wrote it, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts. But on this I will say no more.”

This testimony is supplementary to that of Clement’s. Origen was obviously aware that some churches did not receive the epistle as Paul’s. In the strictest sense of authorship he agreed with them, but at the same time held that it could be regarded as the Apostle’s, as embodying his thoughts and doctrine and he (Origen) was prepared to defend it as such. In other writings he uses such phrases as ‘in the epistle to the Hebrews, the same Paul says’, and “Paul himself, the greatest of the apostles, writing to the Hebrews, says” and then quotes Heb. xii. 18, 23. Origen goes back to the opinion held “in ancient times”. As he was born in 185A.D., this must refer to apostolic, or sub-apostolic times. Consequently as Hallet remarks:

“It is very certain, then, that the churches and writers who were ancient with respect to Origen, had one common tradition, that St. Paul was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. And their testimony to this matter of fact cannot but be of great weight, since those Christians who were ancients with respect to Origen, must have conversed with the apostles, and at least with their immediate successors.”

Origen therefore does not question the ancient tradition that linked the epistle to the Hebrews with Paul’s name, but his standpoint is whether the epistle, precisely as we have it in Greek, can have been written by an amanuensis, which was a common occurrence in N.T. times, an example of which we have with the epistle to the Romans. Its material and doctrine is Paul’s, but the actual writing was done by Tertius (Rom. xvi. 22), and just how much latitude was given to an amanuensis, we have no means of knowing, this possibly varied according to the attitude of the author and capability of the actual writer. We cannot say that it was always merely verbal dictation. Bishop Westcott sums up as follows:

“Thus Clement and Origen, both familiar with the details of the tradition of the ‘men of old time’ to whom they refer, agree in regarding the Greek epistle as Paul’s only in a secondary sense. Clement regards it as a free translation of a Hebrew (Aramaic) original, so made by St. Luke as to show the characteristics of his style. Origen regards it as a scholar’s reproduction of his master’s teaching. Each view must have been consistent with what was generally received . . . . Both use the epistle as Paul’s without any qualification, because it was naturally connected with the collection of his letters. Origen goes so far as to say that he was prepared to show that “the epistle was Paul’s” in reply to those “who rejected it as not written by Paul” (Ep. ad Afric.9); and in another passage, preserved in a Latin translation, he speaks of ‘fourteen epistles of St. Paul’.”

(Hom. In Jos. VII) “*The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.lxxviii.”

Eusebius having included Hebrews among the epistles of Paul, cites it as Pauline in some twenty seven passages. There is no doubt at all that the primitive tradition of the East associated the epistle with Paul, although not written with his actual hand.



In the West it was, as we have noted, altogether different. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (from circa 130A.D.) was among the first to cite the N.T. books by their titles, apparently, but rarely mentions the letter to the Hebrews and never declares it to be Pauline. Victorinus (303A.D.), the Muratorian Canon, and Gaius (circa 190) count only 13 epistles of Paul. Cyprian says that Paul wrote to seven churches: Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, Thessalonica and Galatia. There is no room here for an epistle to the Hebrews. Tertullian, with great decision, names Barnabas as its author. It can be said that, from the second to the fourth century, in Italy and Africa, the Hebrews epistle was held not to be an epistle of the Apostle Paul. It came to the Western church but late and slowly. Paul is not named in the introduction, and it was therefore, from this and its un-Pauline Greek, not reckoned to be an epistle of his.

Thus we find two traditions weighing against each other, but that of the East is the heavier in the scale. The latter bears a positive character, whereas the West is negative. Apparently there was no doubt in Alexandria as to who was the real author, but, owing to its style, the amanuensis and translator who had worked it out was questioned. Those who come to a conclusion of authorship solely on internal grounds, should give an adequate explanation as to how the Eastern church so early arrived at the idea that this epistle was one sent from the Apostle Paul, even though he may not have been the actual pen-man.

Was Clement of Rome right in saying that the Hebrews epistle was a translation from an Aramaic original? There are grave doubts that it could have been a literal translation. The epistle has a good number of paronomasias or play on words, such as we find in the Greek of ii. 8; vii. 3, 19, 22-24; x. 29 etc. These and other genuinely Greek constructions would have no corresponding Aramaic equivalents and the development of thought would not lend itself either to Aramaic. The most that can be said is, that if there was such an Aramaic original, the Greek letter is a free reproduction of it, using it only as a basis, and is in no sense a translation.

From the earliest times many scholars have found difficulty in accepting the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, the chief difficulties being (1) the style of the Greek, (2) the statement of Heb. ii. 3, which apparently militates against the independent apostleship of Paul. As regards (1) it must be conceded that the Greek of the epistle to the Hebrews is generally unlike that of the Apostle. It shows everywhere traces of effort and care, and polish, very unlike the impetuous, almost rough Greek at times of the Apostle Paul. We must be careful here however. No one can say with certainty that Paul *could not* have written such elegant Greek had he desired to do so. On the other hand we may ask why he should have so altered his style when writing to Hebrew Christians? And there seems to be no definite answer. Coming to (2) which has often been put forward by expositors as making the Pauline authorship impossible, we will first quote the verse in full:

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Heb. ii. 3).

Nothing is clearer than Paul's independent apostleship received from the risen Christ separately from the Twelve, but here the writer states that he was indebted to those who heard the Lord, namely the Twelve. There are several points which must be considered before we can come to a satisfactory conclusion. The 'us' can be regarded as the editorial 'we', the first person plural of exhortation being used right throughout this epistle. Note in the immediate context "*we* ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which *we* have heard, lest at any time *we* should let them slip . . . . how shall *we* escape if *we* neglect so great salvation". In such a context "Confirmed unto *us*" is perfectly natural, whereas 'confirmed unto you' would not have been. It is possible that these Hebrew Christians were not the Apostle's converts. They easily could have come to a knowledge of Christ from saved Jews at Pentecost who were afterwards scattered through persecution (Acts viii. 1, 4; xi. 19). The latter could have come directly under the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, and thus be truthfully described as 'those who heard Him'. In the antithesis between the word of the law, spoken at Sinai through angels, and the special aspect of salvation which is characteristic of this letter, that of the salvation of the soul (x. 32-39) first spoken of by the Lord (Matt. xvi. 24-28 which Paul never could have heard), and confirmed "unto us", that is Hebrew Christians generally, by those that heard Him. It is significant that one of these, the Apostle Peter, develops this in his first epistle (I Pet. i. 6-9), linking it with the *goal* of the tested believer's faith, not his initial salvation from sin. The author of Hebrews had in view not so much himself, as his readers. It is because the word salvation here has been construed as the salvation of the sinner rather than the perfecting of the believer, that the problem has arisen. Most certainly Paul received the Gospel of grace to the sinner apart from any human instrumentality (Gal. i. 11-12), but salvation in this sense is not found in Hebrews. It should be remembered that the typical teaching in this epistle does not start with the bondage in Egypt and deliverance through the blood of the Passover lamb (which it would have done had the salvation of the sinner been in view), but with the account of a redeemed people journeying through the wilderness with its tests and difficulties, to Canaan, the land of promise. Hence the particular suitability of that aspect of salvation, that of the soul, which so intimately pertains to be saved, having reward in view at the judgment seat of Christ.

From time to time various others, beside Paul, have been put forward as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. Tertullian was the first who suggested Barnabas. As a Cypriot and a Levite, he was evidently a man of standing at Jerusalem and would have had an insight into the ritual of the Tabernacle and Temple. He was named by the Apostles as the 'son of consolation' in Acts iv. 36, and the word 'consolation' is the same as 'exhortation' in Heb. xiii. 22. We have no other early evidence beside Tertullian, nor do we know anything of the capability of Barnabas as a writer. The apocryphal Epistle attributed to him does not help as there are too many divergencies between it and the Hebrew epistle. Luther advocated Apollos as author and has been followed by others including Kurtz, Farrar, Alford, and today T. W. Manson, W. F. Howard and C. Spicq. That Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, we are assured by the N.T., but again we have no writing of his to compare with, so this is really nothing more than clever guess-work. Harnack maintained that Aquila and Priscilla wrote the epistle, with Priscilla as the main partner, but against this

we have xi. 32 “. . . . the time would fail me telling . . . .” where the participle *diegoumenon*, ‘telling’, is masculine, and once more we have nothing written by Aquila and Priscilla with which to compare the letter to the Hebrews. Sir William Ramsay hazarded Philip the deacon; others have favoured Silas.

Calvin thought of Luke or Clement of Rome as the author, and in the case of Luke we are on different ground, for we have the Acts of the Apostles and his Gospel with which to compare.

Professor F. F. Bruce writes:

“Stylistically Hebrews is close to the writings of Luke than to anything else in the N.T., but this may be because our author and Luke approximate more closely than other N.T. writers to the model of literary Hellenistic—our author even more than Luke.”  
(*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p.41).

Many scholars have noticed the remarkable likeness of Luke’s Greek to that of Hebrews and we shall have more to say about this later on.

## No.2. pp. 53 - 57

One solution to the difficult question of the authorship of this epistle was put forward in 1916 by Dr. J. W. Thirtle, then editor of *The Christian*, namely that the Hebrews epistle was a covering letter or enclosure circulated with the epistle to the Galatians. He pointed out that in early times the epistle to the Hebrews followed that to the Galatians. This is evident from an examination of the Greek manuscript known as Codex B (Vaticanus) belonging to the fourth century. This famous manuscript exhibits, in the words of Bishop Westcott:

“A marginal numeration which shows that the whole collection of Pauline epistles was divided, either in its archetype or in some earlier copy, into a series of sections numbered consecutively. In this collection the epistle to the Hebrews comes between the epistle to the Galatians and the Ephesians.”

(*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p.xxx).

This arrangement approximates to that of the Thebaic and Bashmuric versions, in which the epistle comes between II Corinthians and Galatians. The mass of later Greek MSS follow the Syriac and place the epistle after the pastoral epistles and Philemon, which order has passed into the Received Text probably under this influence, and so gives us its present place in the N.T. Dr. F. H. Scrivener gives a similar testimony in his *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* p.54:

“The Pauline epistles are reckoned throughout as one book in the older notation, with however this remarkable peculiarity, that though in the Codex Vaticanus itself the epistle to the Hebrews stands next after the second to the Thessalonians, and on the same leaf with it, the section are arranged as if it stood between the epistles to the Galatians and

Ephesians . . . . It plainly appears then, that the sections of the Codex Vaticanus must have been copied from some yet older document, in which the epistle to the Hebrews preceded that to the Ephesians.”

This arrangement undoubtedly exhibits this association as obtaining in very early times, possibly the sub-Apostolic age, and that originally, the one epistle followed the other with nothing between. In which case, in a professedly Pauline section of the N.T., we find Galatians and Hebrews merely separated the one from the other by two words: *Pros Hebraious*, To Hebrews, and this, as we have noted, may not have formed part of the original text.

Dr. Thirtle asks: “Was this in reality dividing? Why not—sub-dividing?” He goes on to propound the theory that the epistle to the Hebrews was a covering letter to the Galatian letter and circulated with it, being specially addressed to a Hebrew Christian section in Galatia. In which case, the problem of the introduction without the author’s name is solved, as the name of the Apostle Paul is evident in Gal. i. 1, and would not need to be repeated in the covering letter. As these two epistles became detached in course of time the anonymity of Hebrews naturally became a problem and its position in the N.T. writings became lost, being finally located after the Pastoral Epistles and Philemon, its present position.

Another problem would also be solved if Galatians and Hebrews circulated together and that is the extraordinary omission of the passing of the privilege of circumcision in Hebrews, one of whose main objects is to show that the types and shadows of Israel’s economy had been fulfilled in the Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus had become redundant. Yet circumcision, one of the main bases of Jewish pride and privilege, is not mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews. This is understandable if these two epistles were designed to be kept together, for circumcision had been adequately dealt with in Galatians.

Dr. Thirtle leaned toward an Aramaic original. He felt that Gal. vi. 11, “Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand”, refers not to large lettering due to defective eyesight, but to an epistle written by the Apostle ‘with my own handwriting’, possibly Aramaic; just as some have held to have been the case with the Gospel of Matthew. That gramma, ‘letter’ in the plural can mean this is confirmed by Arndt and Gingrich:

“A document, piece of writing, mostly in the plural even of single copies”  
(I Esdras iii. 9, 13; Esther viii. 5, etc. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.*).

To the objection to an Aramaic original, the writer of Hebrews citing generally from the LXX and not the Hebrew text, he states that this feature “is consistent with a translation made by someone who saw reasons for following the general guidance of the LXX, but has not troubled to tell us why”. And as regards the difficulty of the Greek being a literal expression of the Hebrew (Aramaic) he says: “If the Apostle could write good Hebrew (Aramaic), then a really competent translator could give the same attractive Greek. Such a writing as we actually possess, the Salkinson-Ginsburg version of the N.T., into Hebrew shows that every sentiment of the epistle may be expressed in glowing

Biblical Hebrew. With a corresponding original, even though in later Hebrew or Aramaic, why should not a good translator produce a version in strong and even rhetorical Greek? To be successful, a translation should have such characteristics”.

In our last study we gave reasons for doubting whether the Hebrews epistle is an attempt to literally translate Aramaic. The epistle could be a free reproduction, using an Aramaic original as a basis. If this epistle to the Hebrews is such a reproduction, whose work was it? We have already given various opinions of Bible scholars, most of them being little more than clever guess-work. The fact is, no one knows for certain. Some, however, have more probability than others. Names like Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila are not helpful, because we have no writing of these to compare with Hebrews. We have already remarked on the remarkable likeness of Luke’s Greek to that of the Hebrews epistle and here we are on different ground, for we have his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles to put alongside our epistle for comparison. Bishop Westcott writes:

“It has been already seen that the earliest scholars who speak of the epistle notice its likeness in style to the writings of Luke; and when every allowance has been made for coincidences which consist in forms of expression which are found also in the LXX, or in other writers of the N.T., or in late Greek generally, the likeness is unquestionably remarkable. No one can work independently at the epistle without observing it.”

We find that Franz Delitzsch and other scholar, including Calvin, take the same attitude. In his second volume of *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Delitzsch devotes a chapter at the end to the authorship and decidedly favours Luke:

“That St. Paul was not the direct author of the epistle to the Hebrews, we hold to be incontestably certain. Taking into account the observations made in the course of the exposition from the beginning to the end, we consider it in the highest degree probable that Luke composed the epistle from statements made to him by the Apostle, being commissioned by the latter thereto.”

There are some 49 Greek words which only occur in Luke’s writings and the epistle to the Hebrews. These, together with other predominantly Lucan words, are given later in an appendix. Such words as *hothen*; out of 15 occurrences in the N.T., Luke and Hebrews use it 10 times. The same is true of *diamarturomai*. *Tungchano* occurs 12 times in the N.T.; Luke and Hebrews use it 9 times. In Luke xx. 35, we have “they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain (*tungchano*) that world (age), and the resurrection from (*ek*) the dead”. While Heb. xi. 35 reads: “that they might obtain (*tungchano*) a better resurrection”, an obvious parallel and only found in Luke’s writings and the Hebrew epistle. Then we find *eis to panteles*, no wise, uttermost, in Luke xiii. 11 and Heb. vii. 25; *Diapantos* continually, in Luke xxiv. 53; Acts x. 2; xxiv. 16; Heb. ix. 6; xiii. 15. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts must be carefully studied in the original and compared with Hebrews to note the stylistic likeness, which is too complex to deal with adequately here. It could be, as Prof. F. F. Bruce states: “. . . . because our author and Luke approximate more closely than other N.T. writers to the model of literary Hellenistic—our author even more so than Luke”. But we feel the likeness goes deeper than this, and while we cannot say dogmatically that Luke was the penman of Hebrews, we believe there is more evidence for his association with the epistle than any other who has been put forward.

While we are dealing with the difficult question of the un-Pauline Greek of Hebrews, it is only fair to mention an important work by a Roman Catholic writer, W. Leonard, D.D., *The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1939) in which he seeks to show that this has been sometimes exaggerated, as has the influence of Philo on the writer of this epistle. Dr. Leonard's work is very scholarly and merits the attention of every serious Bible student. While one is not able to accept all his view-points, distinctive Roman Catholic doctrines are not pressed.

If it is not the Apostle Paul's hand that has written Hebrews, can we say that it is his material and mind that is behind it? It is the fashion at present in evangelical circles to say 'no'. Yet, as we have seen, from the earliest times, the Eastern church accepted it as Pauline, whatever doubts they may have had regarding the amanuensis or editor. It has been represented that this was nothing more than an attempt to give the epistle canonicity. But the question can only be settled by the internal evidence of the epistle itself. Those who deny the Apostle Paul's connection with Hebrews bring forward a number of objections, the chief of which are the following:

(1) There is no trace of allegorical interpretation of the O.T., in Paul's epistles. But the association of allegory with the Hebrews is wrong. This is confusing allegory with type. Types are only types, and one of the great aims of this letter is to show that the O.T. types were only partial foreshadowings of the reality found and fulfilled in Christ alone. They could never perfect or bring the believer to maturity.

(2) The doctrine of resurrection is missing. The Apostle Paul never introduces doctrine just for the sake of it. In I Corinthians, resurrection is introduced because some in the church doubted it (I Cor. xv. 12). The epistle to the Galatians is undoubtedly Paul's, and there is no mention of the doctrine of resurrection in it!

(3) There is no Gentile stress in the Gospel. We have already shown that the Gospel which presents salvation to the sinner is not the theme of Hebrews. This letter is addressed to a group of Hebrew believers whose faith was being severely tested and they were in danger of giving up, drawing back and apostatizing.

(4) The characteristic Pauline doctrine of faith verses works is not developed. But this evidently was not the problem of these Hebrew Christians. However, the law is stressed as a shadow only, which can neither save nor perfect (Heb. viii. 4-5; x. 1). So Paul's teaching is implicit here. The same objection could be brought against the Thessalonian epistles.

(5) There is no mention of Christ as High Priest in Paul's epistle. While this is true, yet Rom. viii. 34, "Christ . . . . is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us". And Gal. ii. 20, and Eph. v. 2, which stress Christ's giving Himself for us, surely show Him both as High Priest and Offering. The Lord is not represented as a layman offering Himself to another priest. His position as High Priest is implicit in the prayer of John xvii., as is His appearance in Rev. i. In Paul's later

epistles He is brought forward in His great title as Head over all things to the church, which is His Body (Eph. i. 22-23; iv. 15; Col. ii. 19), and this is inclusive of all other titles. It was absolutely necessary for the Apostle to develop the theme of Christ as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec in Hebrews, as one of the main aims of this letter is to demonstrate to these Hebrew believers that the Lord Jesus was better than angels, or any position that any leader of Israel occupied in the O.T. days. He was infinitely better than Aaron, or the priesthood from Levi, and this could only be stressed by comparing the Melchisedek priesthood of the Lord with the Levitical.

We see, therefore, that such objections cannot be sustained. Unless the theme of Hebrews is clearly understood, its links with Pauline doctrine cannot be appreciated. It is not a manual showing the sinner how his sins may be forgiven, or how he may escape condemnation and receive eternal life. In other words, it does not cover the same ground as Romans. It is for the saved, specially the Hebrew believers, undergoing the trials of the wilderness journey, and with its perfecting or maturing effect spiritually, leading to the recompense of reward, or if failing and turning back to Judaism, eternal loss and Divine disapproval. If we give this great epistle an unbiased examination, we shall certainly find the mind and doctrine of Paul therein, even if it is expressed by another hand, and to this we propose to devote our next study.

### **No.3. Verbal links between Paul's Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews (1). pp. 73 - 77**

To all conversant with the subject of style, it must be clear that it is not the mere occurrence of a peculiar word, but the manner and connection or background in which it occurs, that stamps it with the impress of a particular author. We shall now consider not only words that are peculiar to Hebrews and Paul's epistles, but their context and background, and in doing so we are bound to note many links between the two. The figure of a *race*, with its striving and running with a reward in view, is peculiar to Paul and the Hebrews letter. *Agon* occurs six times in the N.T., five times used by Paul and once in Hebrews (xii. 1), ". . . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the *race* (*agon*) that is set before us". The same conception is found in Phil. iii., where the Apostle is reaching forth to the things that are ahead and pressing forward to the goal for the *prize* of the high calling. Similarly in I Cor. ix. 24, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain". Linked with *agon* is *athleo* and its cognates *sunathleo* and *athlesis*, to strive in the games, all of which are peculiar to Paul and Hebrews. In connection with these are the same words and ideas such as: *hupomene* endurance; *trecho* to run; out of 20 occurrences Paul uses this latter word 10 times, and the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to "*run with patience the race set before us*" (xii. 1). *Apekdechomai* to wait for, is used only in Paul's epistles and Hebrews, where it occurs seven times. In the Pauline writings it is used exclusively for the hope of the

believer connected with the Second Advent, and it is significant that Hebrews uses it in just the same way, “. . . . unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28).

*Aphilarguros* not covetous, occurs only in I Tim. iii. 3 and Heb. xiii. 5; in both cases there is the thought of *hospitality* in the context. *Douleia* bondage, occurs 5 times in the N.T., and is used by the Apostle 4 times and once in Heb. ii. 15, referring to those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. There is a verbal link between Gal. v. 1, “. . . . be not entangled (*enechesthe*) again with the yoke of bondage” and Heb. ii. 15, “. . . . subject (*enochos*) to bondage”.

*Endunamoo* to be strong, is used eight times in the N.T., six by Paul, one by Luke (Acts ix. 22), and one in Hebrews. It is a characteristic Pauline word. Luke’s one reference is to Paul himself, and the occurrences in the Apostle’s last letter, the second epistle to Timothy, with the insistence on suffering and endurance (II Tim. ii. 1; iv. 17), with a view to the crown and reigning with Christ, are very parallel to Heb. xi. 34, where Hebrew believers are being tested in a similar way, and ‘out of weakness were made strong’.

*Euarestos* well pleasing, and its cognates *euarestos* and *euaresteo* are limited to Paul’s writings and the letter to the Hebrews. Note the link of *sacrifice* between Heb. xiii. 16, “. . . . with such sacrifices God is well pleased”, and Rom. xii. 1, “. . . . present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, *acceptable* (well pleasing) unto God”, and Phil. iv. 18, “. . . . I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you . . . . a *sacrifice*, acceptable, *well pleasing* to God”. Also the thought of the will of God links Heb. xiii. 21, “. . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His *will*, working in you that which is *well-pleasing* in His sight . . . .”, with Rom. xii. 2, “. . . . that ye may prove what is that good, and *acceptable*, and perfect *will of God*”.

*Entunchano* to intercede, out of five occurrences in the N.T. is used 3 times by Paul, once by Luke in Acts xxv. 24 (translated “dealt with”), and once by the writer to the Hebrews. Two of the Pauline references are in Rom. viii. in connection with the intercession of Christ at the right hand of God (viii. 27, 34), and once in xi. 2, of Elijah’s intercession against Israel. It is significant that Heb. vii. 25, likewise deals with the intercessory work of the Saviour, Who can save to the uttermost and ever lives to intercede for His people. *This ministry is peculiar to Hebrews and Paul’s epistle to the Romans.*

*Tharreo* to be bold or confident, had six N.T. references, all exclusive to Paul and Hebrews. It occurs five times in II Corinthians (v. 6, 8; vii. 16; x. 1, 2), and once in Hebrews (xiii. 6). Comparing this reference to II Cor. v. 6, 8, we find the Apostle in the Corinthians letter, stating his confidence because of what God has wrought for us in the provision of a resurrection body, “. . . . a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”. This looks to the future. The reference in Hebrews looks to the present and the confidence in what God has wrought for us *now* in the tremendous



promise “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”. In both cases the link is the boldness and assurance that comes from what God has accomplished for us.

*Latreia* service, except for John xvi. 2, is confined to Paul’s epistles and Hebrews. The Apostle in Rom. ix., lists the nation of Israel’s divine privileges, and states: “. . . . to whom pertaineth . . . . the giving of the law, and the *service* of God . . . .” The service being largely related to the ceremonial law. Comparing Hebrews, we find it used in a similar way. “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine *service*” (Heb. ix. 1), and in verse 6, “. . . . the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the *service* of God”.

*Leitourgeo*, *-ia*, *os*, *ikos*, to minister, “ministry”, are predominantly Pauline words and that of Hebrews. The verb *leitourgeo* is used by Luke once (Acts xiii. 2), and the other two occurrences are Rom. xv. 27 and Heb. x. 11. *Leitourgia* is used by Luke once (Luke i. 23). It occurs three times, in II Cor. ix. 12; Phil. ii. 17, 30; and twice in Hebrews: viii. 6 and ix. 21. *Leitourgos* is used 3 times by Paul, Rom. xiii. 6; xv. 16; Phil. ii. 25, and twice in Hebrews: i. 7; viii. 2; and nowhere else. *Leitourgikos* is only found in Heb. i. 14.

*Mesites* mediator, occurs only in Gal. iii. 19, 20; I Tim. ii. 5; and Heb. vii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24. The Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator is peculiar to the witness of the Apostle Paul, and the three references in Hebrews are a strong link with Paul’s ministry.

*Mimetes* follower, is found 5 times in Paul’s writings: (I Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1; Eph. v. 1; I Thess. i. 6; ii. 14), and once in Hebrews (vi. 12), and nowhere else. (In I Pet. iii. 13, the critical texts read *zelotai* instead of *mimetes*). Note the link between I Thess. ii. 14 and Heb. vi. 12:

“For ye, brethren, became *followers* of the churches of God . . . . for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews” (I Thess. ii. 14).

“. . . . that ye be not slothful, but *followers* of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. vi. 12).

In the background of each is testing and suffering. In Hebrews this is expanded in chapter xi., where those linked with faith and patience and testing are given in detail.

*Nekroo* to treat as dead, occurs only three times in the N.T. (Rom. iv. 19; Col. iii. 5; and Heb. xi. 12). The similar usage in Rom. iv. 19 and Heb. xi. 12, is surely apparent. Both refer to Abraham “. . . . as good as dead” as far as his physical capacity to have a son was concerned.

*Olothreuo* to destroy, and its cognates *olothreutes* have only one occurrence each in the N.T., the latter in I Cor. x. 10, “neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the *destroyer* . . . .”, and the former in Heb. xi. 28 “. . . . lest he that *destroyed* the firstborn should touch them”. The usage of the word is identical in both cases.

*Homologia* profession or confession, has six N.T. references, three by Paul and three in Hebrews (II Cor. ix. 13; I Tim. vi. 12, 13; Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14; x. 23). The essence of the three passages in Hebrews is condensed in I Tim. vi. 12, 13:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession . . . .”

*Oneidismos* reproach, occurs five times in the N.T. (Rom. xv. 3; I Tim. iii. 7; Heb. x. 33; xi. 26; xiii. 13). In Rom. xv. 3, we have: “For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The *reproaches* of them that reproached Thee fell on Me”, and in Heb. xiii. 13, “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His *reproach*”.

*Timoreo* and *timoria*, to punish and punishment, have only three N.T. references. Luke in reporting Paul’s speeches uses the former twice: “I . . . . went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be *punished*” (Acts xxii. 5) and in xxvi. 11, “. . . . I *punished* them oft in every synagogue . . . .” The third occurs in Heb. x. 29 “. . . . of how much sorer *punishment (timoria)* suppose ye . . . .”

*Philoxenia* hospitality, has only two N.T. occurrences which are quite parallel. Rom. xii. 13 “. . . . Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to *hospitality*”, and Heb. xiii. 2 “Be not forgetful to *entertain strangers*, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”.

*Phrasso* to stop (the mouth), is another word having only three N.T. references, namely, Rom. iii. 19, II Cor. xi. 10 and Heb. xi. 33. Rom. iii. 19 deals with the mouths of men being stopped, and Heb. xi. 33 the mouth of lions.

*Megas* great, is only applied to Christ in the N.T. (Luke i. 32; vii. 16; Heb. iv. 14; x. 21). In Titus ii. 13, “Our *great* God and Saviour”, and Heb. xiii. 20, “. . . . that *great* Shepherd of the sheep”.

*Katargeo*, occurs 27 times in the N.T. Luke uses it once in a non-doctrinal and primitive sense (Luke xiii. 7). Paul’s epistles have 25 references and Hebrews one. It is peculiarly a Pauline word and the one reference in Heb. ii. 14 is used in the Apostle’s manner:

“Forasmuch then 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.”

“The last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is death” (I Cor. xv. 26).

“. . . . Jesus Christ, Who hath *abolished* death . . . .” (II Tim. i. 10).

*Perissoteron* and *perissoteros*, more abundantly and more exceedingly, with the exception of Mark vii. 36 and xv. 14, are limited to Paul’s epistles and Hebrews; the former in I Cor. xv. 10; Heb. vi. 17; vii. 15, and the latter ten times in the epistles of Paul and twice in Hebrews. These are peculiarly Pauline words, as is also the word

*Stauros* cross. Apart from its occurrences in the Gospels, this word is confined to the Apostle's writings, where it occurs ten times and once in the epistle to the Hebrews. Heb. xii. 2, "Looking unto Jesus . . . . Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the *cross* . . . ." Peter, James, John and Jude do not use the word in their epistles, either as a noun or a verb, which may appear surprising.

When we come to the connecting particles we find more links with Hebrews and Paul's epistles. *Te* is of frequent occurrence in Luke's writings, some 143 times in the Acts and seven times in his Gospel. In the epistles its usage is practically confined to Paul and Hebrews. It occurs twice in James iii. 7 and Jude 6. The Apostle uses it 26 times and Hebrews 22 times.

*Kathaper* as even as, is only found in Paul's writings and Hebrews, eleven in the former, and twice in the latter.

*Mepo* not yet, has only two N.T. references, namely Rom. ix. 11 and Heb. ix. 8.

*Toigaroun* therefore & wherefore, being found only in I Thess. iv. 8 and Heb. xii. 1.

*Huperano* above, is a word which occurs only in Ephesians (i. 21; iv. 10) and Heb. ix. 5.

The above are some of the verbal links with the Apostle Paul's writings and the epistle to the Hebrews. They are not haphazard occurrences, but, as we have demonstrated, have a similar background or thought, showing the same *mind*, if not the same *hand*. Archdeacon Paley, in his *Horae Paulinae* p. 196, writes:

"Whoever writes two letters, or two discourses, nearly upon the same subject, and at no great distance of time, but without any express recollection of what he had written before, will find himself repeating some sentences, in the very order of the words in which he had already used them; but he will more frequently find himself employing some principal terms, with the order inadvertently changed, or with the order disturbed by the intermixture of other words and phrases expressive of ideas rising up at the time; or in many instances repeating not single words, nor yet whole sentences, but parts and fragments of sentences."

Not only do we find the repetition of words used in a similar way between Hebrews and Paul's epistles, but there are other links between the two which we will next consider.

**No.4. Verbal links between Paul's Epistles  
and the Epistle to the Hebrews (2).  
pp. 90 - 96**

Among the peculiarities of the Apostle Paul's style of writing and argument may be mentioned a species of digression. It is a turning aside from the subject, upon the occurrence of some particular word, which causes him to temporarily forsake the train of thought then in hand, and enter upon a parenthetical sentence in which that word is the prevailing term or idea. An example of this can be seen in Eph. iv. 8-11:

“Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and give gifts unto men, (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower part of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things). And He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

In verse 8, the thought and the importance of the Ascension causes Paul to digress from the gift of Christ, and the digression is shown in the words contained in brackets. In the eleventh verse he returns again to the gifts of the Ascended Christ, “And He *gave* some apostles” etc. In chapter iii. we have yet another example. After the great climax of revelation at the end of chapter ii., where the Church changes from the figure of a Body to a holy temple, designed as a permanent dwelling place for God, the Apostle is constrained to pray. He started to do this in iii. 1, “for this cause I Paul”—he was going to follow with the words ‘bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’, which he does in verse 14, but after giving his title, “the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles”, he deviates and devotes verses 2-13 to explain this title and its relationship to the new revelation he had received from Christ, connected with a secret (mystery), hid in God from the ages (verses 9; Col. i. 26) about which he now aims to ‘enlighten all’.

We see the same characteristic in Eph. v. 13-15: “But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; (for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light). See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise”. The Apostle's immediate context is reprov'ing the works of darkness that are done in secret, walking as children of light (verse 8), and walking circumspectly (verse 15), but he turns aside momentarily to comment on the *revealing* power of light. II Cor. ii. 14-17, is a further example, verses 15 and 16 being parenthetical.

We find similar examples in the epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter xii. 18-24 the writer first states negatively: “For ye are *not* come unto the mount that might be touched” (i.e. Sinai), and then positively: “But ye *are* come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . .” The awe-inspiring accompaniments of the giving of the law at Sinai, “the sound of trumpet, and the voice of words” causes the author to digress, “which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. For they could not endure that which was

commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake”. Not only this, but at the beginning of the chapter we have an emphasis upon discipline (chastening) and the three words used are particularly Pauline, *paideuo* (xii. 6, 7, 10), see I Cor. xi. 32; II Cor. vi. 9; I Tim. i. 20; II Tim. ii. 25; and Titus ii. 12; elsewhere it is only used by Luke (Luke xxiii. 16, 22; Acts vii. 22; xxii. 3), and once in Rev. iii. 19. *Paideutes* ‘instructor’, only found in Rom. ii. 20 and Heb. xii. 9, *paideia* ‘instruction’, ‘chastening’, occurring only in Eph. vi. 4; II Tim. iii. 16 and Heb. xii. 5, 7, 8, 11. There is another example of digression in Heb. iii. 1-6, “For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house (For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God) And Moses was verily faithful in all his house, as a servant . . . .” Moreover, in this passage we have three words which are peculiarly Pauline, namely *klesis*, calling, Rom. xi. 29; I Cor. i. 26; vii. 20; Eph. i. 18; iv. 1, 4; Phil. iii. 14; II Thess. i. 11; II Tim. i. 9. It occurs elsewhere only once (II Pet. i. 10). *Homologia* ‘profession’, has six N.T. references, three by Paul and three in Hebrews (II Cor. ix. 13; I Tim. vi. 12, 13; Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14; x. 23). *Kauchema* “rejoicing”, (Rom. iv. 2; I Cor. v. 6; ix. 15, 16; II Cor. i. 14; v. 12; ix. 3; Gal. vi. 4; Phil. i. 26; and Heb. iii. 6).

When we compare I Cor. xv. 26-28 and Heb. ii. 5-14, we have striking evidence of the same mind behind the words. Not only is there the special use of ‘destroy’ applied to death as we have seen; there is in both the peculiar argument derived from the passage: “Thou didst put all things under His feet” taken from Psa. viii. This quotation is found nowhere else in the N.T. than in Paul’s writings (I Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 8); in other words, they are confined to Paul and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. The argument in each case is exactly the same. Adam is referred to by name in I Cor. xv., and clearly implied in Heb. ii. 6. “It is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him” (I Cor. xv. 27), is paralleled by the statement: “He left nothing that is not put under Him” (Heb. ii. 8).

*Hupotasso* ‘to subject’, is another Pauline word. Out of 40 N.T. reference Paul uses it 24 times and Hebrews 5 times *in exactly the same way*. Not only this, but in the same context in Hebrews we have the exclusive Pauline words: *parabasis* ‘transgression’ (Heb. ii. 2; ix. 15; Rom. ii. 23; iv. 15; v. 14; Gal. iii. 19; I Tim. ii. 14); *parakoe* “disobedience” (Heb. ii. 2; Rom. v. 19; II Cor. x. 6); *endikos* “just” (Heb. ii. 2; Rom. iii. 8); *metecho* “to be a partaker” (Heb. ii. 14; v. 13; vii. 13; I Cor. ix. 10, 12; x. 17, 21, 30); *douleia* “bondage” (Heb. ii. 15; Rom. viii. 15, 21; Gal. iv. 24; v. 1). This strong evidence indeed that we have the same *mind* behind these contexts in Hebrews and I Corinthians.

### **Quotations from the Old Testament.**

When we come to consider further quotations from the O.T., we find the Pauline habit of accumulating O.T. passages (See Rom. iii. 10-18; ix. 7-33), often joined together by the characteristic *kai palin* ‘and again’ (Rom. xv. 9-12; I Cor. iii. 19, 20). We find the same characteristic in Hebrews; compare Heb. i. 5-14; ii. 12, 13; iv. 4, 5; x. 30. In

Heb. x. 30, the writer quotes from Deut. xxxii. 35, but does not give a literal translation of the Hebrew or a literal quotation from the LXX. In Rom. xii. 19, Paul quotes the same passage and uses *exactly the same wording*, which is remarkable. The famous quotation from Hab. ii. 4, "The just shall live by faith" gives the key-note of the Gospel of God's grace made known through Paul's ministry. It is absolutely basic to this Gospel, and the epistle to the Romans is written around it. It occurs in Galatians with a slightly different stress (iii. 11), and is not quoted by any other N.T. writer *except the author of Hebrews*. The emphasis here is on the word 'live', for the great theme of this epistle is the perfecting of the believer through trial and suffering (Heb. vi. 1; x. 32-39) with a reward in view. The Apostle does not quote the actual words of Habakkuk, but gives his own rendering. It is noteworthy that the words of Rom. i. 17, and Heb. x. 38, *are identical*. One of the chief objections to the Pauline authorship of Hebrews is the mode of Scriptural citation in this epistle, which, it is alleged, is very different to that of the Apostle. Schulz, De Wette, Bleek and others maintained that the Pauline habit is to name the human author, whereas the writer to the Hebrews represents the various Scriptural passages much more definitely as utterances of God the Holy Spirit, without any reference to the human instrument by whom it was communicated, and leans to the Alexandrian rather than the Palestinian Biblical method, being akin to the mechanical theory of inspiration held by Philo.

But what are the facts? In the Acts of the Apostles we have specimens of the way the Apostle Paul addresses the Jews, and how he varies his mode of introducing quotations from the O.T. There are six O.T. quotations in his speech at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii.), prefixed by "He (God) gave testimony and said" (verse 22), "as it is also written in the second Psalm" (33), "He (God) said on this wise" (34), "He saith also in another Psalm" (35), "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in prophets" (40), "the Lord commanded us saying" (verse 47). It will be noticed that the human author is not once mentioned. There are only two more occasions in the Acts in which Paul formally quotes Scripture, namely when brought before the Sanhedrim, he reviles the high priest and then repents saying: ". . . . for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (Acts xxiii. 5) and in the last chapter where he quotes for the last time in the N.T. the solemn words of Isa. vi. to the Jews at Rome. But he introduces the quotation, saying: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet". In neither case is the human writer mentioned by himself.

From an examination of the epistles, it is clear that the Apostle had no stereotyped method of quoting O.T. Scripture. Three times he mentions Moses as the author of his quotation, David twice, Isaiah five times, but all these cases, with two exceptions (Acts xxviii. 25 and I Cor. ix. 9) occur in one epistle, that to the Romans, and there is no evidence that the Apostle attributed any particular doctrinal significance to the human authors. The fact is that Paul often used the impersonal way of introducing Scripture as is done in the epistle to the Hebrews. In at least three cases Paul makes God the speaker of a Scripture (Acts xiii. 35; II Cor. vi. 17; Eph. iv. 18), not merely quoting a word of God registered in the Scriptures.

Of the supposed Philonic and Alexandrian influence on the writer of Hebrews, Dr. W. Leonard writes:

“. . . . A fair estimate of his (Philo's) method may be deduced from a personal examination of three books, namely, the first book of *Allegories*, the first book on *Dreams*, and his work on the *Intoxication of Noah*. Such an examination, together with tests made on about two dozen quotations occurring in eight or ten different works of Philo citing Scripture has been very much exaggerated . . . . As a matter of fact the Alexandrian writer very frequently indicates the human source of his quotations, sometimes by naming the collection of books, law, prophets or hymns, from which he quotes; sometimes by naming the individual authors, specially Moses . . . . Philo, it is true, had a certain preference for a particular mode of citation, but that mode of citation is found not only in the epistle to the Hebrews, but in St. Paul and also in the Talmudic and Midrashic literature.” (*The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp.281, 282, 284).

We cannot do better than to quote Dr. Leonard's conclusion:

“In regard to the formulae of citation, we have seen once again, how the critics have built on the sand of their own hasty impressions. They have failed to take adequate note of the whole citational formulary of Pauline epistles; they have neglected the testimony of the Acts, and especially the Apostle's synagogal address at Antioch of Pisidia. They have not recognized that the customary Palestinian modes of citation admitted very considerable variety. They have suppressed some of the facts regarding Philo, namely that he not infrequently names the human authors of Scriptural oracles, cites them under passive formulae, and in the quotation of Scripture uses phrases which our author would in all probability have imitated, had he been to any great extent under Philonic influence. The critics also have misrepresented the epistle to the Hebrews itself, because they have failed to note that the purely Scriptural dicta attributed to God do not exceed a half dozen, whereas direct oracles are predominant. They have not taken the intention of the author sufficiently into account. They have merely imagined oppositions to Pauline practice and they have drawn conclusions about the author's notion of inspiration which are wholly unwarranted, because they rest on the double sophism: *non causa pro causa* and *ab uno ad omnes*. They suppose that Philo's mantic view of inspiration must be the reason why he is so little concerned with the secondary human authors and then suppose that our author's insistence on the uniquely divine authority of Scripture must be due to the same cause.

On the contrary, the facts which have been adduced above show that, whereas the mode of Scriptural citation in our epistle furnished no positive argument against its Pauline authorship, that mode of citation coincides with Pauline practice more than once, and is by no means Alexandrian rather than Palestinian.”

### **Parallel passages and doctrine in Hebrews and Paul's epistles.**

We have seen that the figure of a race or contest (*agon*) which is characteristic to Paul is found elsewhere only in Hebrews. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you?” (Gal. v. 7). “Let us run with patience the race set before us” (Heb. xii. 1. See also I Cor. ix. 24-27; Phil. iii. 13-15). There are remarkable parallels between the doctrine of Galatians and Hebrews. We have seen the emphasis on the old and new covenants:

“And this I say, that the *covenant*, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul . . . .” (Gal. iii. 17).

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman . . . . which things are an allegory: for these are the *two covenants*, the one

from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage . . . . but Jerusalem which is above is free . . . .” (Gal. iv. 22-31).

“But now He hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a *better covenant* . . . . for if that *first covenant* had been faultless . . . .” (Heb. viii. 6-13).

“For this cause He is the mediator of the *new testament* (covenant) . . . .” (Heb. ix. 15-20; xii. 24).

“This is the *covenant* that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord . . .” (Heb. x. 16).

In both Galatians and Hebrews a mediator is stressed (Gal. iii. 19, 20; Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24) and *such argument is not found elsewhere*. In both, the New Jerusalem figures prominently (Gal. iv. 26; Heb. xi. 10; xii. 22) and apart from the vision of it that John describes in Rev. xxi., this city is not mentioned anywhere else in the N.T. In both the characteristic Pauline doctrine of perfecting or going on to maturity is stressed, “Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made *perfect* (*epiteleo*) by the flesh?” (Gal. iii. 3). “Let us go on to perfection” (Heb. vi. 1). *Teleioo* and its cognates occur no less than 24 times in this epistle. In fact these give its very doctrine, and without this, any exposition goes astray and misses the point. Reaching maturity or the goal, through trial and discipline, or missing it, is the essence of this letter. For the Israel redeemed from Egypt, the goal was Canaan; for the Hebrew believer to whom the Hebrew epistle was addressed, it was the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. xi. 10, 14-16; xii. 22), which finally finds its location on the new earth (Rev. xxi.). *Telos* occurs five times (Heb. iii. 6, 14; vi. 8, 11; vii. 3); *teleios* twice (Heb. v. 14; ix. 11); *teleioo* 9 times (Heb. ii. 10; v. 9; vii. 19, 28; ix. 9; x. 1, 14; xi. 40; xii. 23); *teleiosis* once (Heb. vii. 11); *teleiotes* once (Heb. vi. 1) and *teleiotes* once (Heb. xii. 2); *sunteleo* once (Heb. viii. 8); *sunteleia* once (Heb. ix. 26); *epiteleo* twice (Heb. viii. 5; ix. 6); and *teleutao* once (Heb. xi. 22). The whole discourse revolves around the things which can or cannot perfect or led to maturity.

Developing from this is the antithesis between babyhood and adulthood, which is likewise peculiarly Pauline and is found elsewhere only in Hebrews.

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto *babes* in Christ. I have fed you with *milk* and not with *meat* . . .” (I Cor. iii. 1, 2).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of *milk*, and not of strong *meat* . . . . for he is a *babe*. But *strong meat* belongeth to them that are of *full age* (*teleios*) . . . .” (Heb. v. 12-14).

Compare also Eph. iv. 13, 14, “. . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* (full grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more *children* (babes)”, also I Cor. xiv. 20, “Brethren, be not *children* in understanding: . . . . but in understanding be *men*” (margin perfect or of full age).

Added to this we must keep in mind that the *goal* of the race or contest is this *perfecting or maturity*, whether in Hebrews or Paul’s writings. “Let us go on to full growth (perfection)” (Heb. vi. 1). “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,



looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter (*teleiotes*) of our faith” (Heb. xii. 1, 2). “Not as though I had already attained, either were already *mature (teleioo)* perfect, but I follow after (pursue) . . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be mature (*teleios*), be thus minded” (Phil. iii. 12-15). “None of these things move me . . . . so that I might *finish (teleiosai)* my course (race) with joy” (Acts xx. 24). “I have *finished (teleo)* the course (race) . . . . henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness” (II Tim. iv. 7, 8).

### **No.5. Verbal links between Paul’s Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews (3). pp. 114 - 120**

In I Cor. viii. 6, we have the expression: “One God, the Father, of (*ex*) Whom are all things . . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ, by (*dia*) Whom are all things”. This is paralleled by Heb. ii. 10, “For it became Him, for (*dia*) Whom are all things, and by (*dia*) Whom are all things”, and this is found nowhere else in the N.T.

“*The Living God.*” In the epistles this title only occurs in Paul’s writings, where it is used seven times: (Rom. ix. 26; II Cor. iii. 3; vi. 16; I Thess. i. 9; I Tim. iii. 15; iv. 10; vi. 17). The writer of Hebrews employs it four times (iii. 12; ix. 14; x. 31; xii. 22).

The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Image of God, is a Pauline conception (II Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15). It is found elsewhere only in Heb. i. 3, “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the *express Image* of His Person”.

The *Ascension of Christ* is vital to Paul’s ministry, especially the doctrine concerning the Body of Christ, so closely identified with the Head, that it is looked upon as being seated in the heavenly places where He is now enthroned (Eph. i. 19-23; ii. 6); consequently we have the Ascension stressed *first* in Ephesians before the position of the Body is dealt with. In the same way Col. iii. 1-3 emphasizes this, and urges the believer to set his mind upon and seek those things which are above “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God”. The doctrine of the Ascension, likewise, is stressed in Hebrews, where it is referred to seven times: (i. 3; iv. 14; vi. 19, 20; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2). Used in this manner, it is peculiar to Paul’s writings and the Hebrew epistle. Peter makes but one reference to the Ascension, I Pet. iii. 22, and it is not essential to the doctrine set forth in his epistle.

Related to the Ascension is the present intercession of the Lord Jesus:

“. . . . Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also *maketh intercession* for us” (Rom. viii. 34).

The only other mention of this in the N.T. is Heb. vii. 25:

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to *make intercession* for them.”

The destruction of Satan, death and its power by the Lord Jesus, is characteristic of Paul’s ministry:

“. . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath *abolished* death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel” (II Tim. i. 10). “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*” (I Cor. xv. 54, 55).

This is another peculiar link with Hebrews:

“Forasmuch then 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 . . . .” (Heb. ii. 14).

So also is the thought that Christ, having died once, will never die again. His one sacrifice for sin is all-sufficient, and never to be repeated:

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead *dieth no more*; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin *once*; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Rom. vi. 9-10).

“. . . . But now *once* in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . . So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many . . . .” (Heb. ix. 26-28).

“But this man, after He had offered *one sacrifice* for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. x. 12).

Though we must be careful with the ‘alls’ and ‘everys’ of Scripture, there is another doctrinal link between II Corinthians and Hebrews:

“. . . . Because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were all dead: and that He died for *all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves . . . .” (II Cor. v. 14, 15).

“But we see Jesus . . . . for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death *for every man*” (Heb. ii. 9).

Both Hebrews and Paul’s epistles treat the law of Moses in a special way. The law cannot save, give righteousness, inheritance or life, and has been done away as a means of salvation:

“. . . . for if *righteousness* come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. ii. 21).

“For if the *inheritance* be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. iii. 18).

“. . . . for if there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21).

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. v. 4).

“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Heb. vii. 18).

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second” (Heb. viii. 7).

“. . . . He *taketh away the first*, that He may establish the second” (Heb. x. 9).

Not only this, but special stress of the law as a *shadow* is peculiar to Hebrews and Paul’s writings:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a *shadow of things to come*” (Col. ii. 16, 17).

“For the law having a *shadow of good things to come*, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. x. 1).

The trinity of graces: faith, hope and love, are characteristic of the Apostle Paul:

“Now abideth faith, hope, love (charity), these three; but the greatest of these is love” (I Cor. xiii. 13).

They also occur in Rom. v. 1-8 in pairs; Gal. v. 5, 6; Eph. i. 15-20; Col. i. 4, 5; I Thess. v. 8; *and twice in Hebrews and nowhere else* (Heb. vi. 10-12; x. 22-24, where ‘faith’ in verse 23 should read ‘hope’, see the R.V.).

Paul is the only N.T. writer who requests *prayer for himself*, and this usually comes at the end of his epistles:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . . . *and for me . . . .* that I might open my mouth boldly . . . .” (Eph. vi. 18, 19).

“Withal *praying also for us*, that God would open unto us a door of utterance” (Col. iv. 3).

“Brethren, *pray for us*” (I Thess. v. 25).

“Finally, brethren, *pray for us*, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, . . . .” (II Thess. iii. 1).

To which may be added Rom. xv. 30; Phil. i. 19 and Philemon 22.

*Hebrews likewise requests prayer in the same way:*

“*Pray for us*; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb. xiii. 18).

And this feature is not found in Peter, James, Jude or John.

Another point needs to be made. The stress in Romans on Abraham and Sarah’s physical incapacity to have a son and heir in their old age, and the quickening power of resurrection is seen also in Hebrews:

“. . . . Abraham, who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before Him Whom he believed, even God, Who *quickeneth the dead . . . .* and being not weak in faith, he *considered not his own body now dead . . . . neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb:*” (Rom. iv. 16-19).

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age . . . . therefore sprang there even of one, and *him as good as dead*, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude . . . .” (Heb. xi. 11, 12).

This power operated too in the willingness to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise (Heb. xi. 17-19). No other N.T. writer treats of this matter.

### **Paul’s Sign Manual.**

One of the ways the enemy of truth was seeking to hinder the progress of the Gospel was by circulating spurious epistles purporting to come from the Apostle:

“Now we beseech you, brethren, . . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, *neither by spirit*, nor by word, *nor by letter as from us*, as that the day of the Lord is at hand” (II Thess. ii. 1, 2 revised text).

In order to guard against this, Paul decided to end all his letters in one special way, in his own handwriting:

“The salutation of Paul *with mine own hand*, which is the token in every epistle: *so I write*” (II Thess. iii. 17),

and then follows a reference to the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, this, so fitting, coming from one who was predominantly the Apostle of grace. This is the way that all the thirteen epistles associated with his name ends. Not one of the other epistles concludes in such a way, and it must surely be obvious that if anyone else used the same formula, its use as a guarantee of genuineness would have been null and void. *But the epistle to the Hebrews ends with it* and this is another definite link with the Apostle Paul and his writings.

“Grace *be* with you all. Amen” (Heb. xiii. 25).

Not only this, but there are remarkable doctrinal parallels between Philippians and Hebrews, as Charles H. Welch has shown in his *Alphabetical Analysis*, Part Two, p.108. These cannot be ignored by anyone who is studying this subject with an unbiased mind. We now exhibit them.

<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 Leaving . . . let us go on	xii. 1. vi. 1, 2.	I press toward the mark Forgetting things behind	iii. 14. 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>sumमितes</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.	

From all the foregoing facts, it surely is clear that behind the epistle to the Hebrews is the *mind of Paul*, if not his actual *pen*.

How expositors can deny this, passes our comprehension. Some may ask: does it really matter who the human author was? From one standpoint we answer “no”, for,

whoever he was, God the Holy Spirit overruled what he wrote, so that it could become part of inspired Scripture and He is the real Author. From another point of view the answer is “yes”, for if Hebrews cannot be included in the Pauline collection of epistles, then the perfect arrangement and balance is upset.

There are 21 epistles in the N.T., and with Hebrews included in Paul’s writings there is a perfect balance of sevens:

1. Galatians	1. Ephesians	1. I Peter
2. I Thessalonians	2. Philippians	2. II Peter
3. II Thessalonians	3. Colossians	3. James
4. I Corinthians	4. I Timothy	4. I John
5. II Corinthians	5. Titus	5. II John
6. Hebrews	6. Philemon	6. III John
7. Romans	7. II Timothy	7. Jude

While we do not wish to imagine or invent sevens in the Scriptures, the employment of this number by God from the very beginning of creation (seven days), its reiteration in the economy of Israel (the sabbath; seven weeks ‘Pentecost’ seven years ‘sabbath of the land’; 7X7 years to the Jubilee; 70X7 years of Dan. ix.; and the seven times of Leviticus), and in addition the accumulation of sevens in the book of the Revelation and elsewhere, show us that the purpose of the ages in Christ is divinely designed in sevens, and we therefore are not surprised to find the same feature in the epistles of the N.T. and we should not lightly set this aside.

If Hebrews is not linked with Paul, then we have *thirteen* epistles from him, (an ominous number, and linked with Satan in the Scriptures), the balance of epistles during and after the Acts is upset and moreover we have no epistle during the Acts which gives the doctrine of the practical outworking and perfecting of faith with reward in view. Hebrews stands to the Pentecostal church much in the same way as Philippians and II Timothy do to the prison ministry of the Apostle Paul, through which ministry the joint-Body, i.e. the Body of Christ, is unfolded.

If we were asked whose *pen* wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, we should hazard the opinion, for what it is worth, that Luke was the amanuensis or editor. Luke was the close companion of Paul right to the end (II Tim. iv. 11). We have not only his own writings (The Gospel and Acts) with which to compare, but also his reporting of Paul’s speeches in the Acts period. We have before remarked on the likeness of Luke’s Greek style to the Hebrews epistle, a feature which has been noticed by many scholars, and the Lucan tradition goes back, as we have seen, to the beginning of Christianity.

However, no one can *dogmatically* say who the penman was, and we feel a little modesty may not be amiss here. If early Christian scholars were not sure, how can we be, living more than 1900 years later? We believe Origen summed up the position well when he stated that he believed that “the *thoughts* are the thoughts of the Apostle, but the *language* and the composition, that of one who recalled from memory and, as it were, made notes of what was said by his master . . . . it was not without reason that *men of*

*old time* (Origen was born 185A.D.) have handed it down as Paul's . . . . But who wrote the epistle (i.e., the amanuensis) God only knows certainly". There must have been an ancient and genuine tradition concerning the Pauline authorship of Hebrews for the Eastern church to give such a united testimony in this way.

From the foregoing Scriptural facts we have brought forward, we unhesitatingly take the same standpoint as Origen of old, although it may not be the fashion in theological circles at the moment to ascribe this magnificent and important epistle to Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

As an appendix, we give a list of word which are *only found in Luke's writings and the epistle to the Hebrews*.

HEBREWS.		LUKE and the ACTS.
<i>agkura</i>	vi. 19 anchor	Acts xxvii. 29, 30, 40
<i>anadechomai</i>	xi. 17 receive	Acts xxviii. 7
<i>anatheoreo</i>	xiii. 7 behold	Acts xvii. 23
<i>anoteron</i>	x. 8 above	Luke xiv. 10
<i>anorthoo</i>	xii. 12 lift up	Acts xv. 16; Luke xiii. 13
<i>apallasso</i>	ii. 15 deliver	Acts xix. 12; Luke xii. 58
<i>apographo</i>	xii. 23 write or tax	Luke ii. 1, 3, 5
<i>archegos</i>	ii. 10; xii. 2 Prince, captain	Acts iii. 15; v. 31
<i>asaleutos</i>	xii. 28 unmoveable	Acts xxvii. 41
<i>asteios</i>	xi. 23 fair	Acts vii. 20
<i>astron</i>	xi. 12 star	Acts vii. 43; xxvii. 20; Luke xxi. 25
<i>boetheia</i>	iv. 16 help	Acts xxvii. 17
<i>diabaino</i>	xi. 29 pass through	Acts xvi. 9; Luke xvi. 26
<i>diatithemai</i>	viii. 10; ix. 16, 17; x. 16 appoint	Acts iii. 25; Luke xxii. 29
<i>eiseimi</i>	ix. 6 enter	Acts iii. 3; xxi. 18, 26
<i>ekleipo</i>	i. 12 fail	Luke xvi. 9; xxii. 32
<i>entromos</i>	xii. 21 tremble	Acts vii. 32; xvi. 29
<i>epistello</i>	xiii. 22 send by letter	Acts xv. 20; xxi. 25
<i>esoteros</i>	vi. 19 within	Acts xvi. 24
<i>euthetos</i>	vi. 7 fit, suitable	Luke ix. 62; xiv. 35
<i>eulabeomai</i>	xi. 7 fear	Acts xxiii. 10
<i>echos</i>	xii. 9 sound	Acts ii. 2; Luke iv. 37
<i>hilaskomai</i>	ii. 17 propitiate	Luke xviii. 13
<i>hierateia</i>	vii. 5 office of priest	Luke i. 9
<i>isemi</i>	xii. 17 know	Acts xxvi. 4
<i>katapausis</i>	iii. 11, 18; iv. 1, 3, 5, 10, 11 rest	Acts vii. 49
<i>katapauo</i>	iv. 4, 8, 10 to rest	Acts xiv. 18
<i>katapheugo</i>	vi. 18 flee	Acts xiv. 6
<i>kephalaion</i>	viii. 1 sum	Acts xxii. 28
<i>lutrosis</i>	ix. 12 redemption	Luke i. 68; ii. 38
<i>metochos</i>	i. 9; iii. 1, 14; vi. 4; xii. 8 partaker	Luke v. 7
<i>orthos</i>	xii. 13 straight	Acts xiv. 10

<i>palaioo</i>	i. 11; viii. 13	grow old	Luke xii. 33
<i>paraluomai</i>	xii. 12	feeble	Luke v. 18, 24; Acts viii. 7; ix. 33
<i>paroikeo</i>	xi. 9	sojourn	Luke xxiv. 18
<i>paroxusmos</i>	x. 24	provoke	Acts xv. 39
<i>patriarches</i>	vii. 4	patriarch	Acts ii. 29; vii. 8, 9
<i>sunantao</i>	vii. 1, 10	meet	Luke ix. 37; xxii. 10; Acts x. 25; xx. 22
<i>schedon</i>	ix. 22	almost	Acts xiii. 44; xix. 26
<i>teleiosis</i>	vii. 11	perfection	Luke i. 45
<i>huparxis</i>	x. 34	goods	Acts ii. 45
<i>phuo</i>	xii. 15	spring up	Luke viii. 6, 8
<i>Aaron</i>	v. 4; vii. 11; ix. 4		Luke i. 5; Acts vii. 40
<i>Aiguptios</i>	xi. 29		Acts vii. 22, 24, 28; xxi. 38
<i>Iesuos</i>	(Joshua) iv. 8		Acts vii. 45
<i>Eruthra Thalassa</i>	xi. 29	Red Sea	Acts vii. 36
<i>Italia</i>	xiii. 24	Italy	Acts xviii. 2; xxvii. 1, 6
<i>Samouel</i>	xi. 32	Samuel	Acts iii. 24; xiii. 20

We also give a list of 79 words which are used largely in Luke, the Acts and Hebrews. A careful check by the interested student will show that many of these, together with the list above, *are used in the same way*. In order to save space, references are not given, but these can be found with a concordance. They are:

<i>agalliasis</i>	gladness	<i>etos</i>	year	<i>aideuo</i>	chasten
<i>anago</i>	bring	<i>eulogeo</i>	bless	<i>paraginomai</i>	to come
<i>anairo</i>	slay	<i>thusia</i>	sacrifice	<i>parakaleo</i>	exhort
<i>anakampto</i>	return	<i>iaomai</i>	heal	<i>pascho</i>	suffer
<i>aniemi</i>	loose	<i>hiereus</i>	priest	<i>peitho</i>	persuade
<i>anorthoo</i>	make straight	<i>ischuo</i>	be able	<i>pleion</i>	many
<i>apodekatoo</i>	pay tithes	<i>katharizo</i>	cleanse	<i>plethos</i>	multiple
<i>boule</i>	counsel	<i>kath'emeran</i>	daily	<i>poseuchomai</i>	pray
<i>dialegomai</i>	dispute	<i>kathizo</i>	sit	<i>prostithemi</i>	add
<i>dierchomai</i>	go through	<i>kardia</i>	heart	<i>prosopon</i>	face
<i>diegeomai</i>	declare	<i>koinos</i>	common	<i>prophetes</i>	prophet
<i>diamarturomai</i>	testify	<i>krites</i>	judge	<i>rhema</i>	word
<i>ethos</i>	custom	<i>laos</i>	people	<i>saleuo</i>	shake
<i>eisago</i>	bring in	<i>latreuo</i>	serve	<i>semeron</i>	today
<i>emphanizo</i>	manifest	<i>metalambano</i>	receive	<i>teras</i>	wonder
<i>exago</i>	bring out	<i>metanoia</i>	repentance	<i>tithemi</i>	appoint
<i>epideiknumi</i>	show	<i>mnaomai</i>	remember	<i>topos</i>	place
<i>epizeteo</i>	seek after	<i>hodos</i>	way	<i>trophe</i>	food
<i>epikaleomai</i>	call	<i>oikoumene</i>	world	<i>tugchano</i>	obtain
<i>epilambanomai</i>	lay hold	<i>holos</i>	all	<i>huparchonta</i>	possessions
<i>episkeptomai</i>	visit	<i>homoios</i>	likewise	<i>hupostrepho</i>	return
<i>epistamai</i>	know	<i>onoma</i>	name	<i>hupsistos</i>	highest
<i>epitrepo</i>	permit	<i>optomai</i>	see	<i>phobeomai</i>	fear
<i>ereo</i>	say	<i>hopos</i>	that	<i>phulake</i>	prison
<i>eremos</i>	wilderness	<i>horizo</i>	determine	<i>chrematizo</i>	warn
<i>heteros</i>	another	<i>hothen</i>	wherefore		
<i>hetoimazo</i>	prepare	<i>hostis</i>	whosoever		



# The Early Centuries and the Truth

## No.1. Introduction, The Didache and 1 Clement. pp. 126 - 130

The subject of Church History is a vast and complicated one, which entails much study and research in order to get a good grasp of it. Yet a knowledge of this subject is necessary in some degree if one is to understand the set-up of modern Christendom. Of particular interest are the early centuries, the sub-apostolic age and those following it, which give us the reactions of the early Christians to the books and doctrine of the N.T., before the Canon was fixed and afterwards.

As many will know, the fixation of the Canon took time to achieve, as there was much apocryphal and spurious literature among the churches thus necessitating careful sorting out, and there is no doubt whatsoever that the Holy Spirit overruled in all this, thus ensuring that no uninspired writing was finally admitted to the N.T. Canon.

As long as the Apostles and their disciples lived, with their oral and written teaching, there was no need of a Canon and it is not until the end of the second century that the concept of a Canon began to reveal itself, and this was precipitated by controversy and heresy, such as that provoked by Marcion of Sinope, who broke with the church of Rome about 150A.D. However, not yet were all the books now existing in the N.T. decided upon. Those accepted generally speaking, were the four Gospels, the Pauline epistles (but not Hebrews), the Acts of the Apostles, some of the general epistles and after a period, the Revelation.

It was not until the fourth century that we find the N.T., as we know it today, finally fixed. In the east this was achieved in 367A.D. as declared in the Thirty-ninth Paschal letter of Athanasius. In the west a similar point was reached at Carthage in 397A.D., when the same list of N.T. books as those contained in the Athanasian letter was agreed upon.

However, from the age of the Apostolic Fathers, one or two of the Gospels were known, and the epistles of Paul, as a whole, although there were doubts about Hebrews. The important point is: did they understand the teaching of the Apostle, whose writings are the key to the truth for this age of grace? What actually happened after the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul? We do know for certain that the body of Truth given by revelation of the Lord Jesus to him, was passed on to his son in the faith, Timothy. What happened to Timothy? Alas, we cannot say, for the earliest Christian literature does not mention him. The later apostolic age to the great apologists of the middle and late second century has been described by historians as a "very ill-lit tunnel". We know little except that it was a period of persecution and pernicious propaganda. The earliest writings were those of the *Didache*, *The Shepherd of Hermas* and those of the Apostolic Fathers, meaning men who had contact with, or who were appointed by the Apostles, although only for Polycarp is there real evidence of such contact. We can examine these writings

fortunately, and come to a definite conclusion as to how the Truth was still regarded from approximately the middle of the second century onwards. We must bear in mind that, by this time, the churches were spread widely throughout the Roman Empire and in the east, beyond it.

### **The Didache, or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.**

This was an early manual of Church instruction, claiming to give the teaching of the Lord as handed down through the twelve Apostles. It probably had as its basis Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you*". *The Didache* was discovered in a Greek manuscript at Constantinople in 1873, and published by Bryennius ten years later. It is apparently composite, and dates from the early part of the second century. An earlier Latin version has been discovered which Professor E. J. Goodspeed considers is separate from the work, a primitive form of it. *The Didascalia*, late in the third century, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, late in the fourth, clearly made use of *The Didache*. We can say it is roughly contemporary with Ignatius, Polycarp and 1 Clement.

It evidently had the recent convert in mind, and presents the Christian life under the titles of the "Way of Life" as opposed to the "Way of Death", but when we step from the N.T. to this writing, it is like entering another world. Do we find set forth the "worthy walk" and the practical outworking of the Truth as set forth in the epistles of Paul? The answer is decidedly 'No'. We are back in a negative legalism, and one wonders whether the author or authors had the slightest understanding of the body of Truth given by the Lord through this great servant of His. When we remember how much Paul's indignation and wonder was evoked by the legalistic spirit that had affected the Galatians, we cannot help feeling that his cause for amazement would have been increased a hundredfold, could he have lived a half century or more later and read this document. One might be pardoned for looking on it solely as a Jewish writing, for there is strangely wanting the great characteristic of grace and love that permeate the Gospel of Christ as made known through the Apostle of the Gentiles; in fact the failure to distinguish between Law and Grace, Salvation and Reward is most characteristic, as the following quotations will show:

"Do not keep stretching out your hands to receive, and drawing them back when it comes to returning. *If through your hands you have earned a ransom for your sins, you shall not hesitate to give it*" (4:6,7).

"See that no one leads you astray from this way of the Teaching, for he teaches you without God. For if *you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect*, but if you cannot, do what you can" (6:2).

"Your fasts must not be on the same days as the hypocrites, for they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you must fast on Wednesday and Friday" (8:1).

"So you shall take the first-fruits of the produce of the wine-press and the threshing floor and of cattle and sheep, and give the first-fruits to the prophets, *for they are your high priests*" (13:3).

One rubs ones eyes with amazement when reading these extracts, specially when one remembers that this was given out as Christian teaching less than a hundred years after the full revelation of grace had been given in the N.T.

Moreover, the Person of Christ is not central, and there is no appreciation of the glorious fact that justification is the present possession of the believer. According to this teaching, on becoming saved, a person must keep to the right way in order to attain salvation; in other words, salvation becomes a reward for righteous living. The word 'grace' only occurs twice, and then it is used as a kind of Divine force, added to that of the believer sets out to perfect himself in the righteousness of the law, and when he fails, to make some kind of atonement by his own works, "through your hands you have earned a ransom for your sins" (4:6,7).

Sometimes we see it argued, that the nearer one gets to N.T. times, the nearer one is to the primitive Truth of the Scriptures. An examination of this early literature shows, alas, such an idea to be false. It is significant that this document goes back to the Twelve Apostles of the circumcision for the instruction of the church in Christian doctrine and living, rather than to the minister appointed by the ascended Christ—Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1, 2; Col. i. 24, 25).

### **The First Epistle of Clement.**

This epistle, apart from the N.T., is probably the earliest Christian document that has come down to us. The writer is not named, but from ancient times, it has been ascribed to Clement, who was bishop of Rome from 88-97A.D. He seems to have had acquaintance with Paul's epistles and the letter to the Hebrews and I Peter. The date of 1 Clement could be around 90-95A.D. It is found in Greek near the close of the Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century and in the eleventh century manuscript found by Bryennius in 1873, Syriac, Latin and Coptic versions have also come to light.

It was addressed to the Corinthian church, which at this time was showing hostility to the office of elder or presbyter, and its purpose was an attempt to correct this. When we study its theology what do we find? He speaks warm-heartedly about Christ, His death, and once actually speaks of "faith in Christ". However, when we examine the contents of these statements we find he expresses sentiments which clearly show that he never properly gripped the truth of salvation by grace, apart from works. Such faith, as he mentions, pertains not so much to the Person of Christ, but to His precepts, the Lord Jesus to him was a preacher of the "grace of repentance". The Lord's death is said to procure, not atonement, but an *opportunity* to repent, and is brought in as an *example*, leading men to a strong desire to do good and to keep humble before God.

Let us look at the passage where he uses the expression "faith in Christ":

"Let our children share in Christian instruction, let them learn what power humility has with God, what pure love can do with God, how good and great His fear is, and *how it saves those who live in it with holiness with a pure mind*. For He is the searcher of thoughts and desires, His breath is in us and when He pleases, He will take it away.

*Faith in Christ confirms all this*, for He, Himself, through the Holy Spirit, invites us thus: Come, children, listen to me. I will teach you to revere the Lord. What man is there that desires life, and loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from uttering deceit. Turn from evil and do what is good. Seek peace and pursue it. The Lord's eyes are on the upright and His ears are open to their appeal . . . .”  
(1 Clement 21:8-22:8).

It will be noted that Clement, after referring to faith in Christ, appears to be about to quote the Lord's actual words, but instead refers to Psa. xxxiv. 11-7, which of course has nothing to do directly with faith in Christ, apart from works, for salvation. In fact, both before and after using the phrase “faith in Christ”, we have a stress on good works. Fear “*saves those who live in it with holiness and a pure mind*”, and a carrying out in practice of Psa. xxxiv. follows, which, to Clement, confirms what “faith in Christ” is. It is surely clear, that, in spite of his piety, Clement had never fully grasped the Gospel as proclaimed through Paul, of justification by faith in Christ, apart from works, and the proper place that good works have, of following and being the *fruit* of salvation, not the procuring cause. Other references make this abundantly clear.

“Let us clothe ourselves with harmony, in humility and self control, keeping ourselves from all gossip and slander, and be *justified by deeds*, not by words” (30:3).

He goes on to quote the example of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob acting by faith, very much as Heb. xi., but he confesses the faith of the sinner in Christ that saves, with the overcoming faith of the believer, pressing on to the goal. Other references are illuminating:

“You see, dear friends, how great and wonderful love is, and there is no describing its perfection. Who is to be found in it, *except those whom God deems worthy?*”

“How happy are we . . . . if we carry out the commandments of God in harmony with love, *that our sins may be forgiven through love*” (50:3,5).

“Let us therefore *strive* to be found in the number of those that wait for Him, so that we may *share in the gifts He has promised*. But how shall this be? . . . . *if we perform acts* that are in harmony with His blameless will” (35:4,5).

According to these statements, God's love is only for those He “deems worthy” and this in spite of Rom. v. 8, “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us”, and “there is none righteous, no, not one” (iii. 10). “Sin being forgiven through love” may be very high sounding, but it is not N.T. truth nor the N.T. basis for forgiveness. Nor do God's “gifts” have to be “striven for”.

To be fair, there is one passage where Clement seems to contradict all this:

“So we too, who by His will have been called in Christ Jesus are made upright not through ourselves, or through our wisdom and understanding, or piety or deeds we have done in holiness of heart, but through faith, by which Almighty God has made all men upright from the beginning; to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (32:4),

which only goes to show there was no *clear* unwavering conception in Clement's mind of the Gospel of God's grace, apart from human merit, as preached by the Apostle Paul. It is one thing to quote the words of Paul's epistles; it is quite another to *understand them*. Clement's epistle on the whole looks on salvation, not so much linked with the Person of

Christ, but as directly connected with the Father, Who, to him, is the Creator, and in the ultimate analysis, salvation relates to Him, the Father, Whom he describes as the “Father of the world”, an unscriptural expression and quite contrary to John i. 11, 12.

Only the redeemed can claim God and say “Abba”, “my Father”. Salvation, according to this writer, can only be had by obeying God, keeping humble, and doing His will. When we bear in mind that all this was written *within some 40 years* of the good deposit of Truth being made known through the Apostle Paul, we can surely see how quickly the fundamental Truths were lost.

## **No.2. The Epistles of Ignatius.** **pp. 143 - 146**

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, lived early in the second century. He was condemned to death and taken to Rome to be thrown to the lions in the Coliseum. As he passed through Asia, he was met by groups of Christians at Philadelphia and Smyrna, and the churches of Tralles, Magnesia and Ephesus sent delegations to greet him at Smyrna. To all these churches he sent letters of acknowledgment, urging them to avoid heresy and stand by their bishops. There are seven letters in all, which have had a chequered history, having been reduced in Syriac to three greatly abbreviated ones, and, on the other hand, in Greek and Latin having been increased by the addition of six or more spurious letters. Eusebius, the historian, in 326A.D., gives the list of seven epistles, and these, it is generally agreed, are the original collection. Eusebius tells us that Ignatius was martyred in the Coliseum in 107-108A.D., though modern scholarship gives 110-117A.D., as more likely to be the true date.

Examining these writings from the standpoint of the truth as revealed in the Pauline epistles, what do we find? First of all, there is no doubt that Ignatius whole-heartedly believed the Deity of Christ:

“. . . . God became incarnate, true life in death, sprung from Mary and from God . . . Jesus Christ our Lord” (Eph.7:2).

“For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary by divine dispensation, of the line of David, and of the Holy Spirit . . . .” (Eph.18:2-3).

“I extol Jesus Christ, the God Who has given you such wisdom” (Smyrna1:1).

“For our God, Jesus Christ, is more plainly visible now that He is in the Father” (Rom.3:3).

In one passage, he uses the striking phrase “the blood of God” (Eph.1:1) and for him, God can only be known through Jesus Christ:

“Jesus Christ will show you that I am telling the truth when I say this. He is the unerring mouth by which the Father has spoken truly” (Rom.8:2).

“. . . . that the disobedient may be convinced that there is one God Who has manifested Himself through Jesus Christ, His Son” (Mag.8:2).

Ignatius writes too to warn the churches of the error of Docetism. This was one of the earliest of Satanic heresies, already combated by the Apostle John in his first epistle (iv. 2, 3). It was the theory that Christ, during His earthly life, had not a *real* body but only an apparent or phantom one. It sprang from the idea of the impurity of matter and the impossibility therefore of God having direct contact with it, whether in a body, or in any other way. This was the basis, not only of Docetism but of Gnosticism, and if the Docetic idea was true, then it is evident that the Lord Jesus could not have really died on the Cross or rose again from the dead, with consequence that the foundations of Christianity are destroyed. Ignatius takes care to expose this great error:

“For He suffered all these things for our sakes, in order that we might be saved. And He *suffered really*, just as He also really raised Himself; it is not as some unbelievers say that He suffered seemingly . . . .” (Smyrna1:2).

“. . . . he who . . . . reviles my Lord by not admitting that He wore flesh and blood. Whoever does not say this has completely denied Him . . . .” (Smyrna5:2).

However, when we come to the presentation of the Gospel, the doctrines of grace, eternal life, and the role that the church plays in the purpose of God, we find a veering away from the N.T. He exalts the local church to a position it never had in the Apostle Paul’s epistles. In fact Ignatius conceives the church practically always in terms of the local assembly headed by the bishop, apart from which truth and salvation cannot exist, according to him. We give some examples:

“It is proper for you to run your race in harmony with the mind of the bishop . . . .” (Eph. 1:4).

“So it is clear we must look upon the bishop as the Lord Himself . . . .” (Eph.4:1).

“I exhort you, be zealous to do everything in godly harmony, with the bishop presiding in the place of God” (Eph.6:1).

“You must do nothing without the bishop and the elders” (Eph.7:1).

“When you subordinate yourselves to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to be living not in the human way, but after the manner of Jesus Christ . . . .” (Trall.2:1).

“In the same way all must respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, as they do the bishop, for he symbolizes the Father and the elders as a council of God and a band of Apostles. Without these no body can be called a church” (Trall.3:1).

“You must all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father . . . . let that be considered a valid thanksgiving which is held under the bishop or someone authorized by him . . . . It is not permissible to baptize or hold a religious meal without the bishop . . . It is well to recognize God and the bishop. Whoever honours the bishop is honoured by God. Whoever does anything without the bishop’s knowledge is serving the devil . . . .”

“It is right for men and women who are marrying to form their union with the approval of the bishop, in order that their marriage may be in accordance with the Lord’s will and not to gratify desire” (Poly.5:2).

No less than thirty times in his epistles Ignatius expresses similar sentiments, so that it would appear almost an obsession with him. As far as he was concerned, practically all truth was expressed, at least symbolically, in the local church with its presiding bishop. It is noteworthy too that he always uses ‘bishop’ in the singular, whereas the N.T. speaks of “*bishops* and deacons” (Phil. i. 1). Little did Ignatius realize that he was sowing the seeds of priestcraft and bondage to be expressed in Roman Catholicism later on. In his defence, it may be stated that he was living close to N.T. times, and the Apostle Paul had already given instruction concerning the character and position of bishops in his first

epistle to Timothy. At the same time it should be noted that Ignatius does not teach an *apostolic* succession of bishops. This was unknown to him and was a later misconception.

It is sometimes said that in I Timothy we have the church in *its rule*, whereas in II Timothy we have the church in *ruin*, with the forsaking of Paul and the truth given through him. From this we must not deduce that after the Apostle's time, local churches ceased to exist. The reverse is the truth, as church history makes clear. It may be that Ignatius knew of Paul's first letter to Timothy, but it is obvious that he had got it all out of focus. For him, the guarding of the truth was to keep united to local assembly and its bishop; in other words we have a doctrine of union with Christ *through the visible church*, and from this logically follows the idea that repentance, spiritual life and growth can only be experienced in the same way:

"Now the Lord forgives all who repent, if in repentance they turn in union with God and the council of the bishop" (Philad.8:1).

"For all who belong to God and Jesus Christ are with the bishop . . . . if anyone follows a schismatic, he cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (Philad.3:2,3).

For Ignatius, a 'schismatic' was anyone who had separated himself from the local church. If we search his writings for a clear conception of salvation by grace, apart from works, we shall search in vain. He is fond of using the expression 'reaching the presence of God' as the hope of the believer and the culmination of salvation, but this is to be attained by faithfulness and endurance. In other words, it is by *works* and *merit*:

". . . . the Father. In union with Him, if we endure the ill-treatment of the evil genius of this world and escape, we will reach God" (Magnes.1:2).

"If you endure everything for His (God's) sake, you will reach His presence" (Smyrna9:2).

". . . in order that, through your prayers, I may reach the presence of God" (Smyrna11:1).

". . . . if only, through suffering, I may reach the presence of God" (Poly.7:1).

This explains why Ignatius forbade anyone trying to get his release and escape from martyrdom. He believed that only by suffering and faithfulness to death would he ever reach God's presence and so, rather than seeking to escape from the wild beasts at Rome, he seemed to welcome it:

"Let me be eaten by the wild beasts, through whom I can reach the presence of God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, so that I may be found pure bread of Christ . . . . If I suffer, I shall be freed by Jesus Christ and I will rise in Him free . . . . Fire and cross, and struggles with wild beasts, crushing of bones, mangling of limbs, grinding of my whole body, wicked torments of the devil, let them come upon me, only let me reach the presence of Jesus Christ" (Rom.4:1,2; 5:1-3).

These are the words of a brave man, who, as a believer, experienced this cruel death at Rome. How utterly pathetic that he apparently did not rejoice in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, and the free gift and assurance of eternal life in Christ! As with all the Apostolic fathers, he confused salvation by faith in Christ, apart from works, with prize and reward for faithful service. In other words, he never learned the N.T. teaching regarding the position of good works. He wrote to the Magnesians:

“Thos who believe with love, bear the stamp of God the Father through Jesus Christ, through Whom, *unless we choose to die in His suffering*, His life is not in use” (Magnes.5:2).

“Be sober as God’s athlete; the *prize* is immortality and eternal life” (Poly.2:3).

We wish to make it clear we are not dealing with these early Christian’s *characters*, but their *doctrine* and *beliefs*.

They were men of the utmost courage personally, but as teachers, weighed in the balances of the Word of Truth, how often they failed to grasp its teaching, although living so near apostolic times!

### **No.3. The Epistles of Polycarp and Barnabas. pp. 164 - 168**

With Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (69-155A.D.), we have a direct link with the Apostolic age and we can regard him as the chief depository of the primitive gospel tradition. Irenaeus tells us that in early life Polycarp “had been taught by Apostles and lived in familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ” (3:3,4). In words addressed to Florinus, Irenaeus informs us of Polycarp’s direct contact with the Apostle John:

“. . . . I can even now point out the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and describe . . . . the discourses which he delivered to the people, how he used to speak of *his intercourse with John and the rest of those who had seen the Lord*, and how he would relate their words. And everything that he had heard from them about the Lord, about His miracles and about His teaching, Polycarp used to tell us as one who had received it from those who had seen the Word of Life with their own eyes, and all this in perfect harmony with the Scriptures . . . .”

Polycarp thus becomes a living link between the Apostles and the writers who flourished at the end of the second century, and from the standpoint of our inquiry, occupies a position of great importance. If the truth was passed down in all its purity, we shall surely find it in his testimony. That he was a Christian who stood high in the favour of his contemporaries, there is no doubt. Nor can one question his implicit trust in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout his long life. In his old age he was martyred, and his words to the Roman proconsul, who offered to set him free, if he would deny the Lord, are well known: “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath done me no wrong. How can I then speak evil of my King Who has saved me?” And thus he went bravely to his death.

There are four main sources of our knowledge of Polycarp: (1) The statements of Irenaeus. (2) The epistle of Polycarp. (3) The epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp. (4) The epistle of the church at Smyrna to the Philomelians, which gives the account of his martyrdom. We are immediately concerned with Polycarp’s epistle to the Philippians. Dr. P. N. Harrison has shown it is possible, originally, that this document consisted of two epistles, chapters 13 and 14 having been written at the time of the death of Ignatius,



and chapters 1-13 written several years later, but for our purpose we shall use the accepted name of the *Epistle of Polycarp*. It is a sequel to the letters of Ignatius. When Ignatius had left Philippi for Rome, on his way to martyrdom, the believers at Philippi wrote, as he had suggested, to Polycarp at Smyrna, asking him to send them the letters of Ignatius that he had in his possession, and this he did with a covering letter, which we know as Polycarp to the Philippians. As we examine it regarding its doctrine, what do we find? That he knew the text of a number of N.T. books there is no doubt, but it is one thing to quote the N.T., it is quite another to *understand its teaching*, and this is where so many of the Apostolic Fathers failed. Like Ignatius he made his stand against the early error of Docetism:

“For every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is an anti-Christ; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this man is the first-born of Satan” (Phil.7:1).

On the opening of the epistle we are encouraged to read:

“. . . . For you know that you have been saved by His grace, not by what you have done, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.”

Yet, a few verses further on we find the following:

“He Who raised Him (Christ) from the dead, will raise us also, *if we do His will and live by His commands, and love what He loved, refraining from all injustice, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; not returning evil for evil or abuse for abuse, or blow for blow, or curse for curse, but remembering what the Lord said when He taught: ‘Do not judge, so that you may not be judged; forgive and you will be forgiven; have mercy so that you may be shown mercy’*” (Phil.2:2,3).

We rub our eyes, as it were, and ask ourselves how Polycarp could have written this, had he really understood the doctrine of grace as made known in Paul’s epistles? The answer is that he did *not* fully understand it. Actually he wrote:

“For neither I, nor anyone else like me, can follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was among you, face to face with the men of that time, carefully and steadfastly uttered his teaching about truth . . . .” (Phil.3:2).

Here, indeed, is modesty, and also a confession that he had not fully grasped the truth given through Paul. Later on he states that ‘love delivers from death’, which certainly is not N.T. teaching. For Polycarp, the death of Christ for our sins does not mean a forgiveness or justification that cancels the penalty and power of sin. Rather, by this act, Christ has set man on his feet again, as it were, and put him into a position where he can fully carry out his obligations to God in works of righteousness, in other words, can complete his salvation by his own acts. This kind of idea is common to all the Apostolic Fathers. There is an unconscious link with the pagan world that we must *do* something in order to be saved. This failure to grasp the real meaning of salvation by faith in Christ apart from works, is all the more startling when we remember the *direct links* that Polycarp had with the Apostle John and possibly other N.T. Apostles. It makes one

wonder just how much basic doctrine of the N.T. epistles was really perceived and witnessed for by those who succeeded the writers of the N.T.

### **The Epistle of Barnabas.**

This is an anonymous epistle, probably Alexandrine, of the early second century, between 70 and 120A.D., which has been attributed to Barnabas. It is very doubtful if he can be the companion of the Apostle Paul. Clement of Alexandria believed he was, but this was possibly an early guess. The internal evidence is strongly against it. The writer's attitude to the O.T. is incomprehensible if Barnabas the Levite is the author, who had worked so closely with the Apostle Paul. In its original form the letter possibly stopped with chapter 17, as one of the Latin manuscripts does. After this, with a crude transition, it continues with more than fifty commands taken from *The Didache*, which we have already considered. In effect, it is an allegorical commentary on the O.T., concerning which we shall have more to say later on.

As with the letters of the other Apostolic Fathers, we search it for its attitude to the basic truths of the Gospel and for any deeper truth. The writer refers often to the sufferings and death of Christ, but what place do these occupy in his theology? It must be said straight away, that he has no clear knowledge of justification by faith, apart from works, as present truth for the believer in Christ. Justification for him is a possible future experience but nothing more. He writes:

“Do not withdraw by yourselves and live alone, *as though you had already become justified*, but gather together and seek out the common advantage . . . .” (4:10).

Forgiveness of sins was linked by him with water baptism. In other words he believed in baptismal regeneration:

“But let us inquire whether the Lord took care to foreshadow the water and the cross. About the water, it is written of Israel how they would not accept *the baptism that brings forgiveness of sins*, but would build for themselves” (11:1).

“Observe how He has defined the water and the cross together. For this is what He means: Blessed are those who have set their hope on the cross and *gone down into water . . . .*” (11:8).

“And there was a river flowing from the right hand and beautiful trees grew out of it, and whosoever eats of them will live for ever. This means that *we go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, and we come up bringing forth fear in our hearts and with hope in Jesus in our spirit*” (11:11).

Barnabas knows nothing of the death of Christ as an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Like the other Apostolic Fathers he blends works with salvation. He exhorts his readers to ‘Win salvation, children of love and peace’ (21:9). Previous to this he writes:

“It is well, therefore, after learning the ordinances of the Lord above written (the commands of *The Didache*) to live by them. *For the man who does so will be glorified in the kingdom of God; the one that chooses their opposites will perish with his works*” (21:1).

“This then is the *way of light*, if anyone wishing to *make his way to his appointed place, will be zealous in all his works*” (19:1).

Perhaps nothing is more revealing than the following:

“Thou shalt remember the day of judgment, night and day . . . . and by meditating how to save a soul by the word, or *by the hands thou shalt labour for the redemption of thy sins*” (19:10).

No one with the most elementary understanding of the basic doctrines of grace, apart from merit of works, revealed through the Apostle Paul, could ever give expression to such ideas. Moreover Barnabas could not have believed that nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. viii. 39), for he writes:

“Let us never . . . . fall asleep over our sins, and so the evil ruler will get control of us, and *thrust us out of the kingdom of the Lord*” (4:13).

We find with this writer what is perhaps the first treatise in post-apostolic times on the allegorical method of treating Scripture. This is a pernicious system of interpretation which is destructive of true understanding of the Word. It has done so much to veil the truth over the centuries, and is seen today in amillennialism and kindred doctrines, and much of the teaching emanating from the Roman Catholic church. Those who hold such ideas never seem to grasp the true position of the people of Israel in the redemptive plan of God, and in missing this, they lose the key that opens so much of Bible teaching. If we err here, it is more than likely we shall err everywhere else in our conception of the Divine plan of the ages centred in Christ Jesus.

Barnabas is strongly anti-Judaistic; in fact he goes so far as to assert that the people of Israel were never in real covenant relationship with God. He even goes so far as to state that circumcision was practiced by them because they were deceived by an evil angel:

“He (God) has commanded that there should be a circumcision *not of the flesh* but *they (Israel) disobeyed, for an evil angel deluded them . . . .*” (9:4).

He takes all the literal commands of the Lord and spiritualizes them. Commenting on the Divine regulations of diet he says:

“This then is why he (Moses) mentioned the swine; ‘You shall not associated’, he means, ‘with *men who are like swine*’ . . . .”

“Neither shall you eat the eagle or the hawk, or the kite, or the crow. You shall not, he means, associate with or come to resemble such men as do not know how to provide their food by toil and sweat, but lawlessly seize what belongs to others.”

“You shall not eat, he goes on, sea eel or polyp or cuttlefish. You shall not, he means, associate with such men . . . . who are utterly ungodly and already condemned to death.”

“Moses received three decrees about food and uttered them in the Spirit, but they (Israel) in their fleshly desire, *received them as having to do with eating*” (10:3-9).

This is typical of the way this writer handles the O.T. Nothing means exactly what it says; some so-called spiritual interpretation must be found. What he did not realize, nor those who follow in his footsteps, that by so doing they are *opening the door wide to error* as there are as many different ideas as there are spiritualizers! If God does not mean what He says we might as well close the Book for all serious and practical

purposes. This does not result in a wooden literality. Sound exegesis takes note of symbols and figures of speech. These have their place, but it is evident that God uses human words in their normal accepted meaning, otherwise how could He convey His truth to men?

The epistle of Barnabas shows two great flaws: (1) Failure to interpret the Word aright through extensive use of allegory. (2) Failure to grasp that good deposit of doctrine made known by the risen Christ to the Apostle Paul as the channel of Truth to the Gentiles, so fitting in this peculiarly Gentile age.

#### **No.4. The Shepherd of Hermas and the Second Epistle of Clement. pp. 183 - 187**

Among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, perhaps that which makes the strangest reading to Christian minds today is *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Hermas was a slave or a freedman in Rome, who lived somewhere around the last decade of the first century. In ancient times two opinions prevailed as regards his identity. Some held that he was the Hermas of Rom. xvi. 14. Origen states this opinion (*Comment in Rom. lib. 10:31*), and it is repeated by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. 3:3) and Jerome (De Vris Illustribus e.x.). The second opinion is based on the *Muratorian fragment* on the Canon. This states "The Pastor was written very lately in our times, in the city of Rome by Hermas, while bishop Pius, his brother, sat in the chair of the church of the city of Rome". In view of conflicting evidence, it is not possible to be dogmatic as to who the author was, but it is certain that this writing is an early composition.

Hermas claimed to be a Christian prophet, and so the work begins with a series of four visions emphasizing repentance, in which he has interview with the angel of repentance, whom he calls the Shepherd. Three or four years later Hermas produced a larger work, *The Shepherd* proper, which begins with an apocalypse. Then follows a series of twelve Commands, showing how the truly repentant believer should live, and after this ten parables occur, setting forth the workings of repentance. Hermas was evidently concerned with the low standard of Christian walk in the Roman church and he sought, by his writing, to stir up believers at Rome and elsewhere. *The Shepherd of Hermas* was highly thought of by early Christians and was accepted as part of inspired Scripture by Clement of Alexandria towards the end of the second century, and by Origen in the third, Tertullian first accepted it, but later repudiated it. Eusebius, the historian, put it among the rejected writings. It stood at the end of the Codex Sinaiticus, about the middle of the fourth century. Athanasius (367A.D.) recommended it to converts for private reading.

What is the true value of this work? It is a loose presentation in allegorical form of what the writer deemed to be Christian truth, but when it is brought to the test of the N.T.,

how far it falls short! To begin with, the writer has the extraordinary idea that only *one* sin after conversion can be forgiven by God. In the dialogue between the Shepherd (the angel of repentance) and Hermas, we find the following:

“If then, sir”, I said, “after the wife is divorced, she repents and wishes to return to her own husband, will she not be taken back?”

“Certainly”, said he, “if her husband does not take her back, he sins and involves himself in great sin. The sinner who repents, must be taken back, but not often, *for the slaves of God can have but one repentance*” (Com. 4.1:7,8).

“But I tell you”, said he (the angel), “If after this great and holy invitation a man is severely tempted by the devil and sins, *he has one opportunity to repent*” (Com. 4.3:6).

Moreover, Divine forgiveness is not immediate. The Shepherd comments upon some who have repented of sin and says to Hermas:

“I know that they have repented with all their hearts; then do you think that the sins of those who repent are immediately forgiven?”

*Not at all! But the man who repents must torment his own soul . . . . and be distressed with all kinds of afflictions*” (Parable 7:4).

Here we have two cardinal errors: (1) the failure to see that the forgiveness of sins by God to the redeemed covers *all* sins past, present and future, and (2) such forgiveness is an act of *grace* on the part of God and cannot be mixed, or be dependent upon the believer’s works, such as self affliction, and torment, etc.

Hermas knows nothing of external life as a free gift by faith in Christ. He is very fond of the expression “Living to God”. It occurs many times throughout this writing, and in every case is connected with works and human merit of which the following is a sample:

“Why, Sir” said I, “did you say of those that keep His commands, ‘they will live to God’?” “Because” said he, “. . . . life with God belongs to those who fear Him and keep His commands. But those who do not keep His commands do not have life . . . .” (Com.7:5).

“But now I say to you, if you do not keep them (God’s commands), but neglect them, you will not have Salvation, nor your children, nor your family . . . .” (Com. 12.3:6).

It is quite clear that, for Hermas, salvation is only realized through the law. His one object is a personal striving for legal conformity. If he “refrains from every evil passion, he will make sure of eternal life” (Vision 3.8:4). Grace, for him, is only an additional force to help him do this. The faith that he talks about, is not faith in Christ as Saviour, but faith that enables one to keep the commandments. Not only does this writer stress human merit, but also supererogatory merit. In fact we find the germ of later Roman Catholic doctrine in more than one sense in *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Vision 3:7 indicates a similar idea to that later developed; in other passages we have the doctrine of penance in the doctrine of purgatory. In Parable 5.3:3, we find the Shepherd speaking to Hermas:

“I will show you His (God’s) commands, and if you keep them, you will be pleasing to Him, . . . . and *if you do anything good beyond God’s command, you will gain greater glory for yourself and be more honoured in the sight of God than you would have been.*”

This is obviously the doctrine of supererogation in germ. If a believer does more than God ordains, he piles up for himself, as it were, a reserve of goodness and glory which, Romanism later asserted, could be drawn upon for others who were not so good! This is a flagrant contravention of the N.T.

Hermas not only knows nothing of salvation by grace apart from works, but he was ignorant of Christ as the one Mediator. For him, angels were the intermediaries through whom protection and revelation may be made. He believed that every man has two angels, “one of righteousness, and one of wickedness” (Com. 6.1:2).

Not only this, but he clearly held and taught baptismal regeneration. In Vision 3.3:5, the woman who represents the church says to him:

“Hear then, why the tower is built on waters. *It is because your life has been saved and will be saved by water.*”

And in Parable 9.16:3, Hermas addresses the angel and asks:

“Why sir”, said I, “did the stones come up from the deep places, and why were they put into the building of the tower . . . .?”  
“*They had to come up through water*” said he, “*to be made alive, for they could not enter the kingdom of God in any other way . . . . So the water is the seal. They go down into the water dead, and they come up alive.*”

Even those who fell asleep before Christ must be baptized before they can enter the kingdom, and the Apostles and teachers are represented as preaching the Name of the Son of God to them (9.16:5). Not once do we read of salvation or atonement resting on the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is self-justification, penance, and law-keeping. He even puts these words into the mouth of the explaining angel:

“Listen”, said he, “all who have ever suffered for the Name are glorious in the sight of God and the sins of all of them have been taken away, because they have suffered for the Name of the Son of God” (Parable 9.28:3).

If this is not salvation by works and merit, what is it? Regarding cleansing, this writer apparently knows nothing of cleansing by the blood of Christ (I John i. 7). Again and again, the reader is exhorted to ‘cleanse himself’ to make himself fit for the kingdom of God.

This apostolic writing makes melancholy reading when one compares it with the clear and pure doctrine of the N.T., and again one is forcibly reminded of how quickly must have been the falling away from the truth so faithfully made known by the Apostle Paul and those associated with him.

### **The Second Epistle of Clement.**

The last of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers we shall consider is the second epistle of Clement. Strictly speaking, this is not an epistle at all, but a sermon, and has no connection with 1 Clement.

Eusebius mentioned it doubtfully as the second letter of Clement in his Church History (3.38:4). Its real author may have been Soter, bishop of Rome 166-174A.D., it being sent as a letter to the church at Corinth and acknowledged by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in a letter preserved in Eusebius (Church History 4.23:11). Dionysius says that the Corinthian church will preserve Soter's letter, and be able to draw advice from it, "as also from the former epistle which was written to us through Clement". This would explain how this sermon became linked with 1 Clement, both documents having been written from Rome and sent to the church at Corinth. They are both found at the end of the Codex Alexandrinus.

2 Clement gives us the earliest sermon of post-apostolic times and once again, we seek to weigh up its teaching in the light of the truth of the Holy Scriptures. In doing so, we find its theology running along the lines of the writings we have already considered, that is, that merit, repentance and persistent good works are the main factors in salvation.

It is significant that these ideas are central in all pagan conceptions of salvation. We must remember that the Apostolic Fathers were Greeks, their language Greek and their background Greek modes of thought, which their knowledge of the N.T. never completely eradicated. Max Muller is quoted in Moody's *The Childhood of the Church* as writing: "I have found the one keynote of all these so-called sacred books, whether it be the Veda of the Brahmans, the Puranas of Siva and Vishna, the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees, the Tripitoka of the Buddhists—the one refrain through all—salvation by works. They all say that salvation must be purchased, must be bought with a price; and that the sole price *must be our works and deserving*". This idea, alas, runs through all the Apostolic Fathers who never really grasped the doctrine of grace. Even when they talk about the death of Christ, faith and grace, these are only means to help them keep the "commands of God", and only by so doing could they hope finally to be saved and enter the kingdom of God. The second epistle of Clement is no exception to this:

"Therefore brethren, if we *do* the Father's will *and keep the flesh pure, and keep the Lord's commands we shall receive eternal life*" (8:2).

"For as a recompense I ask you to repent with all your hearts and *give yourselves salvation and life . . . . let us therefore practice righteousness so that we may finally be saved . . . . blessed are they that obey these commands . . . . they will gather the immortal fruit of the resurrection*" (19:1,3,4).

Even resurrection, therefore, is made to depend upon obedience, and the writer even thinks he can choose to be a member of the church:

"So then, let us choose to be part of the church of life, in order that we may be saved" (14:1).

Not only this, but he has completely unscriptural conception of almsgiving:

"Almsgiving is good even as repentance for sins; fasting is better than prayer, but the giving of alms is better than both . . . . blessed is everyone who is found full of these things, for almsgiving lightens sin" (16:4).

There can be no doubt that the writer rested upon self-justification for his salvation, and entry into the Kingdom of God was by his own efforts. "If we do righteousness before God, we shall enter the Kingdom" (11:7). One cannot help wondering how it was possible for anyone to read seriously the epistles of Paul and hold such ideas, which only goes to show that it is one thing to read the words, but quite another to grasp the truth lying behind them. These Fathers unwittingly turned the Gospel into another law. It was Judaism and paganism in Christian dress. It seems impossible for them to realize that God could justify and save a sinner apart from his works. They never learned the true N.T. position of good works as *flowing from* salvation, rather than being the *procuring cause* of it. They became thoroughly moralistic, drawing up codes and rules, and represented salvation and the Christian life as doing one's best to carry these out to the utmost. They never grasped the supreme truth that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth (Rom. x. 4).

## **No.5. Constantine and the Middle Ages.** **pp. 205 - 210**

In summing up the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers, what do we find? One is surprised and even shocked to discover that none of them had a clear conception of the gospel of grace, Divinely delivered to the Apostle Paul and ministered by him. Rom. xi. 6 never really gripped them:

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

They never realized that grace and works, grace and human merit, can never be blended as far as the gospel is concerned. There was a legalism with a Christian veneer; a salvation by personal righteousness with grace thrown in, as it were, as an added power to help them keep the law. Repentance was not regarded in the N.T. sense as the work of the Holy Spirit, but rather as an eternal principle of self-amendment before God, which they regarded as an adequate means for securing God's forgiveness and mercy. This does not reflect upon their characters of course, for they were brave men, willing to suffer and to die for what they held to be truth, and they conducted a splendid fight against the evil inherent in paganism around them. It was not that they opposed the N.T. gospel of grace, but simply that they did not properly understand it and its implications. It seems impossible for them to grasp that a God of grace could save a sinner, just as he is, by faith in Christ's redemptive work alone, apart from works. For them, salvation was a life-long struggle with sin and failure, with the result that they were driven into legalism and formalism.

Not only this, but their Christology was defective. The Person of Christ was largely pushed into the background, and His place was taken by God in the role of Law-giver, Judge and Creator. For them Christ's unique Mediatorial position was not grasped.



Their chief concern was His teaching as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, and used as a way of living only, to be worked out by themselves as best they could. If they talked about grace, it was regarded as a special power given by God to supplement their own strivings towards self-justification. They were never able to distinguish between salvation, and prize or reward. Confusing these separate aspects of truth, as thousands have done since, and still do today, they were never able to appreciate properly the N.T. position of 'good works'. The Apostle Paul summed this up very clearly in Eph. ii. 8, 9:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; *not of works*, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works* . . . .”,

good works being the fruit of salvation with a prize or crown in view and not the procuring cause.

The early Fathers were ready to take up the cross and suffer for Christ, but they had the mistaken idea that this was the necessary pathway for salvation and ultimate forgiveness. This is seen most clearly in the case of Ignatius, with his eagerness to suffer martyrdom, that by so doing, he might at the end be found worthy of salvation. Such confusion of truth is indeed tragic, when one remembers the lengths these early Christians were prepared to go to for their faith.

What is so startling is the fact of this landslide away from basic truth so soon after the Apostolic times, that is, 50 years after the death of the last Apostle, John. How did this happen? There may have been more than one reason. The gospel of grace was new and revolutionary and this fact alone made its acceptance difficult, both to the Jew with his legal background, and the Gentile with his pagan Greek thought. But this of itself is not sufficient to account for such a slipping away from truth. We believe Paul himself has supplied the answer. In his last letter, writing to Timothy, he said:

“This thou knowest, that *all that are in Asia turned away from me*, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (II Tim. i. 15 R.V.).

There are some who interpret this verse as though it read 'those of Asia' and referred to certain Asiatic Christians who happened to be at Rome at the time of the Apostle's arrest and imprisonment, or who had gone to Rome for the purpose of bearing witness on behalf of Paul, but finding the extreme danger this would put them in by associating with him, forsook him and fled. Certainly in II Tim. iv. 16, Paul states:

“At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their account” (R.V.).

This must have referred to believers in Rome, but it is pure conjecture to link this with "all in Asia". Dr. H. D. Spence writes:

“This simple and more obvious meaning is here to be preferred, and we assume as certain that the forsaking, the giving up St. Paul, took place in Asia itself. Large numbers of Christians, if not whole churches, repudiated their connection with the father of Gentile Christianity, and possibly disobeyed his teaching. What, in fact absolutely took place in Asia, while St. Paul lay bound, waiting for death in Rome, had been often

threatened in Corinth and other centres. Party feeling ran high in those days, we know; and one of the most sorrowful trials the great-hearted St. Paul had to endure . . . . was the knowledge that his name and teaching no longer was held in honour by some of those Asian churches so dear to him.”

The argument that history records no large defection from Paul’s teaching carries little weight when one remembers the scanty knowledge we have of sub-apostolic times. It seems evident that the Apostle lived to see a large falling away from the truth committed to him by the Lord Jesus, and which he had so faithfully made known. No wonder he warned Timothy of those who would “turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (II Tim. iv. 4 R.V.). If they turned away from him whom Christ had appointed as the ministry of the church which is His Body (Col. i. 24-26), and through whom the teaching was made known and vitally connected, then a forsaking of truth and apostasy was bound to result, the effect of which must have been felt at the end of the first century and thereafter. Had the truth for which Paul lived and died, been held faithfully by all the churches he founded, and kept by the succeeding members, the ignorance of the basic teaching of the gospel of grace amongst the Apostolic Fathers would have been impossible.

We once encountered an objection to the doctrine of the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians with the statement that, if this was true, it would be reflected in the beliefs of the early Christians. This sounds reasonable on the surface, but it fails to take into account the apostasy of II Tim. i. 15. As we have seen, there is not even a clear conception of *salvation by grace* in the earliest sub-apostolic writings, and *of the truth of the Mystery there is absolutely none*, nor could there be, for, if the foundation was not understood, the top-stone was impossible of comprehension or witness. Neither is the situation much improved when we come to the later and Greek Fathers. Augustine (354-430A.D.) was probably the first one who had any real conception of grace as revealed in the N.T., but he gives no indication that he knew or rejoiced in the glories of the great Secret of Eph. iii. Outstanding man that he was, his conception of the church was always along the lines of the medieval identification of the kingdom of God with the outward ecclesiastical organization and Roman Catholicism of his day, and he held there was no salvation outside it. His stress on sacraments as vehicles of grace, his belief in purgatory and the use of the relics, and his allegorization of the Scriptures all combine to make an understanding of the Mystery impossible. Paul’s aim “. . . . to make all men see what is the dispensation of the Mystery” (secret, Eph. iii. 9 R.V.), was unknown to the early Christians. *Turning away from him, they lost the key to the truth for this age*, and until the last century, it has never been recovered in anything like its fullness.

### **Constantine.**

Going back to the first centuries, there is no doubt that the conversion of the Emperor Constantine (died 337A.D.) played an important part in the evolution of Christendom. Up to his day, the professing church had endured great persecutions, through which it had survived. The story of his professed conversion is well known. Before the battle of the Milvian Bridge, October 27, 312A.D., when he defeated Maxentius, he passed through a remarkable experience. The story goes that he saw in the sky a flaming cross with the

inscription in Greek, “By this sign conquer”. Whether this was an optical illusion, or even a legend, it is difficult to say, but something affected him deeply and through this he professed conversion. No one can say with definiteness that this was the real work of the Spirit of God. He afterwards retained some of his old superstitions, but certainly showed that he believed in the God of the Christians, and shortly afterwards he joined with the fellow-emperor Licinius in issuing a decree giving full toleration to the Christian faith, restoring to the churches all places of worship which had been confiscated, making good all losses; and giving unconditional religious liberty to all, so that Christianity now enjoyed complete freedom throughout the Roman world. This was indeed a startling reversal of affairs, but while it was of great importance to the church, it was far from being an unmixed blessing. Constantine maintained close contact with the bishops and did his best to settle the various controversies which arose at this time. This led to an intervention by the State in church affairs which proved disastrous later on to spiritual liberty. The Christian leaders allowed the Emperor to have more say in internal church affairs than was his due. The linking of political power with spiritual authority proved what has always been found to be true in experience—the corrupting tendency of power, so that two extremes began to merge, viz., worldly, proud and domineering ecclesiastics, and on the other hand asceticism and monasticism. Spiritual liberty soon became restricted by an increase of centralized control and organization which afterwards developed into Roman Catholicism.

Even worse was the influx of pagans into the church under the disguise of Christianity. In his *The Spreading Flame*, Professor F. F. Bruce writes:

“Constantine . . . . showed clearly in a variety of ways that Christians enjoyed his special favour. Christianity thus became fashionable, which was not really a good thing. *It meant a considerable ingress of Christianized pagans into the church—pagans who had learned the rudiments of Christian doctrine and had been baptized, but who remained largely pagan in their thoughts and ways.* The mob in such great cities as Rome and Antioch and Alexandria became Christian in name, but in fact remained the unruly mob.”

It is most important to grasp the implications of this, for it explains how, together with the falling away from N.T. truth that we have seen, Christianized paganism invaded Roman Catholicism at the beginning, *and has remained ever since, infecting in some measure Protestantism as well.* Paganism at its source goes back to the book of Genesis with the founding of Babel by Nimrod and his wife Semiramis. All pagan legends can finally be traced back here, as Hislop has shown in his book *The Two Babylons*. This was the beginning of Babylonianism, the organized system of Satan which the N.T. describes as “the lie”, and is the very negation of all the truth of God and the position and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a system is all the more dangerous with a Christian veneer, for few seem to have their eyes skinned to see it at its true worth. It is difficult to estimate its blinding power, operated by the god of this age over the minds of men. No wonder as this grew and held sway over the then known world, the terrible darkness of the Middle Ages set in.

In 604A.D. Pope Gregory the Great died, and his reign marked a great step forward in the development of the power of the Roman church and its erroneous doctrines, which is in such startling contrast to the truth of the N.T. Scriptures. We now find papal claims to

universal sovereignty, not only supreme over all other churches and bishops, but over kings and rulers as well, and Rome did not hesitate to topple thrones if it suited her purpose. The Lord's Supper began to degenerate into the Mass with Transubstantiation advocated in 831 A.D., and finally promulgated as a doctrine of the Roman church at the Lateran Council in 1215. This has enslaved millions from that time onwards. Purgatory had gained around ever since Augustine had expressed his belief in its probability. This was a direct take-over from paganism in which the belief in Purgatory was common. Prayers for the dead, indulgencies, and masses for the dead naturally grew up as the belief in Purgatory increased. Such prayers were officially recognized by Rome at the second Council of Nicaea in 787. At the Council of Ephesus in 431, Mary was declared to be *Theotokos*, the mother of God. By the end of the sixth century, adoration was offered her and prayers were addressed to her. This, again, was paganism in disguise, for we find a similar practice with regard to Cybele, Demeter and others. Private confession of sin before a priest, at first voluntary, became compulsory around 765, thus increasing the power of the priesthood over the people. Places of worship became more and more ornate and by 814 the worship of images had become a scandal.

Long before this the Muslims had begun to taunt the Christians with being idolaters because of their image worship. The burning of incense was used at first only for the fumigation of Christian buildings and both Tertullian and Lactantius refer to burning incense as pagan and not practiced by Christians. Later this became a recognized part of the corrupt system of worship. Vestments seem to have first been introduced in the reign of Constantine and by the end of the sixth century had become an essential part of the priest's equipment. In the early centuries leaders had worn no distinctive clerical dress, nor were there such divisions as clergy and laity.\*

[\* - We strongly recommend our readers to obtain the paperback *Roman Catholicism* by Loraine Boettner, published by the Banner of Truth Trust at 8/6 and obtainable through any bookseller.

This is an up to date presentation of Roman Catholic doctrine, fairly expressed in their own terms. It is an eye-opener to all who read it, specially to any who are taken up with the fashionable ecumenical ideas.]

Soon Rome's power, with its bondage and darkness over Europe, was complete. When we add on top of this the inability of the ordinary person to read and write, the fact that the printing press had not been invented and practically all learning was confined to the monasteries, we have a state of affairs, from a human standpoint, which was utterly hopeless. The truth was all but swamped. How could it possibly flourish when the human mind was gripped as in a vice by the cruel bondage of Romanism and no possibility of any individual getting unrestricted access to, or being able to read the Word of God? Occasionally there were stirrings as some, sensing the darkness and bondage, tried to revolt. But it was not until the events leading to the Reformation and the Reformation itself that this monstrous slavery was broken. It is surely clear that the special truth for this age, given through the Apostle Paul, was forced underground during the terrible period of spiritual blindness covered by the Middle Ages.

## **No.6. The Reformation and Dispensational Beginnings.** **pp. 224 - 229**

Having considered the spiritual darkness and bondage of the Middle Ages, we now come to the means that were used by God to break through this terrible state of affairs. There were at least three: (1) the Renaissance, (2) the invention of the printing press, (3) the Reformation and all that led up to it.

The Renaissance (literally ‘a rebirth’) prepared the way for the Reformers by opening men’s minds and leading them to a spirit of enquiry and thirst for knowledge. A new spirit was abroad of adventure and enterprise. In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Turks and as a result, many great scholars fled to the West, bringing with them treasures of Greek literature which had been carefully preserved. The use of the printing press spread knowledge among the masses as never before. At first several of the popes enthusiastically supported the new learning, not realizing that this new spirit of independent enquiry would deal a deadly blow to the authoritarian system represented by Roman Catholicism and the papacy.

In addition to this, opposition arose within the Roman church with such outstanding men as Marsilius of Padua (1270-1342), a physician by profession. He maintained that the supreme standard was the Bible and protested against the power of the papacy and the priests. William of Occam (1280-1347) took much the same line. John Wyclif has been acclaimed as “the morning star of the English Reformation”, and no wonder, when he declared that “the only Head of the church is Christ. The pope, unless he be one of the predestinate who rule in the spirit of the gospel, is the vicar of Antichrist”. He rejected transubstantiation, denied the infallibility of the church of Rome, rejected auricular confession and belief in purgatory, pilgrimages, the worship of saints and the veneration of relics as being unscriptural. He organized bands of preachers who lived simply and went throughout the land preaching the Word at a time when the people were absolutely uninstructed. His most important contribution, and of his followers, was the translation of the Vulgate into English—the first Bible in our language. As Prof. A. M. Renwick says: “. . . . its effects were far reaching, for it brought home the truth to prince and peasant alike”.

But it was the Reformation which gave the death blow to the domination of the Roman church over Europe and its apostasy. Martin Luther laid the axe at the roots of the whole papal system and brought freedom of conscience and liberty to all who would respond. The result of the work of the Reformers who followed was to bring back the basic truth of justification by faith in Christ apart from works or any visible ecclesiastical system. This was the first great step in the recovery of truth, and the pushing back of the darkness and bondage that had been rampant for so long. How sad it is to see many who profess to be believers, being willing to throw away this precious liberty so dearly bought for us by the blood of the martyrs, merely for an external unity between the sects of Christendom, including Rome, who basically has never changed, despite surface stirrings

to the contrary. This is akin to Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage; such apparently are willing to risk going back to all the spiritual slavery of pre-Reformation days. Liberty is a plant of tender growth and does not survive automatically. Let us never forget that the price of Christian liberty, as of all liberty, is eternal vigilance.

As we have seen, there must have been a landslide from truth before the Apostle Paul died and through this, the truth and the glories of the Mystery of Ephesians, and justification by faith were lost, the early fathers giving no clear testimony to either of these precious doctrines. The literal Second Advent of Christ, which was taught by all the Apostles, and His literal reign for a thousand years, was held fast for some two centuries, but as the Lord tarried, the hope of His coming to set up the earthly Kingdom began to fade away. Not understanding the truth for the present age revealed through Paul's writings, *the key to this problem was lost as well*. The only way out seemed to be to spiritualize the promises to Israel and the prophecies which deal with the setting up of the earthly Kingdom. The Roman church seized upon these promises to Israel and appropriated them to herself and regarded herself as the true Israel—the Israel of God, the only visible expression of God's Kingdom on earth, disregarding the Scriptural fact that there is only *one visible organized church on earth*, the literal nation of Israel. Alas! that many Protestant expositors continue with Rome's error of spiritualizing and robbing Israel of her Scriptural place in the outworking of God's purpose for the establishment of His Kingdom in this world of ours.

After the Reformation, the truths that were made known through Paul's ministry slowly began to be recovered. To expect a recovery of all the "good deposit" at the Reformation is to expect too much. The wonder of it is that so much of the basic truth of the gospel of God's grace was brought to light again, when we remember the terrible spiritual darkness and bondage that had held sway for so long. It was the recognition of the dispensational principle of interpretation of the Scriptures that played such a large part in bringing back the deeper truths, culminating with the high water mark of revelation—the truth of the Mystery connected with the joint-Body of Christ. This has not been without misunderstanding and opposition, as we well know. The critics, who have never really grasped the N.T. meaning of the word dispensation and its practical outworking, charge this principle with being new-fangled, divisive and destructive of the unity of the Bible, a product of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Charles H. Welch.

They invent such terms as Bullingerism, and many who do so have no first-hand knowledge of Dr. Bullinger's writings. The charges they make are completely false and unworthy of anyone who professes to be saved and a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall show. Even if it could be proved that dispensational teaching began only recently, that would not of itself prove it to be wrong. As Dr. C. C. Ryrie rightly says in his *Dispensationalism Today*: ". . . . the fact that something was taught in the first century does not make it right (unless taught in the canonical Scriptures), and the fact that something was not taught until the nineteenth century does not make it wrong unless, of course, it is unscriptural". Non-dispensationalists surely know that baptismal regeneration was taught in the early centuries and yet many of them would not include that error in their theological systems simply because it is ancient and historic. After all

the ultimate question is not, is dispensationalism—or any other teaching—historic, but is it Scriptural?

Some of the following facts we owe to Dr. Ryrie's researches, but we absolutely reject his conclusions regarding what he is pleased to call "ultra-dispensationalism" (pp. 66,67). He points out that the charge of newness was leveled long ago at the doctrine of the Reformers. Calvin answered it with characteristic straightforwardness. He wrote: "First by calling it new they do great wrong to God Whose Sacred Word does not deserve to be accused of novelty . . . . that it has lain long unknown and buried is the fault of man's impiety. Now when it is restored to us by God's goodness, its claim to antiquity ought to be admitted at least by right of recovery" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, prefatory address to King Francis, p.3).

Sometimes it is alleged that dispensational teaching originated with the Brethren movement and is linked with the witness of J. N. Darby. This, too, is untrue and not according to the real facts. We can see its beginnings in the writings of the early Fathers, although none of them developed it into a system of interpretation. Irenaeus (130-200) wrote concerning the four Gospels:

“. . . . and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason there were four principal covenants given to the human race; one prior to the Deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the Deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the Law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man . . . . raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly Kingdom" (*Against Heresies*. 3,11,8).

While he does not call these covenants dispensations, he often speaks of the dispensations of God and of the Christian dispensation. Here is an attempt to "try the things that differ" (Phil. i. 10 margin) which plays a vital part in true dispensational teaching. Clement of Alexandria (150-220) distinguished three Patriarchal dispensation (Adam, Noah and Abraham). Augustine wrote the following:

"The divine institution of sacrifice was suitable in the former dispensation, but it is not suitable now. For the change suitable to the present age has been enjoined by God, Who knows infinitely better than man what is fitting for every age . . . . There is no variableness with God, though in the former period of the world's history He enjoined one kind of offerings, and in the latter period another, therein ordering the symbolical actions pertaining to the blessed doctrine of true religion in harmony with the changes of successive epochs without any change in Himself . . . . if it is now established that that which was for one age rightly ordained may be in another age rightly changed—the alteration indicating a change in the work, not in the plan of Him Who makes the change . . . ." (*To Marcellinus* 138:5,7).

We do not suggest that the church Fathers were dispensationalists as the word is used today. But some of them saw Scriptural principles which later developed into dispensational concepts. The Reformation, as we have seen, was largely concerned with bringing back the basic truths of Christianity, and not until Bible students began to be once more concerned with prophecy and eschatology, did dispensational truth begin its part in Scriptural understanding.

Coming to the end of the seventeenth century we have Pierre Poiret, a French philosopher (1646-1719), whose major work *L'Economie Divine* was first published in Amsterdam and then translated into English and published in London in 1713 in six volumes. His viewpoint is pre-millennial and dispensational. His scheme is as follows: (1) Infancy—to the Deluge. (2) Childhood—to Moses. (3) Adolescence—to the prophets (about Solomon's time). (4) Youth—to the coming of Christ. (5) Manhood—some time after that. (6) Old age—to the time of man's decay. (The latter two seem to be the beginning and end of the Christian dispensation.) (7) Renovation of all things—the Millennium.

Elhert's comments are as follows:

“There is no question that we have here a genuine dispensational scheme. He uses the phrase ‘period or dispensation’ and his Seventh dispensation is a literal 1000 year millennium with Christ returned and reigning in bodily form upon the earth with His saints, and Israel regathered and converted. He sees the overthrow of corrupt Protestantism, the rise of Antichrist, the two resurrections, and man of the end-time events.”

John Edwards (1639-1716) published in 1699 two volumes entitled *A Complete History or Survey of All the Dispensations*, in which he attempted to show God's dealings from Genesis one to the end of the Revelation. He set out the following:

- (1) Innocency—Adam created upright.
- (2) Sin and Misery—Adam fallen.
- (3) Reconciliation—or Adam recovered; from his redemption to the end of the world.
  - A. Patriarchal economy (Antideluvian, Noahic and Abrahamic).
  - B. Mosaical.
  - C. Gentile (concurrent with A and B).
  - D. Christian (infancy, primitive period, past, childhood present period. Manhood, future [Millennium]. Old age, from the loosing of Satan to the conflagration).

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a famous hymn writer and there is scarcely a hymnal that does not contain some of his hymns. It is not generally known that he was also a theologian. He wrote a forty-page essay entitled; *The Harmony of all the Religions Which God ever prescribed to men, and His Dispensation towards Them*. He writes:

“The public dispensations of God towards man, are those wise and holy constitutions of His will and government, revealed or some way manifested to them in the successive periods or ages of the world . . . . the dispensations of God may be described more briefly, as the appointed moral miles of God's dealings with mankind, considered as reasonable creatures, and as accountable to Him for their behaviour . . . . each of these dispensations of God may be represented as . . . . different forms of religion, appointed for man in the several successive ages of the world.” (Isaac Watts *Works* 11:543,625).

He sets out the following scheme: (1) The dispensation of Innocence (before the fall). (2) The Adamic dispensation of the covenant of grace (after the fall). (3) The Noahic Dispensation. (4) The Abrahamic Dispensation. (5) The Mosaic Dispensation. (6) The Christian Dispensation. He did not regard the Millennium as a separate dispensation.



Coming to the beginning of the Brethren movement, it is sometimes asserted by opponents that dispensational truth originated with this movement. This is not true, as the above facts show, but there is no doubt that the witness of some of the founders helped forward a great deal the study of the Scriptures along dispensational lines, and also brought forward the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ as the hope of the believer. One of the first things these writers did was to get the proper Scriptural position of the nation of Israel. This is an absolute essential if the Divine purposes revealed in the Word of God are ever to be understood. Once get this clear, and the doctrinal position of the church, the Body of Christ, will fall into line; but if we err here, we shall err everywhere and only get a distorted view of the purposes of the ages. B. W. Newton in his commentary on Romans eleven writes:

“Circumstances however occurred, that led me to consider with care the eleventh chapter of Romans. I could not close my eyes to the fact that the future history of the *literal* Israel was there spoken of; and it was put in marked contrast with the history of those who are at present being gathered out from the Gentiles during the time of Israel’s unbelief . . . . I saw also that Israel when nationally converted, are not to be merged in the present Gentile church, for then they would have been represented in this chapter as grafted in upon the Gentile branch . . . .”

He distinguishes three periods in Israel’s history. (1) From Nebuchadnezzar to the dispersion by the Romans in 70A.D., a few years after Acts xxviii. (2) The present period of their dispersion during which there is a pause in the historic detail of Daniel. (3) The yet future period of their national re-establishment in unbelief. The calling out of the Body of Christ obviously takes place during (2).

J.N.Darby (1800-1882) promulgated a dispensational scheme as follows: (1) Paradise to the Flood. (2) Noah. (3) Abraham. (4) Israel. (4a) under the Law, (4b) under the Priesthood, (4c) under the Kings. (5) Gentiles. (6) The Spirit. (7) The Millennium (see his *Collected Writings* 11 pp.568-573). He writes:

“This, however, we have to learn in its detail, in the various dispensations which led to or have followed the revelations of the incarnate Son in Whom all the fullness was pleased to dwell . . . . but the dispensations themselves all declare some leading principle or interference of God, some condition in which He has placed man, principles which in themselves are everlastingly sanctioned by God, but in the course of those dispensations placed responsibility in the hands of man . . . .” (1:192,3).

The closing words of his *Synopsis* on Acts xxviii. show that he believed in the setting aside of Israel here, and then he states believers enter into “another sphere on other grounds”.

## **The Goal of God.**

**(I Cor. xv. 28).**

### **No.4. “The End” (I Cor. xv. 24).**

**pp. 18 - 20**

The revelation of God’s purpose opens with a ‘beginning’ and in the N.T. reaches an ‘end’. The end “is not yet” but sometimes, to perceive the end of a thing enables one to go back and understand a little better the beginning. If the ‘end’ be the cessation of time, then the beginning will be the commencement of time, but to utter such a statement produces a feeling of frustration. What can be meant by a cessation of time? It may be perfectly true that our present mode of measuring time by the day, hour and minute, will cease; it may be perfectly true that the timepiece of our present system will become obsolete, but if life is to continue, if the redeemed of the Lord are not to cease to be, time, essential time, must abide, for unless we can use the words ‘now’, ‘then’ and ‘when, existence must cease.

It is a well known fact that the book of the Revelation is in structural correspondence with the book of Genesis, but while the book of the Revelation is canonically the book of the end, one passage in the epistle to the Corinthians takes us much further. Let us give this passage the attention which the solemnity of the subject demands, and with the light we receive, we shall be better able to go back to ‘the beginning’ of Gen. i. 1 with hope of a clearer understanding of its import.

The fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is devoted to the fact and the outcome of the resurrection. It is not our intention to attempt an exposition of I Cor. xv., but in order to perceive the place which the section in mind occupies, we present the following analysis. The chapter, as a whole is divided into three parts.

- (1) 1-11. EVIDENCE and EVANGELISTIC importance of resurrection.
- (2) 12-34. FACT of the resurrection established.
- (3) 35-58. MANNER of the resurrection discussed.

Taking the second and third section together, their relationship can be exhibited as follows:

### **I Corinthians xv. 12 - 58.**

- A | 12. FACT. “How?”
- B | 13-33. ADAM and CHRIST. Death destroyed. “When”
- C | 34. AWAKE.
- A | 35. MANNER. “How?” “With what?”
- B | 36-57. FIRST and LAST ADAM. Death swallowed up. “When?”
- C | 58. BE STEDFAST.

The passage we are about to consider is contained in section B | 13-33 and this is arranged as follows:

### I Corinthians xv. 13 - 33.

A   13-18.	FACT relation to doctrine.
B   19.	FACT present life.
C   20-23.	FACT purpose, from Adam to <i>parousia</i> .
C   24-28.	FACT the end.
B   29-32-.	FACT present life.
A   -32, 33.	FACT relation to practice.

This brings us to I Cor. xv. 24-28, the passage in point, and here we must call a halt, while we consider the terms used and their meaning and bearing upon both the goal of the ages and the opening words of Genesis.

“Then cometh the end” (I Cor. xv. 24).

“Then” refers to the preceding sentence ‘at His coming’, and in the structure we have noted that verses 20-23 extend from Adam to the *parousia*, that aspect of the Second Coming of Christ that pertains to all callings and spheres other than the hope of the dispensation of the Mystery.

*Parousia*. This word is derived from *para* ‘beside’ and *eimi* ‘to be’ and so “to be present” in opposition to *apousia* ‘absence’ (Phil. ii. 12). Paul speaks of the coming of Christ in I Cor. xv. 23, and the coming of Stephanas in I Cor. xvi. 17, in both cases using the word *parousia*. In II Cor. vii. 6, 7 he uses the same word of the coming of Titus, and in x. 10 of his own bodily ‘presence’. So in Phil. i. 26 and ii. 12 he uses it of himself. The word is used altogether 24 times in the N.T., six occurrences speak of the presence of Stephanas, Titus or Paul, one passage speaks of the coming and personal presence of the man of sin (II Thess. ii. 9), one passage speaks of the coming of the day of God (II Pet. iii. 12), the remainder speak of the coming of Christ:

- (1) As the Son of Man (Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39).
- (2) As the Lord (I Thess. iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23; II Thess. ii. 1, 8; James v. 7, 8; II Pet. i. 16).
- (3) As Christ (I Cor. xv. 23; I Thess. ii. 19).
- (4) As “His”, without specific title (II Pet. iii. 4; I John ii. 28).

It will be seen that the *parousia* is used in the great prophecy of Matt. xxiv., and by Paul in his epistles written while the hope of Israel was still possible of realization, and by Peter, James and John, but that while he freely uses the word in the prison epistle to the Philippians, he never uses it of the coming of Christ as the hope of the church of the Mystery, another word *epiphaneia* taking its place.

It may be as well if we take this opportunity of indicating the distinctive meaning of the various words that are translated “then” in I Cor. xv.:

- (1) *Tote* “Then”. This adverb of time is made up of *to pote* ‘the when’. There are but two occurrences, namely verses 28 and 54.  
 “Then shall the Son also Himself be subject.”  
 “Then shall be brought to pass the saying.”
- (2) *Eita*. This adverb of order or sequence; “then, afterwards”. There are three occurrences of this word, namely in verses 5, 7 and 24.  
 “He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.”  
 “Then of all the apostles.”  
 “Then cometh the end.”

The remaining occurrences of ‘then’ represent logical conjunctions:

- “If Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain” (14).  
 “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (18).

But these only come before us because the English word ‘then’ has to serve as a conjunction as well as for an adverb of time, but they have no bearing or relation with either *tote* or *eita*.

When we read “Then cometh the end” we must remember as Weymouth notes in his margin:

“*Later on.* The ‘then’ of the A.V. is only a correct translation in the sense of ‘next in order’. The Greek word denotes sequence not simultaneousness, as in Mark iv. 28 ‘*after that* the full corn in the ear’.”

The END. *Telos* does not, as is commonly supposed, primarily denote the *end, termination* with reference to time, but THE GOAL REACHED, THE COMPLETION or CONCLUSION, at which anything arrives, either as ISSUE or ENDING. To illustrate or clarify this distinction:

- (1) The “end” of the pen with which I write these words is an iridium point on the nib, which being dipped in ink makes marks on a sheet of paper. That is the physical end.
- (2) The “end” *telos* of this pen however is to write. That is the purposeful end.

The end or terminus of a journey may be Euston Station, but the end or purpose of the journey may be to visit a relative. When therefore I Cor. xv. 24 says “Then cometh the end”, it means that the goal of God has been attained.

**No.5. “That God may be all in all” (I Cor. xv. 28).  
pp. 49 - 53**

Continuing our study of I Cor. xv., we give the structure of verses 24-28:

- A | xv. 24-. The end.
- B | a | -24-. WHEN He delivers up the kingdom.
  - b | -24. WHEN He abolishes all rule.
  - c | 25-. FOR He must reign.
  - d | -25. Till all enemies under His feet.
- That
  - d | 26. The last enemy; death abolished.
  - c | 27-. FOR He hath put all things under His feet.
  - b | -27. WHEN The one exception.
  - a | 28-. WHEN The Son Himself subjected.
- A | -28. That God may be all in all.

The goal is nothing less than that God may be all in all.

We were warned that the words “*Then cometh the end*” meant sequence, ‘afterwards’, not immediacy, and now we see that there are certain things that must be accomplished before the end is reached.

The reader will discover that there is a background of war in connection with every phase of the kingdom in the Scriptures. Passing a mass of detail concerning the kingdom of Israel, we find that “an enemy” is present in the record of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 25, 39), the preaching of the kingdom of God was associated with authority over the power of the enemy (Luke x. 9, 19), and the translation of the Church of the One Body from the authority of darkness “into the Kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. i. 13) shows that the Mystery itself is no exception to the rule. The reign of Christ must continue until “all enemies” are completely subdued, and when this is achieved, the purpose of His reign and of His kingdom is attained. To perpetuate that aspect of kingship would be undispensational in the first degree, for it is evident from the teaching of Scripture that just as neither Priesthood, Temple, Altar or Sacrifice would ever have been introduced had there been no sin, so Kingship, Crown, Throne and Scepter would have found no place in the present creation had there been no enemy in view. The kingdom that will be delivered up at the end of the ages, will be the Mediatorial kingdom of the great King-Priest after the order of Melchisedec, Who, it should be noted, appears on the page of Scripture when Abraham was returning “from the slaughter of the kings” (Heb. vii. 1), a comment that is as inspired as the rest of the epistle, and intentionally links this King-Priest with war. Such is one aspect of the goal of the ages, the bringing in of perfect peace, by the subjugation of every man, that God may be all in all (I Cor. xv. 28).

We must remember the fact that when the kingdom is delivered up, it is delivered up by the SON to the FATHER, but the goal is not that the FATHER may be all in all, but that GOD may be. The same Scriptures that reveal that the Father is God, reveal that the Word was God, and if the monstrous translation “A God” be offered at John i. 1, it must equally be used in verses 6 and 18, and we shall then read “there was a man . . . . sent from A God” and “No man hath seen A God at any time”, which translations of truth are enough to throw grave suspicion on any who perpetrate this evidence of ignorance. It should be remembered that while there is no definite article “the” in these three passages, neither is there the indefinite ‘a’ that is added by the translator on his own responsibility. The Son is definitely called “God” in Heb. i. 8, and was acknowledged as such by Thomas with acceptance and without rebuke, while the doxology of Rom. ix. 5, after all the attacks of the enemy, remains impregnable as a testimony to the deity of Christ, the Son. With reference to this passage Wardlaw writes, in his book *The Socinian Controversy*:

“This seems abundantly plain, so plain and so decisive, that if there were not another text in the Bible directly affirming this great truth, I know not how I should satisfy myself in rejecting its explicit testimony. It has accordingly been put upon the rack, to make it speak by dint of torture a different language. It might, perhaps, be enough to say, respecting this passage, that according to the order of the original words, the received translation is the most *direct* and *natural* rendering. This, so far as I know, no one has ventured to deny. All that has been affirmed is that it is *capable of bearing* a different sense. And this has accordingly been attempted in no fewer than five different ways:

Of whom, by natural descent Christ came. God, Who is over all, be blessed for ever.  
Whose are the fathers, and of whom the Christ came, Who is above them all (viz. the fathers). God be blessed for ever.  
Of Whom Christ came, Who is over all things. God be blessed for ever.  
Of Whom Christ came, Who is *as* God, over all, blessed for ever.  
Of whom the Christ came (and) whose, or of whom, is the supreme God, blessed for ever.”

In the earlier part of this same epistle to the Romans, we find a passage which is in some respects parallel with Rom. ix. 5:

“Who worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. i. 25).

It is the consistent testimony of the N.T. that all things were created “by Him and for Him”—i.e. Christ (Col. i. 16), and the ascriptions of praise in Rom. ix. 5 and in xi. 36 are both offered to the same God. In Rom. ix. 5 He is over ‘all things’ (*panton*) without reservation, evil as well as good. In Rom. xi. 36 out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are “*the* all things” (*ta panta*), certain specific ‘all things’, which do not include that which is evil. This important distinction we must discuss when we reach Rom. xi. 36 in the course of our exposition.

We joyfully acknowledge that which Israel in their blindness failed to see, that the Messiah Who came from themselves so far as the flesh was concerned, and Who, according to the Spirit, was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. i. 3, 4), was at the same time, “Over all, God blessed for ever”. To this the Apostle adds his solemn

“Amen”. May all who read and believe, echo that “Amen” and rejoice to know that one day Israel shall look on Him Whom they pierced, the One, Who, even in the days of Isaiah, was named “The mighty God”, and shall at last say of Him:

“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us” (Isa. xxv. 9).

When the Son is made subject to the Father, the end is reached for which He, Who originally existed in the form of God, emptied Himself (Phil. ii. 6, 7). He emptied Himself of His glory by becoming man. He further humbled Himself by taking the form of a servant and stooped to the death of the cross. Because of this He has been exalted, and given the name which is above every name, and the goal of I Cor. xv. 28, as well as the goal of Phil. ii. 11, is that the supreme exaltation of the Son should be to the glory of God the Father. When this is achieved, the Son Who is both Creator and Redeemer ascends the throne of Deity, He re-assumes the glory that was His before the world began, and once more, as it was in the beginning, one God occupies the throne of the universe, all His Mediatorial titles Elohim, Jehovah, El Shaddai, Father, Son, Spirit, Comforter, being completely realized and fulfilled that God, such a God, the God of Creation, Providence, Purpose, Redemption, the God against Whom Satan dared to raise his hand, at last will be all in all. A great disservice has been rendered to the cause of truth by the quasi-philosophical employment of the word ‘persons’ when speaking of the Godhead. This word ‘person’ is the translation of the Greek word *hypostasis*, a word used three times in the epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter xi. no one could possibly translate the opening verse “Now faith is the *person* of things hoped for”, the word *substance* being derived from the Latin meaning ‘to stand under’ precisely as does the Greek *hypostasis*. Our acquaintance with the material world is mainly that of appearance; we do not get down to the underlying substance itself. So, in Heb. i. 3, we should read that Christ is “the Express Image of His substance”, that is, He was “God manifest”. The Latin version translated the Greek *hypostasis* ‘persona’, which has been misunderstood to the confusion of our conception of the Deity. The word person is derived from the Latin *per*=through and *sono*=to round, and means “A mask, especially one worn by play actors (*Lloyd’s Encyclopedic Dictionary*).

“No man can long put on a *person* and act a part but his evil manners will peep through the corners of his white robe” (Jeremy Taylor).

If we would but keep in mind the idea of someone acting the part of some particular character and speaking the words of the part “through a mask” we should have the Scriptural *symbol*, as far as it can be revealed, of the One Invisible God, assuming at one time the office of Creator, at another, that of Redeemer and Comforter, without befogging the mind and virtually believing either in three Gods, or denying the Trinity of the Scriptures. In the ‘person’ of the Son, the humble God had played the part of Mediator, and when the glorious work of Mediator is accomplished, the ‘person’ i.e., the mask, will be laid aside. At the consummation “The Son” will not be all in all, “The Father” will not be all in all, but GOD will be all in all.

*All in all.* Let us seek to understand this ultimate term of the ages. Two anticipatory passages should be considered as we approach this great end. One describes the peculiar

honour which is placed upon the Church of the One Body, the other the peculiar position of Christ during this dispensation of the Mystery. The first passage is in Eph. i., and the fact that it follows a quotation from Psa. viii., proves that it is intentionally linked with the consummation of I Cor. xv.

“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 22, 23).

Christ at the moment has not been given Head over all things without restriction or limits. For that He is still ‘expecting’ till His foes be made His footstool. He has been given as Head over all things TO THE CHURCH, so that what He will be in the final and fullest sense, He is already in the more limited sense. The Church thus foreshadows the end.

“The church . . . . the Body . . . . the fullness of Him.”

Here we read two titles of the Church of the present dispensation. During the period of its formation it is called “The Body”, but when every member has been called and quickened, its title changes; it will then be “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”. Consequently the more we understand the constitution of this church, and its relation with the Head, the more we shall understand ‘the end’ or goal to which all redemptive processes move. In Col. ii. we are not taken back to Psa. viii. where all things were put under His feet, but to Adam who was created in the image of God. Inasmuch as Psa. viii. also looks back to Adam the first man, and forward to Christ as the second Man and the last Adam, the passage in Colossians falls into line with Eph. i. 22, 23.

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of Him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all” (Col. iii. 10, 11).

Here the Greek reads:

*Alla ta panta kai en pasi Christos*  
But the all and in all Christ

In this passage the one unifying ‘image’ sets aside the conflicting differences of Jew and Greek, bond and free; these like ‘all rule’ authority and power are set aside in the higher unity of the Spirit. Human knowledge, being exceedingly limited, cannot expect to comprehend what the first term ‘all’ in I Cor. xv. 28 can mean; we must leave the answer to the coming day of glory, but we should be able to envisage the extent and character of the second ‘all’. Does this passage teach Universalism? Does the word ‘all’ here embrace every one that has ever lived, including not only men, but angels and demons, wheat and tares, saved and lost? Yes say some, No say others; our quest therefore must be “What saith the Scriptures?”.



**No.6. The goal of the Mediatorial kingdom.**  
**pp. 70 - 73**

“All in all.” What is the extent of this second word “all”? Is it the entire universe both of men, angel and spirit? Is it all men without exception? Is it all men without distinction? How can we discover the meaning of such a word? We know that it has one exception “It is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him”, so that we can safely say that the word “all” is never used in its widest and fullest sense, but that where we have the entire universe in view, there is nevertheless an exception to be made. This is important, for if ‘all’ in such a context does not and cannot be used in its full universal sense, that may be true in other passages where the circumference is smaller. The word ‘all’ is universal, but the word cannot be used alone, the context supplying the things that are comprehended within its embrace. The idea of the word ‘all’ can be likened to a circle, but the size of the circle will vary according to the things spoken of; but however large or small the number of things there may be, the shape of the circle never changes; all, means, universality, but a universality of specified things. It is therefore of the utmost importance that ‘the things’ should be correctly stated, otherwise wild, fanatical and evil doctrine will arise. Let us consider the following pronouncement, “All men are sinners.” If we know what we mean by “all men”, the statement can stand; but strictly speaking it does not discriminate enough. Let us see,

“All men are sinners  
Christ was a man  
Therefore . . . .”

We cannot, we dare not, take this statement to its logical conclusion. This is no criticism of logic, but it shows that a logical statement forces us to re-examine our premises, whenever the conclusion arrived at is untrue. We must therefore recast the opening term.

“All men descended by natural generation from Adam are sinners” and we can then go on to prove that Christ was not such a man because He was holy and did not sin. One circle can enclose another, the ‘all’ of redemption, being much larger in scope than the ‘all’ of the membership of the church of the Mystery. One circle may intersect another, because the things spoken of may be considered from more than one point of view. Let us now consider the usage of the word ‘all’ in I Cor. xv. 24-28, “All rule and all authority and power” are to be put down (I Cor. xv. 24), but it is manifest that the rule, authority and power of God Himself is not in view, else it would defeat the very object of this subjugation. If we read on to verse 25, we shall come to the inspired comment ‘For’; this is a logical connective, and is prefaced to what follows and links it with what has already been said, “For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet”. The rule, authority and power therefore of verse 24 are not universal, they refer to enemies, and when thus limited, the ‘all’ again assumes its universality, not some enemies, but all enemies are comprehended in this subjection. As a further explanation, the nature of these enemies is revealed by the statement “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is

death". The enmity envisaged is spiritual, even as the rule, authority and power. Moreover, where verses 24, 25 use the words 'put down' or 'put under His feet', verse 26 says plainly 'destroyed', even as the corresponding passage in verse 54 declares that death shall be swallowed up in victory at the resurrection.

Having taken us so far, the Apostle returns to the subject, and this time makes a quotation from Psa. viii., "For He hath put all things under His feet". The placing of an enemy under the feet is an O.T. figure of conquest, and never means deliverance, liberation or blessing. Throughout I Cor. xv. 24-27, and in every passage where Psa. viii. 6 is quoted the redeemed are excepted. The first occurrence of this figure is in Josh. x. The kings of the Amorites and others, banded themselves together against Gibeon, and upon the triumphant expedition of Joshua against them, these kings hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. They were brought out from their hiding place, and Joshua called to the captains of the men of war "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings . . . . and afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees" (Josh. x. 22-27). Makkedah was treated as was Jericho (x. 28), and it is utterly impossible to read into Josh. x., the remotest hint that these enemies had the slightest hope of deliverance. This is the figure employed in I Cor. xv. 24-28 when all enemies are put under His feet of Christ the true Joshua.

When Paul assured the Roman believers that "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly", they knew that the age-long enmity between the two seeds was at length to terminate in the utter defeat of Satan, and the complete victory of the Redeemer and His people. When the eighth Psalm is quoted in Eph. i., the all things that are under His feet, are principality and power, might and dominion, but not the church. Here once again we could echo I Cor. xv. and say "It is manifest that one company is excepted, namely the Church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all". One of the services rendered by Colossians, an epistle which goes over much the same ground as that of Ephesians, is that it presents a truth stated in Ephesians from another angle. So in Col. iii. we read of a company:

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

This is presenting the truth of Eph. i. 22, 23 from another view-point. It will be seen moreover, that Col. iii. 11 teaches that the church of the Mystery foreshadows and anticipates the day when God shall be all in all, Christ occupying that position here and now, even as the final subjugation of all rule, authority and power is anticipated in Eph. i. 21-23. When that great day comes, we read that, when all things are subdued unto Him, then shall the Son Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, and this calls for careful consideration, lest by hasty conclusions and inconsiderate speech we dishonour the Lord. Of itself the Greek word translated 'subdue' and 'subject' is colourless; it does not of itself mean anything derogatory. *Hupotasso*, the verb in question is composed of *hupo* "under" and *tasso* "set" which gives us *tagma* "order" (I Cor. xv. 23). All in Christ are to be made alive, but even so, there will be differences of position for these, even as one star differs from another star, even though both are "in glory". This is indicated by the words "But every one in his own order". The Saviour

as a member of a human family on earth, meekly and rightly took his own 'rank' and 'order', and so we read:

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was *subject* unto them”  
(Luke ii. 51).

This was all part of His voluntary self-emptying, when He humbled Himself to take the form of a servant and to be found in fashion as a man. It was of the very essence of that condescension that He should thus act as the perfect servant and the perfect Son should act, and instead of looking upon this subjecting as something of which we are somewhat ashamed, we look with worshipping wonder at this voluntary submission to Him that sent Him. The Apostle saw no incongruity in placing together the two exhortations:

“Quit you like men, BE STRONG”  
“SUBMIT yourselves unto such” (I Cor. xvi. 13-16).

The only subjection that is ominous or an act of subjugation, is that which is said to be 'under His feet', and as surely as the church is not placed in subjection beneath the feet of Christ, but is to be raised and seated together in Christ Jesus in the heavenly places, so surely the subjection of the Son of God to the Father is not inconsistent with His ascension to the throne of Deity, that the glory which He had laid aside “for us men and for our salvation” shall at length be resumed; that God, not the Father nor the Son, but GOD, a title belonging equally to both Father and Son, that GOD may be all in all. The office of the Son, together with His Mediatorial kingdom may pass, because the purpose of their being has been so gloriously achieved; but this means added glory to the Saviour. The Mediatorial kingdom is not the only thing to pass, creation itself is to be folded up as a vesture and put aside, but even so, the Apostle says of Christ:

“But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail” (Heb. i. 12).

If we could but see things in their true light, we should rejoice that at long last the Son will thus be subject to Him that put all things under Him, for it speaks of work perfectly accomplished, nothing more calling for the self-emptying and humiliation of the Son of God. To wish that the Scripture did not teach that the kingdom of the Son would at length be delivered up to the Father, is to wish that the work of Redemption should never be achieved. Just as it will be the highest glory that the New Jerusalem has no temple therein, so it will be to the highest glory of the Lord, that kingship as well as priesthood, throne as well as altar, sceptre as well as sacrifice shall cease to function and be necessary. All that King and Priest ever mean will be more than included in the words “that God may be all in all”, and much that could never come within this scope, because of sin and death, rebellion and uncleanness, will at length be the blessed experience of those who by grace enter that new world, where God indeed shall be all in all in a sense never yet realized either by the creature or by the Creator. Here is the goal of the ages, a goal achieved by sacrifice, and the steps that lead to its attainment marked by the slow fulfillment and passing of much, which to our limited understandings may seem worthy of retention. These things must decrease, as He must increase, and when that increase is at length reached, the former things will have for ever passed away.

## No.7. The Creation of Gen. i. 1 a “Firstfruits”. pp. 101 - 104

We have considered very briefly “the end”, the goal of the ages, the consummation of redemption, the day when God shall be all in all. An “end” presupposes a “beginning”, and moreover, if we rightly apprehend what is aimed at in the “end”, we shall better appreciate what is implied by “the beginning”. Let us therefore turn back to the opening sentence of the Bible and reconsider what is intended by the revelation that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. i. 1). “Beginning”, is the Hebrew *reshith*, derived from *rosh* “head”, which is the translation of this word in 349 occurrences. In Gen. ii. 10 we have the four ‘heads’ or beginnings of the rivers that encompassed Eden, and the word occurs next in the great promise of Gen. iii. 15 “It shall bruise thy head”. *Reshith*, the form of the word that is used in Gen. i. 1, occurs but three times in Genesis: “In the beginning” (i. 1), “the beginning of the kingdom” (x. 10), “the beginning of my strength” (xlix. 3), where it will be seen that Babel, a place or system, and Reuben, a person, not a date in the calendar, is in view. So in Leviticus to Deuteronomy we have the word translated “firstfruits” (Lev. ii. 12; xxiii. 10; Numb. xviii. 12; Deut. xviii. 4; xxvi. 10). Altogether the term “firstfruits” is stated in eleven passages, and implied in at least seven others. Several passages bring the two words ‘beginning’ and ‘end’ together.

“Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever”  
(Numb. xxiv. 20).

“From the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deut. xi. 12).

“Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase” (Job viii. 7).

“So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job xlii. 12).

“Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof” (Eccles. vii. 8).

“Declaring the end from the beginning” (Isa. xlvi. 10).

Common usage inclines the mind to think of time, when the phrase “in the beginning” is read, but if we press the point and ask “in the beginning of what?” how can we expect an answer? If God necessarily existed before the first act of creation, time cannot strictly be said to begin at all. When we consult a dictionary we find that the time element is of the first prominence. The English word is ultimately derived from the Greek *ginomai* and *geno* to become, to be brought forth, and the following are the headings of Lloyd’s *Encyclopedic Dictionary*:

### A. *Transitive*.

- (1) To commence action; to pass from action to action.
- (2) To trace the first ground, element, or existence of anything.

### B. *Intransitive*.

- (1) To come into being, or commence or enter on any particular state of existence.
- (2) To commence any action or cause of action; to take the first step from non-action to action.  
*Begin* and *Begin with* . . . . To select any particular person or thing as the first of a series.

It will be observed that in the above quotation, time as such does not enter into the definition; what is uppermost is the commencement of an action or of a series. When we add to this the Scriptural concept of a 'firstfruits', a prematurely ripened pledge of a full harvest to come, Gen. i. 1 takes on a richer meaning.

The reference to wisdom in Prov. viii. 22-27 must not be omitted here.

"The Lord possessed me *in the beginning* of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, *from the beginning*, or ever the earth was . . . . when He prepared the heavens, I was there."

Wisdom is here personified, and is practically the same as the *Logos* of John i. 1-3. This leads to the last and most important revelation of the meaning of the word "beginning" when applied to creation. In the book of Revelation the word *arche* 'beginning' is found four times, and never used in any other way than a title of the Saviour Himself.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. i. 8).

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14).

"And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. xxi. 6).

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev. xxii. 13).

When the sacred volume opens, the words 'in the beginning' are left unexplained, but when it closes, we discover that they imply not only a time, a commencement, but a Person, a Firstfruits and a Pledge, indeed the Alpha and the Omega, the Yea and the Amen (II Cor. i. 20). There is no article "the" in the Hebrew phrase "In the beginning", the word being *bereshith* 'In beginning' or 'to begin with' or 'as a commencement' implying a goal that was in mind, a firstfruits, something future which was pledged in the opening act. Three great passages in the N.T. ascribe creation to the Saviour, namely John i., Heb. i., and Col. i., but as these passages are of fundamental importance we will reserve their study for a future article.

It may be a useful appendix to the present examination to give the translations of *arche* found in the N.T. other than the word 'beginning':

- (1) Magistrates (Luke xii. 11). Power (of authority) (Luke xx. 20).
- (2) Corner (Acts x. 11; xi. 5).
- (3) First (Acts xxvi. 4). At the first (Heb. ii. 3). First adj. (Heb. vi. 1). First estate (Jude 6).
- (4) Principality (Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; vi. 12; Col. i. 16; ii. 10, 15; Titus iii. 1).
- (5) Rule (I Cor. xv. 24).

Some of these references must appear again when the N.T. references to creation are before us. Meanwhile we have attained to one all covering and wondrous idea, namely that creation was a first step towards a goal, the creation of heaven and earth being 'a kind of firstfruits' pledging the harvest, and ultimately seen to be vested in the Person of Him Who takes to Himself the title The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the Amen, the Beginning of the creation of God.

We now consider three great passages of the N.T. which ascribe creation to Christ.

“In the beginning was the Word” (John i. 1-3).

There are four occurrences of the phrase *en arche* “in the beginning” in the N.T. namely John i. 1, 2, Acts xi. 15 and Phil. iv. 15, and it will be seen that after each occurrence we must add an explanatory term commencing with ‘when’.

Relating John i. 1 with xvii. 5 and 24, we can read the opening words:

“In the beginning / before the world was \\  
\ and before it was overthrown / was the Word.”

If there is one fundamental truth which underlies all other revelations concerning the Godhead, it is that GOD is the Creator, and consequently when we read John i., we gather that, before the first act of creation was undertaken by the Almighty, a movement took place which is beyond our ability to describe or understand, but which can be spoken of as a descent of the unconditioned and absolute God, “Who is invisible”, into the realm of the conditioned and manifest. Hence, in the N.T. where creation is ascribed to Christ, He bears the titles “The Word”, “The Image”, and “The express Image of His Person”. Essentially “God is spirit” (John iv. 24) and God is “one” (Deut. vi. 4).

Economically, God is revealed as “Father” (Gal. i. 1), “Son” (Heb. i. 8) and “Holy Ghost” (Acts v. 3, 5), as well as Elohim, Jehovah and other titles.

Manifestly, before incarnation as “The Word” (John i. 1), “The Image” (Col. i. 15) and “The express Image of His substance” (Heb. i. 3).

Manifestly, at the incarnation “God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. iii.16), “The Word was made flesh” (John i. 14).

Creation is the work of God Manifest; redemption the work of God manifest in the flesh. Creation is ascribed to Him as “The Word” as follows:

“All things were made (*ginomai* had a beginning, came into being) by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John i. 3).

Creation is ascribed to Him as “The Image of the Invisible God” as follows:

“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” (Col. i. 16, 17).

Creation is ascribed to Him as “The express Image of His person” as follows:

“And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the havens are the works of Thine hands” (Heb. i. 10).

It will be observed that in John’s Gospel, the word ‘create’ is not used, but the word *ginomai* ‘to become’. This seems to have been chosen to emphasize two great facts:

All things came into being through Him, that is the primeval creation (John i. 1-3).  
Grace and truth, i.e. the new creation came into being (*ginomai*) through Him (John i. 17).

This is the first great comparison. The second is found in John viii. 58 and the recurring claims introduced by the words "I am".

"Before Abraham came into being (*ginomai*), I AM."

"I AM the bread of life . . . . the light of the world . . . . the good Shepherd . . . . the resurrection and the life."

The word 'create' is not used in Heb. i. There we read:

"And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands" (Heb. i. 10),

and the strange fact is that, even though the earth and the heavens were thus brought into being, "They shall perish . . . . and wax old as doth a garment". This is revealed in order that the Hebrews should be prepared to find that some things which had been given as 'foundations', were now to be 'left' (Heb. vi. 1); that like the present heavens, the old covenant "waxeth old (and) is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13) in favour of the New Covenant, and that, just as the work of His 'fingers', so the Tabernacle 'made with hands' (Heb. ix. 11, 24) was also to be done away. The word 'create' is used in Col. i. 16 and iii. 10 of both the old and the new creations, and this relationship is further enforced by the repetition of the title "The Firstborn" in Col. i. 15 in connection with the primeval creation, and in Col. i. 18 of the church of the Mystery.

It is evident that these three books, John, Hebrews and Colossians, use their terms with precision, and the fact that inspiration has so pointed the way, makes it an established fact and no longer a pleasant theory that "In the beginning" really does mean in Gen. i. 1 that the primeval creation was 'a kind of firstfruits', pledging the attainment of the goal of the ages.

**No.8. The Creation of Gen. i. 1 a “Firstfruits” (contd.).**  
**pp. 121 - 126**

Not only do we have the most careful choice of terms ‘become’ in John, ‘work of Thine hands’ in Hebrews, and ‘create’ in Colossians, but the three titles of the Creator are similarly selected and related.

“The Word” *Logos* reveals the hidden thoughts of God, and makes them manifest in creation. “The Image” *eikon* reveals that which is otherwise ‘invisible’, so that Christ could say “He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father”. “The express Image” is the *character*, the “Person” is *hypostasis* substratum, that which lies under.

Creation is the thought of God expressed in the material world. The Saviour is the Image of the invisible God, even as He is the external character of His invisible intangible reality. John says “all things were made by Him”. Colossians says “all things were created by Him”. Hebrews says that He it was Who “in the beginning” laid the foundations of the earth, and declares that the very heavens are the works of His hands.

These three great references to Christ as the Creator of Gen. i. 1 are followed by references to His descent into humanity for the purpose of redemption. Let us go over the ground again with this in view:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (as in a tent or tabernacle) among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth . . . . and of His fullness have all we received” (John i. 14-16).

“And He (Who created all things) is the Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the BEGINNING . . . . in the body of His flesh through death, to present you . . . . holy . . . .” (Col. i. 18-22).

He Who is the express Image of His person, the Son Who is God, seeing that 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 (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

When the heavens & earth were created, the goal of God set forth in I Cor. xv. 24-28, that God should be all in all was envisaged, and a word used by God to Job is highly suggestive of the redemptive character of creation.

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . . whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?” (Job xxxviii. 4, 6).

Two very different Hebrew words are here translated ‘foundation’. The first word is the Hebrew *yasad*, which means to establish anything upon a foundation and this is equivalent to Heb. i. 10, the same word being used in the Septuagint showing that the Almighty Who spoke to Job was the One we know as Christ, but the second word is



peculiar. It is the Hebrew word *eden* a socket, which word is employed 52 times, for the silver sockets upon which the Tabernacle rested (Exod. xxvi. 19 etc.). When this fact is taken in conjunction with the testimony of Isa. xl. 22, that God stretched out the heavens 'as a curtain' and spread them out . . . . as a tent (*ohel*) tabernacle (Exod. xxvi. 9) to dwell in, the redemptive aspect of creation is most vividly suggested. We must, moreover distinguish between the creation 'in the beginning' and the reconstruction of the earth, together with the limited 'firmament' or expansion which followed the 'overthrow' of Gen. i. 2. The creation of Gen. i. 1 seems to be in view in John i. 3 and in Col. i. 16, 17, but in Heb. i. 11, 12 the transitory character of the creation is stressed:

"They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed."

This would fit 'the heavens' of II Pet. iii. 10 which are to pass away, or the heavens of Isa. xxxiv. 4 which shall be 'rolled together as a scroll', a figure that is congruous if the heavens here are 'the firmament', the stretched out curtain, but not congruous if it refers to the abiding dwelling place of the living God. When Scripture affirms that "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth", it also affirms that God must have been in Being before creation, and also that 'heaven' is not the dwelling place of God, the Invisible, Absolute and Unconditioned. God, Who existed before the first atom of creation came into existence, and cannot be conceived of as 'dwelling' anywhere. To 'dwell' in the very 'heavens' is a concession, a condescension, a self-imposed limitation. Solomon realized this when he said "The heaven and heaven of heavens CANNOT contain thee" (I Kings viii. 27). However much we may fight against it, when we point that "God is in heaven", we have mentally localized Him. This is not an error, it is simply the recognition that unless God stoops we can know nothing of Him. We maintain that God is a 'person' simply because a person is the highest form of existence that we know. Yet the word is derived from the Latin *persona* a mask, especially one worn by play actors, from *per* 'through' and *sono* 'sound':

"No man can long put on a *persona* and act a part but his evil manners will peep through the corners of his white robe" (Jeremy Taylor).

Consequently when we speak of the 'Persons' in the Godhead, we employ a term that really means that the Invisible, Unconditional, Absolute has 'spoken through' the person of 'Father' or 'Son' or 'Holy Ghost' in the N.T., even as He spoke through the titles Elohim, Jehovah and El Shaddai in the O.T. No one name, nor all the names of God employed together, can encompass and fully present God Himself. Even the employment of the masculine pronoun 'He', 'Him' is a concession to our limitations, for God Who is Spirit, Invisible, having neither bodily parts, form or parts cannot be properly conceived of as male or female. At every turn human limitation is met by Divine condescension, and nowhere is this more evident and more necessary than in the revelation of His unspeakable nature to man. In philosophy or logic a name is 'a word taken at pleasure to serve for a mark, which may raise in our mind a thought like to some thought we had before', but like words, names are often mistaken for things to our undoing. God is *Elohim*, but He is infinitely more. God is *Jehovah*, God is *Father*, God is *Son*, God is

*Holy Ghost*, but God is, in Himself—what? That is a question never raised and never answered in the Scriptures. For us, at least, until in the glory we shall be in a position to know even as we are known, we exultantly behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and if we ask ourselves, as we should, “What is God like?” the answer is that Christ is ‘the character’ (the express Image) of His invisible, unknowable substance or reality (*hupostasis* Heb. i. 3).

Now all this mighty movement, Creation, Purpose, Manifestation, Self-limitation must, if God be wise, holy and just, have an equally wonderful goal. That goal is indicated in I Cor. xv. as we have earlier suggested:

“That God may be all in all.”

That is ‘the end’, and creation, overthrow, Adam, redemption, resurrection, eternal life and ultimate glory, are all the blessed means adopted to ensure at last this most wonderful end is attained. We must contemplate this unfolding therefore with bowed heart and reverent thought, for the unveiling of this purpose will ultimately unveil the heart of the living God.

### **The key found in the words “Image and Likeness”.**

Let us now return to the opening theme of our study and endeavour with the light we have now received to take another step forward. We have already observed that in the world of Nature God is, and always has been, “All in all”, and it is toward this same glorious and acknowledged supremacy and fullness in the world of moral agents that the purpose of the ages moves. Where, however, in the world of physics, God could say “Let there be light” and there was light, where, in the realm “He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast”, in this highest world of morals, it takes the slow unfolding centuries, the bitter lesson of the ages, in other words it takes “the perfecting through suffering” before the God of creation can be the confessed and acknowledged “All in all” in the hearts and consciences of men.

Two passages in Heb. ii. which have not yet been considered must now be given attention, for they contain within them the solution of one of the great problems of the ages, namely, in what way will God be so ‘all in all’ that the relationship shall carry within itself its own guarantee of permanence and its assurance of richest intimacy. The passages are:

“Perfect through sufferings” and “all of one”.

This oneness is to be effected between two parties separated by a gulf that at first seems impassable: The INFINITE God, Who is Spirit, and FINITE man who is flesh. The gulf is spanned by the provision of the *Mediator*, Job’s “daysman”, the One Who could lay His hands upon both God and man, in short, He Who was “God manifest in the flesh”. Here, in Him, God and man can meet. We are already taught that God is ‘like Christ’, so that if redeemed man can become ‘like Christ’ also, oneness is assured and for

ever established by the possession of this common likeness. This truth we now seek to establish by an examination of the Scriptural employment of the word “Image”.

First we must consider those passages which teach that “God is Christ-like”, in which God comes down and finds a meeting place with man, in the person of His Son, the One Mediator. Then we must consider the passages where man (1) by creation, (2) by redemption is said to be either created in the likeness of God, or predestinated to be conformed to the Image of His Son, or is yet to have a body like unto His body of glory; and having discovered in this blessed Person, the Son of God, the Divine meeting place of God and man, we shall have discovered the way, and the only way indicated in the Scriptures, for God to become All in all to His people. That will be *when He* Who is the Word, the Form, the Image, the Character of God, *and they*, for whom this same glorious One became flesh and was made like unto His brethren, shall have become one in the sense indicated in John xvii.:

“That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us . . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may have been perfected into one” (John xvii. 21-23),

or shall be ‘all of one’ as indicated in Heb. ii. 11.

This subject will scale the heights and descend into the depths, for it embraces Deity and Humanity, Creation and Redemption, and must be approached with reverence and with godly fear. Let us consider first of all those Scriptures which teach that God is “Christ-like”.

There appears to be several ways of attempting to answer the question “What is God like?” There is the approach by metaphysics, but this avenue is one that ends in ‘nothing’, God being No-thing (see the philosophy of Hegel) or in a series of negative abstractions like “Infinite”, that is to say “not finite”. This approach is of no use to a seeking sinner or to the Bible student. The Being and Nature of God can be approached along the line of His relation to created things, so that we can understand that the invisible things of Him are clearly seen by the evidence of His handiwork. This however fails to teach us what God is like, for “that which may be known of God” by this means is exceedingly limited. We may deduce by logic a Being of Almighty Power, but we could never discover by this means “The God of all grace”, for the necessary promises are not discernible in nature. Atonement, Redemption and Salvation lie outside the scope of creation’s witness. We leave the work of His hands therefore, and come to the Word which He has inspired, and that Word focuses our attention upon One, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, Who is the fullest manifestation of what God is like that has been or can be given. This manifestation is twofold. First, before creative times, Christ was “The Word” (John i. 1); “The Form” (Phil. ii. 6); “The Image” (Col. i. 15); “The Character of His substance” (Heb. i. 3); “The Brightness of His glory” (Heb. i. 3). Then, “The Word became flesh”, and as a result, God Who is invisible, Whom no man hath seen at any time was ‘declared’ (John i. 14, 18). He Who in days past had spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, spoke at last “In Son”. This strange expression is a Hebraism, as for example where in Exod. vi. 3 of the A.V. we read:

“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty”,

the Hebrew reads *B’El Shaddai* literally “in God Almighty”. Just as to the Patriarchs, God had appeared to them “in God Almighty”, so to their descendants the same God appeared “in Son”.

In Isa. xlv. 18-23 we read:

“God Himself . . . . none else . . . . no God else beside Me . . . . I have sworn by Myself . . . . that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

This the Apostle Paul, by race and upbringing a rigid upholder of the fact that there is “One God”, refers to the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

The same prophet Isaiah saw the Seraphim and heard their cry:

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is Jehovah of Hosts” (Isa. vi. 3),

and John declares that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, and spoke of Him (John xii. 41).

Yet again, Isaiah says:

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. xl. 3).

The Gospels reveal that this was fulfilled by John the Baptist the Forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Israel tempted the Lord, Psa. lxxviii. 56 declares “They tempted and provoked the Most High God”, yet I Cor. x. 9 says they tempted Christ! The epistle to Titus declares that our hope is directly associated with the glorious appearing of “our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 13). Here in the Scriptures we have cited we find such titles as “God Himself; Jehovah of Hosts; The God; The Lord . . . . our God; The Most High God; The great God”, each and every one finding their full expression in one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is, as I Tim. iii.16 declares, “God manifest in the flesh”. These mighty Scriptures are a sufficient justification for seeking further evidence of what God is like in the Person of Christ. Here are a few that doubtless come to the mind of every reader.

“The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. iv. 6).

We shall see later that there is a transfiguring power in that “face” (II Cor. iii. 18) but this we must leave for the moment.

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John xiv. 9).

“Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape . . . . for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not” (John v. 37, 38).

If I desire to understand the righteousness of God, the love of God, the peace of God, the forgiveness of God, or any other of His glorious attributes or gifts, I can see them as I shall never see them otherwise, in the life, person, walk and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (I John i. 1, 2).

Here therefore is the Godward side of the great movement. God stoops down and reveals Himself in the Person of His Son. The manward side also will be found to be completely covered by the same term ‘likeness’ and this we must approach from more than one point of view, first as to man at his creation, secondly in his redemption and thirdly in the Person of Christ as The One Mediator, “The Man Christ Jesus”. The reader must remember, therefore, that our argument has not yet been fully presented. We must consider the same line of teaching from man’s standpoint.

**No.9. An Examination of Gen. i. 26, 27.  
Man as a “shadow” of the Lord and of His purpose.  
pp. 141 - 143**

We have seen that in the mystery of godliness, “God was manifest in the flesh”, and that in the person of Christ, the invisible God, condescended to the limitations of His creatures, and that Christ is a necessary Mediator by reason of the gulf that exists between Creator and all creatures, just as surely as He must be the Mediator because of the moral gulf that exists between sinful man and a righteous God. Instead, however, of commencing with the teaching of Scripture, that Christ was made in the likeness of man, we must start with the creation of man, to see how emphatic the Scriptures are that in the beginning, man was made in the likeness of God. Two things are stated in Gen. i. 26 “In our image, after our likeness”. How are these words to be understood? Delitzsch suggests that in the word ‘image’ we have the outline, and in the word ‘likeness’ we have the filling up of the outline, but upon close investigation it is difficult to understand in what way man was created in the outline of God and what the after “filling up of the outline of God” can mean. We must therefore turn once again to the fountain head of truth in order to obtain all the help we can by examining the usage of these two words and their equivalents in the N.T.

*Tselem* ‘image’. This Hebrew word occurs 17 times in the O.T. and is translated ‘image’ every time, except in Psa. xxxix. 6 where it is rendered ‘in a vain shew’ (margin *an image*). The Chaldee *tselem* occurs also 17 times, and these references are confined to the book of Daniel. In every occurrence the Chaldee word is rendered ‘image’ except in Dan. iii. 19 where the AV. reading is ‘form’. This word *tselem* is allied with *tsel* ‘a

shadow'. It is used not only in a literal sense, as 'a shadow from the heat', 'the shadow of a cloud' (Isa. xxv. 4, 5), but in various figurative ways, as for example:

"All my members are as a shadow" (Job xvii. 7).

"Our days upon earth are a shadow" (Job viii. 9).

In combination with the Hebrew word for 'death' we have the word *tsalmaveth*, translated throughout the A.V. by the words 'the shadow of death'. There can be no doubt in the mind of any who take the trouble to examine the word, its cognates and its usage, that the primary meaning of the word translated 'image' in Gen. i. 26 is 'shadow'.

Let us now turn our attention to the word translated "likeness", the Hebrew word *demuth*. This word comes from *damah* 'to be like'. "Man *is like* to vanity" (Psa. cxliv. 4). "I *have compared* thee, O my love" (Song i. 9). "I have . . . . *used similitudes*, by the ministry of the prophets" (Hosea xii. 10).

*Demuth* itself occurs more frequently in the prophecy of Ezekiel than in the rest of the O.T. where it is translated 'likeness', and is chiefly used of the "four living creatures", the cherubim.

In that daring blasphemy of the king of Babylon, as recorded by Isaiah, we catch a glimpse of the intention of the word, as used in Gen. i. 26:

"Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . . *I will be like the Most High*" (Isa. xiv. 13, 14).

There are many challenging passages in the O.T. Scriptures regarding this matter of comparison with the Most High.

"Who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can *be likened* unto the Lord?" (Psa. lxxxix. 6).

"To whom will ye *liken Me*, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that *we may be like*?" (Isa. xlvi. 5).

The daring assumption of Babylon is the blasphemy of Antichrist, and to quote a passage dealing with another circumstance we can say:

"And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth" (Rev. v. 3),

can be found worthy to be compared with the Most High. Yet, just as in Rev. v. the tears of John are stayed as he learns that the Lion of the tribe of Judah was worthy to open the seven sealed book, so the testimony of the Gospels and the Epistles reveal that in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him alone, may be found the answer to the challenge of Psa. lxxxix. 6 and of Isa. xlvi. 5. *There is One, Who rightly ascended into heaven*, whose throne is exalted above the stars of God. There is One Who thought it not robbery to be upon equality with God. There is One Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the Form of God, and the express Image or character of His substance. He is made known to us in Phil. ii., in Col. i., in Heb. i. and in John i.

The Lord Jesus Christ is “The Likeness” after Whom Adam was created. While it has always been a difficulty to interpret the image and the likeness of Gen. i. 26 on the physical plane, because God is spirit, the difficulty ceases when we realize that the “Image” is the “shadowing forth” for which honour Adam was created, and the ‘likeness’ according to which he was created, was the likeness of Him Who had form and shape before His incarnation, and was destined in the fullness of time to be made flesh, to be found in fashion as a man, to be made even in the ‘likeness’ of sinful flesh.

Man’s hope in the Lord is not exclusively upon the plane of spirit. In the resurrection the exchange of the earthly image for the heavenly image is defined as the exchange of corruption for incorruption, of mortality for immortality, and even though the resurrection body of some will be a heavenly and a spiritual body, they will be bodies nevertheless, and not spirits. So, in Gen. v. we read:

“In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him . . . . and Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image” (Gen. v. 1, 3).

There can be no doubt that Seth, the son of Adam not only resembled Adam his father in mind and spirit, but in body also. In Phil. iii. we have the pledge concerning the body, while in Col. iii. we have the insistence upon the mind, neither the one nor the other being a contradiction, but rather a presentation of complete truth.

“Who shall change this body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. iii. 21).

That is the pledge regarding the renewal of the ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ so far as the body is concerned.

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Col. iii. 10).

It will be remembered that in explanation as it were of the intention of the Creator, the words “let them have dominion” immediately follow the words “in our image, after our likeness”. This dominion first exercised over fish, fowl and beast, is to extend until some at least of Adam’s sons, shall reign with Christ in that supernal glory “far above all”. It will be remembered that the cherubim are described as having four faces, that of a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle. Adam, who had lost the dominion entrusted to him, would see in the symbolic cherubim at the gate of Paradise, God’s pledge that this dominion should be restored.

As a parallel with this suggested meaning of the word *cherub*, we might place the name of the Archangel. Michael is simply *mi* ‘who’ *Kha* ‘like’ *El* ‘God’, “Who is like God?”

We have covered a deal of ground in our endeavour to attain to some Scriptural understanding of the meaning and intention of the words of Gen. i. 26, and we earnestly commend every reader not only to re-read the evidence submitted, but to supplement it

by a personal examination of all the occurrences of the key words, so that the matter may be given the fullest examination. Adam was a 'shadow' only, just like the typical sacrifices. A "shadow of good things to come" indeed, but "not the very image" (Heb. x. 1), and just as Christ sets aside the 'shadows' of the sacrificial law, by coming in the flesh, and offering Himself, so as "the second Man" and "the last Adam" he sets aside the frail type, and is revealed as THE IMAGE of the invisible God, in Whose likeness it is the Divine will that every one of the redeemed shall one day be fashioned.

The wonder will grow as we allow the truth to enter, and the glory of the goal of the ages, focused as it is in the idea of one day being conformed to the image and likeness of the Son of God, will enable us to appreciate perhaps as never before, what lies behind and what leads up to the words,

"That God may be all in all".

### **No.10. The Teaching of the N.T. regarding the "Image". pp. 161 - 164**

There are many references to 'image' and 'likeness' in the O.T. that await examination, but some of them will come under the head of practical application of the truth involved, and therefore we pass from the O.T. usage to that of the N.T., where we shall find the interpretation and fulfillment of what is intended by the Lord in these two significant words. The words employed by the Septuagint Version for 'image' and 'likeness' are *eikon* and *homoiosis*. *Eikon* is derived from an almost obsolete root *eiko* 'to be like' which occurs in James i. 6 and 23:

"He that wavereth is *like* a wave of the sea."

"He is *like* unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass."

*Homoiosis* is derived from *homoioo* 'to be, or to make like'. This word occurs in James iii. 9 where we read:

"Men, which are made after *the similitude* of God."

The distribution of the word 'image' in the N.T. is significant. The first group is that of the Gospels (Matt. xxii. 20; Mark xii. 16; Luke xx. 24). The second group the Epistles of Paul, and the third group- that of the Revelation (Rev. xiii.-xvi., xix. and xx.).

*1st Group.* The image of Caesar. Gentile dominion recognized by the Lord. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

*2nd Group.* The doctrinal steps that lead to the goal of the ages.

*3rd Group.* The image of the "Beast". Worship demanded and denied. Gentile dominion comes to a terrible end. Caesar at length set aside, for "the Kingdoms of this world" must become "the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ".



Every one of these passages contribute their quota to the general impression and teaching of the Scriptures regarding the ‘image’, but those references which must occupy our attention before all others are those that occur in the epistles of Paul. These references are distributed as follows:

1. One occurrence in the epistle to the Hebrews.
2. Seven occurrences in the pre-Mystery epistles.
3. Two occurrences in the Mystery epistles.

We have already suggested, that, just as Adam was only a ‘shadow’ of the intended ‘image’, so all the sacrifices like typical law were ‘shadows’ and not the ‘very image’. Both Adam and the types find their realization in Christ.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. x. 1).

The import of the word “image” here is decided by the antithesis “shadow”. In Heb. viii. 5, the Aaronic priesthood:

“Serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

The ‘shadow’ of Heb. x. 1 is to the ‘image’ as the ‘example’ of Heb. viii. 5 is to the ‘pattern’. These heavenly patterns, not the earthly copies, are “the very image” of unseen realities. When the Apostle wished to teach much of the same truth to those not so familiar with O.T. typology, he uses the contrasting words ‘shadow’ and ‘body’ instead of ‘shadow’ and ‘image’. This is found in Colossians, where he sets aside meats, drinks and holy days, and says:

“Which are a *shadow* of things to come; but the *body* is of Christ” (Col. ii. 17).

To use the word ‘body’ here as though it referred to “the church which is His body”, is just the same error as it would be to use the word ‘image’ in Heb. x. 1 as one of a series of references to the doctrine of the “Image of God”.

The way is therefore clear to consider the remaining references, all of which are found in Paul’s epistles. These references form a doctrinal chain, having seven links, which carry the doctrine of the Divine Image from Creation to Restoration, as will be seen by the following analysis:

1. The distinctive position of man by creation (I Cor. xi. 7).
2. The degradation of that position by idolatry (Rom. i. 23).
3. The earthly and heavenly image, the first Adam and the Last (I Cor. xv. 49).
4. The transfiguring character of grace (II Cor. iii. 18; iv. 4).
5. The Divine determination (Rom. viii. 29).
6. The pre-eminent position of Christ (Col. i. 15).
7. The present anticipation of the restoration of the Divine Image (Col. iii. 10).

Reverting for a moment to an earlier observation, we remember that in the Gospels the Image of Caesar was tolerated, but that in the Revelation it had assumed such blasphemous pretensions that it had to be entirely abolished. The degradation that is manifested among kings and rulers, has taken place in individual man, and while at the moment “the powers that be” are permitted by God, the ideal toward which all history moves, will be that day when “all rule and all authority and power” shall be subjected beneath the feet of Christ, and when the Son Himself voluntarily submits, that “God may be all in all”. The fact that this will be a moral realm, necessitates a long process of time for its attainment. Creation with its innocence gives place to conscience. The Patriarchal rule is followed by the reign of law. The Kingdom of David faintly foreshadows the reign of Christ. In this process the original purpose of man’s creation is kept in mind. The new world that came into being after the Flood was not allowed to forget that man was made in the image of God:

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man” (Gen. ix. 6).

We must however leave these outlying phases of the subject, and turn our attention to the doctrinal features that are characteristic of the references to ‘image’ in Paul’s epistles. The first reference to Paul’s epistles which must be studied, appears on the surface to contradict the testimony of Gen. i. 26, 27. It reads:

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. xi. 3).

In Gen. i. 27 we read:

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He . . . . . THEM” (Gen. i. 27),

and in the book of the generations of Adam we have the additional statement:

“Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called THEIR name Adam, in the day when they were created” (Gen. v. 2).

Now whatever interpretation we may have accepted regarding Gen. i. 26, 27, we have proof positive that the Adam of Gen. v. is the Adam of Gen. ii., who was the husband of Eve and the father of Seth (Gen. v. 3). We also know that Adam was created first and alone (Gen. ii. 7, 18) and that his wife was ‘built’ from a ‘rib’, or preferably a cell taken from Adam while he slept, which occasioned the exclamation of the man upon the presentation of the woman:

“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (Gen. ii. 23).

In the creative purpose, Adam and *all* his posterity, whether male or female were given dominion over the works of God’s hands. All were blessed, and all received the command to be fruitful and multiply. Does I Cor. xi. 3 ignore this patent fact? No, it looks at the matter from another angle. It grants all that may be said as to the oneness of

the race in Adam, irrespective of age and sex, and does not question the full application of Gen. i. 26, 27 or Gen. v. 2 to woman equally with man.

But the home or the Church is a unit, and in both there must be some sort of order and rule. Now, says Paul, it is evident that, while both Adam and Eve were linked together in the purpose of creation as expressed in Gen. i., it is equally true that “Adam was first formed, then Eve” (I Tim. ii. 13), and this fact is made the basis of the Apostle’s argument in I Cor. xi. 8, 9, to show that *within the human circle*, whether in the home (Eph. v. 23), or in the Church viewed as an assembled company on earth (I Cor. xi.), the ‘image’ of God as expressed in headship is vested in the man, and that, just as the head of Christ is God, and the head of man is Christ, so the head of woman, within this circle of humanity, is man.

“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man” (I Cor. xi. 7).

It may appear on first consideration that this passage need not have been included in the references, seeing that we are concerned with the goal of the ages, and the ultimate realization of the Divine image in man, but no examination of Gen. i. 26, 27 would be complete without the light received from I Cor. xi., and further, one feature emerges which is important, namely, the fact that the divine Image, finds one of its expressions in headship. Now *all* rule, authority and power are to be subjected beneath the feet of the Lord in that day, and that leads us to see, at least two things:

- (1) The headship of man, foreshadows the universal headship of Christ, continuing in the frail successors of Adam what he himself only very dimly represented.
- (2) This headship of man is *temporary*. When the goal of the ages is reached ALL rule and authority will have gone; and this indicates that man’s headship now does not foreshadows the END, but foreshadows the Mediatorial office of Christ that *leads up to the end*, when God shall be all in all.

A great deal of heartburning on the part of Christian women, and a great deal of foolish self-assertion on the part of Christian men, would never have been had BOTH men and women realized that they were but playing an appointed part. Neither men nor women in themselves are either superior or inferior to one another, and before Paul enjoins the wife to be ‘subject’ or to ‘submit’ to her own husband he exhorts BOTH to ‘submit’ or be ‘subject’ to one another. It is just as foolish for a man to assume that he is intrinsically superior to a woman because he has been cast for the role of ‘head’, or for a woman to think that she has been degraded because she has been cast for a lower part, as it would be for an actor to assume royal airs and insignia simply because for a brief hour he played the part of a king in a Shakespearean tragedy. Neither the man nor the woman are anything else in this matter than ‘shadows’, and it would not do any harm to us all, sometimes to remind ourselves of the fact. The ‘submission’ enjoined in this relationship is but an anticipation of the greater ‘submission’ of I Cor. xv. 27, 28; for the same word *hupotasso* is used by the same writer in each epistle.

The remaining references to the 'image' that we have listed must now be considered. Meanwhile let us gladly yet humbly accept the role that Divine wisdom has appointed, remembering that it is an unspeakable honour to have ANY part in the outworking or the foreshadowing of our heavenly Father, and to be allowed, both in our homes and in our church order, to anticipate however faintly, the relation of Christ to His believing people.

**No.11. "We must all be changed"**  
**From Earthly to Heavenly and from glory to glory.**  
**pp. 181 - 183**

We now pass on to the consideration of three connected references that, taken together, give light upon the ways, means and end in connection with the 'image' and 'the goal of God'. "We must all be changed."

- (1) The Change. Earthly and Heavenly Image (I Cor. xv. 49).
- (2) The Change. From glory to glory (II Cor. iii. 18; iv. 4).
- (3) The Change. Conformed to the Image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29).

Before we can understand any particular passage, something more has to be done than merely collecting words even though they may be key words. The doctrine is decided by the scope of the passage and the scope is exhibited by the structure. In the case of I Cor. xv., the most casual reader would agree that the one great theme of the chapter is "Resurrection". This is made very evident by the structure.

**I Corinthians xv.**

- A1 | 1-11. Resurrection. EVIDENCE and EVANGEL.
- A2 | 12-34. Resurrection. The FACT. "How?"
- A3 | 35-58. Resurrection. The MANNER. "How?"

It is impossible to cover all the ground indicated by this structure, and so we must pass over the first member A1 | 1-11 and give our attention to the two sections dealing with the fact and the manner of resurrection.

**I Corinthians xv. 12 - 58.**

- A | 12. FACT. "How?"
- B | 13-33. ADAM. Death destroyed by CHRIST.
- C | 34. Practical exhortation. "AWAKE."
- A | 35. MANNER. "How?"
- B | 36-57. FIRST and SECOND MAN. Death swallowed up.
- C | 58. Practical exhortation. "BE STEDFAST."

The reference to the 'image' is found in verse 49, and is in the section which raises the question "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" The reference to the image in verse 49 is a part of a larger section which constitutes the Apostle's answer to this great problem.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. xv. 49).

We can range practically I Cor. xv. 35-57 under the two headings "earthly image" and "heavenly image".

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be . . . . but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

That which is sown is 'the earthly', that body which 'shall be' is 'the heavenly'.

When Paul goes on to say "To every seed its own body" and to differentiate between the flesh of men, beasts, fishes and birds, and the difference between 'bodies celestial' and bodies terrestrial', he still thinks of the 'earthly' and the 'heavenly' image. So also in verse 42, the contrasts indicated there are but the differences between the 'earthly' and the 'heavenly'.

"It is sown in *corruption*; it is raised in *incorruption*:  
It is sown in *dishonour*; it is raised in *glory*:  
It is sown in *weakness*; it is raised in *power*:  
It is sown a *natural* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body" (I Cor. xv. 42-44).  
"The first man Adam was made a living soul;  
the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (I Cor. xv. 45).

The earthly image is that which is 'natural' and which comes first, the heavenly image is that which is 'spiritual'. We, who have borne the image of the earthly, with its corruption, its dishonour and its weakness. (O the glory of it), shall bear the image of the heavenly with its incorruption, its glory and its power. We shall exchange the 'natural body' for the 'spiritual body'; we shall be changed into the likeness of the 'last Adam' and of 'the second Man' the Lord from heaven.

"We shall all be changed" (I Cor. xv. 51).

Here is the first step towards the goal of God. We now turn to the references in II Cor. iii. and iv. to learn something of the atmosphere in which this change will be made. Here again 'change' meets us, for II Cor. iii. 18 contain the words:

"We all . . . . beholding . . . . are changed into the same image."

The theme we are considering is the goal of God, seen in relation to the idea of the "Image" commencing with Creation (Gen. i. 26) and ending with satisfaction (Psa. xvii. 15); commencing with predestination (Rom. viii. 29) and ending with transfiguration (II Cor. iii. 18).

The word translated ‘change’ in II Cor. iii. 18 is the Greek *metamorphoomai*, a word which is used in the Gospels of the transfiguration of the Saviour. He was there glorified on our account, even as His sufferings were endured for us men and for our salvation. Glory had been placed in need of a ‘transfiguration’ had He not for our sakes humbled Himself to man’s low estate. In Him we see the pattern to which God works, and His transfiguration is fulfillment of the teaching of I Cor. xv. where we read:

“That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (I Cor. xv. 46).

According to I John iii., this ‘change’ is associated with seeing Him:

“It does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS” (I John iii. 2).

In like manner, the passage before us (II Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6) is most intimately connected with ‘beholding with unveiled face’, and ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’.

The change is ‘into the same image’ and ‘from glory to glory’. This latter phrase emphasizes the fact that this change operates in grace and not in law. There are two kinds of ‘glory’ in the context. The fading glory of the law, as exemplified by the face of Moses, and the lasting glory of grace as seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

In II Cor. iii. and iv. the Apostle is comparing the two covenants, and does so by a series of striking contrasts, culminating in the passing glory associated with the *face of Moses*, as contrasted with the abiding and transfiguring glory that pertains to the *face of Jesus Christ*. In order that these contrasts may be the better appreciated we set out some of them in two columns, thus:

<i>The Old Covenant</i>	<i>The New Covenant</i>
The letter that killeth (iii. 6).	The Spirit that quickeneth (iii. 6).
The ministration of death (iii. 7, 8).	The ministration of the spirit (iii. 7, 8).
The ministration of condemnation (iii. 9).	The ministration of righteousness (iii. 9).
That which is done away (iii. 11).	That which remaineth (iii. 11).
Moses and Israel veiled (iii. 13-15).	The vail done away in Christ (iii. 13-15).
When Israel turn, the vail removed (iii. 16-18).	We all with unveiled face (iii. 16-18).
The glory of God in the face of Moses (iii. 7).	The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (iv. 6).
This glory is ‘done away’ (iii. 7).	This glory ‘transfigures’ (iii. 18).

The A.V. has somewhat ‘veiled’ the truth by translating in verse 18 ‘open face’ instead of ‘unveiled face’ and ‘hid’ in iv. 3 instead of ‘veiled’. The transfiguration of this passage is ‘from glory to glory’, that is from the glory of the law which was done away, to the glory of the new covenant which excelleth. What is here seen in the change from law to grace, is but a shadow of that change which will be accomplished when the Saviour:

“shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory” (Phil. iii. 21).

In the context of II Cor. iii. 18, we meet with the passage that says:

“Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (17).

Moreover, we learn from Heb. iii. that Moses was a ‘servant’ but that Christ was a ‘Son’. These words ‘spirit’, ‘son’, ‘liberty’, are key words of Rom. viii., the next passage to which we must turn.

**No.12. I Cor. xv. 28.  
pp. 201 - 204**

The attainment of a goal not only involves Purpose, Wisdom and Power, but when the attainment of that goal includes moral creatures, who are free to love and serve, but also free to disobey, then margin must be allowed for moral lapses, sin may manifest itself, Redemption may be necessary, Reconciliation and Salvation, Death and Resurrection, all may be involved before such a goal, with such materials, can be reached. We have no need to labour this point, the whole testimony of Scripture and the witness of history are unanimous on the subject. James knew that the tongue of man might be used not only in the blessing of God, but in the cursing of man made in the similitude of God.

Man, as a son of Adam, quite irrespective of nationality, whether Jew or Gentile, was made in the image and after the likeness of the Creator, but man, irrespective of nationality, whether Jew or Gentile, degraded the high glory of his Maker, and in so doing degraded the high dignity of his own calling, by falling into the senseless sin of idolatry. Today, surrounded by the evidences of ‘civilization’, with science laying bare the innermost secrets of matter, and man triumphing in the physical conquest of earth, sea and sky, the idea of anyone becoming an ‘idolater’ seems absurd, yet we have to face the fact that idolatry has been well nigh universal, that it is confined to no class or period, that it was the snare not only of the ignorant barbarian, but of the people of Israel and of the men of Athens and moreover, that idolatry was seriously discussed in the early church (Acts xv. 20); in the epistles of Paul (I & II Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians); by Peter (I Pet. iv. 3) and in the book of the future, the Revelation.

The epistle that contains the glorious determination of the God of all grace that His believing people shall one day be “conformed to the image of His Son” is the one that reveals the folly and degradation of the image of God in man. All indeed have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Man, as we have already seen is “the image and glory of God” (I Cor. xi. 7), and we have the Apostle’s own argument to confirm our thought that this very fact alone should have made idolatry impossible (Rom. i. 23).

Speaking in a city renowned alike for its ‘wisdom’ as for its ‘idolatry’, namely Athens, Paul said:

“For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts xvii. 28, 29).

We come therefore to Rom. i. 23, where we read that men “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things”. Did the nations know the truth or did they “hold down” the truth? The answer depends upon the meaning of *katecho* translated ‘hold’ in Rom. i. 18. A number of commentators feel that the ordinary meaning of *katecho* cannot be permitted in Rom. i. 18, and teach that in this instance the meaning must be ‘hold down’ or ‘hold back’. Alford and Bloomfield take this view. *The Companion Bible* at Rom. i. 18 gives the note “Hold down, suppress. cp. II Thess. ii. 6”, but when we turn to II Thess. ii. 6 we discover that *katecho* is not there translated “hold down” but “withholdeth”. Paul uses the word 13 times out of the 19 found in the N.T. and in no passage does “hold down” make good sense. Rom. vii. 6 reads “held”; I Cor. vii. 30 “possessed”; I Cor. xi. 2 “keep”; I Thess. v. 21 “hold fast”. We come back to Rom. i. 18 and read afresh that the ancients ‘held’ or ‘possessed’ the truth, but that they held it ‘in unrighteousness’.

If one is acquainted with the writings of ancient philosophy, one is often struck with the fact that these men did have a knowledge of the unity and spirituality of the Godhead, but that as Socrates in his *Timaeus* says:

“It is neither easy to find the Parent of the Universe, nor safe to discover him to the vulgar, when found.”

Augustine blames the philosophers (see Estius, *De Vera Relig.* c. 5) because they practiced the most abominable idolatries with the vulgar, although in their schools they delivered doctrines concerning the nature of the gods, inconsistent with the established worship. They did not, as verse 21 asserts, “glorify Him *as God*” even though they knew Him as such. Let us examine Rom. i. 23 once more. “Changed.” The word occurs but six times in the N.T. so that it will be well to have the references before us.

“Shall change the customs” (Acts vi. 14).  
“Changed the glory” (Rom. i. 23).  
“We shall be changed” (I Cor. xv. 51, 52).  
“Change my voice” (Gal. iv. 20).  
“They shall be changed” (Heb. i. 12).

Instead of attempting an explanation of our own, we direct the reader’s attention to the Divine comment in Rom. i. 25:

“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever, Amen.”

Here, *metallasso* the stronger word is used, where *allasso* is found in verse 23. There is but one other occurrence of this word, and that is in Rom. i. 26.

Truth was exchanged for ‘the lie’ when man began to worship idols. So interrelated is the purpose of God with His Own attributes and with man’s creation, that it is impossible



for man to entertain degrading thoughts of the incorruptible God, without bringing about an immediate repercussion, and degrading himself. This is the tragic story of Rom. i.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness . . . . to dishonour their own bodies” (Rom. i. 24).

This ‘change’ therefore, of verse 23, is not only explained in verse 25 as the exchange of the truth for the lie, but as a “giving up” by man, of God, otherwise the “also” in verse 24 would have no place. “God *also* gave them up.” The man who wrote this terrible indictment of Gentile degradation knew that his own people Israel, with greater advantages than the Gentiles possessed, had gone the same evil way. In fact Psa. cvi. contains the very expression found in Rom. i. 23, together with several parallels with the rest of Rom. i.

“They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their (correct reading is ‘My’) glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their Saviour . . . . they joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them” (Psa. cvi. 19-29).

The argument of Rom. i. follows the same sequence:

“They changed the glory . . . . dishonoured their own bodies . . . . inventors of evil things” (Rom. i. 23, 24, 30).

To tabulate the prohibitions to idolatry contained in the law, or the repeated lapses of which the history of Israel is replete, would make more demands on our limited space than we can afford. The reader however can supplement the above notes by his own reading. We are not at the moment writing a discourse upon idolatry, we are concerned with the subject as it is associated with the goal of God which has the restoration of the image and likeness of God in man in view. There is however a more serious view presented by the Scriptures, than that idolatry degrades the worshipper who was made in the image of God. *Idolatry is a cunningly disguised attack upon the supreme office of Christ.* The exchange, we read, was the exchange of “the truth” for “the lie”. Satan originates nothing. He imitates, substitutes, counterfeits. He takes a truth and distorts it to his own evil ends.

God is invisible, God is Spirit, God is omnipotent. Man by his very constitution needs imagery. The ‘Invisible things’ of the Creator are ‘clearly seen’ by those who intelligently behold the works of His hands. “The heavens declare the glory of God.” When God uses human speech He stoops from the realm of pure thought to the world of imagery. Every attribute revealed is revealed in human terms. This essential need of human nature is fully met by Christ. He is the Word, the Form, the Image of the Invisible God. They that have seen Him have seen the Father. They that come to God, Who is Invisible and Spirit, come to the Father through Christ. Idolatry taking advantage of the basic need of human nature for an Image to interpret the Invisible, foisted upon man the crude and licentious imagery of idolatry, ‘the lie’ thereby occupying the place that alone belongs to Christ, the Image of the Invisible God, Who is Himself “The Truth”. There are two agents through which the ‘Invisible’ God may be ‘seen’ by man. The one is

Creation, the things that are made, as Rom. i. 18-22 makes clear, the other is Christ the only begotten Son, Who 'declares' Him (John i. 18).

"The one object of the incarnation was to satisfy the natural desire for a sensible representation of the Divine Being" (Webster and Wilkinson). Even though we might feel obliged to correct this statement, and say that "one of the objects of the incarnation" instead of "The one object of the incarnation", it is sufficiently true to enable us to see that all idolatry is necessarily of the spirit of Antichrist, that it did not originate in man's ignorance, but comes from the same source as the original temptation of man "Ye shall be *as God*", and betrays an appreciation by the Evil One of the original purpose of God in the creation of man in His Own image and which shows how vital that truth of the 'image' is to the ultimate purpose of God and how near this conception of the 'image' must be to the attainment of the goal of the ages.

Let us look very briefly at the references to idolatry that are found in the epistles. In I Cor. x. 14, the Apostle urges the believer to "flee from idolatry", in Gal. v. 20 it is included in the "works of the flesh". Conversion is described as "turning to God from idols" (I Thess. i. 9). John writing to his believing children says "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John v. 21), but it is in the epistles of the mystery that light is shed upon the *essential* nature of idolatry.

"A covetous man, who is an idolator" (Eph. v. 5).

"Covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. iii. 5).

The moment we read these revealing words, can we not see that He Who framed the ten commandments, fully understood this fact? The law opens with the commandment to have 'no other gods' before the Lord, nor to make graven images, while the commandments close with the words "Thou shalt not covet".

The composition of the word idolatry shows that it means "The service of that which is seen", and anything, be it money, business or brains, anything that becomes a substitute for simple faith in God, be it bowing to "stocks and stones", or to "stocks and shares" is incipient idolatry. Thus we see that God made man to be the shadow of His Own glory, to set forth in miniature the purpose of the ages, and that the 'likeness' after which he was created, was nothing less than that of the Person of Christ "Who is the Image of the Invisible God". We shall be obliged to give a fuller consideration to this aspect of the subject when we are able to assemble what is said under the word 'Likeness'. For the moment we must pursue our study of the several aspects of the word 'image' that still await investigation. Our next study being the references to the 'earthly' and the 'heavenly' image as taught in I Cor. xv.

**No.13. “Satisfied . . . . with Thy likeness.”**  
**pp. 221 - 223**

We have devoted a number of pages to the references found in the Scripture to the “Image”. These studies would however lack completeness if we did not give some consideration to the word ‘likeness’. This must therefore occupy our attention.

*D’muth* ‘likeness’ occurs more times in the prophet Ezekiel than in the rest of the O.T. Apart from the references to Adam in Genesis, the references in the remainder of the O.T. do not contribute anything to our special theme except the one found in Daniel. We will, however, supply the reader with these references in order that he may “see whether these things are so”. They are II Kings xvi. 10; II Chron. iv. 3; Psa. lviii. 4; Isa. xiii. 4; and xl. 18.

It is our boast that the reader of this magazine manifests the true Berean spirit, and we hope that some at least are ready to interpose with a question “What of the passages which forbid the making of *the likeness* of anything; these are found in the law and you have not given the references”. The answer is that beside *d’muth* there are two other Hebrew words that are translated “likeness”, *t’moonah* “the likeness of anything” (Exod. xx. 4), and *tavneeth* “the likeness of male or female” (Deut. iv. 16).

Gesenius is of the opinion that *t’moonah* is from a root that means ‘pretence’ and *tavneeth* is from the root which means ‘to build’, and so this word is often rendered ‘pattern’ as in Exod. xxv. 9; I Chron. xxviii. 11, etc. One occurrence of *t’moonah* must inevitably come into our study at the close, and that is Psa. xvii. 15. We must however adhere to the Divine choice of word in Genesis and seek the teaching associated with that word first.

Commenting on *damah* Parkhurst says:

“The general idea of this difficult and extensive root seems to be *equable, even, level, uniform, conform* . . . . Symmachus (Greek version of the O.T. similar to the LXX) appears to have given nearly the ideal meaning of it, Psa. lxxxix. 7, where he renders it *exisasei*, shall equal.”

In Isa. xlvi. 5 this approach to the idea of being equal is clearly seen:

“To whom will ye *liken* Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be *like*?”

Parkhurst’s translation is:

“To whom will ye equal Me (or make Me equivalent), or liken Me that we may be equal (or conform)?”

It must not be assumed that by so understanding the word translated ‘likeness’ in Gen. i. 26, that there is imported into the record an unholy suggestion at ‘equality’ with

God. It simply indicates that this was a 'likeness' whose parts are *equable* and *conform* to its archetype. By the use of the word 'image' we learned that Adam was 'a shadow', and by the word 'likeness' we learn that he did set forth in some measure of correspondence, the glory of Him Whose title is "The Image of the Invisible God". Further, in some forms of the verb, the dominant idea is that of an image in the mind:

"I thought" (Numb. xxxiii. 56); "I have compared" (Song i. 9);  
"He meaneth not so" (Isa. x. 7).

Here it is 'an image, or idea of a thing in the mind' that is uppermost, and that is by no means absent from the intention of Gen. i. 26. In the nature of things, it is manifest that the creature, innocent and perfect though he was when he came from the hand of his Maker, could never carry the awful burden involved in the fact that he was made in the image and likeness of the Creator. In its full sense Adam was made in the image of God that he might be as it were, "God made manifest" on the earth, but it was as *a shadow* only of that full and glorious manifestation that was alone possible to Him Who is "The Image of the Invisible God".

Further light is found on the meaning of the word 'likeness' where, following the statement repeated from Gen. i. 26, the record of Gen. v. 3 adds:

"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth."

While, in this case physical likeness must be included, whereas it is impossible to so read it in Gen. i. 26; the impression which Gen. v. 1-3 leaves in the mind is that the image and likeness of Gen. i. 26 is very real and must not be explained away because of its manifest difficulties.

We pass from these references, to the New Testament, to consider those passages where *homoios* 'like', *homoioo* 'made like', *homoioma* 'likeness' and *homoiosis* 'similitude' occur. First of all we establish the connection between the N.T. words and the passages we have been considering in the O.T. James speaks of men who are "made after the *similitude* of God" (James iii. 9) and uses the word *homoiosis*. In the first epistle of John, the glorious restoration which has already been seen recorded in I Cor. xv. and Rom. viii. (the exchange of the earthly for the heavenly image, and the conformity to the image of God's Son) is spoken of in terms of 'likeness' *homoios*.

"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (I John iii. 2).

In Heb. ii. 17 in bringing many sons to glory, we learn that it behoved Him "to be made like unto His brethren", and this is more fully stated in Heb. iv. 15, where we read that He was "in all points tempted like as we are". The significant addition "yet without sin" is given emphasis in Rom. viii. 3 where it is written that God sent His Own Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh", and Phil. ii. 7 declares that "He was made in the likeness of men". The O.T. references point ever upward, but many of the N.T. references point downward, speaking of humiliation and descent from glory. This coming of the Saviour down to where His people were completed the 'likeness' from every aspect. Christ is like

God, Christ is like man; conversely God is fully revealed in Christ Who is His likeness, and man is fully prepared for glory in Christ whose likeness he must one day bear.

The Psalmist said:

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psa. xvii. 15).

The primary meaning of the word translated ‘satisfied’ is ‘to be filled’. It occurs with such a meaning in the same Psalm, in verse 14 ‘full of children’, which is placed in strong contrast with ‘satisfied’ or ‘filled’ in resurrection glory.

The goal of God thus expressed is seen in the climax prayer of Eph. iii.:

“That ye might be *filled up* to all the fullness of God” (Eph. iii. 19).

There is no burning desire expressed in prophecy, that does not find its satisfaction in the blessed doctrine of ‘likeness’. There is no glorious doctrine of the Gospel of grace that does not look directly to this same element of ‘likeness’. Sin is the very opposite of the likeness of God; righteousness, sanctification, glory and peace are but phases of the Divine Image. When the likeness is complete, then, and then only will the goal of God be realized, and God will be “All in all” to His moral world even as He is already in the world of things.

At some other time we may be permitted to pursue this theme along the practical path, learning the necessary lesson, that they who hope one day to be like Him *in glory*, should at least seek grace to be somewhat like Him during their pilgrimage *here below*. We can but leave the suggestion with our reader and pray that we all may desire to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”,

“That God may be all in all”.

# HEBREWS

## Perfection or Perdition

### No.52. The Author and Finisher of Faith (xii. 1 - 4).

pp. 1 - 5

The long list of witnesses to faith having been written, “the better thing” emphasized, a giving up and a patient endurance on the part of the faithful pointed out, the apostle turns to the Hebrews to apply the lesson.

Chapter xi. may be looked upon as a great parenthesis; chapter xii., fortified with chapter xi., reverts to the close of chapter x., and gives a fresh application of its truth. Let us refresh our memories by a revisal of x. 32-39. We are in an atmosphere of suffering, yet a suffering illuminated by the prospect of future joys: “knowing that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience . . .”. The immediate danger that beset these Hebrews was that of “drawing back”, growing weary, and to encourage them the apostle puts forward three items:

- (1) The Second Coming of the Lord. “Yet a little while” (x. 37).
- (2) The examples of faith taken from the Old Testament (xi.).
- (3) The example of Christ Himself (xii. 1-4).

It is this third feature which is now before us. Words are used in this passage which demand careful consideration, and it may be well, before attempting the whole passage, to be a little more certain of the words that are employed here.

WITNESSES (Greek *martus*). This word does not mean spectator. It means one who bears witness, even to the length of suffering martyrdom for it. The English word martyr is the Greek word for witness, and surely no martyr was a mere spectator. We find the word in Heb. x. 28, “two or three witnesses”. Rev. i. 5 speaks of “Jesus Christ . . . . the faithful Witness”; and Rev. ii. 13 uses the same words of “Antipas, My faithful martyr”. Heb. x. 15 says, “the Holy Ghost is a witness”, and xi. 4 tells us that Abel “obtained witness”.

It may be of service if we give all the occurrences of *martus*, *martureo* and *marturion* in the epistle to the Hebrews.

- “For a *testimony* of those things” (iii. 5).
- “Of whom it is *witnessed* that he liveth” (vii. 8).
- “For He *testifieth*, Thou art a priest” (vii. 17).
- “The Holy Ghost also is a *witness* to us” (x. 15).
- “Died . . . . under two or three *witnesses*” (x. 28).
- “The elders obtained a good *report*” (xi. 2).
- “He obtained *witness* that he was righteous” (xi. 4).
- “God *testifying* of his gifts” (xi. 4).

“He had this *testimony*” (xi. 5).  
“These all, having obtained a good *report*” (xi. 39).  
“So great a cloud of *witnesses*” (xii. 1).

CLOUD (*nephos*). The word does not occur elsewhere in Scripture, the usual word for cloud being the related *nephele*. It is a word in use among Greek writers for a great company. Homer, in the *Iliad*, has the line: “With him followed a cloud of foot-men.” So Herodotus, Euripides and others. The figure was used likewise by Latin writers: Livy has the line *peditum equitumque nubes*, “a cloud of horse and foot”.

PATIENCE (*hupomone*). The only occurrences of this word in Hebrews are x. 36 and xii. 1. The word literally means “to remain under”. We take note of it here because of its cognates that are not so obvious in the English translation. The verbal form (*hupomeno*) comes in Heb. x. 32, “Ye endured”; xii. 2, “He endured the cross”; xii. 3, “endured such contradiction”; xii. 7, “If ye endure chastening”.

Closely allied, and having a very definite bearing upon the theme, is the simple form *meno*, “to remain”. It occurs six times in Hebrews:

“*Abideth* a priest continually” (vii. 3).  
“He *continueth* ever” (vii. 24).  
“An *enduring* substance” (x. 34).  
“Those things which cannot be shaken *may remain*” (xii. 27).  
“Let brotherly love *continue*” (xiii. 1).  
“For here have we no *continuing* city” (xiii. 14).

RACE (*agon*). The word means a contest, a race, a conflict, and the accompanying imagery is borrowed from the Greek games.

“So run, that ye may obtain . . . . every man that *striveth for the mastery* is temperate  
. . . . they do it to obtain a corruptible crown” (I Cor. ix. 24, 25).  
“I have fought a good *fight* . . . . henceforth . . . . a crown” (II Tim. iv. 7, 8).

A connection hidden from the English reader is found in Heb. xii. 4 “Striving against” is *antagonizomai*, just the verbal form of *agon* as used in I Cor. ix. 25, with the prefix *anti*, against.

The consideration of these words has of itself created the true atmosphere of the passage. It is a race, calling for endurance, beset with peculiar difficulties, having a prize ahead, and a glorious Example. We are now ready for the structure, and can then pass on to the argument itself.

## Hebrews xii. 1 - 4

- A1 | 1. ENDURANCE (*hupomone*).  
Race (*agon*) set before us.  
Entangling sin (*hamartia*).  
B | 2-. | a | Looking away to Jesus (*apo*).  
b | Captain and Perfecter of faith.
- A2 | -2-. ENDURANCE (*hupomeno*).  
Joy set before Him.  
B | -2, 3-. b | The right hand of the throne of God.  
a | Consider Him (*analogizomai*).
- A3 | -3, 4. ENDURANCE (*hupomeno*).  
Opposition (*antagonizo*).  
Sinners (*hamartolos*).

With so great a cloud of witnesses as is found in the Scriptures ever with us, we are exhorted to take heart and run with patience or endurance the race set before us. Two things are enjoined, viz. (1) "Lay aside every weight" and (2) "Lay aside the easily entangling sin". He who would go on unto perfection must bear in mind the two sources of hindrance, (1) Weight, (2) Sin. The first is not of itself sinful. To one it will be riches, to another home ties, to another health, to another liberty. Each will know best what it is that hinders in the race. The second is sin in one of its many aspects, "easily entangling". It is not so much external "sins" that are in view, but the old man, the old nature, the flesh. A reference to I Cor. ix. 24-27 plainly shows this:

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (disapproved)."

Then follows a passage dealing with Israel and the temptations in the wilderness; this is parallel with Heb. iii. and iv. The passage, "I keep under my body", recalls the opposite walk of those "whose end is perdition", "whose God is their belly"; (Phil. iii.)—another passage dealing with a prize.

The greatest encouragement however is found not by looking at the great chain of witnesses, and certainly not by contemplating impediments and entanglements, but by the gaze being directed away to the Lord. In Heb. x. 37 the soon-returning Lord was the encouragement to endure. In Heb. xii. 2 the victorious Leader at the right hand of God is the attractive power. The word "looking" is really "looking away", looking away from all lesser patterns, even those of Heb. xi., and from all the weaknesses and hindrances found in self, looking away to the Lord Jesus.

He has two titles here that are suggestive. "The Author and Finisher of faith". Author is *archegos*, and we have the word already in Heb. ii. 10 translated "Captain", and in close association with the next title, "Finisher" for that is really "Perfecter". "It became



Him . . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain (*archegos*) of their salvation perfect (*teleioo*) through sufferings”.

We are back again therefore in Heb. xii. to the original theme: the need to go on unto perfection, the suffering that is associated with it, and the example of those who drew back unto perdition (Heb. iii. and iv.).

“*Who for the joy that was set before Him.*” The word “for” here is *anti*, which sometimes bears the meaning “instead of”. This has given rise to an interpretation of the passage to the effect that the Lord gave up the joy that was before Him, and in its stead endured the cross. This, however, does not fit the context. The whole tenor of the epistle in general, and the particular example here is that, because of the joy that *lies ahead*, we can endure the suffering *now*.

That is the character of the example of Abraham and Moses, given at length in chapter xi. For the joy set before Abraham he was content to live a pilgrim and a stranger. For the joy set before Moses he turned his back on the treasures of Egypt. For the joy ahead of these Hebrew believers they were exhorted to endure. In this sense the sentence should be translated. Over and over again our problems would be solved if we allowed the Word more way with us. If instead of giving time to speculation concerning this word *anti* we were to read on a few verses we should have our answer.

“Esau, who for (*anti*) one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” Here we have contrast. Esau exchanged the future blessing for the present, whereas we are to follow the example of Moses who exchanged present immunity from suffering for pleasures at the right hand of God which are for evermore.

Apart from the passage “crucify to themselves” in Heb. vi. 6, this is the only occurrence of the cross in Hebrews. As in the parallel epistle, Philippians, the reference is to endurance in view of the crown or prize (Phil. ii. 8; iii. 18). In neither of these epistles is the cross mentioned in connection with redemption or atonement. The usage is similar to the earlier references like those of Matt. x. 38 and xvi. 24. The saying, “No cross, no crown” exactly fits its usage. The cross is prominent in the epistle to the Corinthians, for they were carnal. The cross is prominent in the epistle to the Galatians, because they were being moved away from the faith. The only allusion to the cross in Romans is in Rom. vi. 6 where the old man is dealt with. The argument of Heb. xii. is, surely, that just as He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God, so may the believer endure his cross, despise its shame (not “glory in their shame” as Phil. iii. 19), and in God’s good time enter into that better thing, by that better resurrection, to enjoy that better and enduring substance connected with the heavenly city, Jerusalem.

We are bid to “consider” Him Who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be weary and faint. *Analogia* from which “consider” is taken, is translated “proportion” (Rom. xii. 6), and here implies the act of weighing and balancing one thing with another. It would mean considering the pros and cons of gaining the

whole world and losing one's own soul. It would mean estimating aright the actions of Esau (Heb. xii. 16) and Moses (xi. 24-26), for just as loss now means the gaining of the soul in that day according to Matt. xvi., so does it according to Heb. x. 39.

We are now brought face to face with another cause of stumbling, "the contradiction of sinners", producing weariness. Earlier we had the entangling nature of "sin", now the "contradiction of sinners". *Antilogia* is translated "strife" in Heb. vi. 16; "contradiction" (vii. 7; xii. 3) and "gainsaying" of Korah (Jude 11).

This last reference bears rather pointedly upon the teaching of Hebrews concerning the One Priest. The four occurrences of *antilego* in Acts (xiii. 45 and xxviii. 19, 22) give further light upon the special "contradiction" that the Hebrews would be likely to meet. Each occurrence has to do with *Jewish opposition* to the ministry of Paul. The occurrences are confined to the beginning and the end of his Acts ministry. The only other reference during the Acts period speaks of Israel as "a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. x. 21).

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to explain to our readers that "contradiction" is connected, too, with our own blessed calling, contradiction from those, who, like gainsaying Israel, "have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge", and who, totally misunderstanding our witness, speak of ultradispensationalism! Let us not be weary and faint, even though undoubted men of God call us hard names, thinking they are serving God. This careful and proportionate consideration of what Christ endured will enable us to take up our cross, for none of us can suffer anything comparable with the sufferings of Christ.

*"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."* When we see that the "striving" here includes the word *agon*—race (see the structure above), we realize that the figure of the contest is still maintained.

Let us "consider Him", the great Prince-Leader and Perfecter of faith, and see how He embraces all the qualities exhibited in Heb. xi.

His offering "speaketh better things than that of ABEL".

He was the beloved Son of God in Whom God was "well pleased" (ENOCH).

He saves in a sense that was impossible to NOAH.

He was more intimate than even the "friend of God" could be (ABRAHAM).

He was "The only Begotten Son" offered by the Father (ISAAC).

He was One Who indeed blessed regarding things to come (JACOB).

He will be the great Ruler and Restorer (JOSEPH).

He is the Prophet greater than MOSES.

He embraces all the heroic acts of GIDEON, DAVID and others.

He endured as none else endure, refusing deliverance, refusing to save Himself, and finally attained unto that better resurrection to glory, where He waits the day of His return.

He is indeed the altogether lovely One, the chiefest among ten thousand. Here, as in Col. iii., "Christ is ALL".

**No.53. Sonship and Birthright (xii. 5 - 25).  
pp. 21 - 28**

Heb. xii. 5-24 is occupied with a two-fold theme: 5-14, sons; 15-24, firstborn.

The first section, sons, speaks of that of which *all* are partakers if they are true children. The second, of that which only the *firstborn* attain, but of which *the Esaus* fail.

The structure of xii. 5-14 is simple in its broad outlines, though involved when we approach the detail.

**Hebrews xii. 5 - 14**

- A | 5-10-. Mark of sonship. Discipline received.
- B | -10. The end. Partakers of His holiness.
- A | 11-13. Fruit of righteousness. Discipline exercised.
- B | 14. The pursuit. Peace and holiness.

The opening verse of Heb. xi. is twofold in its aspect, viz., (1) faith is the substance of things hoped for; this is the theme of Chapter xi.: (2) The *elengchos* of things not seen; this is the theme of Heb. xii. 5-14.

*Elengchos* is balanced by *elengcho* in Heb. xii. 5, where it is translated “rebuked”. Now the quotation, “the just shall live by faith” in Heb. x. 38, takes us back to the same word, for in Habk. ii. 1 we find it in the word “reproved” as we have already seen. In Heb. xii. the apostle quotes Prov. iii. 11, 12, where in the LXX translation, we find *elengchos* as “correction”. This “rebuke”, “correction”, “discipline”, is an essential accompaniment of sonship and growth.

Let us now look at one or two passages that illuminate the purpose and instruments of chastening:

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee” (Deut. viii. 2-5).

We are apt to fix our minds upon the painful side of chastening, and, by reason of our folly, there is often a need for that phase, but it is good also to notice that a part of this

discipline or chastening was the provision of the daily manna, the marvelous preservation of clothing, and the care of the wanderers' feet.

"The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy law" (Psa. xciv. 11, 12).

"We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. xi. 32).

Here is another comfort: *chastening is not condemnation*. *Chastening* is for *sons*, *condemnation* for the unbelieving *world*. Man's thoughts are vain; he needs a two-fold treatment, chastening to remove folly, teaching to supply the needed instruction.

Chastening is not only the work of the Father, for Christ Himself says to the Laodicean church: "As many as I love, I rebuke and *chasten*: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. iii. 19).

The apostle puts the matter of this chastening before the reader in a variety of ways. First, the attitude of mind toward it. Do not despise it. Do not faint when rebuked. Perhaps "despise" is too strong a word. Rather, what is meant is to hold lightly, to have very little concern about it. That is one attitude to be avoided. There is the opposite extreme, however, that is, of magnifying the chastening endured, and so "fainting" at the rebuke. This also is wrong. We have to remember that the chastening has to do with us "as sons" (Heb. xii. 5-7). It comes to us from One Who loves us (Heb. xii. 6). To be without chastening is to be without proof of sonship. The little gutter child, unkempt, uncorrected, uncared for, is free from the discipline, restraint, training, care and correction that loving fatherhood imposes, but who, knowing the truth, would exchange the "discipline" of the one for the "liberty" of the other?

The apostle proceeds to reason from the lesser to the greater. We have had fathers in this life whose discipline was brief, and, as far as they knew, right. But it was sometimes in error, yet we held them in respect. God is the Father of our spirits; His discipline is never at fault, and it tends to life. Shall we not then much rather render submission to Him?

The object that the Lord has in view all this time is revealed in Heb. xii. 10: "That we might be partakers of His holiness." Holiness is the atmosphere of Hebrews, as righteousness is of Romans. The sanctification of believers is entirely outside their own deeds or endeavours. They are sanctified by the blood of Him Who suffered "without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). If they are called upon to go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. xiii. 13), it is but manifesting in act and character what has been already accomplished. The going without the camp will never sanctify, but it may *manifest* sanctification.

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10).

"For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

This “perfecting for ever” is in nowise altered or minimized because the epistle proceeds to urge each to “go on unto perfection”, or because it associates perfecting with suffering and obedience. When therefore we read that this discipline has in view the partaking of His holiness, we do not understand that any amount of scourging can sanctify, but that the believer, already perfectly sanctified in Christ, is now trained and encouraged to walk in harmony with such a blessed position. This is practical sanctification.

While the apostle urged the believer to treat with all due reverence the chastening of the Lord, he assumed no stoic indifference. There is something intensely human in the admission: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. xii. 11).

Three items in this verse demand attention. First, the words “nevertheless afterward”. While mother-love is immediate and protective, father-love is concerned with the future. The one sees the babe that is now; the other visualizes the man that is to be. The underlying thought is very close to that of II Cor. iv. 16-18 which hinges upon the words, “while we look not at the things which are seen”.

Then there is the Greek expression translated “the peaceable fruit of righteousness”. We understand this to mean in English, “the peaceable fruit, *namely*, righteousness”. Holiness in Christ is manifested, and imputed righteousness has produced its peaceable fruit. The chastening and the discipline has had the effect of pruning; it has produced fruitfulness. Here is a parallel with Phil. i. 11 which speaks of bringing forth the *fruits* of righteousness.

All, however, turns upon the third expression: “To them which are exercised thereby”, just as the prayer in Philippians urges the need for discernment and trying the things that differ.

Watch the effect of discipline upon two of the Lord’s children. One becomes mellow, the other hard and sour. The one is going on unto perfection, the other drawing back unto perdition. Look at Israel in the wilderness. After their first experience at Marah one would have thought that the next problem concerning water would, at once, have thrown them back on the memory of the Lord’s earlier intervention on their behalf, and that they would have trusted in quiet confidence. But no, so far as they were concerned, the discipline of Marah was wasted upon them; they were not “exercised thereby”. Let us not pass through trials and reap no benefit! Let us ever seek to be “exercised” by the discipline of our pathway, and then it will turn to our profit and the Lord’s glory. This exercise is the mark of the “perfect” or mature: “But strong meat belongeth to them that are perfect, even those who by reason of use have their *senses exercised* to discern both good and evil” (Heb. v. 14). A baby has senses, a man has *senses exercised*. A true son of God is exercised by the chastening of the Lord; he is unworthy of the Name if he is indifferent or hardened.

It is not without bearing upon the theme of Heb. xii. that the word “exercise” is *gumnazo*. The word actually means “to be naked” because in the Greek sports the competitors were stripped. So we have *gumnos* translated “naked” in Matt. xxv. 36; II Cor. v. 3; Heb. iv. 13 and other places. Coming, as it does, after the exhortation to “lay aside every weight and the easily-entangling sin, and run with patience the race set before us”, this word *gumnazo* is very apt.

Seeing then that chastening, though unpleasant, is fruitful, we are exhorted to: “Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be dislocated; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men” (Heb. xii. 12-14). In other words, we are not to seek martyrdom; we are not to pose as sufferers; we are not to pick the roughest tracks and run the thorniest way. Rather are we to gird up the loins and hope to the end; make the place for our feet as level as we can, not aggravate the lame ankle, but rather get it well, that we may finish our course with joy. Further, we are to follow peace with all men. Our discipline will sometimes come through the permitted oppression of man, and when it does we must bow before the Father’s good pleasure. On the other hand we should not go out of our way to irritate our fellows or ask for trouble, but as far as in us lies, we are to make peace. The word “safe” in Phil. iii. 1 is the Greek *asphales*, a grip for the feet of a runner, our modern asphalt. Here is another parallel between Philipians and Hebrews.

Another line of exhortation is discovered here by observing a parallel with Phil. iii. 19, where the believer is urged to mark those who so walk that their end is perdition or loss. So here, those who were running the race are told to make a firm track so that others not so strong or fleet of foot would be encouraged to continue.

“And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14).

This will cause us to run up against the elements of the world and the tradition of men, and will probably provide all the chastisement that we can endure, but without it, we are warned that “no man shall see the Lord”.

The two words that should be emphasized in the whole passage under consideration are “endure” and “exercise”:

“If ye *endure* chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons” (Heb. xii. 7).

“Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are *exercised* thereby” (Heb. xii. 11).

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:

## Hebrews xii. 15 - 25.

- A | 15. | a | Looking diligently.  
          b | Lest any man fall from or fail.  
B | 16, 17. The birthright bartered (*Prototokia*).  
C | 18-21. Ye are not come. Six “ands”. SINAI.  
C | 22, 23. But ye are 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 should 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*” (Deut. xxix. 18).

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 of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?” (Gen. xxvii. 46).

The word “fornicator” 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 *profanes* means one who stands *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 earthly 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 writer, “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 (chapters 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 which now is, and is in bondage with her children”, and Sion for “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother” (R.V.) (Gal. iv. 24-26).

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 (nor? JP) 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 God 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 “the 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. and xii. In xii. 9 we read of “The Father of spirits”; in chapter 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 this church of the firstborn shall be complete and enter into its inheritance and become the Bride, the Lamb’s wife. 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, will 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 “age to come” of which he wrote 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 word: “God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (xi. 16), and the “perfecting” of the spirits of just men in xii. 23.

It was toward this goal that the apostle urged the Hebrew believers to “go unto the goal (perfection)”. The weights which they were counseled to lay aside would include those things mentioned in vi. 2, a passage we have already seen in close connection with Esau and his vain seeking for repentance (vi. 4-6; xii. 16, 17).

The section closes with a word of warning, very similar to the warning that precedes chapter xi. In the structure we show it thus:

C | x. 26-31. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy,  
how much more . . . . .

C | xii. 25. They escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth,  
much more . . . . .

Here we return to the teaching of chapter ii. In that passage the comparison is between the words spoken by angels and the words spoken by the Lord, and the question is put: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" In the other passage the angels are omitted, and the comparison is made between the seriousness of refusing him who spoke on earth, namely, Moses, the servant, and of refusing the Son Who has since spoken from heaven.

The epistle opens with the fact that God has spoken, and that He has spoken in two ways; once through His servants, and now in His Son. The Hebrews were in danger of minimizing the sin of refusing to hear what the Lord had said. The epistle as it continues leads away from the ministry of angels, the mediatorship of Moses, the captaincy of Joshua, the priesthood of Aaron, and the blood of bulls and goats, and focuses all its light upon the Lord Jesus, Who sums up and outshines them all. He has now spoken from heaven. He is there at the right hand of God. There He ever liveth. There He sits "henceforth expecting".

There are "much mores" of mercy, but Heb. x. 26-31 and xii. 25 contain "much mores" of warning and judgment.

The concluding passage, Heb. xii. 25 - xiii. 25, awaits us. This we hope to consider in our next paper, and our survey of this wonderful epistle then comes to a conclusion.

#### **No.54. Outside the Camp (xii. 25 - xiii. 17). pp. 41 - 45**

The epistle now draws to its conclusion. Much that these Hebrews had prized and valued as permanent had been shattered and was 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 those 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; x. 16). 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 etc., in chapter xiii. of Hebrews. 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 in Chapter xiii.

"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 continue (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 entertaining 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. 22-24:

“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 everlasting (age-abiding) covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working (doing) in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

Philippians, the parallel epistle in the dispensation of the Mystery, has the same emphasis:

“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.”

“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. ii. 13; iv. 9).

Hospitality (*philoxenia*), “the entertaining of strangers”, is urged upon the believer more than once in the epistles. 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 which can be 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 Sundays at 11a.m. and 6.30p.m., 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 *philoxenia*). 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 visited him” (Heb. ii. 6). 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 in bonds (bound), AS BOUND WITH THEM, and them which suffer adversity, AS BEING YOURSELVES ALSO IN THE BODY.”

This sympathy has been spoken of earlier: “becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye had compassion on them that were in bonds” (Heb. x. 33, 34 R.V.). 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 in Hebrews, namely 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 in *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” etc., 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 unbelieving, 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 brimstone: 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 are 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 earlier to Deut. iv. with its two-fold sin, and we have seen that marriage and its travesty are brought before us in Hebrews chapter xiii. Where is idolatry? Were the Hebrews warned against that sin? And were they in any real 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 4. 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	<i>philotheoi”</i> (II Tim. iii. 2-4).

This catalogue of the evils that shall characterize the “last days” and 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 at hand (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 verse 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 chaps. iii. & iv.

of Hebrews 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 “destruction”, and 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 give the structure of the section so that what has been seen, and what is yet to be studied, may be kept in their right relationship:

**Hebrews 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 | 9-13. | f | Established with grace, not meats.
  - g | His own blood.
  - h | Bearing His reproach.
- A | 14-16. | a | No remaining city.
  - c | Forget not to have fellowship (*epilanthanomai*).
  - b | Acceptable sacrifice (*euaresteo*).
- B | 17-19. | e | Obey them that have the rule over you.
  - d | Live honestly (*anastrepho*).
- C | 20, 21. | g | Through the blood of the *aionian* covenant.
  - f | Perfect you.
  - h | Doing that which is well pleasing (*euarestos*).

**No.55. Outside the Camp, contd. (xii. 25 - xiii. 17).  
pp. 61 - 65**

There are three 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, Josh. i. 5; the third I Chron. xxviii. 20. In the first 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 a 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 third 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 but an echo of 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 will 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 today, and unto the ages" (literally).



“Obey them that have the rule over you (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 to 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 with the temptation also *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 xii. 11, “nevertheless afterward”.

In chapter 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 and is accountable to the Lord. He 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 ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward” (II John 8, R.V. margin). 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 today, and unto the ages”. The same truth lies at the threshold of the epistle: “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 bedrock of our faith. This was the issue of the manner of life of the leaders whose faith was to be followed. It was the corrective against the divers and strange doctrines which they were to avoid.

These words “yesterday and today and for the ages” are parallel with the titles “Alpha and Omega”, or “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 “today” 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 washings (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 have seen before that the thought of “acceptable service” runs through the closing chapter of Hebrews, and this passage from Romans follows the same theme.

To us at the present time, this scruple regarding “meats” (food) seems to have no parallel. We are not concerned about food having been offered to idols, neither are we under any law that divides foods 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 such 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:

- A | Grace not meats. We have an altar.
- B | Bodies . . . . . blood . . . . . *without* the camp.
- A | Jesus, that He might sanctify.
- B | His own blood, suffered *without* the gate.
- A | Let us go forth unto Him.
- B | *Without* the camp.
- A | His reproach bearing.
- B | 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 with 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 Supper, a doctrine so foreign to the context that there is no need to waste space in confuting it. Others teach that our altar is the cross. The cross throughout the New Testament 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 Old Testament 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 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 he 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 in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the 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 to Him without the camp, leaving behind the types and shadows that could never bring to maturity 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” or organized and carnal religion 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 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 suffered without the gate and has ascended to the right hand of God. These facts give us our two-fold 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 minds on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, there will be a corresponding mortifying of the members that are on the earth.

**No.56. The Great Shepherd (xiii. 18 - 25).  
pp. 81 - 84**

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 his 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 always 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 is 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 a 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 *aionian* 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 for ever and ever (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 *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 and 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 three-fold capacity in the New Testament. 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 *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”, i.e., He was great through the blood etc., or it may indicate that Christ, as the great Shepherd, 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” (*katartizo*) 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 prayers 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 Jesus 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:

“Unto 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 yet 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 verily was 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 Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day” (Heb. iv. 8).

(7) SPEAKING OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD HE SAITH:

“They truly were 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 once 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 obtained (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 through (by) the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. x. 5-10).

(10) SPEAKING OF FAITH HE SAITH:

“By faith Abel, Enoch, Noah”, etc.

“Looking off unto Jesus the Captain and Perfecter of faith” (Heb. xi. and xii.).

(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. 19-24).

(12) SPEAKING OF THE LEADERS HE SAITH:

“Remember your leaders. Obey your leaders.”

“The Lord Jesus that 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 repeat, in barest outline, the structure of the epistle as a whole, the details of which can be pieced together by the reader from the chapters dealing with the passages themselves:



## HEBREWS AS A WHOLE

A   i. & ii. THE WORD SPOKEN.	Thou <i>remainest</i> . Thou art the <i>same</i> . How escape, if <i>neglect</i> ? Bring in again the First Begotten. Let us come boldly. Example of unbelief. Perfect <i>v.</i> babes. No renewal unto repentance. Senses exercised. Crucify afresh the Son.
B   iii. - vi. ON TO PERFECTION.	<i>But this Man</i> . No perfection in priesthood No perfection in law. No perfection in ordinances No perfection in sacrifices <i>But this Man</i> . Let us draw near. Examples of faith. Sons <i>v.</i> firstborn. Found no place for repentance. Discipline exercised. Trode underfoot the Son.
C   vii. - x.18. PERFECTION WHERE FOUND	Things that <i>remain</i> . Jesus Christ the <i>same</i> . Not escape if <i>refuse</i> . Brought again from the dead.
B   x. 19 - xii. 25-. BACK TO PERDITION	
A   xii. -25 - xiii. HIM THAT SPEAKETH.	

## “The House of Jacob shall Possess their Possessions”

### No.8. Peace as a result of Righteousness, and its realization. pp. 89, 90

We have considered the meaning of the word ‘possess’ and seen the symbolism intended in the ‘treading with the sole of the foot’. Let us now take a survey of our blessings, and see how far we have ‘possessed’ them. Before leaving the picturesque background of O.T. story and of the Hebrew language for the more precise doctrinal language of the N.T. and the Greek, we may profit by pondering one or two passages which illustrate or demand the application of the principle we are examining.

In Isa. xxxii. we read:

“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isa. xxxii. 18).

What a delightful prospect these words bring before the mind, especially today when we see the awful results of unrest all around us. The dwelling here contemplated is not the temporary and transitory life in tent or caravan that is indicated by *shaken*, it is rather that dwelling, which is indicated by the Hebrew *yashab*, which means primarily ‘to sit’.

“They shall not build, and another inhabit (*yashab*) . . . . Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isa. lxxv. 22).

In one form of the verb, *yashab* is translated ‘inhabitant’ 25 times in Isaiah alone.

These ‘habitations’ are not only peaceable, they are ‘sure’. The word thus translated comes from *batach* which means ‘to confide’, ‘to have confidence’. *Batach* is translated ‘trust’ more frequently than by any other word, and we give the following references in Isaiah as examples (Isa. xxvi. 4-7; xxvi. 3, 4; xii. 2; 1. 10). *Betach* the substantive occurs in three passages in Isaiah:

“The needy shall lie down in *safety*” (xiv. 30).

“Quietness and *assurance* for ever” (xxxii. 17).

“Thou that . . . . dwellest *carelessly*” (xlvii. 8).

In the third place, these peaceable dwellings are called “Quiet resting places”. The word here translated ‘resting place’ is *menuchah*, and is a word full of meaning.

It is the word used in Numb. x. 33 where we read how the Ark of the covenant went before Israel in the ‘three days’ journey (suggestive of resurrection) “to search out a resting place for them”. It was the word used by Naomi in her advice to Ruth to return to Moab, marry and find a home (Ruth i. 9). It provides us with the “still” waters of Psa. xxiii. (margin waters of *quietness*). Such are some of the blessed attributes of this ‘peaceable dwelling’. The reader may, however, be moved to ask how all this, good as it may be, finds a place in a series confessedly devoted to the idea of ‘possessing our

possessions'. A glance at Isa. xxxii. 17 will show that what we have been considering in verse 18 is the 'possessing' of possessions which are there described.

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever” (Isa. xxxii. 17).

Peace, and all its association, is the outcome of righteousness. Without a righteous basis there can be no true peace; there will be a compromise at the best which will break at the smallest strain. This is universally true; as true for the nations today as for Israel of old, and true for the Church for all time. The N.T. speaks of “The peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. xii. 11).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. v. 1).

With Isa. xxxii. 17, 18 before us, we might well ask ourselves how far we have 'taken possession' of this gift of grace. Peace, assurance, sure dwelling places, quiet resting places, all are ours, for Christ is our righteousness, and “the *work* of righteousness shall be peace, and the *effect* of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever”. Do we, in particular, possess our possessions? Is our abiding place characterized by quietness and assurance? Has the work and the effect of righteousness been realized in our own experiences?

# **The Interpretation of the Scriptures.**

## **No.4. The Principle of Induction.**

**pp. 6 - 10**

Continuing our investigation into this most important subject, and putting into practice the important principle of settling the interpretation of a passage first, we should attempt to discover its real and basic meaning, and not attribute one to it that appeals to us. If we do this we are only reading our own ideas, or those of other people into it, and this is always destructive of truth. Luther wrote: "The best teacher is the one who does not bring his meaning *into* Scripture, but brings it *out* of Scripture". Wise words indeed! Happy is the person who can approach the Bible relatively free from personal prejudices, bias and pre-conceived notions. Too frequently God's Word is marred by traditional ideas, or is cited merely to support some peculiar concept that appeals to the person concerned or the denomination to which he or she belongs.

The Lord Jesus warned the religious leaders of His day in Mark vii. 13 that they made "the Word of God of none effect through their tradition". They emptied it of its real meaning so that they could keep their own ideas (vii. 9), and there is scarcely anything more spiritually blinding than human tradition. The task of the interpreter is to discover the true meaning of Holy Scripture, not to verify his prejudices or to try to bolster up the peculiar tenets of the sect to which he belongs. God's Word must not be used as a peg on which to hang religious opinions.

### **The Preference for the Clearest Interpretation.**

Sometimes the searcher for truth is confronted with two or possibly more probable interpretations as far as grammatical rules permit. The rule then is to choose the clear rather than the obscure and the one that fits in best with the context and the general teaching of Scripture. Obscure passages must give right of way to clear passages. We can be thankful that everything essential to salvation and man's basic needs is clearly revealed in the Word of God. Essential truth is not tucked away among incidental remarks, nor is it contained in passages whose meanings are not yet understood. Furthermore, obscure and difficult portions of Scripture should not be used as a sole basis for doctrine. This betrays weakness. For instance, our conception of future punishment should not be based on the book of Revelation alone. This part of Scripture is universally admitted to be difficult of interpretation. When this sort of thing is done it nearly always is an indication that the Scripture is being used to support preconceived ideas and is therefore suspect.

### **Scripture interprets Scripture.**

The next guiding principle for us to observe is that Scripture interprets Scripture. The apostle Paul expresses it in this way:

“. . . . we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (I Cor. ii. 13).

The spiritual things we are to compare are the words of the Holy Scriptures, the words of God the Holy Spirit. We can only do this effectively by using a good concordance like Young’s *Analytical Concordance*. This enables us to dig into the treasury of God’s Word with all its riches. If we have difficulty in understanding a Biblical word, we should open the concordance and note its occurrences, or the way God has used it and, more often than not, the problem will be solved in another passage. Any interpretation that is forced to go entirely outside the Bible should be suspect. If we keep within the covers of God’s Book and let Scripture interpret Scripture we are safe. This does not mean that we shall never use Bible dictionaries or commentaries, or read books of exposition, but these must never be exalted in importance to the Scriptures themselves.

### **The Principle of Grammatical Interpretation.**

Words are the bricks, as it were, of thought, and a sentence is a unit of thought. The many shades of thought can only be expressed in sentences. Grammar states the principles that arrange the formation of words into sentences that clearly express meaning. Some of us may look back to our school days with distaste when we think of lessons in grammar, but these need not be dry and uninteresting. It all depends on the way the subject is taught. God has conveyed His truth in words and sentences, and the more we know of these and their construction, the better we shall understand the truth they seek to reveal. *Nothing should be extracted from Scripture as interpretation but what is yielded by its grammatical sense.* This can scarcely be overstressed. When this is not observed, fallible human thought is bound to creep in. There is great value in paying attention to grammatical details. When dealing with a word of action or being, which is called a verb, it is obviously important to notice its time value, whether past, present or future. If we do not do this we shall confuse past truth, present truth and future truth.

There are little words called prepositions which are used hundreds of times a day in conversation and writing, e.g., by, through, in, towards, up, down, and so on. These have a theology all their own; for instance the word “believe” either as a verb or a noun occurs many times in the New Testament chiefly in the Gospel of John. It can be used with what the grammarians call the dative case after it, when it means to acknowledge mentally a fact, such as two plus two equals four. But very often the Greek reads literally “to believe into a person”. The Lord Jesus said: “He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life”, but the original reads: “. . . . he that believeth *into* Me . . . .”. The preposition “into” conveys the thought of close association with Christ and to believe into Him means to completely commit oneself to Him and to rely absolutely on Him for everything, a very personal and intimate relationship, and a very different thing from believing as a fact that Jesus Christ was an historic personage. One can believe the latter without any spiritual benefit whatsoever. The little word “into” makes all the difference. Many claim to be believers who have never really believed “into” Christ and this is the only belief or faith that the New Testament recognizes, and it is the only faith that saves.

Observing grammatical sense will also take note of idioms, that is, terms of phrase peculiar to a language. For instance “the breaking of bread” is a Jewish idiom for eating a meal. The flat round Jewish loaves were not cut, but broken before they could be eaten, hence the expression came to mean the partaking of any meal. To restrict it to the “Lord’s Supper”, as some do, is erroneous and fails to recognize this idiom. When the Lord Jesus fed the four thousand He broke bread (Mark viii. 6-9), and the disciples distributed it; so also after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 30) He broke bread and joined in a meal with the eleven. In neither case was He celebrating what afterwards was known as the Lord’s Supper. Likewise in Acts ii. 44-46, the apostles’ doctrine included having all things common or shared, and this included their possessions, goods and meals:

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, *did eat their meat (food)* with gladness and singleness of heart”

Here “breaking bread” is explained as “eating their food” and does not refer to taking communion in the modern sense of the phrase; those who insist on this fail to recognize a common Jewish idiom and read into the passage what is not there.

### **The Principle of Contextual Interpretation.**

The Bible is not a collection of verses put together without any relation to one another. Something goes before every verse and something follows it. If we recognize the flow of thought leading to a passage and away from it, we can know with some certainty the flow of thought within it. This should be obvious, but it is surprising how often the obvious is missed in Biblical interpretation. Had this principle been put into practice consistently, many false doctrines and sects could never have arisen. One writer puts it this way:

“To interpret without regard to the context is to interpret at random; to interpret contrary to the context is to teach falsehood for truth” (*Companion to the Bible*. Barrows).

It is always dangerous to separate a verse from its context. The practice of putting texts on calendars and making wall texts, and collecting favourite texts together, though often attractive, can be misleading, for the all-important *context* is missing.

### **Figures of Speech.**

There is scarcely a subject of more importance to the earnest seeker after truth than that of figures of speech. Figures of speech wrongly handled, or a failure to recognize them in the Scriptures can lead to doctrinal aberrations and error. They have been used in speech and writing from time immemorial. Writing or speech without figures would be very prosaic and dull. Figurative language is used to make these vivid and interesting. They are a departure from the fixed laws of grammar to arrest attention and emphasize, being true to *feeling*, if not to *fact*. It is most important to note that *behind them is always literality*. If this was not so, we could never understand them. If someone states “the ground is dry”, this is a plain statement of fact. If, however, he says “the ground is thirsty”, a figure of speech is employed, because it is impossible actually for the inert ground to experience feeling. But how much more arresting is the latter statement!

There are over two hundred figures of speech. The Greeks and Romans reduced them to an exact science. If anyone asks how they can be recognized, two facts must be borne in mind:

- (1) When rules of grammar are departed from.
- (2) When a statement is contrary to known fact, or the revealed truth of the Scriptures.

No one has a right to assert a passage is figurative unless he can point to the figure and give reasons for its usage. Figurative language is not a convenience that can be turned to an argument in order to escape the literal implication of a passage. Let us take three well-known figures which are linked together:

- (1) Simile or Resemblance.
- (2) Metaphor or Representation.
- (3) Hypocatastasis or Implication.

(1) *Simile is comparison stated*; one thing is said to be *like* or *as* something else, e.g. “All we *like* sheep have gone astray” (Isa. liii. 6). “One day is with the Lord *as* a thousand years, and a thousand years *as* one day” (II Pet. iii. 8).

“All flesh is *as* grass” (I Pet. i. 24).

There are hundreds of examples of this figure in the Bible.

(2) *Metaphor or Representation*. This is *comparison substituted*. The figure lies in the verb “to be”, while the nouns on either side are literal.

“All flesh *is* grass” (Isa. xl. 6).

Metaphor is from the Greek *metaphero* “to carry across”. The likeness is carried across, the verb “to be” then having the meaning of “represent”. We may point to a photograph and say: “This is my father”. What we really mean is the photograph is a representation of our father. Or, pointing to a map, we can say: “This is Great Britain”, meaning this map represents Great Britain, or is a likeness of Great Britain. The figure Metaphor resides entirely in the verb “to be”: “Ye *are* the salt of the earth” (Matt. v. 13); “the seven stars *are* the angels of the seven churches” (Rev. i. 20); “He that soweth the good seed *is* the Son of Man; The field *is* the world; the good seed *are* the children of the kingdom; but the tares *are* the children of the wicked one” (Matt. xiii. 37, 38). In each case the verb “to be” could be rendered “represents”, and so we have likeness by representation.

*Metaphor* is a distinct figure of speech and not a covering term for all figures. Sometimes great issues hang upon the recognition of a figure and false doctrines can be built upon the failure to distinguish them. “This (broken bread) is My Body” (Matt. xxvi. 26). The Roman Catholic insists that the consecrated bread is literally Christ’s body. But in the Greek the grammar is deliberately broken to arrest attention and to show that the figure *Metaphor* is being used. “This” is made to agree with the word “body” instead of its antecedent, the word “bread”, and so through failure to recognize the figure, the deception of the Roman Mass has been perpetuated through the centuries, misleading millions and holding them in bondage.

## No.5. Figures of Speech (contd.). pp. 35 - 39

The third figure of speech in the group we are considering is *Hypocatastasis* or *Implication*. *Hypocatastasis* is a Greek word which literally means that something is “put down under” or wrapped up. The likeness in this case is only *implied*.

“. . . . dogs have compassed me: *the assembly of the wicked* have enclosed me”  
(Psa. xxii. 16).

If the Psalmist had said that the assembly of the wicked were *like dogs* this would have used *Simile*. Had he said the *wicked are dogs*, he would have used *Metaphor*. But in this verse he wraps up, as it were, his illustration of the wicked by simply using the word “dogs”.

In the New Testament we have another example:

“Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. xvi. 6).

Here the disciples completely misunderstood the Lord, as the context shows. “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread” (verse 7). They took His statement literally, not realizing He was using the figure *Hypocatastasis*. He did not say the wrong doctrine of the Pharisees was either *like* leaven, or *was* leaven, but strongly implied it by using the word leaven by itself, which both in the Old Testament and New Testament is symbolic of evil. In verses 11 and 12 the disciples are made to understand that the Lord was not referring to literal leaven, but to the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. There is another occasion where the Lord Jesus used the same figure of *Implication* and was similarly misunderstood.

“Jesus answered and said unto them (the Jews), Destroy this *temple*, and in three days I will raise it up” (John ii. 19).

Once again His hearers took literally what was a figure of speech:

“Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the *temple of His body*” (John ii. 20, 21).

Another common figure used in the Scriptures is *Hendiadys* or *Two for One*, that is, two things are expressed, but only one thing is meant. In England we speak of a piece of bread and butter, which is not bread and butter considered separately, but a piece of *buttered bread*. We will give one or two examples from the New Testament:

“For the law was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17).

While it would be perfectly true to consider grace and truth, taken by themselves, to be resident in Christ, here the apostle John is contrasting the law, with its types and



shadows, with the *reality* that is found alone in the Lord Jesus. There was a measure of grace in the Divine picture book of the Old Testament, but this only looked forward to the coming of the Saviour in Whom is the *true grace*, the perfect thing. In connection with the filling of Judas' place, the early disciples prayed concerning the Lord's chosen:

“That he may take part of this *ministry and apostleship*, from which Judas by transgression fell . . . .” (Acts i. 25).

Ministry and apostleship were not two separate forms of service. It would have been better to recognize the figure *Hendiadys* and translate it *apostolic ministry*.

In Acts xiv. 13 we have another example:

“Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought *oxen and garlands* unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.”

The Authorized Version (A.V.) leads one to think that the oxen and garlands were brought separately to the gates. But not so; it was the heathen custom to put garlands upon the animals to be sacrificed, and so the phrase should be “garlanded oxen”, two things expressed, but only one thing meant. Likewise in Rev. v. 10, “kings and priests” would be better translated “a priestly kingdom”. Sometimes we have an idea represented by three words and then we have *Hendiadris*:

“. . . . I am the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John xiv. 6).

While it is perfectly true that the Lord can be considered as the Way, Truth and Life separately, yet what He really meant was: “I am the True and Living Way”, so recognizing the figure *Hendiadris*, Weymouth renders it thus in his version.

Another frequently used figure is *Metonymy* or *Change of Noun*, where one thing is put for another, frequently for emphasis. In I Thess. v. 19, 20 we have:

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.”

When the word ‘spirit’ stands by itself, it is difficult to know whether God the Holy Spirit is intended, or the gift that He gives. I Thessalonians is an epistle written early in the Acts period when evidential gifts were abundant. The reference to prophesyings, prophecy being one of these gifts (I Cor. xii. 10), shows us that the word ‘spirit’ refers not to God, but to His gift. In any case it is beyond the power of any human being to extinguish God. But His gifts can be so treated and this context gives this warning.

We have another example of *Metonymy* in Rev. vi. 9 :

“. . . . I saw under the altar the *souls* of them that were slain for the word of God.”

Whatever ideas may be held concerning the meaning of the soul in the Bible, it will be generally agreed that it cannot be seen by the eyes. Consequently a figure of speech must be used here. “Soul” is put by *Metonymy* for “person”, just as we talk of ‘souls on board

a ship”, meaning people. This verse in Revelation has sometimes been used to bolster up unscriptural ideas concerning the life after death. Had this figure been recognized, such ideas would have been prevented. In Psa. xvi. 6 the Psalmist says:

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

Here the measuring line is put for the land marked out, as the second statement makes clear. This inheritance was allocated by lot. Jeremiah’s enemies said concerning him, “Come, and let us smite him with the tongue”; obviously impossible literally, but the tongue is put for bitter and unjust words (Jer. xviii. 18).

We give one more example which is important doctrinally:

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle”  
(Heb. xiii. 10).

Again, it is clear that the first statement cannot be taken literally, for altars cannot be eaten. But the word “altar” is put by *Metonymy* for the sacrifice offered on it. In this case we have a double figure, for the writer is not referring to literal sacrifices, but to the great Antitype, the Lord Himself, upon Whom we feast by faith, and to Whom we are urged to go forth without the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. xiii. 13).

We have already considered the anthropomorphic element in the Bible where the figure *Anthropopatheia* or *Condescension* is used. The references to the hands, eyes, ears, nostrils, and arms of God, His remembering or forgetting, or His repentance are all illustrations of this and are a wonderful example of the God of all grace stooping to our level to make Himself and His ways known to us.

In concluding this section we will consider the figure *Ellipsis* where words are left out of the original Hebrew and Greek and must be supplied in English to make sense. In Psa. lxxxiv. 3 we have:

“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of Hosts, my King and my God.”

The word “even” in the A.V. is in italics, the translation supplying the ellipsis to make sense. But it is wrongly supplied, leading one to think that swallows made nests in the altars. The words “so have I found” should be supplied instead of the word “even” and then we have good sense.

When the Lord declares that the mustard seed is the least of all seeds (Matt. xiii. 32), it should be obvious that He is not saying that the mustard seed is the smallest in existence, but the smallest of *seeds sown in a field* as the context shows, and the ellipsis could have been supplied in verse 32.

Sometimes we have false ellipsis, that is, words are supplied which are unnecessary.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle . . . .” (Rom. i. 1).

The words “to be” are in italics, showing they are not in the original Greek. They are not needed. Paul was a “called apostle”, saved and called by the risen Christ.

Again in Phil. iii. 15 we read:

“Let us therefore, as many as *be* perfect, be thus minded.”

But the apostle has stated that he himself was not at this stage perfect or mature, nor had reached the goal in the race in which he found himself, pressing forward for the “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (iii. 14). This being so, it was very unlikely indeed that any believer in the Philippian church had outstripped him in experience. The Greek reads literally: “as many as perfect therefore” showing that the figure *ellipsis* is here. We must therefore supply the words “would be” or “wish to be”. Paul is setting the example for all who desire, not only to run the heavenly race, but to reach the goal and attain the prize. In I Cor. xv. 29 we have one of the problematic verses of the New Testament:

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”

Many have been the interpretations put on this verse. The Mormons use this to bolster up their idea of baptism, vicariously on behalf of someone who has died, though what is this supposed to achieve, expressed in New Testament terms? The New Testament knows nothing of such a practice and it was not heard of until the second century and then among the heretics. Some have thought it means that the apostle refers to those who were baptized on the basis of the testimony of some who had died. Others that the verse refers to young converts who took the place in the church of older believers who had passed away, and yet again Paul was thinking of baptism as a symbol of death and is not referring to those who have died physically.

We believe the best explanation has been given by Dr E.W. Bullinger in his *Figures of Speech*. Re-punctuating the verse and supplying the ellipsis he translates:

“What shall they do who are being baptized? [It is] for dead bodies, if the dead rise not at all.”

That is to say, water baptism has no meaning apart from resurrection, and to this chapter vi. of Romans plainly testifies and moreover it fits in to the context in chapter xv.

The afore-going will give some idea of the great importance of figures of speech as used in the Scriptures. All sorts of wrong ideas and false doctrines can arise where these are not recognized and understood. We would strongly advise the reader to obtain a copy of Dr. Bullinger’s monumental work referred to above. Unfortunately it is out of print, but occasionally may be obtained through a second-hand bookseller.

## No.6. The Interpretation of Types. pp. 45 - 49

The relationship which the Old Testament sustains to the New, forms the basis for the consideration of types. The fact that the Old Testament has a pronounced prophetic element links it indissolubly with the New, and typological teaching is a form of prophecy. On the Lord's own authority He is to be found in the Old Testament. To the disciples on the road to Emmaus He expounded the Old Testament Scriptures:

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures *the things concerning Himself*” (Luke xxiv. 27).

And to the disciples He said:

“. . . . 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*” (Luke xxiv. 44).

In John v. 39, the Lord Jesus said to the Jews: “Search (or ye search) the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: *and they are they which testify of Me*”. There can be therefore no doubt whatsoever that Christ is prefigured by type and shadow in the Old Testament, and that this is a separate study in itself.

There are several Greek words used in the New Testament, which point back to the nature of the Old. *Hupodeigma* means a representation, a copy, an example and occurs six times. “Let us labour . . . . lest any man fall after the same *example* of unbelief” (Heb. iv. 11). As chapters iii. and iv. of Hebrews make clear, the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness has a typical meaning, which this verse reinforces: “. . . . there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the *example* and shadow of heavenly things . . . .” (Heb. viii. 4, 5). Here the earthly priesthood is typical of heavenly realities.

*Tupos* and *tupikos* come from the verb *tupto* “to strike”, and mean the impression formed by a blow, a pattern and then a type.

“Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) for *ensamples* (types): and they are written for our admonition . . . .” (I Cor. x. 11).

Once again the behaviour of Israel in the wilderness with their sin and rebellion is looked upon, not just as an historical event, but something that was typical and pointed forward to the Christian era. *Skia* means a shadow, sketch or outline. “For the law having a *shadow* of good things to come, and not the very image of the things . . . .” (Heb. x. 1 and viii. 5). “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a *shadow* of things to come . . . .” (Col. ii. 16, 17). These verses show that the ceremonial law was a shadowing forth in type of New Testament realities. *Antitupos* means a figure or likeness.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true” (Heb. ix. 24). The Tabernacle was a type or figure of realities in the heavens (Heb. viii. 5).

These words establish beyond doubt the typical character of much of the Old Testament, and the whole of the epistle to the Hebrews revolves around these types and adumbrations, without which it could not be understood. There is no doubt therefore that the doctrine of the types is Scriptural and important to the student of the Scriptures and the seeker after truth. The fact that typical teaching has been abused does not invalidate its truth. The early church fathers doubtless erred in this respect, as have many Roman Catholic theologians, realizing that such teaching could strengthen Romish doctrines. But the Protestant has not been guiltless either, for some, in order to support devotional ideas, have pressed typological teaching beyond its proper limits.

So we ask ourselves, have we any Biblical guiding principle to lift us above mere human opinion and the doctrines of men? The answer is, yes, and it is this: *a character or event in the Old Testament is a type, if the New Testament specifically designates it to be such.* This may be too narrow for some interpreters, but at least we are on sure ground when we put it into practice. It may be true that there are *inferred* types, but we need to be careful here and make certain that the immediate or the remote context justifies them. That Adam was in some respects a type of Christ Rom. v. 14 makes clear:

“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 (type) of Him that was to come.*”

Melchizedek, who appears suddenly in the narrative of Gen. xiv. and disappears mysteriously, is typical of the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus. This is expressly stated in Heb. vii. 3, 15-17. Moses the Prophet, the mouthpiece of God, is a picture of the greatest of all prophets, Christ Himself (Deut. xviii. 15-19; Acts iii. 22-23). The sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament were all foreshadowing the Saviour (John i. 29; I Cor. v. 7). The manna in the wilderness finds its fulfillment in Christ (John vi. 30-35). The brazen serpent of the Old Testament was likewise a type of Christ, (John iii. 14, 15). The veil of the Tabernacle was a picture of the Lord’s humanity (Heb. x. 20). The smitten rock (see Exod. xvii. 6; Numb. xx. 11) typified the Lord Jesus Christ as I Cor. x. 4 asserts, “. . . . for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”. Joshua, the captain of Israel and leader into the promised land, prefigured Christ, and we should remember that Jesus is the Greek equivalent for Joshua (Heb. ii. 10; iv. 8, and note the margin).

And so we might go on. A rich field for study is opened here, and when we have the controlling guide of the New Testament we are delivered from interpretive schools, and many fanciful ideas and the opinions of men. Some students of Scripture identify *typology* with *allegory*, but this is a mistake, for, as we have seen, allegory is a figure of speech, a continued metaphor, whereby one story or aspect of truth is given in terms of another, not necessarily that of the New Testament, whereas true typology is based on the unity of Old Testament and New whereby something in the Old foreshadows something

in the New. In dealing with types we must be careful to note *dissimilarity* as well as *similarity*. As well as there being points of similarity between Christ and Adam, or Christ and Moses, there are many points of dissimilarity, especially when we consider the sin and weaknesses of both Adam and Moses. One of the errors that can arise is to make typical the elements of dissimilarity in a type, but this is guarded against if we carefully note how the New Testament comments upon the types of the Old.

True typology is a species of prophecy, and in the Old Testament we have some of the major and basic doctrines of the New Testament set forth in picture form, such as redemption, justification and atonement. We should take care in typical study to avoid extremes and flights of fancy. Some have been put off such study because of the extremes to which certain expositors have gone. The doctrine lying behind the Tabernacle needs care. A spiritual equivalent cannot be found for every single detail, and to try and produce this is not a mark of spirituality, nor is it sound. Another important thing to remember is that we should never seek to prove doctrine from types unless there is New Testament authority. There are at least six kinds of types in the Word of God:

(1) *Persons*, as we have seen, (2) *Institutions* such as Old Testament sacrifices, (3) *Offices*, Moses as prophet, Melchizedek as Priest-King, (4) *Events*, The wilderness wanderings, (5) *Actions*, The lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, (6) *Things*, such as the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

### **Symbols.**

Linked with types, yet separate from them, are symbols. One difference between them is the *time element*, a type being essentially a prefiguring of something future, whereas a symbol has no definite reference to time. In a symbol there are two elements: the idea which is mental, and the concrete image which represents it. It is well known that the prophetic books of the Bible are full of symbols and it is largely because of this fact that they are difficult to interpret. Here again, unless we have some guiding principle, the door is wide open to fancy, speculation and ridiculous extremes. We will confine ourselves to Scriptural symbols and consider the interpretation of prophecy later on.

When we seek to understand a symbol in the Bible we should have a concordance by us and be prepared to search and note every context where such a symbol is used, in other words, compare Scripture with Scripture, which we have seen is fundamental to the true interpretation of God's Word. We should carefully note if the symbol in question is *explained* by another passage of Scripture, and if so, we must accept this and *not force upon it another meaning which is contradictory*. Thus the wild animals of Daniel's prophecy stand for nations under human rule and energized by Satan. We should be helped by this when we come to interpret the wild beasts of the book of Revelation which have a similar meaning, and refer to the heads or rulers of these nations.

We must note that there is sometimes double imagery in symbols. The Lord Jesus is called "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), and Satan too is likened to a "lion . . . .

seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. v. 8), showing that sometimes a symbol can be used in more than one way; only the context and usage can decide. In consideration of symbols used in the Bible, there is no doubt that *numbers* are sometimes used symbolically, though here, once again, we need to take great care, for some have gone to great lengths in lack of wisdom and flights of fancy, especially those who are mathematically minded. Not every number in the Bible has spiritual significance, and to try and deduce all sorts of doctrines from numbers and gematria can be most misleading and also lead to error and division. It hardly needs stressing that seven is an important number in God’s purpose. The creation in seven days (however we interpret the days); the religious life of Israel revolving around seven, seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost, seven years with its Sabbatical year, seven times seven years with the Jubilee; the seventy sevens of Daniel’s prophecy, and the book of the Revelation is just full of sevens, not only the figure, but in the occurrence of words and phrases as well.

*Six* is man’s number. He was created on the sixth day and so comes short of seven, God’s perfect standard, and it is noteworthy that some of the enemies of God, such as Goliath, for instance, are stamped with six, and the superman of the end time is linked with a triple six (Rev. xiii. 18). *Four* is linked with the earth (the four quarters), *forty* with testing (Israel in the wilderness and the Lord Jesus likewise). *Thirteen* (ominous number for some) is linked with Satan. For a Scriptural exposition of this subject we recommend Dr. E.W. Bullinger’s *Number in Scripture*.

There is also symbolism in *colour*, even though the colours of the Bible may be difficult to determine exactly. While there is room for differences of opinion here, *scarlet* seems to be linked with sacrifice. *Blue* is the heavenly colour. *Purple*, having been worn by kings and high dignitaries, is the colour of royalty, whereas *white* suggests purity or righteousness. It is significant that in the last book of the Bible, where a spotless creation is finally reached, there are more references to white than in any other book in the New Testament.

Metals have a significance too. *Silver* was connected to the atonement money (Exod. xxx. 12-16), and therefore linked with redemption and atonement. *Gold* stands for the highest and holiest and can therefore in some contexts represent Deity. The *brass* of the Bible is not the same as the metal we know today, being composed of copper and tin, whereas the modern metal consists of copper and zinc. Bronze or copper would be nearer the mark than brass. Its use in connection with the brazen altar, upon which all the sacrifices for sin were made, the brazen serpent in the wilderness and the brazen feet of Christ in glory, about to return in power and glory (Rev. i. 15), link this metal with judgment.

Needless to say, a fixed meaning cannot be made for every occurrence of a metal or a colour in the Scriptures. Wisdom and balance must obtain here, as in all our dealings with the Word of God.

## **No.7. The Interpretation of Prophecy.**

**pp. 66 - 69**

When we come to consider prophecy and its interpretation we realize we are face to face with a difficult subject, and one where a great cleavage of opinion exists among believers. Is this really necessary? Prophecy, we are told, is a light that shines in a dark place, to which we should take heed (II Pet. i. 19), but if we cannot know for certain what it means, it ceases to be either a light or a guide; neither can we take heed to something of which we cannot be sure. It is evident that, from the stand-point of the Scriptures, prophecy was not given to puzzle or confuse, but to *guide and direct* the Christian, especially in times of darkness and declension, and to hide future truth from the enemies of God and the merely curious. It is in such times as these that we should be able to approach Biblical prophecy, which is only God writing history in advance, and see the glorious goal that He has planned and will most assuredly attain, and this can give us confidence, strength and full assurance of hope. The interpretation of prophecy is confessedly difficult even if every sound guiding principle is kept. Yet we cannot help feeling that this subject has been clouded and confused by the various schools of interpretation, by tradition, by fanciful and grotesque ideas, for nowhere can the imagination more run riot and go to greater extremes than in the consideration of prophecy.

We believe we can be greatly helped by putting into practice the guiding principles of historico-grammatical interpretation which we have already considered. Some evangelical expositors use these principles till they come to the study of prophecy and then they throw them away. Why? Because they are not convenient to their views? These principles are not just relevant to a *part* of the Bible, but to the *whole* of it, and we are convinced that if they are carried out with relation to prophecy, quite a number of the difficulties vanish. To get a correct understanding of a prophetic passage, we must take note of:

- a. the context, near and remote,
- b. note figurative and symbolic elements, and ascertain if these are explained in the passage or in other parallel parts of Scripture. For instance, a number of the symbols in the Revelation are explained (Rev. i. 20), and we must be ready to accept these as Divine explanations and not seek to *re-interpret them* according to our ideas,
- c. the historical background of the passage should be ascertained, noting of whom and to whom the prophecy relates. Is it Gentile nations or the people of Israel, or the Messiah Himself?
- d. Scripture must be compared with Scripture. The book of the Revelation has well over 200 references to the Old Testament, which fact makes it very evident that the *last book in the Bible can never be understood apart from a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures*, in fact it is an insult to the Divine Author to try and interpret it with the Old Testament shut. While the Revelation is a New Testament Book, it is Old Testament in much of its outlook. In fact, if we found it in our Bibles next to the prophecy of Daniel it would not be incongruous.



- e. We must decide whether the prophetic passage we are considering is conditional or unconditional and,
- f. whether it has been fulfilled or not, bearing in mind there is such a thing as multiple or double fulfillment which is not the same as multiple sense; the prophecy may be fulfilled in more than one stage.
- g. As we stressed before, we must take the literal meaning of the prophecy as a controlling guide. This does not mean a dry, wooden, excessive literalism, which disregards poetic imagery, figures of speech and symbols. In the Old Testament we have prophecies relating to Messiah's first coming and also to His second coming. As far as the Old Testament is concerned, both of these events were future, but for us those relating to the first coming are now history, while only those looking forward to His Second Advent are future. In other words, in the Scriptures we have examples of definite predictions which have been fulfilled, and as we study them, we can see without a shadow of doubt *how* they have been fulfilled, that is, whether literally or spiritually.

Let us consider the Old Testament foreview of the events centering around the Crucifixion (*This is treated in the author's "The Unfolding Purpose of God" pp. 10-14*); there were at least fourteen prophecies fulfilled at this time.

- (1) The Lord's disciples were to forsake Him (Zech. xiii. 7; Mark xiv. 27);
- (2) He was to be dumb before His accusers (Isa. liii. 7; Matt. xxvii. 12-14);
- (3) He was to be wounded and bruised (Isa. liii. 5; Matt. xxvii. 26, 30);
- (4) His hands and feet were to be pierced (Psa. xxii. 16; Luke xxiii. 33);
- (5) Yet none of His bones would be broken (Exod. xii. 46; John xix. 31-36);
- (6) He was to be crucified with thieves (Isa. liii. 12; Mark xv. 27, 28);
- (7) He was to pray for His persecutors (Isa. liii. 12; Luke xxiii. 34);
- (8) The people were to ridicule Him (Psa. xxii. 7, 8; Matt. xxvii. 41-43);
- (9) His garments were to be parted and lots cast for His vesture (Psa. xxii. 18; John xix. 23, 24);
- (10) The cry from the cross (Psa. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46);
- (11) They were to give Him gall and vinegar to drink (Psa. lxix. 21; Matt. xxvii. 34);
- (12) His body was to be pierced (Zech. xii. 10; John xix. 34-37);
- (13) His heart was to be broken (Psa. xxii. 14; John xix. 34);
- (14) He was to be buried in a rich man's grave (Isa. liii. 9; Matt. xxvii. 57-60).

If any spiritualizers existed when these Old Testament Scriptures were written, we can well imagine that they would have dubbed any *literal* fulfillment as "unspiritual or carnal", *but they would have been wrong, for every one of these fourteen prophecies was definitely and literally fulfilled within twenty-four hours.* To these we can add others, such as the prediction of Bethlehem as Messiah's birthplace (Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 4-6), His virgin birth (Isa. vii. 14; Matt. i. 23), and His riding into Jerusalem on a colt (Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 4, 5). The meaning of these would have been completely missed had any attempt been made to spiritualize them. Is there not a lesson that we can learn regarding prophetic interpretation from all this? We believe there is. If so many prophecies concerning the Lord's first coming were fulfilled literally, is not God teaching us that this is the way we should seek to interpret the yet future prophecies of His second coming?

By what sound system of interpretation are we to regard prophecies relating to His first Advent as literal, but the second Advent as spiritual? If the principles of historico-grammatical interpretation cannot be applied to prophecy, then a large portion of the Bible must be exempted, for prophecy extends from Genesis to Revelation, and if so, of what use can such a principle be? We therefore believe as a guiding principle, prophecy should be interpreted literally, unless the plain teaching of the New Testament in dealing with the passage or material in question is against this.

Davidson, in his *Old Testament Prophecy*, writes:

“I consider the first principle in prophetic interpretation is to assume that the literal meaning is his (the writer’s) meaning—that he is moving among realities, not symbols, among concrete things like people, not among abstractions like our church, world, etc.”.

He reprimands expositors who make Zion the church; the Canaanite the enemy of the church, the land of Canaan the promises to the church, and so on. There is no doubt that to the Jew, to whom much of prophecy was first given, Jerusalem meant Jerusalem and Canaan the literal Canaan. Once this is departed from, the door is wide open to human opinion and error. If God does not mean what He says when He inspires prophecy, how can it be a light to guide us in the darkness and how can we ever understand it?

- h. We believe a comprehension of the Divine purpose for the nation of Israel to be essential for the proper understanding of prophecy. If we err here, it is unlikely that we shall ever grasp what the Divine plan for the future is, nor shall we ever get the proper position of the Church, the Body of Christ, in this great plan. We must get clearly in our minds the teaching of Romans chapters ix.-xi., relating to Israel according to the flesh, and chapter xi. must not be interpreted or divorced from chapters ix. and x., which are an integral part of this section. The “all Israel” of xi. 26, who are in the future to be saved, have already been explained by the “all Israel” of ix. 6, 7, and in neither case can these refer to the Church, but are Paul’s “kinsmen according to the flesh” (ix. 3-5).

The weighty statement of Rom. xi. 29 must ever be kept in mind, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (or change of mind)”. This statement alone should be sufficient to prevent us from making the mistake of many spiritualizers, namely that Israel has been finally cast off by God, and the Church has inherited their blessings. If this is true, then God *has* changed His mind and altered the thing that has gone out of His lips, the very thing that He has stated He will never do (Psa. lxxxix. 34-37; Jer. xxxi. 35-37). If God has broken His Word regarding the nation of Israel, away goes all Christian assurance, for how can we be sure that He will not do so in connection with the Church? Moreover, the future restoration of Israel rests upon the New Covenant of grace (Jer. xxxi. 31-37), and this has been sealed by the precious blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28).

This restoration has no regard for personal merit or demerit. Israel are “enemies” of God so far as the gospel is concerned, but they are “beloved” by God, in spite of this, “for the fathers’ sake” (Rom. xi. 28). Their present opposition, blindness and failure cannot invalidate God’s unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or alter His eternal

love to their descendants. They are yet to “look on Him Whom they have pierced” (Zech. xii. 10) when He returns to the mount of Olives, and at this Second Advent Christ will turn away “ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. xi. 26). In no sense can “Jacob” be the Body of Christ, and there is certainly no ungodliness of this Church to be turned away or dealt with at the Lord’s Second Coming, for they already rejoice in the forgiveness of all trespasses (Col. ii. 13; Eph. i. 7; iv. 32). Once the true Scriptural position of Israel, past and future, is understood, the rest of the Bible falls into place. But this can never be realized, unless the guiding principles we have enunciated are carried into effect. Nothing is more destructive of true understanding of the purpose of the ages in Christ Jesus (Eph. iii. 11) than the acceptance of allegorizing or spiritualizing as a *method of interpretation* as is done by the amillennialist. Not only this, but as H. L. Payne has stated:

“It does not seem too much to say that the great strength of modern liberalism had its spring and finds its support in the post- and amillennial circles. This is due in large measure to the fact that the literal interpretation of the Scripture has been set aside, and thus the door has been thrown open to all other error.”

Further, if the spiritualizing principle be admitted into all realms of Christian doctrine, every orthodox doctrine would be eliminated. Amillennialism then is the friend of destructive modernism and Romanism, for spiritualizing has always characterized Roman Catholic doctrine. If we want to let the Word of God speak for itself with all its authority, then such a system must be avoided at all costs, for not in this way can the opinions of men be eliminated in handling the Word.

- i. The Lord Jesus Christ as the central theme must be constantly kept in mind in all prophetic interpretation. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. xix. 10). To miss our way here is to miss our way everywhere. The whole of God’s purposes for a new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness is centred in the Saviour. Not one of them can be understood or come to fruition apart from Him. To be taken up with prophetic details and to miss Christ is tragic, being on a par with the Pharisees of old, who searched the Scriptures and missed the Messiah of Scripture, in spite of the fact that the Old Testament testified of Him on His Own authority (John v. 39, 40).

We believe that adherence to historico-grammatical principles will clear away quite a number of prophetic difficulties, many of which are man-made and not in the text at all. Prophecy is hard enough to expound without adding weights of man’s devising, and wise are we if we avoid these pitfalls and endeavour to approach prophecy apart from schools of interpretation, whether preterist\*, historicist or futurist.

[\*Preterist -- one who holds that the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled.]

## No.8. The Interpretation of the Parables. pp. 85 - 89

The root meaning of the word “parable” is “a placing alongside” for the purpose of comparison, and basically it is therefore a method of illustration. It is important to note when parables are introduced into the Gospel records, and the reason for them, which we shall find is very different from the average Christian conception. In Matthew’s Gospel, parables are not introduced until the thirteenth chapter. It is quite wrong to think that parabolic teaching characterized Christ’s ministry from the start. It is evident from chapter xi. onwards that events were moving to a climax:

“Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not” (Matt. xi. 20).

In chapter xii. the Lord is presented as greater than the Temple and its priesthood (verse 6), greater than Jonah the prophet (verse 41), and greater than Solomon the king (verse 42). He had come to His earthly people Israel as Prophet, Priest and King, and the majority manifested that they were not going to receive Him as such. Chapter xiii. immediately follows with the account of Christ beginning to teach in parables and we are left in no doubt as to the reason. “And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries (secrets) of the kingdom of heaven, *but to them it is not given . . . .* Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing *see not*; and hearing *they hear not, neither do they understand*” (Matt. xiii. 10, 11, 13). Then He went on to quote Isa. vi. 9, 10, which predicted the very state of the people to whom He was speaking, with blinded eyes, deafened ears, and a hard, non-understanding heart or mind, which was going to be repeated in the generation that followed, during the Acts period, when at the end, this prophecy is quoted for the third and last time. This terrible condition has characterized the Jew, as a race, ever since. It is evident that in parabolic teaching the Lord was *veiling the truth* not making it simple to understand, very different from the usual idea that a parable is a simple earthly story with a heavenly meaning, suitable for children in a Sunday school. The very reverse is true. The Lord is wrapping up the truth, as it were, and making it more difficult to understand to those who were rejecting Him. To those who were willing and responsive to learn, as the disciples, He said: “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt. xiii. 16; cf. Luke viii. 8). We must be prepared, therefore, to face the fact that the interpretation of parables is not easy. There are four points at least to consider:

- (1) A parable is some well known earthly event or custom.
- (2) Behind the earthly illustration is the spiritual lesson or truth which the parable sets forth.
- (3) The earthly picture bears a relationship by analogy to the spiritual truth behind it.
- (4) Because every parable has two meanings they all stand in need of interpretation.

To do this adequately we must remember (1) that the Lord linked these first parables with the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 24, 31, 33, 45, 47, 52). We must therefore have a Scriptural conception of the kingdom of heaven before we can interpret the parables correctly. (2) As the parables are largely drawn from the agriculture of Palestine of the Lord's time, a knowledge of this is obviously helpful. (3) As some details of the parables are interpreted by the Lord Himself, we must give first place to this fact and not re-interpret them in any way. (4) The context, as always, must be carefully considered. Luke xv. records the three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. The context gives the setting and the reason for the parables:

“Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them” (Luke xv. 1, 2).

The following parables therefore concern publicans and sinners and the heart of God towards them, and are a rebuke to the Scribes and Pharisees. This setting carries over into chapter xvi. with the parable of the unjust steward, at the end of which we read: “And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, *heard all these things*: and they derided Him” (Luke xvi. 14). The Lord continued to speak to them in the next verses “And He said *unto them*, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men . . . .” and He ended up by speaking to them the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

It may be objected that this is not stated to be a parable and therefore cannot be treated as such, but this cannot be maintained because several are given without any such introduction and are obviously parabolic, e.g., the prodigal son (xv. 11). We should seek to discover the central truth of any parable and not try to fix a doctrinal significance to all the details, which will only side-track from the main teaching. The issue to get clear is: what did it first mean to those to whom the Lord gave it? It is possible that more truth resided in the parable than they could apprehend. Even so, this must square with the teaching of the Lord as a whole and the remoter context of the rest of the New Testament. It is unwise to base fundamental truths upon parables or symbolic prophetic Scriptures, such as the book of Revelation. This generally shows a weakness; if such truths are really basic and foundational, they will be treated as plain doctrine in other parts of Scripture.

The most important thing is to get a Scriptural conception of that aspect of the kingdom to which the Gospel parables pertain. In the New Testament we have several phrases embodying the word kingdom: the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of His beloved Son, and variants of these. We have to decide whether all these are synonymous, or have they differences of meaning? The kingdom of God occurs throughout the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. It is found in Paul's earlier epistles written during the Acts and in those written afterwards from prison. It must therefore be all-embracing, including things in heaven as well as things on earth, the whole of God's mighty redemptive plan in Christ being envisaged in it. There can be nothing that pertains to God outside this universal sovereignty. The kingdom of heaven occurs thirty-two times in Matthew's Gospel and nowhere else. This phase of the kingdom must therefore be restricted to the scope and purpose of this Gospel

which is peculiarly related to the people of Israel and God's purpose for them as made known in the Old Testament. Here, Christ's ministry and that of the twelve was exclusively to Israel (Matt. xv. 24; x. 5, 6), which is the central channel, from a human standpoint, through which God planned to bring in His kingdom the world over, taking the knowledge and light of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, so fulfilling His original promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is aptly expressed in the Lord's prayer of the Sermon on the Mount. ". . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *in earth, as it is in heaven . . . .*" (Matt. vi. 10), or as Moses expressed it centuries before: ". . . . as the days of *heaven upon the earth*" (Deut. xi. 21). After the forty days instruction by the Lord after His resurrection, the disciples do not hesitate to ask: ". . . . wilt Thou at this time *restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts i. 6), showing clearly that this earthly aspect of the kingdom is linked with the people of Israel and not the Church.

The occurrences of the kingdom of God in the Gospels are parallel to this, as a comparison of Matthew xi. 11 with Luke vii. 28 shows, but we must not infer from this that these expressions are synonymous, but as the lesser is included in the greater, the two can now be parallel as far as the Divine purpose is expressed in the Gospel records. The final realization of God's kingdom upon the earth awaits the return of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. xix. 11-16; Matt. xxiv. 29-31). At that time, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. xi. 15).

What is the character of this kingdom? Is it spiritual or literal and visible, or a combination of both? That it starts in a spiritual sense is made clear by such passages as Matt. xxi. 31, where Christ declared to the chief priests that publicans and harlots were entering the kingdom before them. If God's kingdom is ever to be realized on earth or in heaven, then its subjects must have changed hearts and minds and God always begins with the inward and works outwards. Consequently the kingdom of God begins with the new birth (John iii. 3), and basically the "kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Here the spiritualizer and amillennialist will heartily agree, but Scripture makes it plain that this, of itself, is not the complete fulfilling of the kingdom; it is only its beginning. A moment's reflection will surely make clear that if every inhabitant of, say, a large city were saved and practically exhibiting the Christian life, there would be sure to be a practical effect on the outward conditions of that city. Going wider, if a whole nation became truly saved believers in Christ, it would be sure to have an overwhelming effect upon that nation and its daily life, and also upon every nation who had any contact with it. Going wider still, when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, "as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. ii. 14), the effect on the world in its actions and practical business relationships will be tremendous. It will be nothing less than a colossal revolution. Such a kingdom could not possibly be confined to the mind and heart alone. The final realization of the kingdom of heaven upon earth is therefore both inward and spiritual, outward and literal, and to see anything less than this is to fall short of the Biblical conception.

However, the kingdom as used in relationship to the Church which is Christ's Body is in the spiritual realm entirely. This church has a homeland which exists not on earth, but in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). It is urged not to set its mind on earthly things (Phil. iii. 19), but on those things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. iii. 1, 2) and where, in Christ Jesus, they are potentially seated (Eph. ii. 5, 6). All such have already been "translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 13). The apostle Paul speaks of the future hope of this church as at the Lord's appearing and His kingdom, and looks to being preserved unto His *heavenly* kingdom (II Tim. iv. 1, 18). There is a present realization, and because of this and its heavenly sphere of blessing, it must not be confused with the earthly sphere of the kingdom that we have been considering, which is yet to come to pass when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom (Matt. xvi. 28). There is a heavenly aspect of the kingdom of God (Col. iv. 11) relating to the out-calling and building up of the Body of Christ, and an earthly aspect of this kingdom where the nation of Israel largely figure and these must be distinguished, although both find their centre in the Lord Jesus Christ. The subjects of the earthly kingdom are spoken of as "inheriting" or being "heirs of the kingdom", "receiving the kingdom" and "sons of the kingdom", but we never read in the New Testament of receiving the church, or being heirs or sons of the church. We must remember, too, that the kingdom of heaven, when the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven, is the subject of Old Testament prophecy, whereas the Body of Christ was a secret "hid in God" from past ages and generations of people (Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 24-27), and therefore unknown till God chose to reveal it.

There are some who, seeing this, and realizing the need of not confusing these two aspects of God's redemptive purpose, speak of distinguishing between the Kingdom and the Church, as though the word Kingdom is kept in the New Testament to Israel and the earth, and never used concerning the Church the Body of Christ. This is not so, and such language is not accurate and precise enough. We should distinguish, most certainly, between the *earthly* phase of the kingdom and its subjects and the *heavenly* phase of the Body of Christ with its citizenship in heaven (Phil. iii. 20), always remembering that finally these will be linked under the Headship of Christ in the dispensation of the fullness of the seasons, when all things in heaven and earth will be gathered under Him (Eph. i. 9, 10) by reason of His mighty redemptive work on the cross.

From what we have seen therefore, the interpretation of the parables of the kingdom of heaven relates to the earthly aspect of God's kingdom, of which the redeemed people of Israel are the Divine channel. To try and force the heavenly people in here, the Body of Christ as an interpretation, is to confuse "the things that differ", and mix up God's earthly plan with the heavenly aspect of it. There are no parables, or hiding of the truth in the Pauline letters which relate to the Body of Christ, but the very reverse. In Col. i. 24-27, the apostle links his special ministry given to him by the ascended Christ with the Church, the Lord's Body, likening it to a dispensation or stewardship which God had given him, to unfold the great Secret concerning this church, which up till now had been hidden in God (Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 26) but now is *made manifest* to His saints. To whom God *wishes to make known* what is the riches of the glory of this secret, which is Christ among you (Gentiles), the hope of glory (Col. i. 27).

## **No.9. Conclusion.**

**pp. 104 - 109**

At the beginning the question was asked: “Is there some way of interpreting the Word of God, so that human opinion is ruled out, and Divine understanding given? We believe that the practical application of the guiding principles previously indicated will do this as far as it is humanly possible; moreover, these principles are a basis upon which all evangelicals who honour the Bible as the inspired Word of God should be able to agree. Only when treated in this way can the Holy Scriptures speak with authority and say: “Thus saith the Lord.”

Not only this, but such a method of interpreting the Word is a great bulwark against error. The various false cults which surround us today could not have come into existence had they kept to historico-grammatical principles, and every one of them violates these in some way or another. The whole set-up of Christendom with its sects and divisions could not have developed as it has done had Christians from century one onwards handled the Scriptures along these lines; likewise the differences among evangelicals, especially on prophecy, could largely have been avoided by adherence to these rules of interpretation. There can only be one true interpretation of any passage of Scripture, although after this has been settled, applications may be made as long as they are consistent with the truth governing this age of grace in which we live. The result of such interpretation will be to distinguish in Scriptural truth (1) that which is permanently true for all time and (2) that which is true only for a limited period. In (1) we should class sin and the Divine remedy for it, salvation in Christ and its attendant doctrines of redemption, atonement and sanctification. In (2) we should put, among other things, the law given through Moses with its ceremonial, and the constitution of the people of Israel. There was a time when the rite of circumcision was truth; so much so, that of any who disobeyed it, God said: “. . . . that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant” (Gen. xvii. 14). This was a Divine command and could not be broken with impunity. Yet when we come to the epistle to the Galatians we read:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that *if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*” (Gal. v. 1-2).

No believer today brings an animal sacrifice to God when he has been overtaken in a fault, but there was a time when failure to do this would have been disobedience, which would have been directly punished by God. It was truth in Old Testament times, but it is not true today.

Clause (1) may be termed basic or fundamental truth, and clause (2) dispensational truth. Some need to be reminded that the word dispensation *oikonomia* is a Scriptural word which occurs eight times in the New Testament. It is not a human invention. It is often confused with the word “age” and treated as though it is a period of time. Some



have taught that there are seven dispensations which they equate with time divided up into seven periods. This is a mistake, as time, basically, does not enter into this word. Three times it is translated “stewardship” in Luke xvi. 2, 3, 4, & “edifying” in I Tim. i. 4, and the root idea is of one who is put in charge of the administration of a household, an overseer or bailiff. Twice the apostle Paul declares that *he had been given* a dispensation (Eph. iii. 2; Col. i. 25). No period of time had been entrusted to him, but a body of truth connected with the Church, the Body of Christ, had been committed to him by the risen and ascended Christ Jesus, and for this he was its steward or minister, as these verses testify.

Because some have misunderstood or abused the word dispensation, this does not justify the rejection of dispensational truth as error. In every class and society there are those who act in an unbalanced way. One might as well reject Christianity because some have been such poor practical exponents of it. It should surely be obvious that these two aspects of Scriptural truth must be distinguished or confusion is bound to result. Nor must one be stressed and the other forgotten, otherwise an erroneous conception of God’s Word will dominate the mind. In practice, every one who accepts the Bible as the Word of God and the regulator of their daily life is bound to be a dispensationalist. The very fact that such do not make any attempt to carry out animal sacrifices for sin, as mentioned before, shows that they regard such regulations as not being truth for today, however much they believe the Bible, and however true these commands were in the Old Testament times. The Mosaic ritual of the law was a dispensation, or administration of Divine truth, for a limited period only, and Moses was its steward. It was not basic for all time and has been superseded since the coming of the great Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has fulfilled the type and shadow of the ceremonial law.

A practical following out of the historico-grammatical system of interpretation will assuredly lead to a distinguishing between these two most important aspects of revealed Truth, leading to a greater clarification and understanding of the great redemptive purpose of God. In fact it will lead to a practical realization of what the apostle Paul prayed for the Philippian believers, a spiritual perception enabling such to “try the things that differ” (i. 10, margin) or as the main text “approve things that are excellent”. When things differ, they do so not only in external ways, such as shape and size, but in internal quality, and it is only by recognizing and distinguishing these that we can get the best. Abraham was a practical example of this attitude of mind. God had unconditionally given him and his posterity an earthly inheritance (Gen. xiii. 14-17; xv. 12-18). The Epistle to the Hebrews records by inspiration what the Old Testament leaves out, namely that to Abraham God gave a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, very much as the apostle John received in Rev. xxi. Chapter xi. of Hebrews describes this as a “*better country*” (xi. 16), and a city which God has built (verse 10). Abraham “tried the things that differ” and found what was “more excellent”. “Better” is one of the key words of Hebrews; there are seven things described by God as “better” (Heb. i. 4; vii. 7, 19; viii. 6; ix. 23; x. 34; xi. 35). If we want the best, then we shall have to consider carefully and prayerfully the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians where the high-water mark of revelation is reached.

If Abraham had been like many Christians today, he would have failed to distinguish between earthly and heavenly revelation, and would have missed the better things God had in view for him.

To many, the meek who shall inherit the *earth* (Matt. v. 5), and the citizenship that now exists in the *heavens* (Phil. iii. 20), are all one and the same thing. The spirit of discrimination that Abraham exercised is completely lacking in them. If this sort of attitude is right, then we might as well give up all serious Bible study, for words have no meaning. Others see the part and imagine it is the whole. There are systems of Bible interpretation that envisage all the redeemed being blessed in future on the earth, while another interpretation finally puts all the redeemed in heaven and has no place for an earthly kingdom. Both are wrong and have only a part of the Divine picture. What they need, and what we all need, is to have our minds stretched and enlarged to grasp more of the fullness of God's mighty plan of redemption and reconciliation that touches the highest heavens as well as the earth beneath (Col. i. 20), finding its final fulfillment in "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. iii. 13). The understanding of many of us is clouded because of our poverty of conception. We have a God that is too small, and a divine purpose that is little more than parochial.

When Paul urged Timothy to keep in the forefront of his mind the object of receiving God's approval, he was told this was bound up with "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Tim. ii. 15), showing that the way we handle and interpret the Word of God is of supreme importance, and God's future assessment of our Christian testimony and whether we meet Him with joy or shame, depends upon our obedience to this command. We believe that if we carry out the guiding principles before enunciated, we shall be doing just this, and in doing so, we are allowing God's Word to mean exactly what it says, and *every statement of Scripture can be taken in the setting in which we find it without alteration, addition or subtraction*. It then ceases to be the word of man, but is in truth the Word of God. The critic may say that such a system is "divisive", that it "chops the Bible up into unrelated parts" and destroys the organic unity of Scripture. But rightly applied, this is not true. One could retort that the critic who recognizes the division of the Old and New Testaments, has chopped the Bible into halves. When we "rightly divide the Word", we shall recognize the basic doctrine of redemption and the final Headship of Christ that binds together the callings of the redeemed and the spheres of blessing, as well as noting the distinctions that God has made. Eph. i. 10 looks forward to a future dispensation of the fullness of the seasons when all heaven and earth are gathered under the headship of Christ, expressing a unity that will be unbreakable and eternal. "United yet divided" expresses the position, and to ignore one and hold to the other is unscriptural and can only lead to imbalance, and a partial or clouded view of God's great goal. It is quite pathetic to see how some expositors in their over-anxiety to overthrow "dispensationalism", erect a great man of straw, someone's particular brand of dispensational teaching, and then proceed with great show to knock it down, and imagine when they have done this that the dispensational approach to the Scriptures has been proved erroneous and overthrown. This is usually the attitude of the amillennialist, but amillennialism is a denial of the historico-grammatical system of exposition, at least as far as prophecy is concerned and, as such, it is an unsound and inconsistent method of

study, with its allegorization, opening the door wide to human opinion and error. A further example of this can be seen in the amillennial treatment of the two resurrections of Rev. xx. The first is held to be spiritual, taking place at the salvation of the sinner; the second, the general physical resurrection of all the dead of all time. It is well to note the comments by Dean Alford on this passage in his *Greek New Testament*, and he had no leanings toward the dispensational viewpoint:

“It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this commentary, that I cannot consent to distort its words (that of the passage) from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any consideration of difficulty, or any risk of abuse which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole church for 300 years, understood them in the plain, literal sense, and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain *psuchai ezesan* at the first, and the rest of the *nekroi ezesan* only at the end of a specified period after the first—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave—then, there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope” (*The Greek New Testament in loco*).

These are sane and weighty words, and there is no doubt that Dean Alford has the majority of sound scholars with him. Hardly anywhere else is the futility of amillennial interpretation shown up more than in its handling of Rev. xx.

The amillennialist may call the pre-millennialist’s views of the future “carnal” and “unscriptural”, but he needs reminding that spiritual things are not necessarily better than the material. There is such a thing as spiritual wickedness (Eph. vi. 12). When God put Adam and Eve into the garden of Eden, was this carnal because it was material and on the earth? And when the earthly part of God’s kingdom is realized and becomes like Eden again, is this to be dubbed carnal? The literal material and earthly is not to be avoided *per se* for this savours of the *Gnostic abhorrence of the material*, and any approach to this Satanic system of error, so prevalent in the early centuries of Christianity, must be avoided at all costs. The basic and dispensational approach to the Scriptures, keeping these in balance, will save us from this. Such a method of interpretation is sane and reverent, honours the Word of God and allows it to speak with all its authority, and is in no sense a system foisted upon it.

We return to a point we have already stressed, because of its extreme importance. All Scriptural interpretation must finally be Christological, in other words, the Lord Jesus Christ must be the centre and circumference of it all. To get bogged down with interpretive, doctrinal or dispensational details and to miss Him is to miss everything. The great redemptive purpose of the ages is centred in Him (Eph. iii. 11), and the time is yet to be when every being in heaven, and earth and under the earth will give Him His rightful place and acknowledge Him as Jehovah and Lord (Phil. ii. 9-11). Our main task

is to preach Him (Gal. i. 15, 16) as the only remedy for the needs of the individual, the world and creation at large. We can only do this effectively when we handle the Word of God aright and have it richly within us (Col. iii. 16), and in His strength, grace and wisdom seek to make it known. A partial or faulty understanding of the written Word can only lead to an imperfect knowledge of the living Word. That is why hermeneutics, or the science of interpreting the Holy Scriptures, is of such great importance to every believer, whether a leader or teacher or otherwise. We should not count it a labour, a bore, or as being too difficult to get to know the principles which govern correct interpretation. Rather this should be something that is eagerly sought after, and we trust that this study, in some measure, has helped towards this goal.

In conclusion, the honest interpreter will always keep a supreme regard for *truth at all costs*. Nor will he forget the words of the Saviour: “. . . . Sanctify them through Thy Truth: *Thy Word is Truth*” (John xvii. 17), nor His constant reverence for the Holy Scriptures (Matt. v. 17, 18; John v. 46, 47; Luke x. 25-28; Matt. xxii. 29) whose primary aim is to “make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. iii. 15). To interpret the Scriptures is a high and holy task. God will not hold guiltless any who carelessly handle or tamper with His Word, substituting the folly and error of man for His wisdom and His Truth.

## The Plan of God.

*(Being a series of studies in the Scriptures, made for broadcasting in America.  
They have the beginner and even the unbeliever in mind,  
and are an attempt to present the Truth of the Scriptures in the simplest possible way.)*

### No.13. pp. 15 - 18

We have considered the wise practice of the believers at Berea in checking with the O.T. all they heard put forward as truth. We can scarcely over-estimate the importance of this. Truth then becomes *first-hand*, not second-hand, and the possibility of error is greatly reduced.

Now we are going to take bigger steps, otherwise we shall not reach our goal. You will find that in chapter xvii. the Apostle, in his travels, comes to Athens. Now Athens was the centre of the world's wisdom; there resided the great minds, the philosophers, the deep thinkers. We can read their writings today, and we see what great intellects these men had! Yet, strange to say, as he came to the centre of the world's learning, we are told that "his spirit was stirred within him" (verse 16). Why? "When he saw the city wholly given to idolatry". What a commentary on the human mind! You see what sin has done? It has so spoiled man's thinking, that when he comes to the things of God, he is just floundering helplessly in a deep ocean. This cleverness of intellect did not save these men from being idolators, worshipping images of stone and wood. How it stirred up this man who had the Spirit of Christ!

You will notice that, as his habit was, he goes straight to the Jew first (verse 17). We have seen why, because in the great plan of God for world blessing and enlightenment, they are to be the Divine Channel as stated in Gen. xii. One thing we should note is that the Apostle does not quote the O.T. Scriptures, as he usually does. Why? He was dealing with people who had no special regard for them. So he finds his point of contact in something one of their own poets wrote (verse 28), "for certain of your own poets have said, We also are his off-spring", and he made this statement the centre of his address. He said, in effect, "if that is true, surely we should not be so foolish as to make images of the Godhead and worship them!" Then he is able to bring in the great message of the Gospel. He commands all men (verse 30) everywhere to repent.

After this he moves on to Corinth. Corinth was a well-known port and centre of much business and it had a very bad reputation. It was a sink of iniquity. Even the ordinary pagan writers at this time spoke of the sin of Corinth. To "act the Corinthian" was to sink low indeed. One would hardly think that the grace of God could make any headway in a place like Corinth, but it did, showing that God's grace can save even the very worst of sinners! Paul comes to this place, and in just the same way, goes to the Jew first (vs. 4): "He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks (end of verse 5) that Jesus was the Christ". The word "Christ" is simply the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah". He is seeking to convince these Jews that the Lord

Jesus was their Messiah, going right to the heart of things with them. Notice again the continual opposition. It is evident that they will *not* believe, they will *not* receive the gospel with all the special promises to them consequent upon its reception. They hardened their hearts, they made their ears deaf to the message. What a terrible thing is this will of man when it turns against God! But God still waits in longsuffering. How wonderful is God's patience with His people! We are told (verse 6) they opposed and blasphemed; that was their answer to God's long-suffering and grace, so Paul "shook his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean". He had discharged his responsibility in making known the good news, "from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles". Now he had already said that, you remember, at Antioch, when he had received the same treatment there from the Jews. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (xiii. 46). That was only a *local* turning away from the Jew because, at the very next place he visits, he goes straight to the synagogue. The same thing happened here; he turns away from the Jews at Corinth; but when he comes to Ephesus, he still goes to the synagogue, to the chosen people and puts them first.

"And he came to Ephesus and left them there but he himself entered into the synagogue" (xviii. 19). So once more he is with the Jew. It was only another local turning away as before in Corinth. Then he goes down to Antioch (verse 22) and there is a very interesting episode brought before us in connection with a Jewish believer whose name was Apollos (verse 24), and Luke tells us that he was a man who was 'mighty in the Scriptures'. Note he does not say he was mighty in strength, or mighty in wisdom, but that he was mighty in the Scriptures! This is the secret for finding and progressing in truth and the knowledge of the Lord. It is because so many have no acquaintance with God's Book, that they have no knowledge of Him and His ways and so often go wrong. The Lord Jesus said to some in the days of His flesh, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures". A sound knowledge of the Word of God is a sure preventative against wrong ideas and declension.

Apollos was 'mighty in the Scriptures', but there was further truth lying ahead of him. We are told (verse 25) that 'he spake and taught diligently (accurately) the things of the Lord' but he only knew up to the baptism of John. Accurate study is essential for getting truth, and this man was an accurate student as far as he went. But then there were two other believers who, knowing the truth given through Paul's ministry, were able to help this man [*grow*] on further. Their names were Aquila and Priscilla; and in verse 26 we are told that "When Priscilla and Aquila had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly". This word "perfectly" is the same as the word 'diligently', literally, more accurately. Apollos was an accurate student of the truth but these believers were able to lead him on to a *more accurate* knowledge of it. This is a wonderful ministry, when *we* get to know the Scriptures, that is what we shall be able to do as God gives us opportunities. When we have got the Word of God treasured in our hearts and minds we shall be able to lead others on, just like Priscilla and Aquila did.

And so (verse 27), Apollos “helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews shewing *by the Scriptures* that Jesus was the Christ”.

We now go on further and find in chapter xix. that Paul comes back to Ephesus again, and a little further on we read this (verses 11-12): “And God wrought *special miracles* by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them”. When we get to the close of the Acts we shall find that miraculous and instantaneous healing still takes place. In this case, it was not necessary for Paul to be present! If only a piece of clothing that had touched his body was sent at a distance, it was quite sufficient to heal! Note these are *special miracles* and they run like a thread through the book of the Acts and then stop: We will note the importance of this later.

We now pass on to the twentieth chapter; here we find the Apostle Paul calling together the elders of the church at Ephesus (verse 17) “And from Miletus he sent and called for the elders of the chapter, we cannot help feeling that this phase of Paul’s ministry was coming to a close. Twice he tells them that they are never going to see him again, and that greatly upsets them because they had such affection for him. He had helped them so much. Look at verse 25; Paul says “behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more”. Verse 37: “And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he spake, that they should see his face no more”. He continues (verse 22) “And now, behold I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that bonds and afflictions abide me”, or, as the margin says, “wait for me”. Prison lay ahead for him, God the Holy Spirit had shown him that, but he was willing and ready for it. Is it not grand to hear him saying (verse 24): “But none of these things move me”? Strengthened by the grace of God, that is what you and I can say whatever problems lie ahead. Paul later on when he wrote to the church at Philippi said: “*I can do all things* through Christ who strengthened me”. It is a wonderful thing to know where the source of our strength lies. He knew, and surely we can know too.

Then follow two things which, we believe, sum up all faithful ministry and faithful service for the Lord Jesus. He says to them (verse 20), “how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you”. (Verse 27), “I have not shunned to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God”. I have kept back *nothing*; I have made known *everything*. This is the hall-mark of faithful Christian witness. Nothing held back because it may be unpopular, but everything the Lord has entrusted to us fully made known. If we can truthfully say this at the end of our lives, we shall be happy indeed!

When we come to chapter xxi. we find this prediction of imprisonment stressed. There was a prophet called Agabus (verse 10) and in verse 11 “when he was come unto us he took Paul’s girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”. Again, God is speaking through this prophet and he is telling Paul that there is imprisonment ahead for him. Some have gone as far as to say that the Apostle Paul made a mistake; he should have avoided going to Jerusalem

or Rome and so escaped imprisonment. But when we come to chapter xxiii. we are told (verse 11), “And the night following the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as *thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*”

Paul may not have fully known what this future imprisonment was going to involve, but whatever it cost him, there was nothing but tremendous blessing coming through it for Gentile believers, who by nature were aliens and far off from God and all the blessings given to the covenant people Israel. This we trust, we shall get to know for ourselves as we proceed with our study and see how the riches of God’s truth unfold.

#### **No.14. pp. 39, 40**

We have seen how the Apostle Paul is taking the message as he goes on his missionary journeys, spreading the truth of the Gospel, but going to the chosen people first because they were still in covenant relation to God and His plan to reach the earth through the chosen people of Israel, Abraham’s seed, was still a possibility.

Now we open the Book then at the twenty-sixth chapter of Acts, and we find now that, in the providence of God, Paul has come before King Agrippa and he is making his defence before this king. He says (verse 2): “I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews . . . . And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers”. God made certain promises to Abraham, and confirmed them to Isaac and to Jacob as we have seen. These concerned their posterity, Israel, and what God was prepared to do through them for world blessing. At this point He was waiting for their repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and Priest-King.

Verse 7: “Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night hope to come”. Now what about those who teach that Israel was cast off by God at the Cross because they rejected the Lord Jesus? It is quite evident that the Apostle Paul did not believe that. The twelve tribes have still their hope, and there is still a possibility of it being fulfilled! No one knew but what, at the last moment, this nation might turn and repent and then God would have been as good as His Word; He would have sent back the Lord Jesus to them and the earthly Kingdom could have been realized (Acts iii. 19-26). We must keep the possibility of this still in our minds. We know that Israel did not repent and so it did not take place then. We must not look at things as we see them 2,000 years later, but try and put ourselves in the position of believers at this time. So there is a possibility of the hope of the promise that God gave to Abraham being fulfilled as late as Acts xxvi., otherwise words do not mean anything.



And will you notice too, that Paul does not say Judah only, the two tribes. He says *twelve* tribes; so the people who tell you ten tribes are lost are obviously wrong. Paul knew nothing about their beings lost. He speaks of twelve tribes who are waiting for their hope.

Now I want you to notice another thing which he says. He gives an account—this is the third account we have in the Acts—of his conversion; and it is not just needless repetition, because every time we have added details given us. We have it in Acts ix., in Acts xxii. and now in the twenty-sixth chapter. So, if we want the whole story, we must read these three chapters. There is one thing in this account in chapter xxvi. which we do not find in the other two. The Lord speaks to him and he asks Him first of all (verse 5) “Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou *hast* seen, and of those things in the which *I will appear unto thee*”. Now let us try to be very simple. ‘Both’ must speak of two things. Two things mentioned here: (1) the things that *had been* shown to the Apostle by the Lord; (2) the things that would be shown to the Apostle by the Lord at *some time in the future*. So, clearly, there is a two-fold revelation given to Paul by Christ; once, at his conversion, and [*another*], at some unspecified date later on. Can we, when we look at Paul’s ministry, find another time when the Lord gave to him an additional revelation to make known? The answer is yes. In the very next letter that Paul writes after the completion of the Acts he tells us this very thing.

So, anticipating just a little, let us go to this letter, the Epistle to the Ephesians. We will open it at chapter iii. He says (verse 1) “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that *by revelation He made known unto me the mystery*”. Now he has not said anything about this in his earlier ministry for the simple reason it had not been revealed to anyone, being hid in God up to this point. This secret, for that is the meaning of the word ‘mystery’—is concerning a newly created company which is called ‘one new man’ (ii. 15) and his aim now (verse 9) is “to make all men see what is the fellowship (or as the R.V. reads—the dispensation) of the mystery—the dispensation of the secret which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ”. After the Acts, when he ends up in Rome as a prisoner, the Lord had already appeared to him and now gives him the commission to make known the new revelation, and he does it in the first letter written afterwards, that to the Ephesians. We repeat that it was something that had been kept hidden by God Himself, and when God hides anything can anybody find it? The obvious answer is—“No”. It is surely unbelief to try and find it in any place until God reveals it! But He does reveal it at this juncture; it is a secret no longer, He also refers to it when he writes to the believers at Colosse and he makes the tremendous statement that, God *wants* to make it known; God *wills* to make known what is this secret among the Gentiles. God *wants* to make it known! (Col. i. 27). Do you want to hear? He wants to tell it! Do you want to listen? We pray that each of us may have this desire, because in this secret we have the highest and the most wonderful revelation that God has ever given, and if we miss this, *we shall miss the best*.

## No.15. pp. 58 - 60

We have seen that the Apostle Paul, in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, brings forward the two-fold ministry given to him at his conversion by the Lord Jesus. Also, before we finish this chapter, he sums up his past ministry, and this is helpful to us. He says (verse 22) “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, *those which the prophets and Moses did says should come*. That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people (the Jew) and to the Gentiles”. In other words, his ministry had gone no further than Moses and the O.T. In which case no revelation of the Body of Christ could have been given up to this point, as this was a secret, hid by God in Himself and not revealed and publicly proclaimed until Paul became the prisoner of Christ Jesus at Rome (Acts xxviii.). The well-known idea that the Body began at Pentecost is shown to be erroneous by this explicit statement of Paul’s, and not until we can find this church clearly revealed in the Pentateuch, can we subscribe to such teaching, however popular it may be.

Now we come to the last chapter which is one of great importance. Paul has been traveling on his way to Rome to appear before Caesar. In his sea journey he has been shipwrecked, having passed through a terrific storm. If you want a vivid piece of narrative read Acts xxvii. Some people like reading thrilling adventure stories—well, here is one! We must pass over this and come to the last chapter. Paul arrives at the island we now call Malta; it is called here ‘Melita’. We are told (verse 2) “The barbarous people showed us no little kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.” Now they noted this and said among themselves, obviously this is divine judgment on this man. He is wicked, so the gods have allowed a snake to bite him and he will surely die.

But let us read verse 4 and see what actually did happen. “They said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.” And then, to their surprise “he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm”. That must have been an anti-climax surely! Expecting him to fall dead they note that the poisonous snake bite does not have the slightest effect on Paul. So their attitude now changes. He must be a god, then—there must be something divine about this man. “Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; but after they had looked a great while and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.”

There must be some good reason why this incident happened and is recorded here, and it should take our minds back to a promise that the Lord Jesus made, in ascension, to the

eleven. In Mark xvi. 17 the Lord said “And these signs shall follow them that believe”. If this promise is true—and we may be assured that every promise of the Lord *is* true—then there is no doubt about it that these signs will follow every true believer. “In my Name they shall cast out devils (or demons), they shall speak with new tongues”; this they did, on the day of Pentecost and onwards. Now note: “They shall take up serpents” (Paul had done this very thing), “and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”. Now not only did Paul experience a deadly snake bite, but we find him also healing again, as recorded in this chapter, showing the promise of Mark xvi. is still holding good at this point. Following hard on the episode concerning the snake bite, verse 8 states “and it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux”. We would call it by its modern name—dysentery—a very serious and difficult disease to treat, especially in those days; “to whom when Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, *and healed him*”. This was instantaneous healing; it was the real thing. He did not have to wait for two or three weeks before he was cured. “So when this was done, *others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed.*” So there is the second promise of Mark xvi. being fulfilled in connection with Paul’s public ministry. Do these signs follow every true believer today according to the Lord’s promise? If not, why not? This should be a challenge to everyone who is saved to find a *Scriptural* answer. Now he comes to Rome, the very centre of civilization at that time, and the first thing he does is to do what he has done all the way through the Acts; he contacts the leaders of Israel. He gather them together, speaks to them and reasons with them thus: (verse 20) “For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that *for the hope of Israel* I am bound with this chain.” Now he had already before Agrippa stated that Israel’s hope was still possible. The twelve tribes, he said, are still waiting for their hope, and here he asserts that he is bound for the hope of Israel. This awaited one thing—Israel’s repentance and their conversion—their turning back to God. We are never going to understand the Divine movement through the Acts unless we put Israel in the proper place that this book puts them. It is “to the Jew first” to the last chapter, clearly showing that they had not yet been laid aside in unbelief by God. But now God’s longsuffering runs out. God had not “cast away His people which He foreknew” (Rom. xi. 2). He had waited in matchless patience for some 35 years since Calvary. He said “all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. x. 21). But now His judgment is about to fall.

Coming to verse 23 we read “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets”. There is an earthly side and a heavenly side to the all-embracing Kingdom of God. Which is Paul dealing with here? The context connects it with Moses (the Pentateuch) and the O.T. prophets. He must have been dealing then with the Israel and the earthly kingdom purpose. It was that part of the Kingdom of God that was revealed in the O.T. concerning God’s kingdom on earth.

What was their response? Let us see (verse 24) “And some believed the thing which were spoken, *and some believed not*”. Still no unanimity you see—some believed, some

believed not. After all this long waiting on the part of God, after all this ministry to them which included the gospel of the circumcision, there is no sign of a unanimous repentance and turning to God as they had been commanded to do (Acts iii. 19-26).

And this is where God's longsuffering finally ran out: "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word". He now quotes from a very solemn passage from the O.T.; It is from Isa. vi. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the Prophet unto our (but if you read the R.V. 'unto your') fathers saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing you shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross (heavy, hard), and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them". This is the same word that Peter spoke to them in Acts iii.: "Repent and be converted"—turn again—but they refused to turn back to God and truly repent. "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent (or 'was sent') unto the Gentiles, and they *will* hear it". You refuse to hear it, they *will* hear it—look at the difference! The poor, despised Gentiles whom the Jews looked on as dogs, heard the Word gladly and received it, but the Jews would not do so, with the consequence that they had become blind, deaf, and so hardened spiritually, that now they are quite unusable by God and He lays them aside. As a race they have been in this condition ever since. True, God has saved individual Jews, but racially they are still Christ rejecters. They have been in the forefront of God's purpose since Gen. xii., for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Will this kingdom never come? Has God finally cast away Israel? The Scriptural answer is 'no'. On the basis of the New Covenant of grace, they will yet be restored (Jer. xxxi. 31; Rom. xi. 25-29) at the Second Coming of the Lord. Meanwhile God has been carrying out another phase of His great redemptive purpose that affects the heavens, and men and women of this age who are saved by grace. For them are unsearchable riches such as Israel never knew. These lie ahead for our explanation by faith.

## **No.16. pp. 77 - 80**

We finished our study last time at the end of the Acts of the Apostles; we saw that it struck a tragic note because the plan of God, which embraced the whole world to be reached through the Jewish nation, was temporarily brought to a halt through their opposition and unbelief. God's longsuffering at last ran out with this people, and at Rome, the Apostle Paul was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to quote from Isa. vi., and tell them that, like their fathers of old, they had got into such a terrible condition that they could not see, hear, or understand God's truth, whereas the Gentile, the outsider, would receive the message. The prophet Hosea had looked forward to this time, and prophesied that God would call Israel, Lo-ammi, not my people. But not only that, He says something even worse: "and I will not be your God". Can you think of anything more terrible than that? Supposing God said to us, "I will not be your God", what could

we do about it? Absolutely nothing, and our outlook would be hopeless in the extreme. And this nation cannot do anything about it until, as we have seen, God steps in, in the Person of His Son, when He returns in power and glory. Nothing less than this great event will be needed to convert this hardened earthly people of the Lord. Then their hard hearts are going to melt; then at last they are going to have their real Day of Atonement, they will repent when they look on Him and see Him as their Saviour and their Sinbearer. And I am sure they will then marvel because they have been so blind, when their O.T. Scriptures made it so clear that He was their Messiah, their Priest-King.

Before we go any further, let us note a promise that Christ made in resurrection, in Mark xvi. 17, 18, because this promise was fulfilled right through the book of the Acts. Verse 15 reads “And He said to them (that is, the eleven) Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned (or condemned). And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils (or better—demons), they shall speak with new tongues . . . .” (they did, on the day of Pentecost and onwards), “They shall take up serpents . . . .” (we have seen that Paul did this and suffered no harm from the snake bite). “If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”—miraculous thing!

Now on the day of Pentecost, in chapter ii., Peter makes this statement (Acts ii. 22) “Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God (attested of God) among you by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know . . . .” Do you realize that these miracles, wonders and signs were Messiah’s credentials, as it were? It was a Divine guarantee to Israel that Christ was the true Messiah. There have been many false Christs, and how were the people of Israel to avoid being deceived? The answer is that the real Messiah would not just perform miracles (Satan can travesty and perform miracles, II Thess. ii. 8, 9) but that He would perform the specific miracles predicted by the O.T. Scriptures.

So let us turn back to Isa. xxxv. 4 “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong and fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and say you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing”. Were not these the very miracles that the Lord Jesus performed day after day in His earthly ministry, If any, in Isaiah’s day, had spiritualized these verses they would have been hopelessly wrong: They were *literally* fulfilled, time after time, by the Lord in the days of His flesh. He *did* open the eyes of the blind; He *did* give hearing to the deaf; He *did* make people leap as an hart (the impotent man); He *did* make dumb people speak! *These* were the specific miracles, wonders and signs which were the guarantee that He was the true Messiah. And you will find these divine signs did not stop at the Crucifixion; they continued right throughout the Acts and then stopped.

Let us turn to Acts ii. 43: “And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles”. Chapter iii. commences with one; the healing of a lame man, and he is made to do what Isaiah said—“leap as an hart”. Peter takes him

(verse 7) “by the right hand, and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up . . . .” here is the lame man leaping as an hart!

Acts iv. 29. Here is a gathering of believers praying and saying “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word—by stretching forth Thy hand to heal; and that *signs and wonders* may be done by the Name of thy holy Child Jesus”. Acts v. 12 “And by the hands of the apostles were *many signs and wonders* wrought among the people . . . .” Not just a few, many were performed. And then in verse 15, “Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about in Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one”. No failures, no mention of a lack of faith, no exceptions, but every one healed!

Acts vi. 8 “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great *wonders and miracles* among the people”. Chapter viii. 13 “Then Simon himself believed also; and he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the *miracles and signs* which were done”.

We come to chapter xiii. and here we find another miracle, but this time one of judgment, not healing. A Jew named Elymas, a sorcerer, was blinded for a season. This was a prophetic warning to Israel of what finally came on them at Acts xxviii.—blinded eyes. Verse 11: “And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season”. It is not blindness for ever; nor is it with the people of Israel, as Rom. xi. makes clear. Chapter xiv. 3, “Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted *signs and wonders* to be done by their hands”. And then there is another record of a cripple being healed at Lystra, and note what is said in verse 10: Paul “Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped” (here is the leaping again) “and walked”. God’s Word is fulfilled to the letter! Chapter xv. 12: Here is recorded a very important church meeting at Jerusalem and this is what was said—“Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience unto Barnabas and Paul, declaring what *miracles and wonders* God had wrought among the Gentiles by them”. Acts xix. 11: “And God wrought *special miracles* by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them”. So, in those days, it was not even necessary for Paul to be present for healing to take place! Even a handkerchief that had touched his body could heal at a distance, and did so, as this verse tells us. Then we come to the last chapter, Acts xxviii., where we are told (verse 8) “that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux” (what we would call dysentery) “to whom Paul entered in and prayed, and laid his hands on him, *and healed him*. So when this was done, others also, *which had diseases in the island came and were healed*”.

These special miracles, then, go right through the Acts like a thread, and are as much in evidence in the last chapter as they are at the beginning, and then they cease, which

can be seen when we turn to the epistles written after the Acts of the Apostles. Turning to Philippians, a letter Paul wrote from his Roman prison, we find in chapter ii. that he refers to a very valued fellow-worker by the name of Epaphroditus, and in verse 26 he says: "He longed after you all and was full of heaviness, because, ye had heard that he had been sick". And indeed he *was* sick, near to death (verse 30) "because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life" ('he hazarded his life', says the R.V.). Does Paul heal him? No; what he says is this: "God had mercy on him . . . . and on me also". Now if the Apostle Paul still had the power to heal, this is inexplicable, is it not? Here is a valued fellow-worker and all the Apostle can say is that God had mercy on us both and preserved his life! Paul did not heal him; why not, if he still had the power so to do?

We turn to I Tim. v. 23, and here we have the Apostle giving health advice to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy. Now here was one who was very close indeed to the Apostle Paul—This is what he says to him (v. 23) "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine *often* infirmities". A "little wine" prescribed, rather than miraculous healing! Or look at Paul's last letter (II Tim. iv. 20): "Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus *have I left at Miletum sick*". We do not find Paul doing that in the Acts. Evidently now the power to heal was his no longer. The covenant nation, who had all the signs and wonders, had now been laid aside by God and all the external evidential miracles went with them. What we are going to see now is that there is new truth about to be revealed, and this truth is a secret phase of God's purpose which He had never made known before. It is not directly connected with the earthly kingdom, but with a heavenly side of His purpose, and miraculous gifts have no relationship to this spiritual calling.

## No.17. pp. 96 - 100

In our last study we noted how evidential miracles run right through the Acts of the Apostles and then stop abruptly, and we noted the reason for this. In summing up, let us now look through the Book as a whole. The Acts is a most important book in the N.T. because, if we get a correct understanding of it, we shall be greatly helped to place the Epistles of the N.T. in their right setting. We saw that there was an overlapping between Luke's Gospel and the Acts. The Gospel ended with the Saviour giving the eleven opened understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, so that whatever doubts and wrong ideas they had before, He was able to correct. And not only that but the first chapter tells us that for forty days they had the wonderful privilege of Him taking the Word, the O.T. Scriptures, and explaining their meaning to them. So they were in an extraordinarily favoured position. We should hardly think that any Christian has been in a better position to understand God's truth. And we saw the first question they asked, because of that instruction was, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" If we just opened the Book and pick out that verse without seeing what has gone before, we might say, as some have said, that this was a foolish question. They should

have been asking the Lord to teach them about the Church. But they could not have known anything about the Body of Christ as we know it today, for that was still a secret, hid in God. But they *do* ask Him, because of His unfolding of the O.T. Scriptures, as to whether the kingdom would be restored again to the people of Israel at this time. The Lord did not say it would never be restored to this people, rather it was the time of restoration that He could not reveal.

Then we looked at the day of Pentecost and its relationship to that great plan for world blessing that is revealed in the Bible. We saw that the Apostle Peter, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, links it with the prophecy of Joel. We saw that Peter's quotation was in a setting of restoration for the people of Israel; so that it is all in line with the disciples' question. And Peter tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ had been raised to sit on *David's throne*, and that has surely a close relationship with the people of Israel and not the church, the Body of Christ. The Hebrew Christians who were saved on that day formed part of the faithful Jewish remnant that the Apostle Paul is going to talk about later on.

Then we came to chapter iii., an extremely important chapter. There is a miracle of healing performed before the Jews, showing, in effect, that what God had done for that lame man, he was able to do spiritually for them, if they would only repent and turn again, and that is what they were commanded to do by the Apostle. Wondrous things God promised if they would do that. Their sins would be forgiven (you would hardly think it possible that God could forgive the great sin of crucifying Christ!). Yet it *was* possible; and not only that, but He would send back again Jesus Christ who before had been preached to them in His earthly ministry. And we took the trouble to look through all the epistles written during the time covered by the Acts, and every one of them looks on the Lord's coming as being imminent. And no one at that time knew whether the people of Israel would repent or not; we know that now, of course, as it is a matter of history that they did not! But we must try and put ourselves back in the place of people at this time if we really want to understand how the purpose is developing. Peter not only tells them that the Lord Jesus Christ would return, but that the glorious kingdom as made known by the O.T. prophets would then set in. This was no secret; it had been clearly revealed in the O.T. And *we* can still go to those same Scriptures and see exactly what would have happened had the Nation of Israel obeyed that command.

Then we passed on to chapter v., where Peter deals with the resurrection. He says that the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead *to give repentance to Israel*. That is a fact that is often overlooked. The resurrection of Christ is of tremendous importance because it is the very foundation of the Christian faith; but how often do we hear of the Lord Jesus being raised to give a change of heart, a change of mind, to the people of Israel? The usual idea is that the Jew, as regards God's purpose, was finished at the Cross; but no, there is at this point, still a possibility of them repenting and turning back to the Lord and the earthly Kingdom being set up.

And then in Acts x. we find a very important event recorded—the coming-in of a Gentile to blessing *with Israel*. We see Peter using the keys of the kingdom and



unlocking the door to the Gentiles. And, of course, there was nothing secret about that. God had never intended from the start that the kingdom would be limited to the people of Israel. His plan was that it should be worldwide, but that Israel should be the channel, to take the knowledge of salvation to the ends of the earth. But Gentile blessing was happening in advance of the Divine plan because, at this point, Israel was not ready to be used as a channel for world blessing. The reason for this is made clear in Rom. xi. where the Apostle instructs the Roman church and tells them that the Gentile was admitted *to provoke the people of Israel to emulation, to provoke them to jealousy*, that is, if possible, to wake them up from the terribly hardened and blinded condition that they were sinking into deeper and deeper.

Then we came on to the recorded ministry of the Apostle Paul. His public ministry started in chapter xiii. at Antioch. We find he gives a very long speech there, again dealing with the people of Israel, and he also mentions the resurrection. He tells his hearers, among other things, that the Lord was raised in connection with “*the sure mercies of David*” and this took us back to Psa. lxxxix., where God had made a covenant with David concerning *the throne*. He made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning the *seed* and the *land*; and the sure mercies of David deal with the *seed* and the *throne*; not only the people and the home, but the leader they were to have. So this is parallel with Peter, Christ raised to sit on David’s throne. The sure mercies were fulfilled of course, finally, in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for at the first the angel prophesied that He would reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever.

Next we found that the Apostle Paul, on his missionary journeys, always went to the synagogue first. It was to the Jew first always with him. This is impossible to understand unless we see that, in God’s plan then being worked out, the people of Israel are still to be reckoned with. There is still the possibility of them being used for world blessing if they would only turn to God and repent. Otherwise why go to them first? But Paul said to them in Acts xv. 46 it was necessary that they should have the message first. Peter says the same thing to the Jew in chapter iii. “unto you first”. This is what is stressed, as we know, in the opening chapter of Romans; to the Jew first for the gospel, to the Jew first for judgment, too. As long as the Jew is in covenant relationship with God, which put them above all other nations in light and responsibility, the Jew must be first: that was the position that God willed they should have in the outworking of the earthly kingdom, and O.T. Scriptures made that very clear (Deut. xxviii. 13). Although in so many places that Paul visited the message is rejected by the Jew, we find he still goes to the synagogue. And he does this right to the last chapter when, under the guidance of the Lord, he finds himself at Rome, and there again he calls the chief of the people of Israel. He tells them he is still bound for *Israel’s* hope. But before that, we saw in chapter xxvi. that he stood in front of King Agrippa and also reminded him, even at this juncture, that *the twelve tribes* were still waiting for their hope. And when, at Rome, there was still disagreement among them, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give the final word, the final quotation of that terrible prophecy recorded in Isa. vi.—laying the nation aside in unbelief and spiritual darkness. And this spiritual darkness is so terrible that it can only be removed by the Second Advent of the Lord. It is when they look on *Him* Whom they have pierced, the Scripture says that they are going to mourn

and repent. It will take nothing less than the returning glory of their Saviour to at last bring them to their knees.

So we find then that the break with the Jewish nation is not at the Cross; *it is at the end of the Acts*. There is a consistent line of Divine purpose going right through from Gen. xii., where God lays hold of Abraham, right on to the end of the Acts, and we can say that the people of Israel are in the forefront all the way through till that point. There is coming a time, the Second Advent of Christ, when God is going to deal with His earthly people again. Between these two points there is a gap so far as the earthly kingdom is concerned, and what fills it up is the revelation that the Lord Jesus Christ made known through Paul, His prisoner. And this concerns the revelation of a secret purpose of God concerning His heavenly people, the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

In this company there is no Jew and no Gentile either. It is a new creation where both lose their status and something infinitely better is revealed. That is one reason why this could not be revealed during the Acts where Israel, the chosen nation, is being dealt with by God until the last chapter.

We have looked at the word 'church' as used in the Bible, and we saw that it would be quite Scriptural to talk about the children of Israel as a church, because this word only means a called-out company of people, which just describes the nation of Israel. And in any case, the word 'congregation' that we have as many times in the O.T. is translated 'church' in the Greek translation of the O.T., the Bible in common use in N.T. times. Stephen does not hesitate to use the word 'church' in connection with the people of Israel; he calls them 'the church in the wilderness'. It is not correct to say that there is only one church in the Bible: there is only *one Body*, but that is quite another thing. There was a called-out company of Hebrew Christians, as we would term them today, at Pentecost—a church who were indeed the Israel of God. But was it *the Church* connected with the secret that was revealed after the Acts through Paul's later prison ministry? We have seen that this cannot be. For one thing every step in the Acts was linked with the O.T. which is quoted at various points and therefore was not, and could not be secret in any way. Let us obey the command in Phil. i. 10 margin and "Try the things that differ" and not confuse them. If we do this, how can we expect to get light and blessing? We want to make it plain that it is not foundation or basic truths that change after the Acts, such as sin, salvation and sanctification, these are true for all time. But God can reveal various aspects of His great plan for His creation, all of them resting solidly upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and this is what we find after Israel's failure at the end of the Acts. God now reveals something entirely new, related to the heavens and not the earth, and it is this heavenly side of the purpose of the ages connected with the Body of Christ that now comes to the forefront and dominates the scene during this age of grace, while the nation of Israel are in darkness and unusable by God.

## No.18. pp. 109 - 114

We have been studying the Acts, and have found that the people of Israel are dealt with by God right through to the last chapter. The Apostle Paul put them first because of their important covenant relationship with God, but at the end they are laid aside in unbelief and hardness of heart. We now ask the question—have they any part in God’s future plan for world blessing and the establishment of his Kingdom on earth? We find that evangelicals are largely divided on this. Some will say yes, definitely, there is coming a time when this nation is at last going to be saved and restored and made useable by the Lord. Equally, there are others who say—no, there is no future for them as a nation in God’s redemptive plan; all the blessings that God promised to them have been transferred spiritually to the Church. The Church now is the real Israel; they are the Israel of God—the spiritual Israel. Now this is very important because we are, together, trying to search out the revealed plan of God in His Book, past, present and future, and we cannot afford to err on such important points of doctrine.

We have, in past studies, looked at the covenant that God made with this nation. In Exod. xix. we saw that God made some remarkable statements concerning what He was prepared to do for them, but it was a *conditional* covenant. God said, you shall be a peculiar people to me, a peculiar treasure, above all people. You shall be a kingdom of priests; there had never been such a thing before—a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. But it was conditional, to be realized only if they kept the law. They had already received the ten commandments through Moses, but they broke them. We would admit that, if this was all God had revealed for Israel, then there is *no* future for them as a nation. They broke the conditions for the fulfillment of the covenant and they have no claim at all upon God from that standpoint.

However God did not let the matter rest there; later on He made another covenant with the same people and this time there was no ‘if’ about it. It all concerns God’s actions for Israel, and this time it is not conditional. Let us turn to Jer. xxxi. 31 and see.

This reads: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:”. Obviously this is the same nation that we have mentioned in the Book of Exodus as the following verses clearly show.

We read on: “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts”. When God writes His truth in the heart of an individual something lasting is going to happen. God says, I will do this for this people; I will put My law in their inward parts, and “write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people”. There are no ‘ifs’ here; God says He will do all these things without conditions. “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour

. . . . saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more”. And then God appeals to creation (verse 35): “Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: The Lord of hosts is his name”. Now a challenge thrown out: “if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, *then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever*”. This cannot be just the blessing of individual Jews and their being saved by the Gospel today. “Thus saith the Lord, If the heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath”, (then—another challenge) “I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord”. What a challenge this is! Nobody can accept it because it is impossible to carry out!

So there must be, then, a future for this people, for God could not be more emphatic or more clear. We shall see some other parts of Scripture confirm this, and at the end the combined testimony is overwhelming.

Let us now turn to the N.T. to Rom. xi. 11. Here the Apostle Paul is dealing with Israel’s lack of response, their opposition to the gospel right throughout the Acts of the Apostles. God had opened the door, through Peter’s ministry, to the Gentiles, and here Paul tell us why. “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for *to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy*”—in order to stimulate them spiritually, if it was possible so to do. And then in verse 14: “If by any means I may *provoke to emulation* them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?” If this is true, how can some say there is no future for Israel in the plan of God? Paul says there is coming a time when they *are* going to be received back into blessing. God has lopped them temporarily in unbelief, the branches had been ‘broken off’. But God is able to put them back again and restore them, and when that happens it is going to be like resurrection life, life from the dead, to the world. That is what a dead world needs, resurrection life.

We will go on further to verse 24. The Apostle now speaks to the Gentiles: “For if thou wert cut out of the wild olive tree which is wild by nature” (the olive tree is simply a symbol of the people of Israel Jer. xi. 16) “and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” This is the receiving of them back again. Then he drops symbolism and says plainly: (Verse 25) “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (this secret), lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fullness of the Gentiles be come in”. Even if we do not understand what “the fullness of the Gentiles” means, we can surely understand that Israel’s blindness cannot be for ever. It is only blindness for a *limited period* on this people. After that (verse 26) “*And so all Israel shall be saved*”. And the context makes it clear that he is not dealing with the Church which is His Body! This is the literal people of Israel, the nation of Israel, those who are “my flesh” as Paul describes them in chapter ix. as his own kinsmen. “And so all Israel shall be saved: as

it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” He is coming back to deliver them and He is going to deal with their past sins and apostasy. You will remember the New Covenant with its assurance—“Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”. When the Lord was on earth He instituted the New Covenant memorial feast. He said “This is (this represents) the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for many”. Basically, the restoration of the people of Israel depends upon that one perfect Sacrifice which the Lord Jesus Christ made, and upon that firm foundation, and at the return of Christ, they shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced, repent and believe. That will be sufficient at last to bring them to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. They will be a nation born at a stroke; a nation useable at last by God to be a channel of blessing to the whole world. All the true Israel will indeed be saved.

Now note verse 27: “*For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins*”. This is a direct reference to the New Covenant we have been considering, the same covenant when God does these wondrous things for them and saves them. He is going to deal with their sins, the sin of blindness and hardness and deafness and refusal. They have been in this condition for nearly 2,000 years, but one day all that is going to be taken away on the basis of this New Covenant of grace resting upon the shed blood of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 28: “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election *they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*”. Do let us get clear in our minds what the meaning of this word “repentance” is. It is not the same as a similar-sounding word—penitence—but it, primarily means a change of mind. Now here is a most marvelous statement, *that God does not change his mind over His purposes*. As this is a fact, there must be a future for the people of Israel. Some Christians tell us that He *has* changed His mind and has transferred all the promises made to Israel over to the Church! But this goes flatly against what the Scriptures have made so very clear.

This view is held by the a-millennialist, who does not believe in a literal earthly Kingdom for 1,000 years, and this view is gaining ground alas, in some quarters. We want to be quite sure that we are resting upon the Word of God and not on the opinions of men, however good they may be. Let us go back to Jer. xxxiii. 25, “Thus saith the Lord: If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth: Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My Servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them”. Here is another Divine challenge thrown out concerning creation: God says, if I have *not* appointed the ordinances of the day and night then I will cast this nation off—but He *has* ordained day and night, and so He has not and will not cast away His earthly people for ever!

Turning now to Deut. xxx. 1, 2 we read: “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven

thee” (and that is where they are now, and have been for 1,900 years or more) “And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul: That then the *Lord thy God will turn thy captivity . . . . and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee*. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: *And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers*”. That has never been fully fulfilled; there have been partial fulfillments, but not a complete one.

We go on to Isa. xliii. 5: “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth”. We are told in Jer. xxxi. 10 that *He which scattered Israel will also gather him*; and just as Israel must be the literal nation who were scattered, so the gathering must refer to the same people.

And finally, to Ezek. xxxvii. 21. The prophet is instructed to say this to them: “Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen” (from among the Gentile nations) “whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land”; this must be the literal land that God promised to Abraham. In our earlier studies we went back to the very beginning and saw the geographical boundaries that God set to that land, from the great river Nile to the river Euphrates, and this cannot be spiritualized and make sense. Verse 22: “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; And one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more . . . .” Verse 24: “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt”. Again this must be the same land. “And they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children *for ever*: and My servant David shall be their prince *for ever*. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an *everlasting covenant with them*; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will *set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore*. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen (the Gentile nations) shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when *My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore*”. As we have seen, we are dealing with a God who does not change His mind.

“The gifts and the calling of God are without change of mind”, and these rest then, not upon anything that Israel are, or what they have done, but upon God’s unchanging love and His unchangeable purpose, and they stand four-square upon the wonderful redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary’s Cross. That is sufficient, surely, to establish a future of blessing for this nation. So in our consideration, then, of the plan of God, we must have a place for the restored, saved, cleansed and, at last, useable people

of Israel. One other thing we must consider. Those who do not subscribe to a future for the nation of Israel, constantly refer to the Church as being “the Israel of God”. You would think, to hear them talk or write, that this was a title scattered all over the N.T., so often do they use it. The Body of Christ, they say, is the real Israel. The phrase occurs once only in the Scriptures, in Gal. vi. 16, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or a new creation). And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on *them*, and mercy, *and* upon the Israel of God”. Now will you note that there are two companies here, not one. This is *not* a descriptive title, even for *all* the saved at this time. “Peace be on them”—them that walk according to this rule—“and mercy, *and* upon the Israel of God”. The little word “on”, the preposition which is *epi* in the Greek, *is repeated twice*. We are dealing with *two* companies not one. It was a description of the *faithful Israel, the faithful remnant*, at this time. When the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Romans there was a remnant according to the election of grace. The few among the Jews were responding to the Gospel; the bulk were not. They were not the true Israel; those Hebrews who were saved during the Acts period, were the true Israel from the Divine standpoint, and they are the Israel of God. This title is never used again in the N.T., and we have no right to take this as a covering title for all the redeemed for all time. This is surely a very flimsy basis on which to erect a great doctrine. Beware of one-text doctrines! Important doctrines do not rest on single verses!

Let us be thankful to realize that God is unchanging in His love and purpose for His earthly people, in spite of their sin, failure, and opposition. If this was not so, what assurance could we have that He will always remain the same toward us, the members of the Body of Christ?

## **No.19. pp. 136 - 140**

In past studies together we have noted the wonderful fact that in the plan of the ages in Christ Jesus, there are three spheres of blessing wherein His redeemed children have an inheritance. When we reach the new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. iii. 13), we shall have come round as it were in a full circle, because that is the way God started in the beginning with a perfect creation. In this future new creation these spheres will have their place. One is, of course, the earth itself. How often have people read the Sermon on the Mount, and in it the verse which states “the meek shall inherit the earth”? (Matt. v. 5). All the redeemed are not going to heaven; neither are all going to be blessed on the new earth. Some will evidently be blessed in each of these spheres otherwise the Word of God is not true. And then we have seen, too, that Abraham, although he had an earthly inheritance promised him by the Lord, looked for something better, a better country and city as the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals. This is the heavenly Jerusalem. The Apostle John also had a vision of it, and he describes it in the last chapters of the Book of the Revelation.

In the Book of the Revelation we are told three times that this heavenly city is not going to stay in heaven permanently; it is going to descend to the new earth. We still have the highest heaven where the Lord Jesus is now enthroned at the Father's right hand; and, wonder of wonders, we find in God's Word the revelation concerning a company of His redeemed children whom God sees positionally there in Christ! (Eph. ii. 6). This gives us three great spheres of blessing in the wonderful purpose and plan of God.

Then we noted, too, that this is a predominantly Gentile age because the Jew, for nearly two thousand years, has been unusable. He is still rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, and he was left at the end of the Acts (Acts xxviii.) with blinded eyes, deaf ears and a hardened heart. In spite of this, God has a future for the Jew as a nation because of the New Covenant, which was ratified by the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The essence of that New Covenant is that God is going to touch their hearts and put His law therein. That will be a heart that can believe, appreciate and obey Him, and moreover God declares that He will forgive and forget all their past sins and failures (Jer. xxxi. 34).

Now all down this present age what has been happening in the purpose of God? Can we find some part of Scripture that will cover this time? We most certainly can! And we find that God has an appointed messenger for this Gentile age with a special message, and he is the Apostle Paul (Eph. iii. 1; I Tim. ii. 5-7). He was able to describe himself when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans as "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Rom. xi. 13), and we have seen that the word 'apostle' just means a 'sent one'. God sends His messengers with His truth to different companies of His children according to His purpose.

This special revelation to Gentiles is found in Paul's prison letters. The end of the Acts finds him at Rome, a prisoner, and after the Acts period there are five of his Epistles which are stamped with his Roman prison. Ephesians is the first one—"the prisoner of Christ Jesus" for us Gentiles (iii. 1). This very intimately, can concern you and me if we are Gentiles, and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians is the next prison letter (i. 7, 13, 16).

After this we come to the epistle to the Colossians and the fourth chapter. He says (in verse 3) "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds".

And then we have in II Tim. ii. 8, 9 "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound". There is also the short letter to Philemon, and in the first verse we read: "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother". So there are five letters written after the end of the Acts by the Apostle that are stamped with his prison. The Philemon epistle is a beautiful, personal little letter, typical possibly of many that the Apostle Paul must have written, and we are thankful that we have one preserved like this. We can say there are four outstanding



basic, doctrinal prison epistles. They are Ephesians and Colossians (the two having many parallels beside their own distinctive teaching), Philipians and II Timothy.

Now at the end of the Acts when the nation of Israel was laid aside, nobody living at that time knew exactly what God was going to do next. How thrilled they must have been when they had this first letter after this period, the Epistle to the Ephesians, possibly a circular letter sent round to all the churches, revealing a new phase of God's purpose, what He was going to do now when this nation was laid aside in unbelief. In it we find glorious truth which He had never previously made known—the Apostle connects it with a Divine 'mystery' or 'secret'; something that God had hidden in the past and at last made known. In this letter we are going to see the first revelation of some of the distinctive truth for this present age that God wants us to know. How many want to listen? Surely we ought to be all attention when He has something wonderful to tell us! These prison epistles contain untold riches, and this word 'riches' occurs 8 times.

Let us glance at them and later on we shall be able to give them deeper consideration. In chapter i. of Ephesians we have a recurring phrase in the opening verses referring to 'grace' and 'glory'. You will find it in verse 6—"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted . . . ." He, the Father, has made us accepted—literally, 'grace us' in the Beloved One, the Lord Jesus "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins". And the measure is—"according to the *riches* of His grace". We are not merely saved by grace, but saved and forgiven by the *riches* of His grace. It would be good if we paused to get some understanding of what it cost Him to provide them for us to begin with, and what it even cost *this* man in his Roman prison. He asked these Ephesian believers "not to faint", he said, "at my tribulations for you". What did it cost the Apostle Paul so that the Ephesian believers—and you and me today, might be reading these things?

With these riches of grace we have got to start, and if we have not started here, we have not started at all! Do we appreciate for ourselves the glorious fact of redemption and the forgiveness of sins? The companion letter, the Epistle to the Colossians, says this: "Having forgiven you all trespasses" (ii. 13). That just means what it says, all past sins, present and future, all covered by that wonderful redemptive work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's Cross. He was made sin "for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. v. 21).

Let us pass on to the next occurrence. Later on in the first chapter of Ephesians the Apostle begins to pray for these Ephesian saints (verses 16 and 17) and in verse 18 we read: "That . . . . the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (or, having been enlightened) "that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the *riches* of the glory of His inheritance in the saints". These things are so wonderful that they almost defy explanation, His inheritance in His heavenly people, connected with the real holiest of all in heaven's innermost shrine. If we want to receive this for ourselves we shall have to use this prayer intelligently, humbly, simply and depend upon the only One who can give us understanding—the Holy Spirit Himself—the Spirit of wisdom and unveiling and revelation. First riches of grace, then riches of glory!

Then in chapter ii., after telling us what we once were from two different angles, and the wonderful interposition by God in His grace and mercy (verses 4, 5) we read: “But God, who is *rich* in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (made us alive) together with Christ”. And then we have the reference to grace slipped in by the Apostle. Some people start with grace and then they seem to forget it. But we should not do that. We must learn to live by grace, to serve by grace, and we go on with grace right from the moment of salvation to the end of the pilgrim journey. “By grace”, he says, “ye are saved. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”. This is a tremendous climax; here we have reached the highest point of revelation in the whole of the Bible for the believer! This is a challenging statement, but I ask you to try and find something in the Scriptures that is higher or more wonderful than this. Think of the height of glory that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to, the Father’s right hand. Think too of the “exceeding greatness of His power” which was worked in Christ when He was raised from the dead and seated (set) in the heavenly places far above all. Then consider this redeemed company in the same heavenly places, seated together in Him—what a position! But the Apostle (in verse 7) goes on “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding *riches* of his grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”. So when the whole of the Church is at home in glory, there are still riches to unfold. This too baffles description. The Apostle uses the word ‘exceeding’, as though even *he* could not fully explain. What is the future going to unfold for the favoured believers of this company, the Body of Christ as the ages roll their course? Exceeding riches are going to be made known to us!

Let us come to chapter iii. Paul is speaking again of his ministry concerning this secret. There are two secrets in this context which we will look at more closely in another study. There is the ‘mystery of Christ’, the secret concerning Him, the Head, and the secret concerning His Body, the Church. The one concerning His Body you will find explained in verse 6: “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers . . . .” In the Greek is a three-fold stress on the preposition *sun* which gives us equality “*Joint*-heirs, and a *joint*-body, and *joint*-partakers of His promise in Christ by the good news (gospel) whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God which is given to me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I might preach among the Gentiles” (that is you and me), “the unsearchable *riches* of Christ”. Here is something that Israel, even at their zenith, never had. Do we realize what a favoured people we are? We are put in the position to get to know some of the most marvelous truths that it is possible to conceive. And then the Apostle adds that he wants to make all see “what is the fellowship (or dispensation) of the secret, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God Who created all things by Jesus Christ”.

Further on in this chapter he prays the second time, and we find this word ‘riches’ occurring once more. He writes (verse 16) “That He (the Father) would grant you (or give you) according to the *riches* of His glory”. What a measure to give! God is going to give this company according to the riches of His glory “to be strengthened with might by

His Spirit in the inner man”. One step leads to another. And when we reach the end of it, think on these words (verse 19): “And to know the love of Christ, which exceeds (passes) knowing, that ye might be filled with (or unto) all the fullness of God”. No wonder all he can do now is to close with a glorious doxology. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”

Passing on to the next letter, Philippians, we find one occurrence of the word ‘riches’ in the last chapter. This church had been a very practical company. They had wanted to make some recognition of their love and their indebtedness to the Apostle Paul in his prison, so they had sent him a gift. We do not know what it was, but it was something that had touched his heart, something that he said was very fragrant to the Lord. He even used the word ‘sacrifice’ to describe it. So he says (iv. 18): “But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His *riches* in glory by Christ Jesus”. It does not say ‘out of His riches’, but, ‘according to His riches’. If a millionaire gave *out* of his riches he could give a few pence, that would be giving ‘out of’ his riches, but if he gave ‘according to’ his riches, I wonder how much he would have to give? A large sum surely! You see the difference? This is the way your needs and mine are supplied by the Lord—‘according to His riches in glory’, but remember this was said to *generous* Christians.

Lastly there are two references in Colossians: “To whom God would make known what is the *riches* of the glory of this secret among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you” or “Christ among you”, as the margin reads (i. 27). Years before, the Apostle rejoiced in the fact that he had Christ dwelling in him, “Christ liveth in me” he had written to the Galatians (ii. 20), but he did not say this was a secret. Here we have Christ *among* us Gentiles—Gentiles who, as Ephesians tells us, were hopeless, aliens, strangers, outside the pale, now so near as to have Christ among them apart from the chosen nation of Israel.

Then in chapter ii., he prays (verse 2) that their “hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all *riches* of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God (R.V.), *even Christ*”. *He* is the great secret of God. This secret has not been fully revealed yet, but there are untold riches attached to Him with Whom it is connected, riches of full assurance of understanding.

So you see what an inheritance lies before us in Paul’s prison letters! May we have that keenness to go on, to search and see and make wonderful discoveries by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

## No.20. pp. 157 - 160

Having given a short consideration to the spiritual riches revealed in the Apostle Paul's prison letters, we will now turn to the first of these, namely the epistle to the Ephesians, because this was the first letter written after the Divine break with Israel at Acts xxviii., and contains the new revelation concerning an aspect of God's redeeming purpose which He had kept hidden all the while He was dealing with Israel as His earthly covenant People (from Gen. xii. to Acts xxviii.).

We have noted that this was possibly a circular letter, as the words "at Ephesus" are missing from some Greek manuscripts. If this was so, it would be all in line with the need to make the new truth known to all the churches, not just to one only. In our consideration of Ephesians, we do not intend to make it a very detailed and exhaustive study. Our main aim is to get the general drift of the teaching as simply as possible.

We first take note of the fact that the Apostle addressed the epistle not only to those at Ephesus, but to "the faithful in Christ Jesus", and he does this again when he writes from his prison to the Colossian church (Col. i. 2). We have no right to ignore this qualification. If we ask ourselves "are all believers in Christ *automatically* faithful?" the answer is obviously "no". Some play fast and loose with God's truth, and the N.T. as a whole has a lot to say about Christians who are disloyal to the Lord. It must be clear at the outset that, whatever wonders of truth are going to be revealed from this point onwards, they are not for the unfaithful or untrustworthy. This should make us search our own hearts and honestly face up to the challenge as to whether we are prepared to be absolutely loyal to the Lord and to all the truth He chooses to reveal to us in His grace and love. If we are not, then Ephesians and the epistles to follow will be closed so far as we are concerned.

After the important introduction of the first two verses, the first section commences with verse 3 and extends to verse 14. It is sub-divided for us by a recurring phrase containing the words "praise" and "glory". This will be found in verses 6, 12 and 14. The three sections thus formed deal with God and the Father (verses 3-5), God the Son (6-12), and God the Holy Spirit (13, 14) in their gracious dealing with believers who form the Body of Christ. Let us look at the first section which reveals the Father's will. In this supreme will we have the Father's choice—*us*, the Father's object—*that we should be holy and without blemish*, and the Father's motive—*love* (verse 4).

Primarily verse 3 starts, not with God the Father blessing us, but we blessing Him! This of course is only possible when we have appreciated, in some measure, experimentally the wonders of revelation that His Divine will contains, and our hearts then spontaneously respond in praise to Him. We are assured that the Father "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". Every blessing that is spiritual is nearer the meaning. Note the *quality* and the *quantity* of these blessings, and *where* they are to be found, namely "in Christ" and "in heavenly places". Their quality is

that they are *spiritual*; their quantity is such that none have been held back by our heavenly Father. *All* have been lavished upon us. This is prodigality indeed!

But to appreciate them better, let us try and get some measure of understanding of the word “spiritual”. We know nothing of the sphere called heaven except what the Bible reveals. That it is not a place of concrete materials, such as our present earth is, must be surely clear. Heaven or the various heavens or sub-divisions that comprise it, is a place of *spirit*. God Himself is spirit (John iv. 24), and has created angels, principalities and powers who are spiritual beings (Heb. i. 7, 14). This may not reveal much to us, but let us not think that heaven is less *real* than the earth because we cannot fully grasp it by our five senses. Possibly it is all the more wonderful because we cannot do so, insomuch that it is too great and exalted for our present limited comprehension. If we were able to bear a glimpse of heaven, we should have some idea of the *spiritual* blessing that go with it.

We can contrast these with Israel’s blessings, which were earthly, because they were God’s earthly people with an inheritance that they will finally enjoy in the earth. God suits the blessings to the sphere where they will be enjoyed. As our homeland exists in heaven (Phil. iii. 20), our blessings relate to heaven and heavenly conditions, a realm of spirit, and therefore they are spiritual blessings not material ones. But also we do well to remember that there is an evil spirit world dominated by Satan, “the *spirit* that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. ii. 2), and in connection with this we are told that there is “spiritual wickedness” (vi. 12), so it is clear that the words “spirit” or “spiritual” are not necessarily synonymous with what is good or Christ-like.

The Father has assured us that He has lavished upon us every blessing that is spiritual, namely all the blessings of the highest heavens to which the Lord Jesus was exalted after His resurrection “. . . . heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (i. 19-21). This is also described as the Father’s “right hand” (20), and must be the highest pinnacle of glory and exaltation. This answers the question as to *where* these blessings are now, and *where* they will be enjoyed by every member of the Body. They are additionally secure because they are “in Christ”, and what safer place could they be in? Who can touch the exalted Christ? Who can wrest these priceless blessings from Him? Not even Satan, with all his power and the hosts of demons under his control can lay their hands on such Divinely guarded spiritual wealth. Nor are they put into our hands yet, for if they were, we should probably spoil or lose them. They are treasured up in the Saviour and Head of the Body until His members are home with Him, are made like Him with a body of glory, and can enjoy and use them to the full. *Now* we receive them by faith; *then* faith will be exchanged for sight and full experience.

If we should ask, why did God do this? There is only one answer—LOVE, Divine love that is beyond our full comprehension (iii. 16-19), but which we should seek to know more and more. Here then is spiritual wealth beyond dreams, and if the new revelation given in Ephesians consisted of nothing more than this, it would be overwhelming, but this is only the beginning! Verse 4 continues: “According as He (the Father) hath chosen us in Him (the Son) before the foundation of the world, that we

should be holy and without blame before Him in love". The word 'chosen' is the word 'to elect', and so we have election in the forefront of Ephesians. We need not be puzzled by this, for, as we have stressed many times, God is working out a great redemptive plan for heaven and earth, and what could be more reasonable than that He has chosen the channels or the means through which He will work His will out. He certainly has not left this to chance or human volition. Israel was a Divinely elected people, not because they merited it, or were in any way in themselves better than the surrounding nations, but simply that they were the means that God willed to use to reach and bless the whole world.

Likewise He has chosen the Body of Christ for some great heavenly purpose that for the moment He has not fully revealed. Before such a Divine choice or predestination, comes God's ability to foreknow everything, as Rom. viii. 29 and I Pet. i. 2 make clear. If we do not put God's foreknowledge before election as the Bible does, problems will be raised in our minds that we cannot solve. In past eternity our heavenly Father knew who would be faithful and who would not, and we are in no position to query His methods, choice or acts, but, on the contrary, to gratefully accept His great condescension and graciousness, and fully respond to Him in return. This election was "in Christ", and in this section (verses 3-14), nothing is seen apart from Him. All has its centre in the Lord Jesus. The time of the Father's choice was "*before* the foundation (or overthrow) of the world". As far as the redeemed are concerned, this time is unique. No other company of God's children reaches back, as it were, before creation. This phrase elsewhere is reserved for the Son of God alone (John xvii. 24; I Pet. i. 20). Other phases of God's redemptive purpose are stated to be "*from* or *since* the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34), and if words mean anything, these are two distinctive time periods that must not be confused, and therefore two distinct companies of the redeemed must be related to them.

We shall find, as we further consider the new calling of Ephesians, that it has other unique features which only serve to emphasize the riches of grace that have overflowed to every member of the Body from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Verse 4 continues with the Father's object: "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love". What an aim to have in view! The words 'holy' and 'holiness' are so far removed from human experience that they are never used in ordinary conversation concerning human beings and human affairs. Holiness belongs to God alone, and yet He wills us to be as Himself—holy! We surely do not need anyone to tell us that this is one thing that we definitely have *not* got, no matter what our abilities or attainments are. Nor can we procure it for ourselves or get any other created being to do so for us. Unless God Himself shall work it out on our behalf and give it to us as a free gift, we shall certainly never experience it. *But this is exactly what He has done*, by the redemptive work of the Son: as Eph. v. 25-27 states, ". . . . Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it . . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but *that it should be holy and without blemish*", (same words as i. 4). What the Father willed and chose us to be in past eternity, the Son has made possible for us sinner by His great redemptive work on the Cross. Truly all this must have originated from love, love that transcends all our thinking. Such overwhelming love cost the Father

His beloved Son, for He “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. viii. 32). What is our response to such love so wonderfully expressed?

## **No.21. The Epistle to the Ephesians (1).** **pp. 176 - 180**

Having considered the greatness of the Father’s choice of each member of the Body of Christ, His object, that we should be holy, His motive, love, we pass on to i. 5, “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will”. As in verse 4, we have three great statements brought before us to believe and rejoice in; the Father’s predestination—US; the Father’s object—ADOPTION; the Father’s motive—GOOD PLEASURE. The Father’s predestination obviously balances His election of the previous verse. It is unfortunate that we have ‘destiny’ in the make-up of the English word. This is not resident in the Greek which has the thought of “marking off beforehand”. Those who form the Body of Christ have been appointed by the Father in His will to a definite and wonderful position, that of ‘the first-born son’ with an inheritance in view. “Adoption” brings to our mind the modern practice of bringing an outsider into the family, one who is not linked with any blood ties and making him just a member of the family. The archaeological researches of Sir William Ramsay have shown clearly that, in Paul’s day, adoption meant much more than this, namely that the adopted child was given the place of the first-born son, with the right to inherit the property of the father, and moreover, once this had been ratified, *it could never be changed or rescinded* (see Gal. iii. 15).

Translated into the spiritual terms of Eph. i. 5, it means that the Body has been marked off, in the Father’s purpose, for the position of the first-born, with an eternal inheritance in view, not on the earth, but in heavenly places where Christ is now enthroned! Phil. iii. 20 states definitely, in accord with this, that our citizenship, our homeland, now exists as a present fact, in heaven. *That* is our great goal and is what our mind should be centred upon. “If ye then be risen with Christ (a blessed fact as other Scriptures show) seek those things which are above, *where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*. Set your mind (not affection) *on things above*, not on things on the earth” (Col. iii. 1, 2). With this glorious inheritance go all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places that Eph. i. 3 has described.

All this was in the plan of our heavenly Father when in past eternity He chose us in Christ, and we need to take time and reflect upon the magnificence and wonder of this revelation to us, and to respond in practice with grateful hearts. As we have noted before, nothing of this is seen apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. This predestination is “by Jesus Christ to Himself”, and the only reason we are given for it, is the overwhelming ‘love’ of verse 4, and the “good pleasure of His will” of verse 5, which only reminds us that there is nothing *in ourselves* to merit such a choice. This being so, verse 6 continues, that this should be “to the praise of the glory of His grace”. The whole of this heavenly plan, as

well as the earthly one, will finally uplift the Lord and bring glory to Him, to Whom it alone belongs.

The fact that grace is brought in here doubly emphasizes the fact that human merit and works are ruled out, just as Rom. xi. 6, dealing with the characteristics of grace, clearly reveals. This great grace has been reckoned ours, as the rest of verse 6 states. The words “made us accepted” have the word ‘grace’ in the original, reading literally “. . . . the glory of His grace, wherein He graced us in the Beloved (One)”. This is another of the great words of Paul’s prison letters. It occurs only once more in the New Testament, namely Luke i. 28, where the angel addresses Mary as “highly-favoured”. The margin here reads “graciously accepted, or much graced”, and how true this is for each one of the members of Christ’s Body! What company of God’s redeemed children since Genesis have had such grace and riches poured upon them?

Israel were indeed a favoured nation, above all nations of the earth (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20; Rom ix. 3-5), yet this eclipses anything that they possessed, and just as Israel were intended ‘to possess their possessions’, so are we. But are we doing so? If we are not, then we are indeed foolish and robbing ourselves of much joy and blessing.

Once more we see this linked to the Lord Jesus Christ, for we have been much-graced “in the Beloved (One)”, and this brings us to the next section of the chapter which enlarges on the redemptive work of the Son, Who alone makes all these wonders of the Father’s will possible by what He has accomplished for us on Calvary’s Cross: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (verse 7). If we want to see redemption in picture form, then we find it being carried out in Israel’s experience, when the Lord redeemed them from Egypt with its cruelty and bondage. The book of Exodus makes it clear that the Israelites were in no position to redeem themselves. They were slaves of a tyrannical Pharaoh, and all they could do was to cry to God for deliverance (Exod. ii. 23, 24; iii. 7, 8). The earlier chapters of this book reveal the majestic way in which God accomplished this for them, but not before Calvary had been exacted typically, by the blood of the Passover lamb (Exod. xii. 3, 12-14).

We, who are the members of the church which is the Body of Christ, have a greater redemption from a greater bondage to Satan (Eph. ii. 2), the world which at present lies in his power (I John v. 19 R.V.) and from the sinful old nature which we all inherit from fallen Adam. We have been set free from all this, not typically by a Passover lamb, but by the reality of the precious shed blood, the life laid down by the Saviour on the cross on our behalf, this being the price He paid for our deliverance, and “if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John viii. 36). This is liberty in the fullest sense, not the spurious thing that man prates about. We who once were slaves, whether we knew it or not, are now free, not just to please ourselves, *but to please and serve Him* as He wills and shows us just what this involves day by day.

This redemption is further explained in Eph. i. 7 as “the forgiveness of sins”. There is only One Who has the right to forgive sins, and that is God alone, for all sin ultimately



is against Him, as David once realized to his cost (Psa. li. 1-4). There is the thought of deliverance in this word too, for in Luke iv. 18 it is translated 'deliverance' and 'set at liberty', and the measure is "according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us" (verses 7 and 8). The slight adjustment in punctuation does not touch the original Greek, for in this there are no punctuation marks.

We have before given a short consideration of the various and great riches which the prison epistles of Paul make known, and we start here with the riches of God's grace in which He has (literally) *overflowed* toward us. Here is no trickle of blessing, but a veritable torrent! Let us not pass by this lightly. Well may we sing, with Frances Ridley Havergal: "I could not do without Thee, O Saviour of the lost, Whose precious blood redeemed me at such tremendous cost", and realizing this afresh, we shall be more ready to serve Him faithfully.

Verses 8 and 9 continue, "In all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the secret (mystery) of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him" (R.V.). It will be noticed that redemption is put into God's secret will, for the good reason that God did not plan sin and death to enter into His creation, but, foreknowing all things, He had provided for its eradication in that aspect of His will which He had kept secret until the right time for its revelation. When God warned Adam that disobedience would lead to death, He did not reveal to the man that such an eventuality had been provided for in the work of the Kinsman-Redeemer. This was kept in God's secret will until its need had become apparent. Without such a provision, the wonderful plan of the ages which finds its goal in the dispensation of the fullness of the seasons, could never be realized (verse 10). The word 'fullness', another of the great words of the Prison Epistles, occurs in Ephesians four times (i. 10, 23; iii. 19; iv. 13). Its basic meaning is 'to fill up' a rent or a gap. The fall of Satan, sin and death, and the failure of the people of Israel, have indeed made gaps in God's great plan, but in each case He has gloriously filled these up in His redemptive purpose, so that at the end it reaches a glorious conclusion unmarred and in all its beauty.

Eph. i. 10 looks forward to this goal of the final dispensation when everything in heaven and earth will be filled by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who Himself contains all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). Then all will come under *His* headship and control. The words "gather together in one" represent one word in the Greek "to head up again".

Since the beginning of time, God has placed the headship over creation in the power of created beings, possibly unfallen Satan, but certainly Adam and later on Israel (Psa. viii.; Deut. xxviii. 13). These have failed and brought untold misery and suffering, and the way our heavenly Father in His wisdom and prudence will ensure that such tragedy can never be repeated, is to take such power out of the hands of the creature and put it in the control of the Creator. Then *all* rule and authority and power will be abrogated and He alone will be Sovereign (I Cor. xv. 24). What a magnificent conclusion to which to look forward! Then indeed the will of God will be carried out perfectly and completely in heaven and earth, and all problems, personal and world-wide, and in the

heavens too, will be solved. Eph. i. 11 goes on to teach us that we have a sure part in the Kingdom of God when it is thus realized. Just as the word 'adoption', as used in Paul's day, brings before the mind an inheritance, so here we are told "in Whom (Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (or marked off beforehand) according to the plan (purpose) of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will". Nothing happens by chance, all has been designed by God the Father and is being carried out with absolute certainty.

From our limited standpoint, everything seems to work so slowly, or even to come to a standstill, but we have to remember that God is not dealing with puppets, but moral creatures, who by their opposition, sin and failure, may lengthen out that plan. But the goal cannot fail of realization; God cannot be defeated! and the age of faith can look beyond the present darkness and overwhelming problems that thicken all around us, to the very time of triumph that this context is revealing, in which, by redeeming love and grace, we shall share. We shall then be "to the praise of His glory" as verse 12 declares, thus His glory will be magnified.

The rest of this verse states that we "first trusted in Christ". The margin points out that the word 'trust' is really 'hope'. What is the meaning of 'first'? Is it first in time, or first in place and dignity? It all depends how far the Apostle is looking back into the past. If the Acts period, then it possibly refers to those who first responded to the gospel. If only a short time previously when he was commissioned to make the new revelation known, it could refer to the hope of this new calling, which is the first to be realized in time and the first in dignity, for this hope encompasses heavenly places 'far above all', and this church is part of Him Who is the First-born of all creation and the First-born from the dead (Col. i. 15, 18), now enthroned at the Father's right hand.

Each calling of the redeemed has its own particular hope, centred in Christ, according to its place in the Divine plan, whether it be linked with the new heavens or the new earth, yet to come into being. The consummation of the Body's hope is to be taken to the glory of heaven's holiest of all, where the Father has willed it to be. This eclipses anything that had been revealed up to this point, and no wonder Paul goes on to pray that these Ephesian believers would go on to apprehend what such a transcendent hope involves (verse 18). This is a challenge to us all, whose eyes have been opened in measure. As the days come and go, is this hope becoming clearer, greater and more vital to us?

## **No.22. The Epistle to the Ephesians (2).** **pp. 196 - 200**

We quote Eph. i. 13, 14 in the R.V. rendering, as it is more accurate with the tenses than the A.V. "In Whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory." The A.V. 'after' used twice is misleading, and gives rise to the erroneous idea that some time after believing, the Ephesian saints were sealed by the Holy Spirit, a kind of second blessing. But the Greek makes it clear that the believing and sealing were accomplished at the same time.

The sealing is a well-known illustration of a finished transaction. We use the phrase "signed, sealed and settled" to convey the same meaning. In Eph. iv. 30 we are again reminded of this sealing of the Holy Spirit. For our own comfort let us get it quite clear, that we ourselves are not able to affix the seal and so secure the Divine transaction. *This is God's work alone* and once He has affixed the seal, it can never be broken! This is one of God's guarantees that we cannot fail to attain to the heavenly inheritance He has appointed for us. No wonder we can have full assurance of faith and hope, as we rest in what He has willed and accomplished for us!

Not only this, but the Holy Spirit of promise gives us now the earnest or foretaste of this glorious inheritance. The word "earnest" is a pledge, very much like the three occurrences in Gen. xxxviii. 17-20. It is used in Greek of an engagement ring, a pledge of marriage. The possession of the Spirit now, and the new nature that He gives to the believer, is the beginning of that fullness that we shall one day enjoy in the heavenlies, when in resurrection the redemption of our body will be attained (Rom. viii. 23; Phil. iii. 20, 21). This will indeed be "the redemption of God's own possession". Now we enjoy the first fruits, then will be the great harvest and we shall be "unto the praise of His glory".

### **Prayer and its purpose.**

Having made known this spiritual wealth emanating from the Father's will, the Son's redemptive work, and the Spirit's present witness and sealing, the Apostle ceases from further doctrine and begins to pray. This in itself teaches us one of the great purposes of prayer. The Apostle is now concerned that, what he has been the means of revealing would now become real in the experience of the Ephesian believers. To approach truth intellectually is not enough. Words of Scripture can be read and memorized by all, but what of the truth behind the words? This will elude the grasp of the cleverest unless they come God's way to get spiritual understanding.

So he continues: "For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye show toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks

for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (15, 16 R.V.). At least seven times Paul declares that he never stopped praying for others. The whole of his Christian life was one long intercession. What an example this is to us! Is it any wonder that he was so mightily used by the Lord and so many were blessed through his ministry? Spasmodic praying for other people achieves little or nothing. It is the constant intercession along the lines of God’s will which achieves much. May this stimulate each one of us to be more diligent in our remembrance of others at the throne of grace.

### **The Two prayers of Ephesians compared.**

In chapter iii. we find another profound prayer of the Apostle recorded. Before we go any further, it will be helpful to compare them. Both prayers are addressed to the Father (i. 17; iii. 14). In the epistles, prayer is never addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. We are exhorted to give thanks to the *Father*, in the *name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Eph. v. 20). To directly address the Saviour denies the need for a mediator between ourselves and God, and the Lord Jesus in His present position is precisely this to all men. “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me” He expressly declared, and we ought to remember this constantly.

### **The Father’s gifts.**

In both prayers the Father *gives*, that we may *know* (i. 17, 18; iii. 16-19) and this is the right order. Unless He first gives how can we possibly come to any knowledge of the Truth? In the second the Father *grants* (gives) to be strengthened with might so that Christ may take up His abode in our hearts by faith (iii. 16, 17); and that we might *get to know* the surpassing love of Christ (19). In both prayers there is something ‘exceeding’, the exceeding power that raised Christ from the dead and this love of the Lord that exceeds knowledge. The first prayer looks up to the Father’s right hand where Christ is now enthroned. The second prayer comes down to our experience, revealing that this highly exalted One is prepared to stoop and dwell in our hearts by faith.

Both prayers stress resurrection power. This was the power that conquered death and raised the Lord Jesus from the dead (i. 20) and this same overwhelming power can work in us (iii. 20). The goal of each prayer is “fullness”. In the first, the raised and seated Lord is Head of the Body, which is His fullness (i. 22, 23). In the second we find the mighty statement “that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God (iii. 19 R.V.).

### **The First prayer --- Wisdom and Revelation.**

The first of these prayers is that “the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (i. 17 R.V.). “The Father of glory” is a profound title which we may not be able to grasp fully. Does it mean that the Father is the origin of that indescribable divine quality called “glory”, or that there is a unique glory connected with God’s Fatherhood? Eph. iii. 15 states that all fatherhood in heaven or on earth is finally derived from His Fatherhood, for this is the archetypal Fatherhood. The desire of the Apostle is that this Father may give to the Ephesian saints “a spirit of

wisdom and revelation". Note the order. Wisdom is put *before* revelation because of its prime necessity. Of what use is knowledge without wisdom? Where there is no wisdom, knowledge can be squandered and abused. In fact knowledge without wisdom can be a menace. True wisdom is not inherent in fallen human nature. We need this as a gift of God as much as anything else. How glad we should be to read James i. 5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not".

The classic N.T. passage dealing with wisdom is chapters i. and ii. of I Corinthians. There the word occurs 17 times and the seeker after truth should carefully ponder over these chapters. In Ephesians and Colossian wisdom occurs 9 times (Eph. i. 8, 17; iii. 10; Col. i. 9, 28; ii. 3, 23; iii. 16; iv. 5). All these references should be studied too, and then the importance of this divine gift will surely become apparent.

Wisdom leads on to revelation, the basic meaning of which is "to remove the veil from" and so disclose what has been hidden. If ever there was a need for 'opened eyes' it is here where we are dealing with the most profound truth of the Scriptures. Thousands read these epistles and their wonder and teaching is unperceived. They cannot comprehend the new calling revealed therein, neither do they understand those who are rejoicing in the riches unfolded in them. There is no doubt that the believer needs this revelation from God regarding Ephesian truth, just as much as when he was an unsaved sinner he needed Christ revealed as Saviour. This need for revelation should be a challenge to every child of God who reads Eph. i. 17.

Such revelation is closely connected with the ascended Christ in glory, where He is now enthroned in the heavenly places. The truth of all the callings of the redeemed is linked with the Lord Jesus Christ in some way, either as King of kings in His earthly sovereignty or as Head over all things in His heavenly exaltation. It is this latter aspect of the knowledge of Christ that Paul stresses here, and when we remember that the word translated "knowledge" is sometimes "acknowledge" (Col. ii. 2; Titus i. 1; Philemon 6), we have even deeper truth, namely that divine wisdom and revelation are intimately connected with a practical acknowledgment in our daily lives. God does not pour spiritual truth into our minds quite apart from our practical response. This would not be wisdom. If we are not prepared to 'acknowledge' in practice day by day, then we are not in the right condition for divine enlightenment.

### **Three-fold Knowledge.**

The Apostle continues his prayer, pre-supposing this necessary enlightenment to have been experienced: "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling" (18 R.V.). Hope is the fulfillment, or practical realization of the callings and promises of God. When Paul stood before Agrippa, he declared, "And now I stand and am judged for the *hope* of the *promise* made of God unto our fathers, unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, *hope* to come" (Acts xxvi. 6, 7). The hope of the twelve tribes will be realized, the Apostle asserted, when the promises concerning the seed and the land made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are fulfilled and this they were waiting for as late as Acts xxvi. This indeed is the "hope

of Israel” (Acts xxviii. 20), which in no way can be made identical with the hope of the Body of Christ, if sound precepts of interpretation are used and words are allowed to mean what they say.

In Eph. i. 18 we have the hope of His calling, and in iv. 4 the “one hope of your calling”. The calling of the Body is a heavenly one as we have seen (Phil. iii. 20), and the realization of its hope will take place when Head and Body are united and manifested in the heavenly holiest of all. It should be obvious that a clear knowledge of the calling under consideration is essential, if the hope attached to it is to be understood. Any blurred conception of the calling will result in an imperfect or completely wrong interpretation of its hope. We have heard it stated that the Ephesian hope is ‘vague’, but this is only because the revelation of the secret of Eph. iii. has not been clearly grasped.

So many see in it nothing more than the Gentile being blessed with the Jew, in spite of the fact that this never was a secret, and was clearly stated to be God’s will as far back as Gen. xii. 1-3, where the Divine promise reads: “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*”. Israel was meant to be first, but not first and last. There was never any Divine intention to limit light and truth to this people, and Israel’s tragedy was that they finally became obsessed with this idea. They were intended by God to be a channel only to reach the Gentile world. But the Gentile being blessed through the Jew is certainly not the secret of Eph. iii. This we will give a close study when we reach this third chapter.

The next expression in the Apostle’s prayer is “that ye may know . . . . what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”. That God finds His inheritance in His people is surely true and wonderful, but we believe something deeper lies here. The word ‘saints’ in the Greek can mean holy people or holy things, and as the latter it is translated ‘holiest of all’ in Heb. ix. 8. If it is rendered in the same way in the context we are considering, it would read: “what (is) the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the holiest of all”, that is, the real holy of holies in heaven itself of which the O.T. Tabernacle and Temple had copies and were patterns (Heb. viii. 5; ix. 23). The reality is the innermost shrine of heaven, which, as far as we can understand, is solely the abode of God. Certainly the earthly copies were, for it contained the Shekinah glory, an expression of God’s presence, and no redeemed Israelite, with the exception of Aaron on the annual Day of Atonement, ever entered it, and he only remained in it while he was performing the ritual prescribed by God. *The holy of holies as the permanent home for the redeemed is absolutely unknown in the O.T., and the N.T. as well, until we reach the new revelation of Paul’s prison ministry.*

Here then is something tremendous, something entirely new. No wonder the Ephesian saints needed “opened eyes” and a “spirit of unveiling” in order to know and rejoice in it! And what “riches of glory” are attached to it, just as glory was centred in the holiest of all in both the Tabernacle and the Temple!

The third thing that Paul prayed for the Ephesians to know was “what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength

of His might, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead . . . .” (19, 20 R.V.). Here is something so tremendous that the Apostle piles synonym on synonym, exhausting the resources of language to describe how God’s resurrection power (*dunamis*) operates according to the inworking (*energeia*) of the strength (*kratos*) of His might (*ischus*). Why does he do this? Because he is trying to describe the greatest of all powers, *the power that conquers death*.

We live in an age of power. Men in their researches are discovering the great power that God has locked in the atom. But great though this is, *it can never raise a person from the dead*. In this prayer we are facing up to the power that can, and actually did so, when our Saviour burst the bonds of the grave, and this same power, says Eph. iii. 20, *can work in us*. Hence its importance to every member of the Body of Christ.

Have we realized its possibilities in our daily lives?

### **No.23. The Epistle to the Ephesians (3). pp. 217 - 220**

The goal in both the prayers of Ephesians is tremendous and is connected with *fullness*, one of the great words of the Prison Epistles. The ascended Christ, far above all heavens, with all things under Him, is now Head of the Body, the church, the *fullness* of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 22, 23). In the second prayer the climax is reached when the member of the Body is “filled unto (not ‘with’ A.V.) *all the fullness* of God” (iii. 19). This is so overwhelming, that it almost defies exposition. There is no doubt that these two prayers touch the high water mark in the N.T. The basic idea behind the word fullness (*pleroma*) is that which fills up something that has been torn or is empty, such as the patch which filled up the rent in an old garment (Matt. ix. 16). There have been a number of ‘rents’ in the purposes of God caused by sin and failure, such as followed the fall of Satan, of Adam and the failure of Israel. It would appear that the Body of Christ fills up the gap caused by the sin of Satan and the angels with him. Ezek xxviii. gives us a glimpse of the high and holy calling that Satan occupied in his unfallen state.

Not only this, but this church fills the “rent” made by the defection of Israel at Acts xxviii., up to their being restored to Divine favour at the end of the age. In the context we are dealing with, the Church is described as the fullness of Christ Who is the Head. Just as the human body is the complement of the head in order to make up a complete man, so here this church is the complement of its Divine Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. As *God*, the Lord Jesus Christ is complete, for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). As *Head* He needs the Body as His complement, and when one realizes this, what an overwhelming honour is given to the Church!

We express our minds through our bodies, and the absent Lord expresses Himself likewise. Or does He? This is a challenge to us all never to forget that day by day we

can know His indwelling by faith (Eph. iii. 17) and that in word and action we can express Him. In chapter iv. 10 we are told that the Lord's ascension was in order that "He might fill all things", that is the complete universe. The Body of Christ shows this in miniature now as Christ's fullness, and in fact in this and in many other respects sets forth the great goal of the ages when God shall be all in all (I Cor. xv. 28).

Sometimes the best way of explaining truth is by contrast, and in the chapter that follows we have this in two ways. Twice Paul takes us back into the past, from two different angles. First reminding us of our desperate condition as sinners lost and undone and under the control of Satan, and second, as Gentiles we were distant outsiders, not being members of the chosen race of Israel, the favoured nation who had all the divine blessings showered upon them! The words "in time past" introduce each of these sections (verses 2 and 11). Verse 1 tells us that we have been made alive from spiritual death caused by trespasses and sins. As to the translation "dead *to* trespasses and sin" (along the line of Rom. vi. 2, 11) we do not enter here, as the explanation of the Greek construction is too technical for these particular articles. The fact is that whichever way the phrase is translated, it expresses truth.

Looking back to our lives before we were saved, we walked "according to the course of this world", literally "the age of this world". In Gal. i. 4 the Apostle has already described this age as being evil, and this is still true despite all the scientific advance in knowledge and social improvement that has taken place. This age still rejects Christ, Who is the Truth, and is therefore evil whatever its external appearance may be, though one would have thought that, with the rampant sin and ungodliness that abounds everywhere, with the mounting problems that result from this, such demonstration of the truth of Paul's statement is not really necessary. But men are very loath to admit that this present age is basically evil, and whether they admit it or not, the fact remains that the evil world system dominates all the unsaved without exception. That means that the educated, refined person who is unsaved is just as much under its control as the profligate. Satan does not mind people living good lives, according to human standards, as long as they do not come into living touch with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason for the present age being evil is made clear by the Apostle's next statement, "according to the prince of the power of the air", or put more clearly "the ruler of the authority of the air". This is none other than Satan whom the Lord described as the "prince (ruler) of this world" (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). Through man's sin he has temporarily got control of the affairs of the world and he now *energizes* (works in) all the sons of disobedience although they do not recognize this power which is unfelt and therefore unknown to them. Such power is indeed mighty to have such a wide influence, and is in utter contrast to the tremendous resurrection power which *energized* (worked in) Christ, when He was raised from the dead. Satan has control of the aerial regions for the moment, and when this is seen to be a fact, man's invention of the aeroplane, instead of being a blessing ultimately becomes a great danger. At the end of this age, Satan's last desperate throw to gain world worship, is to hand over to his earthly representative, the wild Beast of Rev. xiii. 2, all his power and authority, which must include this control of the air. He who controls the air, controls the world. No wonder at this juncture, it is said



“who can make war with him?” (Rev. xiii. 4), and so this monster can pose as the “prince of peace” and offer to solve the problems of the nations, torn, impoverished and wearied by war and the intolerable burdens that result because of it.

Verse 3 continues “Among whom also we all had our conversation (manner of life) in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others”.

By ‘flesh’ Paul means the unregenerate nature of man, and we must remember that this can manifest itself in respectable ways as well as the more gross acts of sin. There is even such a thing a ‘religious flesh’. Some unsaved people are temperamentally attracted to outward forms of religion—specially those that appeal to the senses, but such are as much in spiritual darkness as the atheist and the libertine. The fact remains that all who are out of touch with Christ are under the control of the spirit called Satan, the great enemy of God, whatever their manner of life is.

Now in the abundant mercy of God comes the great reversal. The word ‘but’ indicates a sweeping change. “But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ” (4). The word translated ‘quickened together’ is a word not found in secular Greek, only in early Christian writers and it is very likely that it was coined by Paul himself to express the truth of the identification of the believer with the Lord Jesus. When He was made alive in resurrection, in God’s plan, the believer was made alive too! The wonder of it all constrains the Apostle to magnify the grace of God that has made this possible, and he slips in one of his characteristic parenthesis—(“by grace ye are saved”) and then adds the topstone of revelation: “and hath raised us up together and *made us sit together in heavenly places IN Christ Jesus.*”

Let us not hurry, for here we have truth connected with a company of God’s redeemed children that is unique in the realm of Scripture. Israel were indeed a favoured nation with all the blessings given to them (Rom. ix. 3-5), but not in their wildest dreams would any Jew have imagined that they were to be blessed in the highest heavens where God is enthroned! This is the apex of revelation so far as the redeemed are concerned and God has made it known for the appropriation by faith by His children. Yet how few know or rejoice in such riches of grace and glory! Let us note the exact wording. Many misquote Eph. ii. 6 as though it read seated together *with* Christ in the heavenly places. It actually reads *IN* Christ, not *WITH* Christ. In other words it is *positional, in our standing in Christ*. Just as II Cor. v. 17 states: “if any man be *IN* Christ, he is a new creation”, and we could not change this to read “if any man be *with* Christ, he is a new creation”, so in this passage of Ephesians, we are not *WITH* Christ until our hope is realized, and we are manifested *WITH* Him in glory (Col. iii. 4).

Even the height of glory made known in Eph. ii. is not the end, for verse 7 goes on to say: “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”. Note the word *ages* in the plural which tells us that the Millennium is not the last age, as some expositors imagine. Just how many ages there

are to come in the future, we do not know, but we are certain of one great fact that, as each age succeeds age, the crowning display of God's grace will be shown in His kindness revealed in increasing measure in all its fullness.

Again Paul returns to the theme of grace, which for him was inexhaustible. Grace for ever rules out human goodness or merit, so however high or great the blessings are, there can be only one basis for them, namely the "exceeding riches of His grace". Riches of grace are seen in the Son's redemptive work (i. 7), but *exceeding riches* is the only expression that befits the Father's kindness in the future age. Verse 8 gives perhaps the most concise summing up of the gospel of grace in the N.T. revealed through Paul: "for by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (8, 9).

This is an extension of the parenthesis of verse 5. The believer's salvation springs solely from the grace of God and is made our own possession by faith or trust in Christ alone. And all of this is a gift of God, not just faith alone. It is the whole grace-by-faith salvation that God has given us, and faith is the channel through which we receive it. It is "not of works, lest any man should boast" (9). If man was able to do anything in connection with his salvation, he would have something to boast about, but God has so arranged it that this is impossible, and He alone must have all the glory in saving mankind. This high and holy calling starts with grace and continues with it in the coming ages. Do we constantly rejoice in this?

#### **No.24. The Epistle to the Ephesians (4). pp. 237 - 240**

While the Apostle in Eph. ii. 8, 9 gives his concise summing-up of the gospel of grace, which rules out good works or human merit, we must not deduce from this that Paul was an Antinomian, or against the law from any angle (see Titus iii. 1, 8, 14). To get complete balance we must not divorce verse 10 from verses 8 and 9: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained (margin, prepared) that we should walk in them". To get the teaching of the N.T. for the present time relative to good works clear in our minds, is to make a considerable step forward in the knowledge of the Truth. Good works can never be the *ground* of the believer's salvation, but they should be the *fruit* or result of it in his daily life. Thousands never get this clear, stressing one at the expense of the other, or getting them in the wrong order.

We should be careful too, to avoid any fatalistic ideas about these "good works". Verse 10 does not teach that we produce them automatically because "God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". The margin tells us that 'ordained' can read 'prepared', and the teaching is that God has prepared us by redemption and grace so that we are now free to produce these works or fruits of the Spirit which are according to His

mind and will. Before salvation, while we were under the domination of the flesh and the god of this age, good works, as God sees them, were impossible.

Verse 11 starts another section and looks back into the past once more, but from a different angle. Verses 2-10 show our basic condition as unsaved sinners. Verses 11 and 12 give our dispensational disability of being Gentiles and therefore not belonging to the chosen race of Israel. “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” To better appreciate this great disability ‘in the flesh’, let us see what Scripture teaches concerning Israel, the nation specially chosen by God and redeemed by type and shadow and in close covenant relation to Him. In Rom. ix. 3-5 Paul states: “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen”. No wonder Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20 reads: “He showeth . . . . His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them.* Praise ye the Lord”.

It should be quite obvious that in the human sphere, that is “in the flesh”, God’s dealings and the blessings He showered upon the Jew were unique. No Gentile, however civilized and cultured, could ever hope to attain to such a position of Divine favour by his own efforts. Israel had *all* the earthly blessings; they were a nation near to the Lord, as Moses described it, and had the honour of being custodians of His written revelation, “the oracles of God” (Rom. iii. 1, 2). They were in close covenant ties with God and had the unique position of being His servants and His witnesses to a darkened Gentile world. To cap it all, in His humanity Christ came primarily to them (Matt. xv. 24). Israel alone had the expectancy of a Messiah (Christ).

To all this the Gentile was a ‘stranger’ and an ‘alien’. Great Gentile civilizations arose and passed away, making their mark on human history, but not one of them could compare in Divine privilege with the elect nation of Israel. In this section of Ephesians, it is a question of *distance* and *nearness* to God. The favoured nation of Israel were placed near by God Himself, whereas anyone being born a Gentile was as far off from God as it is possible to imagine, and his only hope of canceling this out was to become a proselyte and forsake his Gentile status. When one adds on top of all this his condition as a helpless sinner under the dominion of Satan and death, the picture of hopelessness is complete.

As we have before seen, unless God steps in there could be no possibility of deliverance, but just as He did so in verse 4, so He does again in verse 13: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were *far off are made nigh* by the blood of Christ”. It is the Lord’s redemptive work on the Cross that can alone cancel this appalling state of the

Gentile unbeliever. What is utterly impossible by human ability or effort, God has wonderfully accomplished through the one offering of His beloved Son on our behalf.

Verse 14 continues: “For He is our peace, Who hath made both (Jew and Gentile believers) one”. No colour bar, or class distinction was ever so great as the separation between Jew and Gentile previous to the epistle to the Ephesians. One of the great features of the distinctive teaching of Ephesians relating to the Mystery or Secret (Eph. iii.) is the cancellation by Christ of this great estrangement in the “New Man”, the joint-Body of Christ. This is further illustrated in the succeeding words of verse 14, “and hath broken down the middle wall of partition (between us)”. This is most evidently an allusion to the literal wall of partition in the Temple area at Jerusalem which separated the outer court of the Gentiles from the inner courts and the Temple itself, into which only Jewish worshippers might enter. Notices were displayed in Greek and Latin warning Gentiles to keep out or suffer the death penalty. Paul himself had had a vivid experience of this when, a few years earlier, it was rumoured that he had taken a Gentile into the holy place and violated its sanctity, thereby narrowly escaping death himself (Acts xxi. 28).

This ‘middle wall of partition’ was a symbol of the tremendous barrier between Jew and Gentile represented by the law of God given through Moses to Israel, whether considered in its moral, ceremonial or civil aspects. It also included the special decrees instituted by the Hebrew church at Jerusalem in accordance with God’s will, which represented a minimum of the law that the Gentile believer was expected to observe (Acts xv. 28, 29; xvi. 4), in order to avoid giving offence to the Jewish believer. These are the ‘ordinances’ of Eph. ii. 15. They have no reference to the Lord’s Supper or water baptism. These, together with the Mosaic law, caused the ‘enmity’ which verse 15 tells us has been abolished by Christ in this new calling.

In a similar way Col. ii. 14 shows that the “handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us” have been cancelled by being nailed to the Cross. Having disposed of these insurmountable barriers, God can now in Christ ‘create’ (not just ‘make’ as A.V.) in Himself of twain (literally the both, that is Jew and Gentile believer) one *new man*, so making peace” (verse 15). Let us get this quite clear. The calling of Ephesians revealed after Acts xxviii. is something *new*. It is not a continuation or merely an improvement of the position during the Acts, where the Gentile believer was likened to a wild olive grafted into the true olive tree of Israel (Rom. xi. 17-22), and sharing their spiritual things (Rom. xv. 27). Here Israel the nation with its covenant blessings has no place, neither has the Gentile as such with his great disability. In this ‘new man’ there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision (Col. iii. 11).

The newness of this calling revealed in Ephesians is further stressed by the usage of the word ‘create’ rather than ‘make’. The essence of Divine creation is that old things have passed away and new things have come into being (II Cor. v. 17). The church or out-calling revealed in this epistle is a new beginning, not an evolution of some existing grouping, though doubtless many believers of the Acts period, came to learn from

‘enlightenment’ (Eph. i. 17, 18) that they now belonged to this new creation, where Israel with their earthly privileges and the Gentile with his hopeless condition, cease to exist.

The goal of this “new man” is to grow up to a “full grown male” (“perfect man” Eph. iv. 13 A.V.). This is the word translated ‘husband’ in v. 25 and it can never represent a woman or a bride. God never mixes His metaphors and we have no right to make Him do so by teaching that this company, whose goal is to be a full-grown male, can be the same as the Bride of the Lamb.

Believers who do this are confusing the callings of God and this can only lead to a lack of appreciation and insight into the wonderful purpose of the ages in Christ (Eph. iii. 11). It is confusing a calling where Israel is prominent (Rev. xxi. 12-14) with one where Israel as such has no existence, to say nothing of seeking to blend the Jerusalem which is above and whose goal is the new earth (Rev. xxi. 2, 10) with a position ‘far above all heavens’ (Eph. iv. 10) where the Lord Jesus Christ is now exalted.

The removal of the ‘wall of partition’ and everything that would divide the members of the joint-Body, whether Jew or Gentile, leads to reconciliation, the removal of all barriers: “that He might reconcile both in one Body unto God by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (verse 16). Here is another aspect of the Lord’s great reconciling work on the Cross, dealing not with the relationship of God to the sinner, but the relationship of each member of this new calling to each other and to the Father, and this leads to the widest aspect of reconciliation, that of Col. i. 20, dealing with the Body and all the heavenly beings. The removal of all ‘enmity’ and differences of position and blessing results in “peace to you which were afar off (the Gentile), and to them that were nigh (the Jew)”.

All this finally leads to unrestricted access to the Father: “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father” (18 R.V.). This peace does not just remove enmity and barriers; it brings every member, whether Jew or Gentile, into the presence of God the Father. To appreciate this tremendous privilege properly we should go back and consider the position of Israel as a covenant nation. With all the advantages and blessings we have seen that Israel possessed, unrestricted access to the presence of God, located in the holy of holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple, did not exist. If a Jew did not belong to a priestly family, not once during his lifetime could he even enter the Tabernacle, let alone go into the sacred innermost shrine, where the glory of God, the Shekinah, dwelt!

God deliberately hedged Himself round with all sorts of barriers, to impress upon His people the inestimable privilege of coming into His holy presence, lest this should become cheap and under-valued. For us who belong to the one Body, all such restrictions are gone and we can go to Him through the one Mediator *at any time* and *with any frequency*. Do we really appreciate this and avail ourselves constantly of such a precious privilege?

# PHILEMON

No.1. pp. 210 - 215

This delightful little epistle, which is so often neglected because of its brevity and personal nature, has much to teach the believer in Christ. Since it belongs to the post Acts xxviii. period this should especially concern the members of the Body of Christ who are now being called out. True it does not contain the depth of teaching as set out in Ephesians and Colossians, nor the exhortations to ‘run the race’ in view of the prize set before us, of Philippians and II Timothy, but it does lay down an important principle which every believer ought to note. It reveals Paul’s attitude to one of the evils of his time—slavery, and so indicates what should be the practice of the present day believer to the evils of his day. Before this is pursued at any length, a brief outline of the story behind the epistle may be of help in understanding why the letter was composed at all.

## The story behind the epistle.

Philemon was a Colossian, or at any rater an inhabitant of Colosse. This is apparent from Col. iv. 8, 9 and Philemon 10, 12:

“Whom I have sent unto you . . . . with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.”

“Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds . . . . . whom I have sent again (R.V. ‘back to thee’).”

If Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, was one of the Colossians, it is reasonable to suppose that since he was being sent back to Philemon, then Philemon himself was at Colosse, and almost certainly resident there. This being so it is interesting to note the reference to the “church in thy house” (Philemon 2)\*, which could have been the meeting place of the Colossian believers. It also reveals how Philemon may have come to deserve the commendation of Paul, “the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (7). How important a place hospitality must have held for these early believers who had no splendid buildings in which to meet.

[\* - (# or number) indicates the verse in the epistle to Philemon.]

Philemon seems to have become a believer under the ministry of Paul, but where and when is not apparent from Scripture. It is possible that the Apostle’s long stay at Ephesus when “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus” (Acts xix. 10), may have been the time when Philemon came to owe Paul, “even thine own self besides” (19)—an undoubted reference to his conversion. Since that event Philemon had become a beloved brother of Paul, in whom the Apostle had confidence concerning his wishes, both with respect to what he asked for Onesimus, and for the preparation of a lodging, should he be released from prison (21, 22). Philemon evidently did not disappoint Paul, or else the epistle which bears his name would hardly have been passed down to us.

Onesimus was the slave of Philemon. (It may be wondered how a believer of Philemon's character could retain a slave after his enlightenment, but when it be realized what Paul taught as to the relationship between masters and slaves, this will present no problem.) Onesimus had evidently run away from his master, and it seems possible from verse 18 of the letter that he had stolen money or goods:

“If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.”

Whether or not this was due to the relaxed restraint of his master, having become a believer, cannot be said, but it is evident that Onesimus was not a believer at this time. Coming to Rome (not Caesarea as will be shown later) he contacted Paul and was converted. How this contact was made is a matter of speculation. He may have been aware of Paul's imprisonment there and (not unlike the Prodigal Son) having exhausted his means and “come to himself”, turned to the only one he knew in the thronging crowds of the metropolis. That he could have free access to the Apostle at this time is evident from Acts xxviii. 30:

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.”

Whether the above speculation be true or not, after his contact with, and conversion under Paul in prison (10), Onesimus remained long enough in Rome to minister to the needs of the Apostle and so be judged of him to be “profitable to thee and to me” (11). Paul desired that he should remain in Rome to continue this ministry, but would not impose upon Philemon his master, and so sent him back (13, 14). A favourable opportunity occurred, and accompanying Tychicus, who was traveling to Colosse with letters to the church there and in Laodicea, Onesimus returned to his master bearing Paul's covering letter—the letter to Philemon. (This latter connection with Tychicus and its implications concerning Colossians and Ephesians will be considered later.)

The covering letter, which Onesimus was to deliver to Philemon, called for the acceptance of the runaway slave as ‘a brother’ (15, 16), and the letter was to be read to the church (and was so addressed, verses 1, 2). Thus *all* would know Paul's desire in the matter. They would also be aware of the attitude he was taking, an attitude characteristic of the great man, who could have ‘enjoined’ (ordered) Philemon to obey him in his capacity as an Apostle, but chose rather to ‘besech’ (8, 9). Paul looked upon the whole affair as a means of God (15), an example of all things working together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Rom. viii. 28).

Such is a brief look at the story behind the epistle. It is quite evident why the letter was written in the first place; it may not be so obvious as to why the Holy Spirit singled it out to form a part of inspired Scripture. Unlike the other epistles which were addressed particularly to individuals (I & II Timothy and Titus), it does not discuss important matters affecting church discipline and government. There must have been many other letters like it which have not survived the test of time, and yet Philemon has not only done this, but has been accepted as part of the canon of Scripture from early days. Bishop Ellicott says of it:

“The originality with which the Apostle is thus stamped, and the strong external testimonies of antiquity, which, short as this epistle is, are by no means wanting, may justly be said to place its *genuineness* and *authenticity* beyond all doubt.”

(*Introduction to Philemon*).

There are probably a number of reasons why the epistle holds the place it does. “It is one sample of numberless letters which must have been written to his many friends and disciples by one of St. Paul’s eager temperament and warm affections, in the course of a long and chequered life” (Bishop Lightfoot). *As a sample* it reveals, perhaps better than any other of his epistles, the character of the man who was set forth as a “pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him to life everlasting” (I Tim. i. 16). The Apostle is as it were caught in an unguarded moment. He could surely never have imagined regarding this letter (even if he did with respect to his others) that it would have been handed down to posterity. He is revealed in this most private of all his letters as one who practices what he preaches—he lives up to his convictions, and his private life is as much to be commended as that open to public gaze. If Paul was going to fail anywhere it would have been here, but he does not do so; he shows himself to be the man presented to us in the longer, more public, records of his thoughts and ways. He is a consistent pattern, and Philemon reveals this.

“The example tact with which his (Onesimus’) fraudulent conduct towards Philemon is alluded to (18),—the absence of everything tending to excuse or palliate the misdeed, yet the use of every expression and sentiment calculated to win the fullest measures of Philemon’s forgiveness,—has not failed to call forth the reverential admiration of every expositor from the earliest times down to our own day.”

(*Introduction to Philemon*—Bishop Ellicott).

But there is a more particular reason for the retention of this epistle as part of the word of God, for as has been already noted, it reveals Paul’s attitude to one of the evils of his day, and as such is a guide for present practice in this respect.

How did Paul react to slavery? Before this question can be answered it must be remembered that the Apostle was a Hebrew, familiar with the history and teaching of the O.T. He was aware that a system of slavery was enacted under the Mosaic law, (a system which has been greatly misunderstood by opponents of slavery since), and he would naturally have been influenced by this. It has been suggested that by his action in sending back Onesimus to his master he “countenanced the principles of modern fugitive-slave law”. These points must be considered before any clear conception can be gained of the Apostle’s attitude to N.T. slavery.

### **Old Testament slavery.**

This title, although correct in the broadest meaning of “slavery”, will be modified in the course of this consideration, to “Old Testament *servitude*”, for the system which prevailed under the Hebrews must in no way be confused with the more modern Negro slave trade. There is no need, with some expositors, to “put out the hand to save the ark of God”. O.T. servitude, correctly understood, will leave the believer no cause for alarm, nor need to compromise his belief in the veracity of “all Scripture”. As with all systems,



it was to be expected that it would be abused by some, but laws were formulated which protected the lot of the individual, and behind it all was the reminder:

“And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt . . . .”  
(Deut. xv. 15).

Bishop Lightfoot’s remarks are here much to the point:

“Considering the conditions of ancient society, and more especially of ancient warfare, slavery as practiced among the Hebrews was probably an escape from alternatives which would have involved a far greater amount of human misery.”  
(*Epistle to Philemon*).

The writer has of course in mind here the bondage of foreigners to the Hebrews, but the system of servitude covered also the Hebrews themselves and was in many cases a blessing in disguise as will be seen.

Slavery, of the sort practiced by ships’ crews who carried off savages to be sold in some distant land, men-stealing in fact, was condemned outright under the Mosaic law:

“He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death” (Exod. xxi. 16).

Paul was well aware of this aspect of O.T. law:

“. . . . . *the law* is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly . . . . . for men-stealers” (I Tim. i. 9, 10).

Theft of property must be atoned for by restitution. Sometimes this would mean paying double (Exod. xxii. 9), quadruple or even quintuple restitution (Exod. xxii. 1), but a man-stealer must forfeit his life. Such was the sanctity of human life under the Mosaic law.

A person could be sold into servitude if, having stolen and been caught, he was unable to make restitution:

“If a man steal . . . . he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for this theft” (Exod. xxii. 1-3).

This is surely a much better system than one in which the thief is kept at the expense of the State in prison, when there is very often no thought of restitution being made to the one stolen from. Perhaps the idea of restitution being demanded two, four or even five-fold, would provide a more effective deterrent to would-be thieves, than a short prison sentence, at the end of which the prisoner is freed to enjoy, after a suitable period of waiting, the fruits of his robbery, which had been carefully hidden before his capture. There is surely nothing inhumane in the above law, except to those modernists who refuse to accept that a man may be responsible for his actions.

A further reason for servitude under the Mosaic law is stated in Lev. xxv. 39:

“If thy brother that dwelleth by thee *be waxen poor*, and be sold unto thee . . . .”

“Thy brother” evidently refers to a Hebrew in this passage, and it should be noted that there was a difference between the sale of such and the sale of foreigners. A Hebrew could not be sold, under these conditions, as a ‘bondservant’, only as a ‘hired servant’. This is understood by some to mean that the individual sold himself, or more strictly the right to his labour. In this way, a man falling into poverty and becoming unable to maintain himself, could obtain the means of subsistence for himself and his family. Again it will be recognized that this is a thoroughly humane system, especially when it be observed that this service at most could last six years (Deut. xv. 12).

There is a further view on Lev. xxv. 39 which emphasizes the humanity of this law even more. Translate,

“And if thy brother be waxen poor by thee . . . .”,

that is to say, having done all possible to help him he still fails, *then* allow him to be sold unto thee. See especially verses 35-37 which precede this passage and suggest the above idea.

When the six years was at an end (or should the jubilee arrive first, Lev. xxv. 40) then the servant was to be sent out with many gifts, reminiscent of the treatment afforded the Israelites on their departure from Egypt:

“And when thou sendest him out from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally . . . . of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee” (Deut. xv. 13-15).

The treatment of servants was at no time to be with rigour:

“Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God” (Lev. xxv. 43),

which should be seen in contrast to Exod. i. 11-14, where the experience of Israel is recorded. That this injunction was likely to be obeyed is seen in that provision was made for the servant who did not wish to leave his master:

“And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and *he shall be thy servant for ever*” (Deut. xv. 16, 17).

Compare this last clause with Philemon 15:

“For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest *receive him for ever*.”

Other aspects of this subject could be examined but enough has been presented to show in what O.T. servitude consisted. There is one passage however, which in the light of Paul’s action with Onesimus, demands attention. This will be considered in the next article.

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It was demonstrated in the previous article that O.T. servitude was a humane and merciful system and very often a blessing in disguise. All systems however may be abused, and it must be allowed that there were those Hebrews who took advantage of being a master over another man. Cruelty is a sin not confined to the heathen of the O.T. but being found even among those of the Lord's inheritance. Provision was therefore made for such cases as would come to light:

“If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished (avenged).”

“If a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake” (Exod. xxi. 20, 26).

In addition to this, the willful murder of a servant was treated under the general law affecting all under the laws of Israel (Lev. xxiv. 17, 22). But the passage which is of most interest under the circumstances, is Deut. xxiii. 15, 16, which deals with what has been called the “fugitive-slave law”:

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.”

Such a passage as this might well come into the Apostle's mind when Onesimus, the runaway slave, came to him. A great difference however existed between what was behind the O.T. injunction and Paul's present experience. Referring to the passage in Deuteronomy, *The Imperial Bible Dictionary* says:

“When a servant escaped from his master, the law presumed that he had good reason for fleeing, and therefore forbade anyone on whose protection he might throw himself to deliver him up to his master. He was to remain with the person in whose house he had taken refuge . . . . It is obvious that the effect of such a law must have been to stimulate masters to treat their servants with all possible kindness and consideration.”

Things were very different under the system of slavery in Paul's day. Bishop Lightfoot commenting on this, first contrasts the slaves among the Jews, who ‘formed only a small fraction of the whole population’, with the vast masses held in Greece and Rome. Referring to the latter he continues:

“And these vast masses of human beings had no protection from Roman law. The slave had no relationships, no conjugal rights. Cohabitation was allowed to him at his owner's pleasure, but not marriage. His companion was sometimes assigned to him by lot. The slave was absolutely at his masters disposal; for the smallest offence he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, thrown to the wild beasts” (*Epistle to Philemon*).

One can well imagine, under such a system, how Onesimus, having stolen from his master, would flee to the metropolis to escape detection and punishment (possibly death).

Could he be certain that he would be treated with leniency, even though he might have observed a changed attitude in his master since he became a believer? Evidently not. There is also another factor which ought to be considered; the character of Onesimus himself.

“There was absolutely nothing to recommend him. He was a slave, and what was worse, a Phrygian slave; and he had confirmed the popular estimate of his class and nation by his own conduct. He was a thief and a runaway. His offence did not differ in any way, so far as we know, from the vulgar type of slavish offences.”

*(Epistle to Philemon).*

In line with this it should be noted that Paul does not seek at any time to excuse the misdeed of Onesimus, nor blame his action upon the circumstances under which he had grown up. Only the Lord can judge of the relationship between circumstances and action. The character of Onesimus may perhaps be judged from Philemon 11:

“Which in time past was to thee *unprofitable* . . . .”,

a possible allusion to the name “Onesimus” which means profitable, so that before his conversion he did not live up to his name. After, things were different.

How Onesimus contacted Paul in Rome, as has been noted before, belong to the realm of speculation. Onesimus, having exhausted his means, and knowing of the whereabouts of Paul, may have thrown himself upon the Apostle’s mercy and learnt of the greater mercy of Christ in redeeming all sorts and conditions of men from bondage, whence his conversion—but this is pure guesswork.

Now is observed the great test of Christianity. How much difference does belief in Christ make to a man? The law required that Onesimus must be sent back to his master. In addition to this the law of conscience required that, although Onesimus had repented of his misdeed, restitution should be made. This could only be possible if the runaway slave was returned to his master. But how would Philemon react? Confessedly he was a believer, but it must be remembered, brought up in a society which accepted slavery. By returning, Onesimus would put himself entirely at the mercy of his master, who had every right to exact death for a far lighter offence than his. But Paul’s confidence is strong in both Philemon and Onesimus. Accompanied by Tychicus, Onesimus returns to Colosse (Col. iv. 7-9); Paul now assured that he will live up to his name (11), and the letter he carries has the words:

“receive him . . . . not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved . . . . receive him as myself . . . . Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say” (Philemon 15-21).

It must be assumed that, since this letter has survived, Philemon did not disappoint Paul in his expectations.

The change wrought in both Philemon and Onesimus as a result of their contact with the living Christ was no less in Paul himself with respect to slavery. Paul had been trained as a Rabbi, and would, prior to his conversion, have acceded to the teachings of

his former masters. Dean Farrar observes the following in his book *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, gleaned from Jewish writings:

“It happened that on one occasion a female slave of Rabbi Eliezer died, and when his disciples came to condole with him he retired from them from room to room, from upper chamber to hall, till at last he said to them, ‘I thought you would feel the effects of tepid water, but you are proof even against hot water. Have I not taught you that these signs of respect are *not* to be paid at the death of slaves?’ ‘What, then’, asked the disciples, ‘are pupils on such occasions to say to their masters?’ ‘The same as is said when their oxen and asses die’, answered the Rabbi—‘May the Lord replenish thy loss.’”

Probably not all Rabbis would take the above extreme view, but would hold less severe ideas. Nevertheless, it seems that Rabbinic tradition would have influenced the Apostle’s mind enough to have caused him to regard slaves as very inferior persons, and no doubt his position as a Roman, *free born* (Acts xxii. 25-28) would contribute to such an attitude. But what grace is found in Christ, grace which caused the Apostle to write in an epistle delivered at the same time as Philemon, and in the context of ‘masters and slaves’:

“there is no respect of persons . . . .” (Col. iii. 25).

### **Paul’s attitude to slavery.**

It is evident from the foregoing that Paul’s Christianity was opposed in principle to all that Roman slavery stood for. His exhortation to a master to receive a slave ‘as a brother’ is indicative of this. Yet Paul never attacked slavery as an institution, nor urged believing masters to free their slaves as a part of their duty to God. It is true, as Lightfoot observes, that in Philemon “the word ‘emancipation’ seems to be trembling on his lips, and yet he does not once utter it”. He does however in the same epistle put Philemon under an obligation which far transcends the emancipation of Onesimus:

“receive him as myself . . . . thou owest unto me even thine own self besides” (17, 19).

Onesimus was in debt to Philemon but the reverse was also true. Philemon owed to his now believing slave what all believers owe to each other:

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another . . . .” (Rom. xiii. 8).

Such truth in practice would in time undermine the system of slavery, and what was already true in Christ Jesus, “there is neither . . . . bond nor free” (Col. iii. 11), would eventually become true in the flesh. Two Scriptures are helpful in establishing Paul’s view on this system, which was entrenched so deeply into the society of his day:

“Every man should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a slave when you were called? Do not let that trouble you; but if a chance of liberty should come, take it. For the man who as a slave received the call to be a Christian is the Lord’s freedman, and, equally, the free man who received the call is a slave in the service of Christ. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Thus each one, my friends, is to remain before God in the condition in which he received his call.”

(I Cor. vii. 20-24 *New English Bible*).

There is an alternative idea as to the translation of the latter half of verse 21 advocated by Coneybeare, Bengel, Meyer, etc., which would make it read:

“Wast thou in slavery at the time of thy calling? Care not for it. Nay, though thou have power to gain thy freedom, rather make use of thy condition” (Coneybeare’s translation).

There are thus two opposing views as to what Paul is here advising, both equally admissible on the grounds of the language alone. Either Paul is recommending the slave to accept any offer of freedom given to him, or to refuse the same. One factor which weighs heavily with the latter view is the proximity of the Lord’s coming (*parousia*) at the time of I Corinthians. In the very same chapter Paul is advising the unmarried to remain so, “for the present distress” (vii. 25-29) and in view of the fact that “the time is short” (verse 29). Should not the slave manifest the same attitude?

Even if the above be conceded as Paul’s attitude during the Acts period, there is no need to imagine that this continued to be so when the hope of the Lord’s *parousia* was postponed at Acts xxviii. In I Timothy (a post-Acts xxviii. epistle) the Apostle advises the younger widows to marry and bear children, a recommendation contrary to the spirit of I Cor. vii. Only the recognition of a changed dispensation will account for this. And also in the light of a changed dispensation it seems highly improbable that Paul would recommend slavery in preference to freedom, if that freedom could be obtained lawfully. “The independent position of the freeman would give him an obvious advantage in doing the work of Christ, which it is difficult to imagine St. Paul enjoining him deliberately to forego” (Lightfoot).

Turning however to the main point in I Cor. vii. 20-24, it will be observed that the slave was to be content with his lot, untroubled by his position in society. He was to be aware that his condition in this life meant little when seen in the light of the Lord’s work in him. He was the Lord’s freeman and as such stood on an equality with all who were the Lord’s. A realization of this position would make his condition in this life tolerable. Paul never condoned slavery; what he did was to remind those who suffered under it, of their position in Christ. In the flesh the slave had nothing; in Christ he was rich beyond dreams. (Compare Col. iii. 23-25).

The second passage which has a bearing upon Paul’s attitude to slavery is I Tim. vi. 1-10. The passage begins with an exhortation to slaves to “count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his (literally ‘the’) teaching be not blasphemed”. This exhortation seems to be directed especially at slaves with unbelieving masters in contrast to verse 2, “they that have believing masters”. What grace would be needed to obey such an exhortation when the master might well be a tyrant, with no sympathy whatsoever towards the beliefs of his slave, yet “the name of God and the teaching” was at stake.

Not all however held ‘the teaching’ here referred to. There were those who would not consent to “wholesome words” (verse 3), who apparently taught the slave to adopt quite a contrary attitude. Why should he acquiesce to his position in his life! why remain

content with his lot as a slave? He should be free and enjoy some of the goods of this world. On the face of it this sounds very plausible, for why should a man be a slave subject to the whims and fancies of another; has he no right, on the basis of Christian principles, to an equal chance in life as his master? Certainly, but this is not the point of this passage. The *attitude of mind* is that which is uppermost in the Apostle's thoughts, for there were those who were,

“supposing that gain is godliness” (verse 5),

or better, “holding godliness to be (equivalent to) gain”. So that for a slave to seek betterment in the form of social standing, or particularly (in the context), by gaining materially, was the process of godliness. Such a doctrine was contrary to “the words of our Lord Jesus Christ” which taught that, “godliness with contentment is great gain” (verse 6). It may seem hard to expect a slave to accept such a statement, but then Paul adduces as his reason an observation true of all men of all times:

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (verses 7, 8).

Also it should be remembered, that Paul was not asking for an attitude of mind on the part of others, which was contrary to his own:

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. iv. 11).

When Paul wrote these words he was in a Roman prison, not a very pleasant *state* to be in, yet he was content, as is also emphasized in his reference to himself as, “The prisoner of Christ Jesus” and “The prisoner of the Lord” (Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1), rather than recognizing that he was a prisoner of the Roman power. If Paul could take such an attitude to life from a position of captivity, and if he could encourage such an attitude in those under the bondage of slavery, then those believers of the present time whose lot is cast in “pleasant places” have no excuse for taking any other attitude. The wisdom of God, which is foolishness from man's point of view, reveals that the contrary attitude, the determination to be rich, leads to ‘temptation and a snare’ (I Tim. vi. 9).

“Those who want to be rich fall into temptations and snares and many foolish harmful desires which plunges men into ruin and perdition. The love of money is the root of all evil things, and there are some who in reaching for it have wandered from the faith and spiked themselves on many thorny griefs” (I Tim. vi. 9, 10 *N.E.B.*).

The attitude, the ‘bent’ of the mind is all important. Paul directed that it should be on things above, “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God”, and this was to be so whether bond or free.

Summarizing Paul's attitude to slavery it is noted:

- (1) He never attacked it *as an institution*, but his teaching opposed it at heart.
- (2) He expected slaves to give due honour to their masters.
- (3) Slaves were not to care about their condition but to be content.
- (4) If a slave could obtain his liberty legitimately, he should do so.
- (5) “In Christ” there is neither “bond nor free”.

The Apostle's general teaching for slaves and servants of all degrees, is as true today as it ever has been. Similarly his injunctions to masters. If today they are known as "employers" and "employees" does that make any difference? The Apostle would not have thought so. So may all take heed to his words, which, since they form part of Scripture, are "words which the Holy Spirit teacheth":

"Servants, obey your masters here below . . . . do not work simply when their eye is on you . . . . but serve them with a single heart, out of reverence for your Lord and Master. Whatever be your task, work at it heartily, as servants of the Lord and not of men; remember, you are to receive from the Lord the inheritance . . . . the wrongdoer will be paid back for his wrongdoings—there will be no favour shown. Masters, treat your servants justly and fairly; remember that you have a Master of your own in heaven" (Col. iii. 22 - iv. 1 Moffatt Version).



## **The Out-Resurrection**

**(Phil. iii. 11).**

**What does it imply?**

**pp. 147 - 152**

In II Tim. ii. 16-21 the Apostle speaks in most serious terms of a system of teaching “which will eat as doth a canker . . . . saying that the resurrection is past already”. We do not know just exactly what this heretical teaching was, and need not spend time in a negative research, but we should be exceedingly sensitive to any line of teaching that touches either the Resurrection of the Lord, or of His people

As the martyr Tyndale said, the idea that at death the believer enters into the presence of the Lord, empties resurrection of any meaning. We have particularly in mind in writing this article the idea, entertained by some children of God, that any, who like Paul “attain unto the out-resurrection”, do not wait for the end of the age, or the Second Coming, but ‘depart’ to be with Christ at death. While this prospect is exceedingly attractive, it can only be accepted if justified by the Scriptures, all else must eventually come under the censure of II Tim. ii. 16-21.

Let us consider the term “out-resurrection”. Whatever prefix we may place before the word ‘resurrection’ such as ‘the better resurrection’, ‘the resurrection of life or of condemnation’, ‘the first resurrection’, the meaning of resurrection remains constant, and resurrection is linked with a ‘body’, and cannot be spiritualized away. The ‘out-resurrection’ is an expression which is not found in the A.V. but is justified by the original text.

Let us turn to Mark ix. 1-13 where we have described the Transfiguration of Christ, for an illustration:

“And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead” (verse 9).

The problem that meets us here is the fact that these disciples questioned one another as to,

“What the rising from the dead should mean?” (verse 10).

As the matter stands, we too would be perplexed, for it is common knowledge that even the Pharisees believed the resurrection of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6-8) as also did Martha (John xi. 23-27). It seems strange therefore that the disciples should question it. Whenever we meet with any similar problem, our first thought should be to consult the original, not to attempt some independent explanation. In the original we find the preposition *ek* ‘out of’, which is not translated in the A.V. and it was the presence of this word that caused the disciples’ perplexity.

“Till the Son of Man were risen OUT FROM the dead.”

“What the rising OUT FROM the dead should mean.”

In Luke xx. 35 we read of some who shall be ‘accounted worthy to obtain’ that world, and the resurrection which is OUT (*ek*) from the dead, that they shall be equal to the angels. So that this ‘out-resurrection’ is associated with being ‘accounted worthy’. In other words we are being prepared to accept the idea that ‘out-resurrection’, if it be used elsewhere, may be associated with a ‘prize’, and this is just what we find.

In Phil. iii. 10-14 we read:

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained . . . .”

Now if the Apostle Paul was not sure that he would be included in the resurrection of the dead, what hope have we? Besides, the words ‘attain’, ‘not already perfect’, ‘that I may apprehend’, prepare us for the fact that we have before us not a calling and a standing in grace, but a race and a prize.

And so we find this preposition *ek* occurs as in the passages quoted above.

“If by any means I might attain unto the *exanastasis*, the out-resurrection, *ek nekron*, out from the dead” (best texts).

Sometimes it is hopeful to consider any parallels that exist elsewhere, and the epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of the Revelation provide these parallels. Heb. xii., in its opening verses, shows that in Heb. xi. there has been some element of race and prize. “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us”, and so the reference to a ‘better resurrection’ in Heb. xi. 35 falls into line with ‘the out-resurrection’ of Phil. iii.

Philippians is balanced by II Timothy, as Ephesians is balanced by Colossians, and recognition of this correspondence is helpful.

“Try the things that differ” (Phil. i. 10 margin)  
“Rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (II Tim. ii. 15).  
“The prize of the high calling” (Phil. iii. 14).  
“Henceforth a crown . . . . at that day” (II Tim. iv. 8).  
“Having a desire to depart” (Phil. i. 23).  
“The time of my departure is at hand” (II Tim. iv. 6).  
“I count not myself to have apprehended” (Phil. iii. 13).  
“I have finished my course” (II Tim. iv. 7).  
“Not . . . . already perfect” (Phil. iii. 12).

There is also a parallel to be found between Philippians and Hebrews.

“Our citizenship (conversation) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change this body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory” (Phil. iii. 20, 21).  
“He looked for a city” (Heb. xi. 10).  
“He hath prepared for them a city” (xi. 16).  
“A better resurrection” (xi. 35).  
“The spirits of just men made perfect” (xii. 23).  
“Let us go on unto perfection” (vi. 1).

“We are not of them who draw back unto perdition” (x. 39).  
“Esau . . . . for one morsel of meat sold his birthright” (xii. 16).

These references taken from Hebrews find their counterpart in Philippians, ‘the citizenship’, ‘the out-resurrection’, ‘not as though I were already perfect’. The word translated ‘perdition’ is the same in the original as ‘destruction’ in Phil. iii. 19, and the reference to Esau is found in the warning concerning those ‘whose god is their belly’. These most evident parallels cannot be ignored, and Paul’s reference ‘to depart’ in Philippians is to be understood in the light of his own words found in II Timothy:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that have loved His appearing” (II Tim. iv. 8).

The classical passage concerning resurrection is of course I Cor. xv.:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end” (I Cor. xv. 22-24).

There is no place here for an ‘out-resurrection’ or a ‘better resurrection’, but we get some lead when we look at the overcomer in Rev. xx.:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them . . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first (or former) resurrection” (Rev. xx. 4, 5).

Here, most certainly is an out-resurrection of those to whom a throne, and to change the figure, a crown is awarded, but there is nothing here to suggest that these who are prize winners, or partakers in an ‘out-resurrection’, passed *at death* into their reward; all waited for the Advent of Christ.

We come back to the Apostle’s own position, and find this to be similar. Nearly 2,000 years ago Paul died. He was indeed an overcomer. He knew that a ‘crown’ awaited him. But there is not the slightest evidence from Scripture to justify the idea that for nearly 2,000 years the Apostle has been consciously ‘with Christ’, having received the ‘prize’ of Phil. iii.

Heb. xi. say of those who were examples of the overcomers:

“These all died in faith, NOT HAVING RECEIVED the promises, but having seen them AFAR OFF . . . . they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly . . . . God . . . . hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. xi. 13-16).

This city is the Heavenly, or the New Jerusalem that has not yet descended out of heaven. It would be a contradiction of the words “NOT HAVING RECEIVED” to assume that one by one as they died they, by an “out-resurrection”, went before the Lord’s return to that city of their faith. They saw them ‘afar off’, not as an immediate hope, and the closing lines of this chapter read:

“That they without us should not be made perfect.”

To this line of teaching the Apostle evidently referred when in Philippians, with the race, the prize and the out-resurrection in view, he said:

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow . . . . I press . . . . for the prize” (Phil. iii. 12-16).

The Apostle in another context said, concerning the hope of resurrection:

“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (II Cor. v. 4).

The same apostle, writing to the same church, used this same figure “Death is swallowed up in victory” and related it to the “last trump” (I Cor. xv. 51-54). If those who attain to the prize and the out-resurrection pass, after three days burial (as some have maintained) into the presence of the Lord, why has Paul, the Apostle, not said so? So far as Paul is concerned, the crown will be his at the Lord’s “appearing” (II Tim. iv. 8), which is the word that refers to the *hope*, of the Church of the Mystery.

We will not continue unduly to consider this idea that is held by some believers, but realize that those who die in faith, in any dispensation, fall asleep to awake:

“When Christ, Who is our LIFE, shall appear” (Col. iii. 4).

Let our criterion ever be ‘what saith the Scriptures?’ not what we ourselves wish the Scriptures said.

In conclusion, we feel that it is due to all readers to state, that in Volumes VII & VIII of *The Berean Expositor* we did, on page 150 of Volume VIII indicate a leaning to the possibility that those who attained to this “OUT-resurrection” and who died, did pass into the presence of the Lord. For this we had no actual Scriptural basis, it was but a possible inference. *Such ‘leanings’ or ‘inferences’ can never be satisfactory to the true Berean who searches to see if what is taught is “SO”,* and for years now since 1918, we have regarded this teaching to be but a private opinion which could possibly approximate to that which the Apostle so strongly condemned in II Tim. ii. 16-18, and so have left the matter as it stands in Scripture.

We believe Paul himself settled the question for us, and for all who will let him speak for himself. We note how the following words taken from the same epistle (Philippians) harmonize with the subject we have been discussing. We are content to let our faith rest here:

“For our citizenship is in heaven; FROM whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change this body of our humiliation, that it may fashioned like unto His body of glory” (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

While Paul’s “citizenship” existed as a present fact (*huparcho*) IN HEAVEN, he himself, and those likeminded with him, “Looked for the Saviour FROM WHENCE”. Clearly he did not anticipate experiencing this, and at the same time, a special resurrection at death.

## APPENDIX by Stuart Allen.

As an appendage to this study, we would point out that the above reflects our late President's mature views on this subject. It was written in October 1964 when he was ministering fully at the London chapel. It is evident from the Scriptures that there is more than one "out-resurrection". Some have imagined that a special out-resurrection is peculiar to the Mystery alone, and yet they go to II Cor. v. for some of its details! As Mr. Welch has shown, the Lord, in His earthly ministry, taught that there was an out-resurrection for those who "shall be *accounted worthy* to obtain that age (world), and the resurrection out from (*ek*) the dead" (Luke xx. 35). The resurrection of Rev. xx. 5 is parallel, as those who experience it are overcomers who have been faithful unto death, whereas the rest of the dead are left in their graves until after the 1,000 year reign of Christ is accomplished. While the *word* out-resurrection is not used, the *fact* of it is obviously there. Similarly we can place the 'better resurrection' of Heb. xi. 35 in the same category, as all those mentioned in chapter vii. are likewise overcomers who are stamped with faithfulness, being willing to suffer loss in this present life, and content to be strangers and pilgrims.

These are therefore at least three out-resurrections: (1) in connection with the Lord's earthly kingdom; (2) the ministry of the Acts and the heavenly Jerusalem; (3) the Body of Christ. In the first two the exact time element is not revealed. Neither is there any time element in Phil. iii. 11, but if we realize that 'prize' and 'crown' are symbols, not of two separate things but of one thing, namely *reward* for faithful service, then the parallel epistle of II Timothy *does date it for us*. The Apostle says:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give to me AT THAT DAY, and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His Appearing" (II Tim. iv. 7, 8, R.V.).

In Philippians he was running the race for the prize, but, at that time, he was not certain of attaining to it. In his last letter, II Timothy, he has finished the same course and is allowed to say with certainty that he will receive his reward, not at death, but AT THAT DAY, which the context of verses one and eight links with the Lord's appearing (*epiphaneia*), the distinctive word which describes the hope of the Body. If the prize or crown is received through a special resurrection just after death, then the Lord must be sitting on His award-throne all down this age of grace and giving rewards one by one as each prize winner dies. Needless to say, such an idea is completely unscriptural.

If we allow this important passage of Scripture to weigh with us, then we shall believe that, as far as the *time element* is concerned, the prize or crown is received at the same time as the hope is experienced, namely at the *epiphaneia* of the Lord as Head of the Body.

We must be careful, too, that the truth of identification with Christ is not mis-used. The “raising together” of Eph. ii. 6 (*sunegeiro*) is not physical resurrection, but is positional, IN Christ Jesus (6), and is how God sees us now *in Christ* in our glorious standing. It is no more physical than our present being “seated together *in Christ Jesus*” (same verse) is physical. On the other hand *anastasis* ‘resurrection’ is never used in the N.T. except in the literal bodily sense, but that word does not occur in this context. Moreover, if identification with Christ teaches that the out-resurrection occurs at death or soon after, then it proves too much, for the Pentecostal church was likewise seen to be raised with Christ (Rom. vi. 3-5), and if this means literal resurrection, then away goes the uniqueness of the out-resurrection as applied to the Body.

It is important to realize that the out-resurrection is not the prize, but *the gateway* to it, just as in Rev. xx. the first or former resurrection is not the prize for these overcomers, but the necessary introduction to it, that is, *reigning with Christ* in His millennial kingdom. It is the sharing of this glorious reign which is the crown or reward for these faithful believers, not this resurrection taken by itself.

So with the Body, it is the *reigning with Christ* in the heavenlies, symbolized by the word ‘prize’ or ‘crown’, which is the abiding reward for faithfulness and endurance:

“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. *If we endure, we shall also reign with Him . . . .*” (II Tim. ii. 11, 12, R.V.),

and this is introduced by the out-resurrection of Phil. iii.

There is no need to be concerned with the *gap* between death and this resurrection. However long or short this may be, *in experience* it will be death and sudden glory. The fact that ‘sleep’ does not occur in the Prison Epistles proves nothing. Sanctification is not mentioned in Ephesians or Colossians. Are we to deduce from this that the truth of sanctification does not apply to the Body of Christ? What has been settled as *basic truth* in earlier epistles does not need repetition. And if the prize winning believer is only in the grave for three days (as some assert), would not this be ‘sleep’?

We cannot help feeling that if, instead of clinging to the time element and unscriptural inferences and wishful thinking, we paid more attention to the stringent conditions for *obtaining* the prize or crown, it would be much wiser. What is the use of arguing about the exact time it will be realized if we are not fulfilling the conditions for obtaining it? Specially when we remember that the cunning adversary is always waiting for an opportunity to divide the saints on doctrinal points if he possibly can and so spoil that unity which the Lord has made, and which we are charged to guard (Eph. iv.). The evil doctrine that the Apostle Paul so solemnly warned Timothy about did not so much deny the resurrection of the believer, but asserted that it was ‘past already’, and so overthrew the faith of some (II Tim. ii. 18). It was the *time element* that was wrong. Resurrection, with was yet future, Hymenaeus and Philetus taught as being already attained by some, and this was spreading like a ‘gangrene’, upsetting other believers and giving place to the devil. It was part of ‘profane and vain babblings’.

As the days darken around us, there is more need than ever that everyone who professes to be a true Berean will take care not to teach anything but what is clearly and unambiguously revealed in the Scriptures, especially in those of Paul's prison letters which so intimately concern the Body of Christ.

## The Pleroma

### No.21. “All the Fullness of the Godhead Bodily-wise.” pp. 10 - 14

Three Greek words are translated “Godhead” in the N.T., namely, *To Theion* that which is divine, the thing pertaining to *Theos*. *Theiotes*, divinity, the characteristic property of *Theos*. That which is discernible from the works of creation, thereby making idolatry “without excuse” (Rom. i. 20) and *Theotes*.

*Theotes*, Deity, the being in Whom *Theiotes* of the highest order resides (Col. ii. 9).

The above is partly quoted from Dr. E. W. Bullinger’s Lexicon, and it agrees with the definitions given by Trench, Cremer, Lightfoot and most commentators.

Those of us who believe the doctrine of the Deity of Christ naturally turn to Col. ii. 9 as to a proof text, but this may not be the right attitude of heart and mind when dealing with the sacred Scriptures. We do no honour to the Lord, if we misuse a portion of Scripture, even to prove or to enforce the glorious doctrine of His Deity. *Truth needs no bolster*. One of the reasons that caused us to hesitate about this use of Col. ii. 9 is that when we apply the principle given in I Cor. ii. 13 namely, that we speak not in the words of man’s wisdom, “but which the Holy Ghost teacheth”, and that we then go on to compare spiritual things with spiritual, we come up against a doctrinal difficulty. If the words “all the fullness” of the Godhead, prove the Deity of Christ, what do they prove in Eph. iii. 19. There, the prayer of the apostle is for the believer, that Christ may dwell, *katoikeo*, in their hearts by faith, and as a consequence that they may be “filled with (*eis* unto, with a view to) all the fullness of God”. If “all the fullness of *Theotes*” proves the Deity of Christ, should not “all the fullness of *Theos*” prove the Deity of the Church? To express the thought is to refute it. Such cannot be the meaning. In Col. i. 19 we meet the expression “all the fullness”, but there it is not followed, either by “God” or “Godhead”, yet this first reference must have a definite bearing upon the second reference found in Col. ii. 9.

“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell *pan to pleroma katoikedai*” (Col. i. 19).

We cannot expect to understand the reference in Col. ii. 9 if we ignore the earlier reference in Col. i. 19. They go together and constitute a united testimony. The first passage opens with redemption (Col. i. 14) and closes with “peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. i. 20). He Who created “all things, that are in heaven and that are in earth” (Col. i. 16) reconciled “all things, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col. i. 20). We move from Creation to Reconciliation *via* the headship of the church which is His body, and the blessed fact that He Who was in the beginning “the firstborn of every creature” is revealed as being Himself “the beginning, the firstborn from the dead”. While the triumph of His resurrection is the feature that is stressed here, we believe we shall never understand the reference to “fullness” in Col. ii. 9 if we do



not know the corresponding “emptying” of Phil. ii. In order to illustrate this approach we use the figure of Jacob’s ladder, being fully justified so to do by the reference made to it by the Lord Himself.

In Gen. xxviii. we have the record of Jacob’s dream, wherein he saw a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, “and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Gen. xxviii. 12). In John i., Nathaniel is referred to by the Lord as “an Israelite indeed, in Whom is no guile” (John i. 47). The word translated “guile” is *dolos* and is used in the LXX of Gen. xxvii. 35, where Isaac tells Esau, “Thy brother came with subtilty (*dolos*) guile, and hath taken away thy blessing”. One cannot avoid seeing an oblique reference in John i. 47 to Jacob, an Israelite who was most certainly not without “guile”. However, that is by the way, our interest is more directly concerned with verse 51.

“Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the ANGELS of God ASCENDING and DESCENDING upon the Son of Man” (John i. 51).

Now observe, “fullness” is associated with Christ, in the fact that in order that He might FILL ALL THINGS, He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* far above all heavens” (Eph. iv. 10).

Returning to John i., we observe the following sequences of thought:

“In the beginning was the Word . . . . the Word was God.”

“All things were made by Him.”

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled, *skenoo*, not the permanent ‘dwelling’ *katoikeo* of Col. ii. 9) among us.”

“Of His FULLNESS have all we received.”

“The angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

So in Col. i. 15-20, He Who was the “Image of the Invisible God” (compare John i. 1 and 18), Who created all things (see John i. 3) Who became also the Firstborn from the dead, Who is before all things (even as John the Baptist acknowledged, John i. 30), in Him, in the capacity, not only as Creator but as the Firstborn from the dead (thereby assuming the death of the cross), in that capacity and in no other way, was it pleasing to the Father that “in Him should all the fullness dwell”. It is for this reason, we find the word *somatikos* “bodily” in Col. ii. 9. This word has been translated by several commentators “bodily-wise”, as though the fullness could not dwell in Him in any other way.

We spoke a little while ago about the fact that if Colossians speaks of the Saviour’s “Fullness”, the Philippians speaks of His voluntary self-emptying. Phil. ii. 6-11 has been given a fairly full exposition in the book entitled *The Prize of the High Calling*, and the reader would be advised to consult pages 75-111 of that volume. Here, we can deal with one item only, the meaning of the words “He made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. ii. 7). First of all we give the structure of verses 6-9.

**Philippians ii. 6 - 11 and iii. 4 - 19.**  
**Examples of Christ and Paul.**

- A | ii. 6. EQUALITY WITH GOD. Originally (*huparchon*).
- B | 7, 8. The Humiliation (seven-fold).
  - a | He emptied Himself.
  - b | A bond-servant.
  - c | Likeness of men.
    - d | Fashioned as a man.
  - a | He humbled Himself.
  - b | Obedient unto death.
  - c | The death of the cross.
- A | 9-. EXALTATION. THE NAME (inherited, see Heb. i. 4).
- B | -9-11. The Exaltation (seven-fold).
  - a | The name above every name.
  - b | Every knee to bow.
    - c1 | Things in heaven.
    - c2 | Things in earth.
    - c3 | Things under the earth.
  - b | Every tongue confess.
  - a | Jesus Christ is Lord.

Here it will be observed “things in heaven, and things in earth” occurs as in Col. i. 16.

“*He made Himself of no reputation.*” The A.V. has used the word “reputation” twice in Philippians, the second occurrence being at ii. 29, “hold such in reputation”. The R.V. has wisely omitted the word “reputation” in both passages, reading in ii. 7 “but emptied Himself”, and in ii. 29 “hold such in honour”, for two different Greek words are used.

The change, however, while it makes some aspects of the truth clearer, introduces other problems for, to a modern mind, there is something strange about the idea of anyone “emptying himself”. In modern usage, empty places foremost in the mind the idea of a “jug without water”, “a room without furniture” & “empty vessels” (II Ki. iv. 3). These come naturally to mind. In order to avoid too crude an application of the figure of “emptying a vessel” when speaking of the Saviour’s humiliation, most of us slip into paraphrase and say “He divested Himself” of His dignity and insignia of Deity, but this is confessedly an attempt to avoid a problem. The verb *keno* is cognate with *kenos* “vain” and means “empty”. That the word has a wider application than that of emptying a vessel, such expressions as “seven empty ears” (Gen. xli. 27), “the sword of Saul returned not empty” (II Sam. i. 22) will show.

Where *kenos* is translated “empty” in the A.V. of the N.T. it refers in the parable to the treatment of the servant by the wicked husbandmen, who sent him “empty away” (Mark xii. 3; Luke xx. 10, 11), and to “the rich” who were “sent empty away” (Luke i. 53); in most cases, however, *kenos* is translated “vain”, as for example, in

Philippians itself “run in vain” and “labour in vain”, where it is evident that “empty” would have no meaning (Phil. ii. 16).

The verb *keno* translated “to make of no reputation”, occurs 5 times in the Greek N.T. and the four occurrences other than that of Phil. ii. 7, render the word “make void”, “make none effect” and “be in vain” (Rom. iv. 14; I Cor. i. 17; ix. 15; II Cor. ix. 3). In Phil. ii. 3 we find the word *kenodoxia* “vain glory”. We remember with adoring wonder that in the Psalm of the Cross, we read “I am poured out like water” (Psa. xxii. 14). He did indeed “empty Himself”. The word translated “offer” in Phil. ii. 17 is found in the LXX of Gen. xxxv. 14, where Jacob revisited the scene of the “ladder”, which he re-named “Bethel”, and following his Master’s footsteps, faintly adumbrates that awful condescension which, for our sakes, left behind the glory of heaven, for the deep, deep humiliation of “the death of the cross”.

Above the ladder is intimated “the glory that He had” before the world was. This must not be confused with the glory that was “given” Him, as the Man Christ Jesus, the One Mediator. We may, in resurrection behold the one, but “the glory which thou gavest Me” the Saviour said “I have given them, that they may be one, EVEN AS we are one” (John xvii. 22). We do not pretend to understand this profound revelation. We would add not one syllable of our own lest we spoil and corrupt such unearthly beauty; but we can bow our heads and our hearts in adoring wonder, as we perceive that *this* is implied in the word “fullness”, for the church of the One Body is revealed to be,

“The fullness of Him, that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 23).

Here the church is one with the Lord. We see the wondrous descent seven steps down to the death of the cross. Here at the foot, on the earth He is seen as Emmanuel “God *with us*”. Here, it was fulfilled “He was numbered *with* the transgressors”. And by virtue of that most wondrous “reckoning”, He became our Surety. The word translated “surety” in the O.T. is the Hebrew word *arab*, which in the form *arrabon* is brought over into N.T. Greek, occurring in Eph. i. 14 as “earnest”. This word corresponds with “pledge” in Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18 “Wilt thou give me a *pledge* till thou send it?” The root idea appears to be that of *mixing* or *mingling*:

“A *mixed* multitude” (Margin a great mixture) (Exod. xii. 38).

“The holy seed have *mingled* themselves” (Ezra ix. 2).

“A stranger doth not *intermeddle* with his joy” (Prov. xiv. 10).

“In the warp or *woof*” (Lev. xiii. 48).

Arising out of the idea of this mixing and interweaving comes that of a surety, who is so intimately associated with the obligations laid upon the one for whom he acts, that he can be treated in his stead. So we get:

“Thy servant became *surety* for the law” (Gen. xlv. 32).

“He that is *surety* for a stranger shall smart for it” (Prov. xi. 15).

“We have *mortgaged* our lands” (Neh. v. 3).

“Give *pledges* to my lord the king” (II Kings xviii. 23).

In Ezek. xxvii. 9, 27 we find the word translated “occupy” in the sense of exchanging or bartering. In the same way we understand the expression, “Occupy, till I come”, and still speak of a man’s trade as his “occupation”.

Such is the underlying meaning of the word “surety”, one who identifies himself with another in order to bring about deliverance from obligations. This is clearly seen in Prov. xxii. 26, 27: “Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?”. It is evident from this passage that the surety was held liable for the debts of the one whose cause he had espoused, even to the loss of his bed and this meant practically his all, as may be seen by consulting Exod. xxii. 26, 27, “If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down; for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?” Judah who became Surety for his brother Benjamin, gives us a picture of Christ’s Suretyship, saying to Joseph:

“How shall I go up (ascend) to my father, and the lad be not WITH ME?” (Gen. xlv. 34).

If poor erring Judah could enter like this into the meaning of Suretyship, how much more must our Saviour have done so. At the foot of the ladder, the transfer is made, and the first of the seven steps up to the glory of the right hand of God is made. The self-emptying on the one hand is compensated by all the fullness on the other, but that fullness would never have been attained had the Saviour not become man, a Man of flesh and blood, all the fullness dwells in Him “bodily-wise”. The church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The goal and standard of that church is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The personal experimental climax of the faith is that each member shall be filled with (or unto) all the fullness of God. It is difficult, with these features so clearly set forth in Ephesians, to think that the same word “fullness” when dealt with in Colossians, a confessedly parallel epistle, should suddenly swing over to the doctrine of the deity of Christ.

It may be that our attempt to explain Col. ii. 9 is so defective that the gleam of truth we saw at the commencement of this article has already become dimmed by our very effort to explain it. Shall we then, writer and reader, pause, put aside our lexicons, our concordances, our interpretations and follow in the footsteps of Asaph, who tells us that not until he went into the Sanctuary of God, did he understand.

**No.22. “The fullness of the seasons.”**  
**pp. 32 - 35**

The failure of Israel at the time of Nebuchadnezzar was answered by the times of the Gentiles, which commenced in the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah (Dan. i. 1), but, although earthly dominion passed from Israel at that time, they did not become “Lo-ammi” in the full sense of the term until a fuller and deeper apostasy opened a deeper gulf that could only be spanned by a greater and more spiritual fullness among the Gentiles. In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, and His birth at Bethlehem and His genealogy constitute the opening chapters of the books of the New Covenant (Matt. i. and ii.). The earthly ministry of the Saviour opened with a proclamation concerning the kingdom of heaven (Matt. iv. 17), and as “The King of the Jews” He was crucified (Matt. xxvii. 37). The earlier stages of the culmination of this rejection is revealed in chapters xi.-xiii.

“They repented not” “Even so Father” (Matt. xi. 20, 26).

A greater than the temple, than Jonah and than Solomon (rejected Priest, Prophet and King) (Matt. xii. 6, 41, 42).

The MYSTERIES of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii.).

In these three chapters the gap and its antidote are anticipated. The miracles which the Saviour wrought, had, as their primary purpose the repentance of Israel, and so to finally lead to the setting up of the earthly kingdom (Matt. xi. 20-24). Christ stood in their midst as Prophet, Priest and King, but they knew Him not and rejected Him. In Matt. xii. we meet the first favourable use of the word “Gentile”. In Matt. x. 5 the disciples were told “Go not into the way of the Gentiles” but upon it becoming manifest in Matt. xi., that Israel were not going to repent, a change is indicated:

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying . . . . He shall bring judgment unto the Gentiles . . . . And in His name shall the Gentiles trust” (Matt. xii. 17-21).

The next chapter, Matt. xiii. supplies the third key word namely “mystery”.

Here we find:

- (1) Non-repentance of Israel, in spite of evidence of miracles.
- (2) The inclusion of the Gentile for the first time, consequent upon Israel’s failure.
- (3) The kingdom of heaven passes into its “mystery” stage and the parable form of speech is introduced.

The introduction of the parable, contrary to popular interpretation, was NOT in order that the common people should be enabled to understand the message of the Gospel, but to veil the new aspect of truth from the eyes of those who were not repentant. As this point of view is so contrary to that which is considered orthodox, let us consider what the Lord actually said in answer to His disciples’ question “Why speakest Thou unto them in

parables?” (Matt. xiii. 10). The very fact that the disciples were moved to ask such a question suggests that the parable form of speech was new to the Saviour’s method hitherto. His answer is unambiguous and conclusive.

“He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know THE MYSTERIES of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Matt. xiii. 11).

Here, the first reason given has to do with the making known the “*mysteries*” of the Kingdom not of the kingdom of heaven itself as already announced both by John the Baptist and by the Lord (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17). Neither was this mystery aspect made known with such publicity as the opening ministry of the kingdom of the heavens, for “Jerusalem and all Judaea, and all the region about Jordan” together with Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. iii. 2-7) heard the one, whereas it was “given” to the disciples to know these mysteries, but to the people of Israel as such it was “not given”. The second part of the Lord’s answer indicates that a great dispensational change was imminent.

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias . . . . but blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt. xiii. 13-16).

The people of Israel had reached the point when the blindness prophesied by Isaiah had begun to take effect. It is a matter of importance to note the peculiar word used by the Lord here that is translated “fulfilled”. Up to Matt. xiii. 14 the accepted formula “that it might be fulfilled” or “Then was fulfilled” translates the verb *pleroo*, and this on seven occasions (Matt. i. 22; ii. 15, 17, 23; iv. 14; viii. 17 and xii. 17). Once only in the whole record of the Saviour’s utterances, is there a departure from this rule, and that is made at Matt. xiii. 14, where the intensive form *anapleroo* is employed. There is an element of completion about this word, as I Thess. ii. 16 will show. Even though the long-suffering of God waited throughout the whole period covered by the Acts of the Apostles and there was granted a stay of execution consequent upon the Saviour’s prayer and the witness of Pentecost, it is not without significance, that when the Apostle in his turn quotes Isa. vi. 9, 10 in a similar context, namely, upon the rejection of Israel, the favourable mention of the Gentile, and the brining in of the dispensation of the Mystery, he *does not say* “In them is fulfilled” but “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto your fathers” (Acts xxviii. 25). What was *de jure* in Matt. xiii. is *de facto* in Acts xxviii. At the failure of Israel, the Apostle Paul became the prisoner of the Lord, and as such received the dispensation of the grace of God for the Gentiles, the dispensation of the Mystery (Eph. iii. 1-9 R.V.), and while the church of this new dispensation is usually referred to by its title “The church which is His Body” or “The One Body” there is an extension of this title that is of vast importance. The full passages reads:

“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, THE FULNESS of Him that FILLETH all in all” (Eph. i. 22, 23).

When the dispensation of the Mystery comes to an end, the successive dispensations that have suffered a rupture will be resumed, and as the signs of the times thicken around

us, they tell us plainly that the *lo-ammi* (“Not My people”) condition of Israel is nearing its close. Already believing Jews who accept Jesus as their Messiah are gathering and witnessing in complete independence of Gentile Christianity, and the claim of Israel for national recognition, *made at Pentecost* 1948, while not to be confused with the day when they shall be restored by the Lord Himself, is certainly an indication that the great epoch is upon us. The church of the Mystery fills the last gap in the outworking of the ages, and in this dispensation of the Mystery, the conception of “fullness” receives its fullest exposition.

“That in the dispensation of the *fullness* of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph. i. 10).

Gap after gap has been succeeded by fullness after fullness, as we have already seen in the outworking of the age-purpose, and at last we have arrived at the fullness of these seasons. The outstanding characteristic of the dispensation of the fullness of the seasons is that therein,

“He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.”

# Thy Kingdom Come

## (A Consideration of the Lord's Prayer).

**No.1. pp. 131 - 135**

*The New Bible Dictionary* opens its article on The Lord's Prayer with these words:

“The prayer which our Lord taught His disciples as the model prayer for believers and for His Church of all ages.”

This view is by no means novel, having been held by believers throughout the ages of Christendom, and so the prayer is repeated in most churches at least once every Sunday, to say nothing of its use at other meetings and in private devotions. To question its usage is to mark oneself with the brand ‘heretic’, although it is quite legitimate apparently to spiritualize its clauses so that they may be properly understood. “Daily bread”, instead of being a reference to material needs, is to be understood as a spiritual need of some description, since most people in Christianized countries have no difficulty in obtaining material ‘daily bread’. The clause on forgiveness is interpreted in the light of Eph. iv. 32, in spite of the added explanation of the Lord that, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”. The honest, thinking Christian will not be satisfied with such handling of the Word of God, but will seek the true meaning of each of the clauses of the prayer, a task that can only be accomplished by those prepared to ‘search the Scriptures’ with a view to observing ‘things that differ’ (Phil. i. 10 margin). This will be the object of these articles.

The prayer is recorded by two of the Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, and it is evident from a comparison of the contexts that the two passages are not parallel, so that the Lord gave the prayer on at least two separate occasions. The following arrangement is presented with due regard to the best Greek texts and will be found to be more in line with the R.V. than the A.V., hence the omissions:

<b>Matthew vi. 9 – 13.</b>	<b>Luke xi. 2 - 4.</b>
Our Father Who (art) in the heavens sanctified be Thy Name let come Thy kingdom let Thy will be done as in heaven (so) also upon earth our bread (the <i>epiousion</i> ) give us today and forgive us our debts, as also we have forgiven our debtors  and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil	Father  sanctified be Thy Name let come Thy kingdom  our bread (the <i>epiousion</i> ) give us daily and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone indebted to us and lead us not into temptation



It will be observed that the Greek *epiousion* (translated 'daily' in the A.V.) has for the moment been left untranslated. Nobody can be quite sure of its meaning and it will be considered in a later article. Also the expression in Luke xi. 3 translated above 'give us daily', could be rendered 'give us according to the day', which will prove of help in understanding the meaning intended by the Lord. The reader should also take note of the change of words, 'sins' for 'debts' in Luke.

Omission of the doxology may come as a shock to some, but it should be noted that it does not appear in the A.V. of Luke's account of the prayer anyway, and in the R.V. it is also omitted in the Matthew account. Following the best evidence available it is omitted by the following translations also, J. N. Darby, Weymouth, Rotherham, Moffatt, R.S.V., N.E.B., etc. It is also omitted by the latest text of the N.T. based upon all the results of modern scholarship. *The Companion Bible* however suggests it is wrongly omitted and cites a number of ancient versions as containing it. Since no great doctrine hinges upon either its presence or absence nothing more need be said, except to note that it is not by any means unscriptural, in fact it is not unlike I Chron. xxix. 11:

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory . . . . thine is the kingdom . . . ."

The other omissions will be considered in their place, as also the differences of language of the two accounts.

It will be of help to note the occasions on which the prayer was given. In Matthew it forms part of a long address given by the Lord (v. 1 - vii. 29) known popularly as "The Sermon on the Mount". In Luke it is the answer to the request from "one of His disciples" to "teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples". Hence we observe the different introductions:

"After this manner therefore pray ye . . . ." (Matt. vi. 9).

"When ye pray, say . . . ." (Luke xi. 2).

Since the prayer in Matthew is part of a long address, it is doubtful whether it would have been remembered word for word by the hearers, and the context suggests that it was not given to be so remembered. "After this manner" is in contrast to some other manner already suggested.

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do . . . . be ye not therefore like unto them . . . . after this manner therefore pray ye" (Matt. vi. 7-9).

The prayer is to be contrasted with the "much speaking" of the heathen (Gentiles), and since the Lord found it necessary to give such a correction, it is evident that these "vain repetitions" had permeated the life of the people of Israel and the heathen. Two examples from Scripture are helpful in understanding this.

"And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us" (I Ki. xviii. 26).

"But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts xix. 34).

The word translated ‘vain repetitions’ (*battologeo*) is thought to be derived from the idea of stammering and hence repetition. It is evidently to be explained by ‘much speaking’ (*polulogia*) and is in direct contradiction to the words of Eccles. v. 2:

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for *God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.*”

The reason given here for the few words is, “God is in heaven”, which fact is remembered in the Lord’s Prayer—“Our Father, *Who art in heaven*”.

The prayer, according to Matthew, was given as a model upon which prayer for the time then present should be based. The prayer, according to Luke on the other hand, with its introduction, “When ye pray say”, suggests that here the Lord was giving the disciples in question the actual words to use in prayer. It must not be assumed that the disciples who desired this teaching on prayer were necessarily present at the giving of the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord had more disciples than the twelve whom we generally associate with the word disciple, so this was not repetition as far as they were concerned.

Before leaving the subject of ‘much speaking’, it should be observed that the Lord did not condemn ‘much praying’, in fact by his own example He commended it. Also the Apostle Paul with his exhortation to “Pray without ceasing” encouraged the practice of prayer. It is ‘much speaking’ even ‘vain repetition’ that is to be avoided, and it is sad to observe that the very prayer which was given as a model of this, has become by its mechanical repetition in some churches just the opposite. It has become ‘vain repetition’.

### **The prayer part of the Sermon on the Mount.**

What are the implications of the prayer as forming part of the Sermon on the Mount? If we believe, with Bloomfield, that the sermon contains “the great outlines of Christian practice”, then we can have no hesitation in believing that the prayer is for us today. If however we look more closely at the sermon we observe that it was given to a people subject to “persecution for righteousness’ sake” (v. 10), in danger of “Gehenna” (v. 22 “hell fire”), who must pay “to the uttermost farthing” (v. 26), who were waiting for a “coming kingdom” (vi. 10) and were in need of “daily bread” (vi. 11). If they did not exercise forgiveness neither would they be forgiven (vi. 15), they were still to fast (vi. 17) and they were not to be concerned about food and clothing (vi. 25). The ‘coming kingdom’ for which they were to pray was “the kingdom of the heavens”, which at that time was at hand (iv. 17), and the whole sermon must be understood in the light of this nearness, and hence the prayer also as forming part of it. The period immediately before the coming of this kingdom (with the return of the King) is known as the Great Tribulation, a period during which the prayer with its references to ‘bread’, ‘temptation’ and ‘the evil’ is most appropriate. This will become clearer as the various clauses are considered.

One of the most important point to notice about its place in Scriptures is that it is given in Matthew prior to the revelation of xvi. 21:

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . . . and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

The prayer therefore takes no account of the implications of these events leading as they do to the sacrificial work of Christ. It is not offered in the Lord’s name and this gives point to John xvi. 24:

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

The prayer formed part of what they had asked *hitherto*, and as such it was a continuation of prayer on O.T. principles, offered towards the Temple in Jerusalem.

“Have thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant . . . . . which Thy servant prayeth before Thee today: that *Thine eyes may be open toward this house* night and day, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My name shall be there: that Thou mayest hearken unto *the prayer which Thy servant shall make toward this place . . . . .*” (I Kings viii. 28, 29).

Hence Daniel’s prayer in Dan. vi. 10:

“His windows being open in his chamber *toward Jerusalem*, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed . . . . .”

The Lord ordained a place where He could be sought, a place where He had put His Name, and this place must be duly recognized in approaching Him.

“Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His Name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek . . . . .” (Deut xii. 5).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the antitype of this meeting place and it is true for the present time that, “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John xiv. 6). He is the One who manifested the Father’s *Name* and in His name only can prayer be offered.

“Giving thanks always for all things *in the name* of our Lord Jesus Christ to God even the Father” (Eph. v. 20 R.V.).

Compare also Paul’s prayer in Eph. iii. 14-21. The Lord’s Prayer does not belong to this period, being given at a time when type and shadow still prevailed, and when Jerusalem was still the acknowledged place of acceptance before God. When prayer ‘after this manner’ is offered during the yet future Great Tribulation, it seems as though such prayer will have to make due recognition of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but *as given* it makes no such recognition.

### **The Missionary Prayer.**

Although the prayer will be applicable during the Great Tribulation, it must be remembered that the period during which the disciples lived could have developed into that time of trouble. Matt. xxiv. is so written as to demonstrate this. Also the book of

Revelation, which deals with this period, speaks of things which must “shortly come to pass”. All this being so then, we should expect the prayer to have some application at the time given. This is so with respect to the *missionary* efforts of the disciples.

The twelve disciples were appointed “that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth” (Mark iii. 14). In Luke ix.:

“Then He called His twelve disciples . . . . and He sent them to preach the kingdom of God . . . . and He said unto them, *Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money . . . .*” (verses 1-3).

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face . . . . I send you forth as lambs among wolves, *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes . . . .*” (Luke x. 1-4).

The disciples were entirely dependant for their needs upon their reception in the places to which they came. They were sent forth both unarmed and without bread. It would not be surprising for such to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread . . . . deliver us from the evil”.

### **A Rabbinic “fountain” prayer.**

Although the Lord warned the disciples not to be called Rabbi, both He and John the Baptist accepted the title. In John i. 38-40 Christ is viewed as a traveling Rabbi lodging in the area where John and his disciples were. The disciples are directed to the Lord as “the Lamb of God” and they followed Him.

“Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi . . . . where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day . . . .”

The outcome of this meeting was (verse 41) “We have found the Messiah”. The disciples become followers of this traveling Rabbi, and in common with other Rabbis of the time, He teaches them a “fountain” prayer.

“In the time of Christ, among the Jews of Palestine, there were prayers *and* prayers: there were those that were full and regular, and there were those that were brief or summary in form: and both were proper as having been duly sanctioned by the Rabbis. The brief, or summary, form was called a ‘Fountain’, and those who could not pray the prescribed prayer in its fullness were expected to pray the ‘Fountain’ . . . . it was the recognized habit of teachers to give forth short prayers for their students, or followers . . . thus providing ‘Fountains’ for special classes and exceptional circumstances.”

*(The Lord’s Prayer by J. W. Thirtle).*

The travels of the Lord and His disciples would exclude them from the normal synagogue worship, and so these ‘exceptional circumstances’ called forth the “Lord’s Prayer” from the greatest Rabbi that ever walked this earth. He gave them a ‘Fountain’ prayer.

These ‘Fountain’ prayers seem also to have given a ‘tone’ to the particular Rabbinic school in question, as indeed this prayer did for the Lord’s school of disciples.

The Lord's Prayer was not then given for "believers of all ages", neither for use during the coming Kingdom Age (or why pray, "Thy kingdom come"?), but for a people awaiting that kingdom, who were asked to endure for 'a little while' in the light of the nearness of the return of the King. When understood in this light, every word can be given its full value and there is no need for spiritualizing. The Lord has given us in its place the prayers of Eph. i. 15-23; iii. 14-21; Col. i. 9-12; iv. 12, all applicable to the present time and in harmony with God's present purpose.

## No.2. pp. 152 - 157

Before considering the various clauses of this prayer, it will help to observe that the first three requests are qualified by the words "as in heaven so also upon the earth", thus:

Sanctified be Thy Name	\	
Let come Thy Kingdom	}	..... as in heaven so also upon earth.
Let Thy will be done	/	

Also the omission of the words, "but deliver us from evil" in Luke, suggest that these words are included in the clause "lead us not into temptation", and we read it so:

"Lead us not . . . . . but deliver us . . . . ."

The prayer then, expresses a desire for heavenly conditions to prevail upon the earth, "as in heaven so also upon earth"; it represents the desire of God's ancient people for their golden age, the Millennium, to come, when "the heavens do rule" (Dan. iv. 26). The answer to the prayer will be the setting up of this 'kingdom of the heavens' which will run on into the "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness". Before the coming of that glorious age however, this same people will pass through a refining process, the Great Tribulation, when the need to pray for deliverance from 'the evil' of that day will be expressed in the latter part of the Lord's Prayer, and when they still "hunger and thirst" (compare Rev. vii. 13-17) and need 'daily bread'.

### Our Father.

It is the blessed experience of all 'the children of God' to be able to approach God with the word "Father". This fact however must not blind us to the import of the word used in *this context*. The expression, "*Our* Father", being suggestive of a company of people, reminds us of the relationship between Jehovah and His people Israel.

"Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He *thy* Father that hath bought thee?" (Deut. xxxii. 6).

"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is *My son*, even My firstborn" (Exod. iv. 22).

The actual expression “Our Father” is rare in the O.T., occurring but three times in the prayer in Isa. lxiii. 16 (twice); lxiv. 8:

“Doubtless Thou art our Father . . . . Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer.”  
“. . . . now, O Lord, Thou art our Father.”

In verse 16 Jehovah is their Father in contrast to Abraham and Israel (Jacob), who, although ‘fathers’ of Israel, yet could take no knowledge of them since they were asleep. The contrast in lxiv. 8 may be seen thus:

a | O Lord Thou art our Father  
b | we are the clay  
a | Thou (art) our Potter  
b | we all are the work of Thy hand.

The conception of the Father in this context is of one Who has fashioned them as the Heavenly Potter and could take knowledge of them. Such an one is called upon (lxiii. 15) to “Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory”. Compare this with, “Our Father, Who art in heaven”.

The conception of the Fatherhood of God in the O.T. was however, limited. It was the coming of the Son that was to show to Israel the real meaning of the relationship. When Philip requested, “Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us”, he was met with the answer:

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John xiv. 8, 9).

If they had known Him, they would have known the Father, for He revealed the Father. The expression “Our Father” would thus take on new meaning according to their knowledge of the Son.

One point which should be noticed is that although the Lord encouraged His disciples to use the expression “Our Father”, yet we have no record that He Himself ever used it. The nearest He came to it was in John xx. 17:

“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascended unto *My Father, and your Father*; and to My God, and your God.”

The Lord was one with His brethren (Heb. ii. 11-13) and yet preeminent among them (Rom. viii. 29), and thus it was not to Him “Our Father”, but “My Father *and your Father*”. Let none mistake the condescension of the Lord in being made ‘like unto His brethren’ for inferiority. He is “the firstborn of all creation, *for* by Him were all things created”, and “firstborn from the dead, that in (or among) all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Col. i. 15-18).

The expression “Our Father” is suggestive of a Father Who belongs to us, but if the Greek be rendered literally another aspect is revealed. *Pater hemon* is actually “Father of

us” suggesting our belonging to Him rather than someone upon whom we have laid claim. This is surely more expressive of the truth implied in “Our Father”, and is of course true of all the children of God.

### **Who art in the heavens.**

The words of Eccles. v. 2 have already been observed to have some bearing upon this clause:

“God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

“Much speaking” and “vain repetition” would be avoided by due recognition of the relative positions of God and the supplicator. He is in heaven, “*therefore* let thy words be few”. At the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer, a further reason is given for those “few words”:

“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of” (Matt. vi. 8).

It was a mistake to imagine, with the heathen (vi. 7), that prayer was heard for ‘much speaking’, or indeed that God had to be supplicated continually for the needs of life. He was fully aware of their needs and this clause “Who art in the heavens” was a reminder of this.

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek): for *your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*” (Matt. vi. 31, 32).

In the Lord’s prayer therefore, the daily need is expressed in simple terms—“Give us this day our daily bread”—and then with due regard to priorities, for it does not occur until first have been mentioned, “Thy Name”, “Thy Kingdom”, and “Thy will”. Hence Matt. vi. 33 goes on:

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things (the needs just mentioned in verse 31) shall be added unto you.”

In Matt. vii. 7-11 the disciples were further encouraged to, “Ask, and it shall be given you . . . . for everyone that asketh receiveth . . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give . . . . how much more shall *your Father which is in heaven* give”. The clause “Who art in the heavens” would be a reminder of the position, ability and willingness of the Almighty God to answer their prayer. The “heavenly Father” Who took due account of every sparrow that fell to the ground, who had the very hairs of their head numbered, was the one they supplicated. With what confidence then would they begin their petitions, and with what confidence also should we approach the same Heavenly Father, knowing that He can “do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. iii. 20).

### **Sanctified be Thy Name.**

This clause is the first of three qualified by the words, “as in heaven so also upon earth”, and the implication is that the Father’s Name is already sanctified in heaven.

Sanctified (A.V. “Hallowed”) is the Greek verb *hagiazō*, evidently related to *hagios*, holy. Parkhurst suggests the possible derivation of the two words from *a*, negative and *ge*, the earth, so, “separated from the earth”. Whether this be the correct derivation or no, it is not possible to say with certainty, but there seems little doubt that the basic meaning of sanctification is separation. When “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (Gen. ii. 3), He set that day apart from the other six. This Sabbath, which was given to Israel, was itself a sign between the Lord and Israel, that He had *sanctified* them, and so was their *Sanctifier*.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that *I am the Lord that doth sanctify you*” (Exod. xxxi. 12, 13).

Or literally, “I, Jehovah am your Sanctifier”. To say that God gave the Sabbath to any other nation than Israel is to deny the truth of this verse. It was a sign between the Lord and Israel, and it suggested separation. If the other nations had received this sign also, what evidence would it then have been to Israel that the Lord was *their* Sanctifier?

In the prophecy of Isaiah the expression, “the Holy One of Israel” occurs some twenty-five times. The people of Israel at that time were condemned because they had “provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger” (Isa. i. 4); the word ‘provoked’ being translated elsewhere ‘abhorred’ (I Sam. ii. 17), ‘blasphemed’ (Psa. lxxiv. 18), ‘despised’ (Isa. v. 24), etc. The word is used in a particularly significant context in Numb. xvi. 30. Korah and his company had challenged the position of Moses and Aaron with respect to the whole congregation of Israel saying:

“You have gone too far! For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?” (Numb. xvi. 3 R.S.V.).

The danger of this challenge lay in it being a half-truth. The whole congregation, insofar as the Lord had separated them from other nations, were holy. What Korah failed to recognize was a further separation, a choice from among this holy people, of leaders, even Moses and Aaron. In this way he *provoked* the Lord, and the opening up of the ground to swallow him and his company was evidence of this (verse 30). He failed to recognize the Lord as the Sanctifier, and so *provoked* or despised the Lord. In the expression, “sanctified be Thy Name”, there is a call for a recognition of the Father’s Name as being holy, and this is equivalent to a recognition of Him as holy. The opposite of this would appear to be despising or blaspheming the name of the Lord, something of which both Korah (in Numb. xvi.) and Israel (in Isa. i.) were guilty.

The sanctified nation, Israel, were evidently intended to so conduct their lives that the Lord would be sanctified in them. Owing however to their constant failure and apostasy, this has yet to be. Paul, in Rom. ii. 17-27 brings the condemnation against the Jew for his failure in these words:



“Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you . . . .” (verses 23, 24).

Instead of God’s name being sanctified by the sanctified people serving the Lord and keeping the Law, rather was it being blasphemed through them. Obedience to the voice of the Lord and the keeping of His covenant with them, would have constituted them a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exod. xix. 5, 6), but this covenant they brake. Under the terms of the New Covenant there will yet be the fulfillment of this promise in Exodus, and during the Acts period it was anticipated:

“Peter . . . . to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus . . . . ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for a possession, that ye should shew forth the virtues of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. i. 1; ii. 9).

During the future Millennium the promise will find its fulfillment, and then will the Lord God be sanctified in His people, and the prayer, ‘sanctified be Thy Name’, answered in its fullness.

“For in mine holy mountain . . . . saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel . . . . serve me in the land . . . . and *I will be sanctified in you* in the sight of the nations . . . .” (Ezek. xx. 40, 41 R.V.).

“When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their way . . . . and I scattered them among the nations . . . . and when they came unto the nations . . . . they profaned my holy name . . . . I will sanctify My great name, which hath been profaned among the nations . . . . and the nations shall know that I am the Lord . . . . when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes . . . .” (Ezek. xxxvi. 17-23 R.V. See also Ezek. xxxix. 25-27, etc.).

The close connection of the clause ‘sanctified be Thy Name’ with ‘Thy kingdom come’ and ‘Thy will be done’, suggests when the answer to this part of the prayer will be fulfilled. The will or wishes of the Father being done on earth will be when this kingdom (the subject of the Lord’s Prayer) shall have come, and at that time will the Father’s Name be sanctified. *Heavenly* conditions will then prevail on earth, “the kingdom of the *heavens*” having come, and it will then be true to say, “as in heaven so also upon earth”. The Lord’s Prayer, set as it is in the period immediately preceding the Millennium, calls upon the one who needs “daily bread” and seeks deliverance from ‘the evil’ of that day, to look to the near future, when the present necessity will have passed. It bids him to seek earnestly that day when the Name of the Father will be revered by obedience to His wishes, and when He will be sanctified in His people.

It should be noted that although the answer to ‘sanctified be Thy Name’ awaited a future day for those addressed in I Peter, yet could it have a partial answer in the life of an individual believer then. Writing to those who were “elect . . . . through *sanctification* of the Spirit” (i. 2), were a “*holy nation*” (ii. 9) called by One Who Himself was “*holy*” (i. 15), Peter exhorts *holiness* “in all manner of conduct” (i. 15), and that in the midst of suffering they should “*sanctify* the Lord God” in their hearts (iii. 14, 15). This sanctification of the Lord in the heart may be something of which He alone was aware, but it had the manifestation of a readiness to state the hope within (iii. 15) in the

event of being asked, and that in spite of being falsely accused as an evil doer (iii. 16). In a day when the righteous suffer and evil doers prosper, the sanctification of the Father's Name must remain unfulfilled except in the way already suggested, in the heart, and inasmuch as it was the province of the Son to manifest the Father's Name (John xvii. 6), and that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John v. 23), so it could be possible to "sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts" (I Pet. iii. 15). (Christ is substituted for God in the best texts).

In the narrow dispensational sense the petition "sanctified be Thy Name" belongs basically to Israel, but surely all can join voices to desire earnestly the day when both in heaven and upon earth that Name shall be sanctified.

### **No.3. pp. 168 - 173**

#### **Let Thy kingdom come.**

The kingdom for which the disciples of the Lord were to pray had already been qualified in the Sermon on the Mount as "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3, 10, etc.). More literally it should read "the kingdom of the heavens", an expression peculiar to Matthew and used some 32 times. This kingdom had drawn near at this time and both John the Baptist and the Lord Himself proclaimed it (iii. 2; iv. 17). It was to be possessed by the "poor in spirit . . . . persecuted for righteousness sake" (v. 3, 10), whose righteousness exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees and who had become 'little children' (v. 20; xviii. 3). Many of these would come from the east and west to recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom (viii. 11).

The expression 'kingdom of God', used 5 times by Matthew is used by the other evangelists in such a way as to suggest that *at this time* it meant the same as "the kingdom of the heavens". It seems that "the kingdom of God", insofar as it is found in Col. iv. 11, is an embracing term covering more than one aspect of the purposes of God, and is to be looked upon as including within its meaning "the kingdom of the heavens". Viewed in this light, it was true to say that at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry, and afterwards during the Acts period, the kingdom of God, described by the specific term "the kingdom of the heavens", had drawn near. It was this that was implied in "Thy kingdom come".

One other expression which may be looked upon as further explaining this kingdom is "My Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29), or speaking of the righteous of this kingdom, "the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43). The kingdom of God was to be sought—"seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. vi. 33), and the petition "thy kingdom come" should be looked upon as being included within this seeking.

Although the kingdom prayed for as “the kingdom of the heavens”, the petition desired that it should “come”, and the qualifying clause, “as in heaven so also upon earth”, shows that it was to come on *earth*. The expression then describes its character rather than its position, and its *origin* rather than its goal. Its establishment depends upon the presence of the King and so looks for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. So writes John in the book of the Revelation, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. xxii. 20).

### **Let Thy will be done.**

The kingdom of the heavens will be a place where the will of God is done, and therefore entry into it was dependent upon this factor:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. vii. 21).

Such were viewed in a special relationship to the Lord:

“For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. xii. 50).

The word ‘will’, *thelema* with its verbal form *thelo*, should be considered with care before deciding on its meaning. In the very same Gospel as the above quotations are found, we read:

“If any man *will* come after me” (Matt. xvi. 24).

“For whosoever *will* save his life” (xvi. 25).

“If thou *wilt* enter into life” (xix. 17).

“If thou *wilt* be perfect” (xix. 21).

Can any man *will* (in the sense of determine) to follow the Lord? Can he *will* to save his life (Gr. ‘soul’) or enter into life? Can he *will* to be perfect? Consider the import of the following verse if the word *thelo* is to be so understood:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . . how often *would* (*thelo*) I have gathered thy children together . . . . and ye *would* (*thelo*) not” (Matt. xxiii. 37).

It was not that Jerusalem deliberately determined not to be gathered, but simply that they were found without any desire for it. Behind the Greek word *thelo* is the idea of desire not determination. When applied to God it is possible that it should be regarded as strong desire, but it is nevertheless desire. A good idiomatic translation would be ‘want’. (For a fuller consideration of *thelo* the reader should consult *The Berean Expositor* Volume XXXVII pages 84-87).

In case it should be imagined that the above suggests a certain looseness with respect to God, it must be remembered that on the other hand we have such words as ‘purpose’, ‘election’ and ‘predestination’ to give us a balanced view of His ways.

The petition, “Thy will be done”, expresses the highest form of prayer that can be offered, since it suggests that the desire of the supplicator is in line with the desire of the Father Himself. In the case of the Lord’s Prayer the expression is qualified by the words, “as in heaven, so upon earth”, limiting it to the earthly kingdom, but prayed in the context of any calling of God, it is a call for the strong desires of God to become reality.

### The “*epiousion*” bread.

“Our bread the *epiousion* give us today” (Matt. vi. 11).

“Our bread the *epiousion* give us according to the day” (Luke xi. 3).

Before considering the meaning of the word *epiousion* (‘daily’ A.V.), consider the expression “according to the day” (in the Luke account) in the light of Exod. xvi. 16, 18:

“Gather of it (i.e. the manna) every man *according to* his eating, an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons . . . . he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.”

The prevailing thought in these words is of need supplied. The gathering was *according to* the need of each person and the number in each tent. There was neither lack nor excess; the need of every man was met. Inasmuch as they “gathered twice as much” (verse 22) on the sixth day, the supply was also “according to the day”. The day by day need of a people who were unable to obtain food in the wilderness, was miraculously met with bread from heaven, bread which came down upon them.

Consider now the Great Tribulation, a period into which it has already been suggested the Lord’s Prayer fits:

“Let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes . . . . for then shall be great tribulation . . . .” (Matt. xxiv. 16-21).

Such will be the swiftness of flight, that there will not be time to take even the very necessities of life into the mountains. This people will therefore be in very real need, wanting even the bread of the day. How will such survive? Will God ask such to flee for their lives into the mountains only to let them die of hunger when there? Emphatically no! The One Who once fed this people miraculously in the desert will feed them again with the *epiousion* bread for which they pray. This is more than suggested in at least two passages in Revelation:

“And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, *that they should feed here there* a thousand two hundred and threescore day.”

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, *where she is nourished* for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent” (Rev. xii. 4-6, 13, 14).

In both passages is the suggestion of the three and a half years of the Tribulation, which begins when “the abomination of desolation is set up” (Dan. ix. 27; xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15), during which time the woman is fed. If the man child is Christ, then it points to the woman as Israel, or at least part of Israel.

In the light of all this the meaning of *epiousion* may now be considered. The word possibly derives from *epi*, upon and *ousia*, substance. *Ousia* is used twice in the N.T. of the ‘goods’ and ‘substance’ of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 12, 13), and Parkhurst suggests it as related to the verb ‘to be’ in the form *ousa*. The literal rendering of the word would then seem to be, “the substance which comes upon us”.

Until recently it was thought that this word had been specially coined by the Holy Spirit, as it could not be found in secular Greek. However it has at last turned up in an ancient housekeeping book, discovered in archaeological research (*Light from the Ancient East*, 1927 edition p.87), and Professor A. T. Robertson points out that it also occurs in three late verses after 2 Macc. 1:8 (*tous epiousious* after *tous artous*). The latter part of the word he derives, with other authorities, from *eimi* “to go”, rather than *eimi* “to be”. Arndt and Gingrich in their Greek-English Lexicon state that *epiousios* may equal the Latin *diana*, the daily ration of food given out for the next day. In view of these facts one cannot be dogmatic over its precise meaning. If the older view of Parkhurst is correct, there seems to be an allusion to the manna of the O.T.

One verse in particular calls for attention:

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, *It is manna: for they wist not what it was*” (Exod. xvi. 14, 15).

*The Companion Bible* note on this verse reads, “It is manna. Hebrew *man-hu* = What is that? for they knew not what *that was*”. The manna was named from the fact of their not knowing what it was, and similarly with the bread of Matt. vi. and Luke xi. it is simply termed ‘a substance’, that which exists, and like the manna of old, it was to ‘come down upon them’.

One other passage might be of interest to the reader in placing the time for which such a petition as this is applicable. Rev. xiii. 16, 17:

“And he (another beast verse 11) causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark . . . . and *that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*”

If a man may not buy or sell, how shall he eat? And if the mark of the beast brings God’s wrath, how shall the faithful live except by being fed miraculously by God Himself? That there will be some who hunger at this time seems implied in Rev. vii. 13-16:

“What are these which are arrayed in white robes? . . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation (lit. *the* great tribulation) . . . . *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more . . . .*”

It has always been the lot of those who would be faithful, to “suffer for righteousness sake”. This is true of all dispensations during which evil triumphs. The time of the Great Tribulation will however be exceptional, a time of suffering the like of which has not been known before and of which it will be true to say, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. xxiv. 22). See how this period is described in Scripture:

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jer. xxx. 7).

“There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Dan. xii. 1).

“Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be . . . . for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22).

During this period, the Lord’s Prayer with its *epiousion* bread, reminiscent of the wilderness experience of a past generation, will find its place. What a comfort it will be for those who pray this petition to know the truth of the Lord’s words in Matt. vi. 8, “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him”.

### **Forgive us . . . . as we also have forgiven.**

Before considering the meaning of the next petition in any depth, observe that forgiveness is, in this context, conditional. Many expositors have sought to get round this and to bring the petition in line with the present experience of forgiveness as taught in Eph. iv. 32:

“forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

But it is evident that Matt. vi. and Eph. iv. are on different ground and this is emphasized by the Lord’s explanation of the petition:

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. vi. 14, 15).

Matt. xviii. 21-35 ought also to be considered in this respect, but especially verses 34 and 35:

“And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. *So likewise* shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”

These passages may present tremendous problems, but at least they should be recognized rather than to deal deceitfully with the Word of God by reading thoughts into them contrary to their whole tenor. This part of the prayer alone ought to have made the

professing church hesitate before ordaining the prayer as part of the regular worship of God's people, and any believer who seeks the glory of God must satisfactorily explain the apparent contradiction with Eph. iv. 32, before accepting the prayer as being for him.

It may be argued that 'debts' rather than 'sins' are involved in this forgiveness, and this is certainly true in Matthew:

"And forgive us our *debts*, as we also have forgiven our *debtors*" (vi. 12),

but in the explanation (verses 14, 15) "trespasses" (*paraptoma*), translated "sins" in Eph. i. 7, is used. Also the Luke account interchanges 'debts' with 'sins', a fact which will help in a true understanding of the meaning here intended:

"And forgive us our *sins*, for we also ourselves forgive everyone *indebted* to us"  
(Luke xi. 4).

All this however does still not get round the conditional nature of the petition which must not be lightly set aside. The O.T. background of forgiveness must be first considered, before any true interpretation can be put on this forgiveness of sins and debts, but let it not be confused with the present experience of grace.

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

## No.4. pp. 190 – 196

### O.T. background to "debts" and "sins".

Literal renderings of Matt. vi. 12 and Luke xi. 4 are respectively:

"And forgive us our *debts*, as we also have forgiven our *debtors*" (R.V.).

"And forgive us our *sins*, for we ourselves also forgive everyone *that is indebted* to us" (R.V.).

The Greek word involved are, 'forgive' *aphiemi*; 'debts' *opheilema* (with its cognates *opheiletes* and *opheilo*—'debtors' and 'indebted'); 'sins' *hamartia*.

A basic passage which throws light on forgiveness of debts in the Old Testament is Deut. xv. 1-11, of which are given verses 1 and 2 according to the A.V. and LXX renderings:

"At the end of every seven years (*Companion Bible* 'when the seventh year has arrived') thou shalt make a *release*. And this is the manner of the *release*: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall *release* it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called *the Lord's release*" (A.V.).

“Every seven years thou shalt make a *release*. And this is the ordinance of the *release*: thou shalt *remit* every private debt which thy neighbour owes thee, and thou shalt not ask payment of it from thy brother; for it has been called a *release* to the Lord thy God” (LXX).

The LXX version employs the Greek *aphesis* to translate the Hebrew *sh'mitah* ('release'), and the verbal form of the same word *aphiemi* for *shamat* ('release' A.V., 'remit' LXX). Also the word 'debt' (LXX rendering) is the Greek *opheilo*. A comparison between the three passages cited will reveal similarities which are invaluable in throwing light on the petition under consideration. The very Greek words used are the same, and in each case the 'forgiveness of debts' is involved. Where 'sins' fit into the picture should become obvious later; enough now to observe that the word *aphesis* is employed in the N.T. expressions "*remission* (or *forgiveness*) of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark i. 4; Luke i. 77, etc.).

The seventh year was important in the life of an Israelite. It was a period of 'rest' for the land (Exod. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv. 1-7) and "release' for the debtor and servant (Deut. xv. 1-18). The release of the servant may not have been coincident with the "Lord's release", but the servant was to be released after six years of servitude anyway, demonstrating the same principle as being involved. The seventh year was of particular importance after *seven* of them had been numbered:

“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement . . . . And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land . . . .” (Lev. xxv. 8-10).

The whole passage bearing upon the Jubilee should be read and the following points observed:

(1) The word 'liberty' (*d'ror*), in verse 10, is the same word used in Isa. lxi. 1, "to proclaim *liberty* to the captives", and this passage of O.T. prophecy called 'the acceptable year of the Lord' was stated by the Lord Jesus Christ as being fulfilled in the ears of the Jews at Nazareth (Luke iv. 17-21). In other words it was being fulfilled at the very same time as the Lord's Prayer, with its petition concerning "forgiveness of debts", was given. Also it should be observed that when the Lord quoted the Isaiah passage, He twice used the word 'forgiveness' (*aphesis*) to interpret the Hebrew words:

“to preach *deliverance* (*aphesis*) to the captives . . . . to set at *liberty* (*aphesis*) them that are bruised . . . .” (Luke iv. 18).

If the "acceptable year of the Lord" proclaimed by the Lord was a jubilee year, as hinted at by the *Companion Bible*, then the forgiveness of debts of the Lord's Prayer would be expected in the light of that jubilee. The baptism being practiced was "the baptism of repentance for (Gr. *eis* 'with a view to') the remission (*aphesis*) of sins", and this in the light of bringing forth fruits 'worthy of repentance' (Luke iii. 2-8). Not to act in harmony with the Lord's proclamation, (i.e. not to forgive all debts), would constitute a failure to 'bring forth fruits worthy of repentance', and thus no remission of sins could



be expected. Seen in this light, the conditional nature of the petition on forgiveness must be understood of the time then present, which time will again draw near during the future Great Tribulation.

(2) The Jubilee was proclaimed on *the Day of Atonement* (Lev. xxv. 9), a day on which the people of Israel were to afflict (humble) their souls (Lev. xxiii. 27, 32); the one day in which the high priest entered the holiest of all, the day when *the sins and iniquities of the people* were especially remembered (see Lev. xvi., especially verse 21).

(3) The Jubilee was a time of *return and restoration*:

“Ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Lev. xxv. 10).

Surely this return of the people will find its fulfillment when the Lord completes what He began at His first coming, and the times of restoration associated with His presence (*prosopon*, ‘face’), will come. These times during the Acts Period were conditional upon repentance, but they will yet come in association with the sending back of Christ Jesus (Acts iii. 19-21).

“For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will . . . . bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel . . . . I will seek that which was lost . . . .” (Ezek. xxxiv. 11-16).

The One who came ‘to seek and to save that which was lost’ (Luke xix. 10), will yet complete that work, a time pictured by the O.T. Jubilee, and in the light of which ‘forgiveness of debts’ is expected of these who would have a place in that gathering.

The reader might also consider in the context of all this, the action of the saints at Jerusalem, when they sold their possessions and laid the money at the apostle’s feet. Was this done in the light of the return of the Lord and their entering into their true possessions in the land? It is especially interesting to note that there is no record of this practice anywhere else, and even in Jerusalem, as it became apparent that the people as a whole were not repenting, the action was not repeated. Could this sale of possessions explain “the poor saints at Jerusalem” of Rom. xv. 26?

It is evident that the forgiveness of debts and sins harmonizes with a particular ‘season’ of God’s dealings with His ancient people. Seen in that context there is nothing incongruous in a conditional forgiveness. To bring such a petition into the present dispensation, however, is to fail to appreciate the grace of God, and to introduce a contradiction into the Word of God. The great key which has unlocked many a mystery and thrown light on many a passage of Scripture, the key of ‘right division’, when applied here does not fail us but places the petition, “forgive us . . . . as we”, in the setting into which the whole prayer has been cast for us, by every part of it which has so

far been examined. One petition remains, and it will be seen also with this, that it again yields its truth when placed in its right setting.

**Lead us not . . . . . but deliver us.**

It has already been suggested that the clauses, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” are one petition, this being partly inferred from the absence of the second clause in Luke xi. This is immediately helpful insofar as it brings together the ideas of ‘leading’ and ‘delivering’, and ‘temptation’ and ‘evil’.

a | Lead us not  
b | into temptation  
a | deliver us  
b | from the evil

The idea of temptation in Scripture must be carefully handled. Consider the following:

“Let no man say when he is *tempted* (*peirazo*), I am *tempted* (*peirazo*) of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither *tempteth* (*peirazo*) He any man” (James i. 13).  
“By faith Abraham, when he was *tried* (*peirazo*)—(O.T. ‘God did *tempt* Abraham’ Gen. xxii. 1), offered up Isaac . . . .” (Heb. xi. 17).

There is a plain contradiction in these statements unless we recognize that the word *peirazo* can have both good and bad associations. The presence of the word ‘evil’ (lit. evils) in the James passage is suggestive of this, and if the following verses are read it will be seen that ‘lust’ and ‘sin’ are involved in the context. *Peirazo* probably derives from *peiro*, and Parkhurst’s note is suggestive.

“to perforate, pierce through, by doing which we *make trial* of the internal constitution of things” (*Greek and English Lexicon to the N.T.*).

A man may be *tried* in a good sense or *tempted* in an evil sense, but in both cases his reaction reveals his internal worth. Perhaps this is one way in which the Lord is able to work all things (good or bad) together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. viii 28). It is the province of God to sift the wheat, in order to separate from it the chaff for burning:

“He that cometh after me . . . . shall baptize you with holy spirit and fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. iii. 11, 12).

But Satan has also a sifting to do:

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you (R.V. margin ‘obtained you by asking’), that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke xxii. 31).

The plural ‘you’ indicates that all the disciples were subjected to this sifting, and the lure of money, (the love of which is a root of all evils), brought the separation of the chaff (Judas Iscariot) from the true wheat. Let the *tests* of God be carefully distinguished from the *temptations* of Satan. God seeks the wheat, Satan the chaff.

The wilderness experience of ‘bread from heaven’ threw light upon the meaning of the *epiousion* bread of the Lord’s Prayer. The provision of manna (Exod. xvi.) closely followed by a need for water:

“And there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them. Why chide ye with me? *wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?*” (Exod. xvii. 1, 2).

It was not unreasonable in the circumstances to ask for water; what was wrong however was the attitude of the people. They quarreled with Moses and murmured against him. The word ‘murmur’ (*loon*) has about it the basic idea of abide or dwell. The people’s error lay in *dwelling* on the subject of their need with discontent and grumblings, and so they *tried* the Lord. This attitude, which was characteristic of the whole period of their wandering, is further explained in Heb. iii. 8 as being ‘provocative’, characteristic of ‘hardness of heart’. The experiences through which they passed were intended to humble and *prove* (*nasah*) them (Deut. viii. 2), but alas it turned out that they *tried* (*nasah*) Him. The period of this failure became proverbial; it was “the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Psa. xcv. 8; Heb. iii. 8).

The attitude, and consequences of that attitude, of the Moses’ generation are quoted by the writer of Hebrews as a warning to the then present generation, “lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (iii. 13). Their experience was very much a wilderness experience, and they could fall to the same temptation. If that dispensation had continued unbroken it would have run on into the Great Tribulation and the experiences recorded in the Revelation, a time of need even greater than that of Moses’ generation. In the light of all this, a promise given to those that endure during this yet future period is very significant:

“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience (endurance), I also will keep thee from *the hour of temptation* (*peirasmos*), which shall come upon all the world, *to try* (*peirazo*) them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. iii. 10).

What this may imply can be felt from II Pet. ii. 6-9:

“Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes . . . . and *delivered* (*roumai* the word used in the Lord’s Prayer—‘*deliver* us from evil’) just Lot . . . . the Lord knoweth how *to deliver* (*roumai*) the godly out of temptation.”

The warning given to Lot, which saved him from being consumed in the destruction of Sodom, is paralleled in Matt. xxiv. 15-22, where the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the holy place is a warning signal to ‘flee into the mountains’, for then shall be ‘great tribulation’. Under such conditions as will prevail during this period, there will be great tendency to react like a previous generation of Israel, who tempted the Lord with their murmurings. The Acts period was not the Great Tribulation, but it was preparatory to it in some senses. An early epistle written during this period was that of James and parts of it are very significant to this subject:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers testings (*peirasmos*); knowing that the trying (*dokomion*) of your faith worketh endurance . . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (*peirasmos*)” (i. 2, 3, 12).

“Be patient therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . . we count them happy which endured. Ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord . . . .” (v. 7, 11).

The endurance of Job is brought to bear as an example, but how in the O.T is Job commended?

“Job said . . . . the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (with injustice)* . . . . Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil (*trouble*)? *In all this did not Job sin with his lips*” (Job i. 21, 22; ii. 9, 10).

Job, unlike the Moses generation, did not murmur during his trial, and *thus* is set forth as an example of endurance to be emulated.

The Lord Himself was called to go through an “*hour of temptation*” in Gethsemane:

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death . . . . and he prayed that; if it were possible, *the hour* might pass from Him” (Mark xiv. 34, 35).

“Could ye not watch with me *one hour*? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into *temptation (peirasmos)*” (Matt. xxvi. 40, 41).

Both the period immediately before the Great Tribulation (‘the beginning of sorrows’ Matt. xxiv. 8) and the Great Tribulation itself, will be times of testing for some of God’s people. Especially will it concern those in Judea (Matt. xxiv. 16). During these periods many will break down, betraying one another and hating one another. The love of many will wax cold by reason of abounding lawlessness. Endurance is the order of the day (Matt. xxiv. 9-13). During this great trial, the faithful will need to pray to be delivered from ‘the evil’ of that day, and especially that, unlike a generation of their forefathers who failed under trial, they will not enter into any murmuring spirit, *tempting* the Lord.

The implication in, “Father . . . . *lead us not into temptation*” must not be pressed outside the limits of the context. The Lord of the O.T. *led* the children of Israel into trial to test their worth (Deut. viii. 2). That they then ‘tempted’ Him was entirely on their part. Strength to overcome under such trial is given by the Lord, but He desires that such should be sought from Him. This then demonstrates the importance of the place of prayer in any believer’s life, but especially under trial. So with the Lord’s Prayer. The supplicants must pray, “that they enter not into temptation” (Matt. xxvi. 41), and that they be “delivered from the evil”. Instead of murmuring at their lot, they must pray. The Moses generation failed; they might do also—“Our Father . . . . *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil*”.

This petition, seen in its context, has nothing to do with the members of the Body of Christ as such, but there is a possible parallel to “the hour of temptation” mentioned in Eph. vi. 13—“the evil day”—for which the whole armour of God is provided. What this

day will be is not fully known yet, but it is evident that for it to be so described implies a time of trial. In Paul's day there was a need of deliverance, and his confidence was in the Lord:

“I was *delivered (roumai)* out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall *deliver (roumai)* me from every *evil work . . . .*” (II Tim. iv. 17, 18).

May all the members of His Body enjoy the same confidence, not neglecting to pray always “with all prayer and supplication in spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. vi. 18).

### **CONCLUSION.**

The Lord's Prayer has now been examined throughout, and although not every problem has been solved, enough has been seen to place the prayer into a very particular 'season'. To take the prayer out of this context is to miss its whole point, and to fail to rightly divide the word of truth. The tradition of many years has ordained its use, both amongst Catholics and Protestants. It has been laid open to many interpretations, most of them begin an attempt to get round the conditional forgiveness clause, in the light of the 'present' season. To see it in its correct light is to be delivered from all this. May the Lord's people, who are members of His Body, be prepared to recognize the place of this prayer in the purpose of God, and to turn rather to the prayers of Ephesians and Colossians, which are so very much more applicable to the present dispensation.

## **The Valley of the Shadow**

### **No.1. An enquiry into the Scriptural meaning of the words “The Shadow of Death” (Psa. xxiii. 4). pp. 173 -176**

An assurance of redeeming love, of heavenly provision, of tender care, and of blessed guidance is no guarantee that the object of such love will be immune from the troubles and afflictions that are in the world. David knew this redeeming love, for he said “The Lord is my Shepherd”. He knew that heavenly provision, for he said “I shall not want”. He had experienced the Lord’s tender care, when the Lord has made him to lie down in green pastures. He knew the blessed guidance that had led him beside still waters. Yet the self-same Psalm speaks of walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

But, some may say, David spoke of death which comes to all. A moment’s thought upon the Psalm as a whole will reveal that this is untenable. Death is the end of all things in this life. Rod and staff may comfort while life lasts, but are useless after death. Moreover, to introduce actual physical death into the middle of the Psalm, is to ignore the fact that the Psalmist continues without break to speak of a table spread, of an anointed head, and of goodness and mercy following all the days of his life.

“The valley of the shadow of death” is a figure found in a number of O.T. books, and in none more than in the book of Job, a man who, for a time, longed for death though it came not. At first sight the reader who is seeking immediate comfort in his hour of trial, may be repelled by a long investigation into the meaning of the phrase, but all those who really value “the comfort of the Scriptures”, will be among the first to see to it that they do not rely for their comfort or peace upon the uncertain foundation of incomplete understanding.

While we may be obliged to admit that Psa. xxiii. speaks of an experience (‘dying daily’) rather than the dissolution of the body in the article of death, there are passages where the valley of the shadow of death includes death itself. Yet even so, it is death accompanied with sore distress and trouble that is in view. One such passage is that of Job x. 21, 22, where such a death is contrasted unfavourably with death at the moment of birth (Job x. 21, 22):

“Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.”

This chaotic condition implies however something more than death itself; there is all its terrible accompaniments and consequences. Shakespeare uses the same figure:

“Let order die . . . . and darkness be the burier of the dead.”

In Job xxxiv. 22, the words 'the shadow of death' are used in a more figurative manner:

"There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves",

or as in Job xxiv. 16, 17, the wicked whose natural element is darkness, "In the dark they dig through houses", look upon light as an enemy, "For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death".

To the Psalmist, bondage and affliction could be described in terms of the shadow of death,

"Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron."

"He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and break their bands in sunder" (Psa. cvii. 10 and 14).

In Psa. xlv. we have the figure of the shadow of death used together with that of sheep devoted to destruction:

"Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen."

"Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (Psa. xlv. 11, 22).

So, the Psalmist could say:

"Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death" (Psa. xlv. 19).

To the zealous Israelite, the nations outside the land of promise lived in the shadow of death:

"Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. ix. 1, 2).

Jeremiah likens the wilderness experience of Israel to that of passing through,

"A land of drought, and of the shadow of death" (Jer. ii. 6).

It will be seen therefore that when the Psalmist speaks of the valley of the shadow of death, he refers rather to life's dread experiences, than to death itself.

To be 'killed all the day long' may not yield sense to the cold and critical, but to those whose experience enables them to understand the language of the heart, no explanation is necessary. Many of those who read these words, have lived in the very shadow of death. There is comfort for all such, for the Psalmist said:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I will fear no evil.*"

The believer's path through life is a mingled experience. Sometimes resting at an Elim, with its palm trees and its wells of water; sometimes walking with weary step through a waterless desert. Sometimes resting beside still waters, sometimes treading the valley of the shadow.

The testimony of Psa. xxiii., however, makes one thing certain. However varied the circumstances of life's pilgrimage may be, one thing remains constant, *the presence of the Lord*. "Thou art with me." His presence is not limited to experiences of joy or sorrow, but irradiates them all. When experience is that likened to resting in green pastures, it is *He* Who makes me thus to lie down. It is *He* Who leads me beside still waters; it is *He* Who restoreth my soul. Further, the green pastures, or the quietest waters would lose their charm without that presence, whereas the hardest couch is comfort if endured *with Him*.

David therefore dwells upon this blessed fact as he contemplates the deepest of life's trials, even there, in the valley of the shadow of death, he can say:

"I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

As in the language of the N.T., so in that of the Old, there is much to be learned from the particles of speech. This little word 'with' for instance is the hinge upon which the passage turns. It is the Hebrew *immadi*, and is formed from the verb *amad* to stand. It is used of the close and lasting relationship which God ordained should exist between man and wife, as Adam makes clear when he spoke of Eve as "The woman whom Thou gavest to be *with me*" (Gen. iii. 12).

The personal presence and fellowship of the Lord in the sorrows and troubles of His own, is one of the most blessed and comforting of His many condescensions.

"When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee*" (Isa. xliii. 2).

"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: *I will be with him in trouble*" (Psa. xci. 15).

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of *His Presence* saved them" (Isa. lxiii. 9).

Keeping to the figures of Shepherd and sheep, David spoke out of his own shepherd experiences when he said:

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

"The rod" refers to the shepherd's club, with which he defended the sheep. "The staff" refers to the shepherd's crook with which he rescued the sheep from dangerous paths.

"The rod" for the enemy is seen in Psa. ii.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron" (Psa. ii. 9).

"The staff" (Hebrew *misheneth*, from *shaan* 'to lean').

"The Lord was my *stay*" (Psa. xviii. 18).

"Lo, thou trustest in the *staff* of this broken reed, on Egypt" (Isa. xxxvi. 6).



It is good to know that in the dark valley we have Someone upon whom we may confidently “lean”.

This ‘leaning’ is but a symbol of “trusting”.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and *lean not* unto thine own understanding” (Prov. iii. 5).

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and *stay* upon his God” (Isa. 1. 10).

In the darkest part of life’s pilgrim path, the Lord stands with us. He is armed against our foes, He holds a trustworthy staff upon which we may confidently lean.

If these things are true in our experience, then we can say:

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I will fear no evil.*”

## **No.2. The “needs be” of the Valley of the Shadow. pp. 187 -190**

It may be a means of comfort to some of God’s tried ones, if we pause in our reading of Psa. xxiii. to ask, “Why should the valley of the shadow of death” come in to this Shepherd Psalm at all? This is not exactly the same as saying “Why should Christians ever suffer?” for such a question would be tantamount to denying both life’s experiences, the testimony of all saints, and the record of Holy Scripture. There is a lesson to be learned if we will but acquaint ourselves with the land of the Shepherd Psalm and work of the Palestinian shepherd.

First, let us observe the actual word used by David which is translated ‘valley’. He could have used the word which means ‘a low land, a plain, a gentle slope’ and if he had, such would have been a delightful spot for sheep rather than a place of dread. David uses a word which gives us the name “Gehenna” or “The valley of the son of Hinnom” (Joshua xv. 8).

In the land of Benjamin is a valley, called “The valley of Zeboim”, which Gesenius translates “The valley of Hyaenas” (I Sam. xiii. 18) and it would be to some such valley that David would refer in Psa. xxiii. In the “Song of Our Syrian Guest” we read:

“Some paths that are right paths lead through places that have deadly perils; ‘Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death’ is the way the psalm touches this fact in shepherd life. This way of naming the valley is very true of our country. I remember one near my home called the ‘valley of robbers’ and another ‘the ravine of the raven.’”

While this is true, and may be unquestioned by the reader, we have still left untouched the heart of the question “why should sheep be led *by their shepherd* into such dreadful places?”

Each case, of course, would have to be settled on its own merits, but in the generality for instances, “the valley of the shadow” was a necessary link between pastures that had been exhausted and pastures that were new. In the hill country of Judah many such ravines and valleys intersect, with their deep shade, the pasture of the hills. Here, in caves and dens, lurked the wolf and the hyena. David knew what it was in the exercise of his calling as a shepherd, to face a lion and a bear. The shepherd never led his flock through these dreadful places without real and imperative reasons, and we may rest assured that God, Who is not only righteous but Who is love, Who is not only creator but is redeemer, Who is not only Lord but is Father, never permits His children to pass through any such experience without reason. We may not understand or appreciate this, any more than ‘silly sheep’ could understand the working of the Shepherd mind. Enough that we know HIM; we have received from Him the greatest of all blessings, salvation. That salvation was procured at infinite cost, and an argument is put into our lips, drawn from this very fact:

“If God be 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).

If the believer will keep steadily in mind the opening lines of this Psalm, he will find the answer to his question and to his fears in the words “The Lord is my Shepherd”. Grant this, and all must follow. He will provide, lead, defend. He will never afflict without good reason, it is for us to follow, and, as the darkness deepens, to “lean hard upon our Guide”. However dark the shadow may be He is with us, and however deadly the gloom, He has overcome death, and because He lives, we shall live also.

Peter, in his epistle, makes use of the figure of Shepherd and sheep and knew that this dark valley must sometimes be endured:

“Though now for a season, *if need be*, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (I Pet. i. 6).

The valley of the shadow therefore must needs be the experience of all who travel through the wilderness of this world. Let us not make it more dismal by complaining or repining, let us rather face its gloom saying:

“I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

This valley of the shadow of death may at times be given a particular name to emphasize some special phase of experience. In case any reader should hesitate to use mere geographical names as a basis for spiritual teaching, let him remember that the instance which we now put forward is an inspired example of this very thing. It is good to be sensitive in our handling of Scripture, but not super-sensitive, lest things written beforehand for our learning and comfort be lost. One such name for this valley is “The

Valley of Achor”, or to translate the name into English “The valley of trouble”. The actual valley of Achor was so named, because of the sin of Achan who ‘troubled’ Israel (Josh. vi. 18). In I Chron. ii. 7 Achan’s name is actually altered to read ‘Achar’ the word for ‘trouble’ to emphasize the fact.

There are two references in the great prophecies of Israel’s restoration where this “Valley of Trouble” is turned by overruling grace into a place of blessing:

“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of My mountains: and Mine elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for My people that have sought Me” (Isa. lxx. 9, 10).

The lesson that appears on the surface, which administers balm to our hurt minds, and soothes in times of stress is this:

- (1) God has a chosen people “Mine elect”.
- (2) Though sin has robbed them of their inheritance, and turned the place of triumph into a valley of trouble (Josh vi. and vii.), the elect shall yet enter into their own.
- (3) The present “Valley of Trouble” can be turned into a place of rest;
- (4) And the principle is found in the closing words of the passage “For My people that have sought Me”.

Here, therefore, we can see the lesson for ourselves. At one end of the story is the electing love of God, and at the other the voluntary seeking of the Lord by His people. In between lies the valley of Achor, the valley of trouble, but electing love, and seeking faith can turn the valley of trouble into green pastures wherein the herds may ‘lie down’.

The second occurrence of this valley of Achor in the prophets, is that of Hos. ii. 15. This chapter opens with the shameful unfaithfulness of Israel, under the figure of a woman who has ‘played the harlot’; and of the Lord’s dealings with such, taking away the corn, the wine, the wool and the flax, not only as a judgment upon the woman’s utter unfaithfulness, but as a means of opening her poor blind eyes.

“For she did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal” (Hos. ii. 8).

When the lesson has been learned however, the Lord says:

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably (as in Isa. xl. 2) unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt” (Hos. ii. 14,15).

The valley of trouble, can become ‘a door of hope’ to all who have learned the lesson of faith. The figurative use of a ‘door’ for ‘opportunity’ is familiar to all who know the writings of the Apostle Paul. He speaks of “a great and effectual door” (I Cor. xvi. 9), “a door . . . . opened by the Lord” (II Cor. ii. 12); ‘a door of utterance’ (Col. iv. 3). The book of the Revelation uses the word in the same figurative sense (Rev. iii. 8).

The Valley of the Shadow, through which the believer must sometimes pass, may turn out to be such a valley of trouble that it, by the grace of God, shall become a 'door of hope'.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope" (Rom. v. 3, 4).

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

### **No.3. The Vale of Tears, a place of triumphant faith. pp. 215 -217**

The valley of the shadow, we have seen, may at times prove to be "The valley of Achor (trouble)" which under God's blessing may become 'a door of hope'.

The valley of the shadow, may have another name attached to it at times, it can be called 'the valley of Baca'.

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee:  
in whose heart are the ways of them.  
Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well:  
the rain also filleth the pools" (Psa. lxxxiv. 5, 6).

"The valley of Baca" means "The valley of tears", and the figure has passed into English literature in the phrase "This vale of tears", to indicate the passage of humanity through life. It would take us too far afield to discuss the general intention of this Psalm. Some teach that the Psalmist is cut off from the fellowship and thinks with pain that even sparrows and swallows find a resting place in the courts of the Lord, an access which was denied to the Psalmist. Others question this idea saying that in no circumstances could sparrows and swallows build nests at the very altar, and teach that the sparrow and the swallow is to be understood as of the Psalmist himself who has found a resting place in his God, whether having access to the place of worship or whether such access be denied.

This truth appears in verse 6. Those who have 'the ways' in their heart, can turn even a 'valley of tears' into a place of blessing. Burkhardt writes:

"After you have advanced two hours, the valley for an hour gets the name of *Wady Beka*, or the valley of the weeping."

Rotherham translates Psa. lxxxiv. 5:

"How happy the men whose strength is in Thee,  
Festive processions are in their heart."

It appears therefore that the valley of the shadow, can become very much what we make it. If our faith is largely made up of human traditions, 'places' of worship, veneration of 'days' and other elements of 'religion', we shall miss the externals of our

faith badly, when the happy fellowship of the Lord's people must be exchanged for the valley of weeping. But the living realities of faith are ours. If our 'place' or worship is 'where Christ sits at the right hand of God' if, even though far from human fellowship, "Festive processions are in the heart" then the Valley of Weeping provides a Well of Salvation.

Many readers of *The Berean Expositor* are cut off from the fellowship they enjoyed in days gone by. They sit or work in loneliness and isolation. They 'long even faint' for an opportunity to meet around the Word once more. But, as one such wrote to us: "The teaching we received at the meetings, now proves to be our armour". To such, "Christ is all" and if He is with them in the Valley, then even though every external accompaniment of their salvation should be denied, though all fellowship broken, though all opportunities of study denied, though the mind refuses to concentrate because of the pressure of the times, nevertheless, the valley of Baca becomes a valley of triumphant faith. Tears are dried, *He* is with them, and all is well.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
for Thou art with me."

### **The Transforming Presence.**

If we set no bounds to our license we may spiritualize every valley that is found in Palestine, but we refrain. We have endeavoured to minister comfort to those who may be called upon to walk through the valley of the shadow; and the very heart of this comfort is found in the precious fact that the Psalmist could say "Thou art with Me".

We have discovered that there is a true spiritual application of geographical terms, for although the valley of Achor can be found on the map, yet the valley of Achor is also used as a spiritual experience. We read of the 'valley of Jehoshaphat' which becomes in the prophets message the 'valley of Decision' (Joel iii. 2, 12, 14), and it may be that sometimes the valley of the shadow can become in a very intense way, a valley of decision for the one passing through it, a decision which, like that of the blinded Saul of Tarsus, should influence the whole of his after life. The valley of the shadow may be to some, 'the valley of Hebron', where a most blessed fellowship is entered that could not otherwise be enjoyed. The valley of the shadow can become the 'valley of Mispah', a place where we learn to watch as Habakkuk did (Hab. i. 1-4; ii. 1-4). Others will find that the valley of the shadow may become the 'valley of Succoth' or 'booths' (as at the feast of Tabernacles), where rest and peace are exchanged for alarm and strife.

Sometimes, the believer may discover the valley of the shadow, to become the "valley of Eshcol" with its blessed reminder of the 'earnest of the inheritance' that the "grapes of Eshcol" stand for. Sometimes the valley of the shadow may appear to be a dreadful cul-de-sac at times, yet it may become "The valley of passengers" (Ezek. xxxix. 11), and prove to be a covered bridge, leading from 'light to light'. But there are limits to this application and we can but hope that, whenever the believer passes through the valley of the shadow, not only the spiritual experiences outlined in this series will be entered, but others, unrecorded here will be, by the overruling grace of the Lord,

the blessed parallel of those experiences symbolized by the valley of Achor and its door of hope, or the valley of Baca, and its well of water. Let us once again remind ourselves of the one essential all covering factor:

“Thou art with me.”

#### **No.4. The Valley of Vision. pp. 235 -237**

If we approach the subject from the standpoint of the flesh, then the valley of the shadow must be the last place wherein to expect illumination, but if the valley of the shadow should be a spiritual experience, there is hope that the very darkness will be blessed to illuminate both our own need and the Lord’s provision. It may become in grace “The Valley of Vision”. This term is borrowed from the prophecy of Isaiah, and for its place in that prophecy and its primary meaning, the reader is referred to the series entitled “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” in which the book of Isaiah is given an exposition. As we have stated before, following the example set by the usage of the Valley of Achor, we are taking a little liberty with the text in this short series, using these different passages as a means to an end, namely to minister comfort to those of our readers who may be passing through periods of trial.

The word used by Isaiah to describe this valley of “Vision” is almost identical with his use in Isa. i. 1:

“The *vision* of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he *saw*.”

Sometimes there comes into the spiritual experience of the people of God a period that may be likened to the days of Eli, when:

“The word of the Lord was precious (perhaps because of its rarity) . . . .  
there was no open vision” (I Sam. iii. 1).

It may be that one has accepted the blessings of the Lord, without due consideration of their grace: it may be that it becomes necessary that we should be obliged to pass through the valley of the shadow, that in the darkness the eyes of our heart may see. Something of this spirit is expressed in the words of the Psalmist when he said:

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept Thy word.”

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn Thy Statutes”  
(Psa. cxix. 67, 71).

“Where there is no vision”, said the wise man, “the people perish” (Prov. xxix. 18).

One very important lesson was learned by the prophet Habakkuk. He entered the valley of the shadow, but in it he learned a most valuable lesson concerning ‘vision’. In chapter i. we find Habakkuk in the valley of the shadow.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear? even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save?” (Hab. i. 2).

There can be no gloom quite so oppressive as that which comes from a fear that God has forgotten one, or no longer ‘cares’. The gloom deepened with each step, for Habakkuk complains that he was ‘shown iniquity, and caused to behold grievance’ yet judgment never seemed forthcoming (Hab. i. 3, 4). Yet that dark valley of the shadow became to him “The Valley of Vision”.

“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me . . . . Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. ii. 1-3).

The valley of the shadow—“Thou wilt not hear”; “Thou wilt not save”—is transformed. “It will surely come, it will not tarry.” The lesson that brought light in the darkness, is the lesson of the ages. God has an appointed time, and prayer must not be abused. We must not act as though by our continual crying unto God, we can or should attempt to persuade God to alter by a single line His great and glorious purpose. Habakkuk summed up the lesson in the pregnant words:

“The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. ii. 4).

If we may be permitted to speak of a mountain-top experience as a passing through the valley of the shadow of death, then Abraham trod his path when he rose up early in the morning with knife and wood and fire to obey the heart-searching command:

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest . . . . and offer him . . . . for a burnt offering” (Gen. xxii. 2).

When Abraham said to Isaac “My son, God will *provide* Himself a lamb . . . .” (Gen. xxii. 8), he used a word that meant ‘to see’ even as ‘pro vision’ means “to see beforehand”. This became most gloriously true, for after the testing, came the naming of the mountain “Jehovah-jireh”; as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen”. Abraham’s valley of shadow became a valley of vision, he rejoiced to see the day of Christ, he saw it and was glad.

Job passed along the valley, until darkness gave place to light and he could say:

“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee” (Job xlii. 5).

Darkness and light are both the same to the Lord. Darkness especially when used in the spiritual sense depends far more on that which is *within* than which is *without*. The very darkness that is without may but lead the spiritual eye to see the better. Let us therefore never forget that if the Valley of Trouble can become a Door of Hope so the Valley of the Shadow may be so blessed that it becomes to us “The Valley of Vision”.