

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,

While the sphere of our blessings is “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God”, we are reminded continually that we still walk through the wilderness of this world, and it would be natural at this time to emphasize such words as “crisis”, “war”, “depression” and the like. We have, however, the exhortation to “set our minds on things above”, even as believers in another calling were exhorted in similar circumstances to “lift up their heads”.

Without therefore being unmindful of the signs of the times, we still seek to fulfil the ministry that we have received, namely, “to make all men see” (so far as it lies within our power) “What is the dispensation of the mystery”, leaving to others the liberty and responsibility of dealing with matters which, though important, do not come within the scope of this magazine.

We acknowledge gratefully the fellowship of many in making this ministry possible, and look forward to another year of testimony, confident that grace will still prove “all-sufficient”.

Yours “looking for that blessed hope”.

CHARLES H. WELCH
FREDERICK. P. BRININGER

December, 1938.

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The Use of Ab (“Father”) in the O.T.

p. 142

Ab enters into the composition of a number of names in the Hebrew Bible, such as *Abner*, *Abigail*, *Abraham*, etc. The Syro-Arabian languages demand that such names be translated as Abner, father of light, Abigail, father of joy, etc. It is only because we fail to appreciate the use of the word “father” in the Hebrew, that we find any difficulty in the thought that a *woman* is called the “father of joy”.

It is a common thing among the Syro-Arabic speaking people to use the word “father” in the sense of source or cause, and in a figurative way. For example, Milk is called “the father of white”. If we refer to Gen. iv. 20, 21 we find that Jabal, one of the line of Cain, is said to be “the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle”. No one, however, believes that Abraham was of the line of Cain. Again, Jubal is said to be “the father of all such as handle the harp and organ”, yet no one believes that David was of the line of Cain.

A passage that needs care in handling is Isa. ix. 6:

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given His name shall be the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

There is no confusion in this passage between the person of the Father and the Son. Rotherham’s translation reads “Father of futurity”. The word *Ad* is translated eternity, ever, everlasting, evermore, old, and perpetually. Isa. ix. 6 reveals that time, the ages, all futurity are in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and assures us that inasmuch as the government is upon His shoulder, He will bring the purpose of the ages to a glorious consummation.

The Acts of the Apostles.

#25. The First Missionary Journey (xiii. - xvi. 5). The Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Opened Door (xiii. - xiv. 28). pp. 34 - 39

The Book of the Acts is so full of interesting subject-matter that one has continually to recall the prime object of these studies, lest the unfolding purposes of grace which it describes should be obscured by the wealth of archæological and other interests. Much, for example, that could be said about Antioch, Lystra, and the cities of Galatia visited by Paul on this momentous journey must be omitted here and left for the interested reader to discover for himself. One point, however, we will mention in passing. In the previous sentence we have used the term "Galatia", and this may cause some readers to wonder whether a mistake has been made. Up till recently, the Galatia visited by Paul was considered to be the kingdom of that name, shown on maps of Asia Minor, and lying much further North than Antioch. Sir William Ramsay has, however, established from monumental inscriptions and ancient writings that the Roman Province of Galatia extended further South and included the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. We have given the evidence for this in "The Apostle of the Reconciliation". All we can do here is to give two maps: the first from Dr. Kitto's Cyclopædia of 1847, and the second from Ramsay's "Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians" of recent date. The latter shows the political divisions of Asia Minor in A.D.40-63.

- - - I l l u s t r a t i o n - - - (BE-XXVIII.35).

Leaving this aspect of our subject, we turn now to the passage itself to seek to understand its message. What distinctive contribution does it make to our understanding of God's purposes? In the preceding article, we found that Acts xiii. 16-41 formed a complete member, so that we are left with the remainder of chapter xiii., and the whole of chapter xiv. to complete the record of the first missionary journey. Before attempting to go into detail, it will be advisable to look at the passage as a whole and to discover its scope by determining its structure. We observe that in Acts xiii. 42-51 we are still at Antioch of Pisidia, while in Acts xiv. 26 we are back again in Antioch of Syria. In the former, we read the prophetic words: "A Light to lighten the Gentiles"; and in the latter, the dispensationally important words: "A door of faith opened unto the Gentiles."

Following out the places visited by the apostles, we obtain the following structure:

Acts xiii. 42 - xiv. 28.

- A | xiii. 42-51. ANTIOCH (*In Pisidia*).—The Light to lighten the Gentiles.
- B | xiii. 51 - xiv. 5. ICONIUM.—Jews and Greeks believe. Threat to stone.
- C | xiv. 6-20. LYSTRA.—The miracles and the witness against idolatry.
- D | xiv. 20-21. DERBE.—Many taught.
- C | xiv. 21. LYSTRA.—The return journey.
- B | xiv. 21. ICONIUM.—The return journey.
- A | xiv. 21-23. ANTIOCH.—Confirming and commending.
- AI | xiv. 24. PISIDIA.—Passed throughout.
- BI | xiv. 24. PAMPHYLIA.—They came to.
- CI | xiv. 25. PERGA.—The word preached.
- DI | xiv. 25-26. ATTALIA.—From thence they sailed.
- A | xiv. 26-28. ANTIOCH (*In Syria*).—The door of faith unto the Gentiles.

In Acts xiii. 42: “When the Jews were gone out” we have an anticipation of Acts xxviii., where “the Jews departed” and the door of faith was closed to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. As Israel’s door begins to swing to, the door for the Gentile swings open. Again, in Acts xiii. 43, the “congregation (*synagogue*) breaks up”, while in Acts xiv. 27 we read: “And when they had gathered (*sunagagontes*) the church together”, suggesting that the synagogue of the Jews was about to give place to a “synagogue” of all believers.

We pass by the record of Paul’s visit to Iconium without comment, except to mention that he evidently stayed there a considerable time (xiv. 3), and that, while the Roman Colony at Antioch would deal with the administration of city affairs, Iconium, as an Hellenic city, would be much more democratic. Ladies of high rank (xiii. 50) could be used by the Jews in the former, but it was the mob in the latter that brought about the apostles’ expulsion.

At Lystra, we must pause for a moment, as the record becomes more detailed, and is of evident importance. For the reader to understand the action of the people in offering sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul, it is necessary to know that the ancients believed that their gods often visited the earth in human form, and more than one such visit is associated with the neighbourhood of Lystra. Dryden’s translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* reads:

“Here Jove and Hermes came, but in disguise of mortal men concealed their deities.”

Jove here is Jupiter, and Hermes Mercury, these being the corresponding Greek and Latin names for the same gods. In 1909 Sir William Ramsay unearthed a statue dedicated by the Lycaonians to the two gods, Jupiter and Mercury, showing that these two gods were associated together in the cult of the neighbourhood.

It is not quite correct to speak of the “miracle” at Lystra in the singular, for there were actually two; not only the miracle of the healing of the lame man, but the miracle of the raising of Paul after being stoned and left for dead. The statement of the Acts leaves it undecided as to whether Paul actually died, as some think, or whether he was badly wounded and rendered unconscious, but the fact that he could rise up, go back to the city,

and be off on his journey the next day is in any case sufficient to justify the term “miracle”.

We give below the expansion of the member C | xiv. 6-20:

- A | 6, 7. They preached the gospel.
- B | 8-15. The miracle of the lame man. |
 - C | 8-10. The first Miracle. |
 - a | Impotent on feet.
 - b | Never had walked.
 - c | Heard Paul speak.
 - c | Faith to be healed.
 - a | Stand upright on feet.
 - b | He leaped and walked.
 - D | 11-15. Sacrifice attempted. |
 - d | Gods.
 - e | Jupiter. Mercury.
 - f | Sacrifice.
 - e | Barnabas. Paul.
 - d | Men.
- A | 15-17. Paul and Barnabas preach.
- B | 18-20. The miracle of Paul's recovery. |
 - D | 18. Sacrifice restrained. |
 - g | With these sayings.
 - h | Scarce restrained.
 - h | Not done sacrifice.
 - g | Unto them.
 - C | 19, 20. The second Miracle. |
 - i | Jews came thither.
 - j | Paul stoned.
 - k | Disciples.
 - j | Paul arose.
 - i | Came into the city.

The reader will no doubt remember the dispensational character of Peter's healing of the lame man, as recorded in Acts iii. and iv., and will see that the healing of the lame man by Paul is an intentional parallel. The English reader is handicapped by the fact that the words “save” and “salvation” and the verb “to heal” are sometimes translations of the Greek “*sozo*”. In Acts iv. 9 Peter speaks of the impotent man being made “whole”, and in Acts iv. 12 he uses the word “salvation”. The word “whole” here is *sozo*, and “salvation” *soteria*. So, in Acts xiv. 9, when Paul perceived that the man had faith to be “healed”, the word used in *sozo*, “saved”. Isa. vi., quoted in Acts xxviii. 27, ends with the words: “I should heal them”, using the ordinary word for “healing”. This is followed immediately by the words:

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation (*soterion*) of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts xxviii. 28).

The lame man of Lystra is said to have “heard” Paul speak, and his faith came by “hearing”. In this respect Israel failed, and Rom. x., which gives us the text: “Faith cometh by hearing”, is a sad indictment against them.

Paul’s two miracles on his first missionary journey are prophetic:

- (1) A Jew is blinded, upon which a Gentile (named Paul) is saved. This foreshadows the setting aside of Israel and the salvation of the Gentile as recorded in Acts xxviii.
- (2) A lame Gentile is healed, the language of the account being identical with that of Peter’s miracle of healing.

With reference to the parallel between Paul’s miracle in Acts xiv. and Peter’s miracle in Acts iii., we note that both miracles take place in the proximity of a temple, and both are followed by an outbreak of persecution. Peter is put into prison and brought before the High Priest; Paul is stoned and left for dead. Peter, and those with him, after his release, address their prayer to God, saying:

“Lord, Thou art God, Which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is” (Acts iv. 24).

Paul, speaking to the idolatrous people of Lystra, says:

“We preach unto you that ye shall turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts xiv. 15).

Moreover his reference to “vanities” finds an echo in Peter’s quotation concerning the heathen imagining “vain” things (Acts iv. 25), although the actual words used are not the same.

Enough has been indicated, we trust, to demonstrate the Holy Spirit’s intention in this narrative, and to see its place in the outworking of God’s purposes of grace. Before concluding, however, we allude to one further point, which is not actually mentioned in Acts xiv., but which, from subsequent Scriptures, is necessarily implied. It was here, in these circumstances, that Paul first became acquainted with the household of Lois, Eunice and Timothy. Paul refers to Timothy in his epistle as his own son in the faith, and in chapter xvi. we find him ready to accompany Paul on his journey. Here, therefore, must be placed the conversion of Timothy.

Writing from his last prison in II Tim. iii., Paul reminds his young successor of these early days:

“Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. iii. 10-12).

What memories these words would produce in the heart of Timothy! And what significance they give to the recorded summary of this early work:

“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts xiv. 22).

And so at length these two men return to Antioch in Syria, whence they had been sent out, having “fulfilled” the work which they had been set apart to do. They rehearse before the Church at Antioch “all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles”.

#26. The open door and the many adversaries (xv. 1-35). pp. 79 - 83

In I Cor. xvi., written rather later than the periods covered by Acts xv., we read:

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries”
(I Cor. xvi. 9).

There is reason to believe that Paul is referring here to the period covered by Acts xix., and if so, we have only to read Acts xix. 23 - xx. 3 to see that he had opposition in abundance. The figure of the door is repeated in II Cor. ii. 12 and refers to the same period, though not to the same place.

In Col. iv. 3 the Apostle again uses the figure of the door:

“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance” (or, of the word).

We have not to search far here for “the adversaries”, for he immediately adds “For which I am also in bonds”. It seems that wherever and whenever a door was opened for the exercise of ministry, the Apostle knew well enough that there would be adversaries. Acts xiv. ends with the blessed fact that God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts xv. opens with the attempt of the adversary to counteract this movement of grace, and we find the Apostle plunged into a fight, upon the issue of which, speaking humanly, hung the fate of the glorious gospel that had been entrusted to him for the Gentiles.

At the outset of our study, let us remember, even with shame if need be, that it is almost impossible for any of us, when engaged in strife and conflict, even for the most worthy ends, to be entirely free from bias. This is very evident when one studies the various interpretations of Acts xv. It would be rather a waste of time to go over these differences in detail, but there is one mistaken view to which we must refer, or suffer from a bad conscience by keeping silent. In the scheme of interpretation to which we

refer, not only are the attempts to impose circumcision and law-keeping upon the Gentiles rejected as evil, but also the subsequent methods adopted out of respect for the weaker consciences of Jewish believers, *which is a totally different thing*. The seriousness of this point of view will be evident to any one who ponders the following explanation given on this scheme. With reference to James—who is described as the “fleshly James”—it is stated that “when he makes his decision, saying, ‘Wherefore I decide’, he does not consult Peter or the rest of the apostles”. The reader will probably realize at once the inaccuracy of this view, for in Acts xv. 22 we read: “It pleased *the apostles and elders, with the whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company.” If this interpretation were true what could we make of the express statement: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost”?

Continuing our quotation, we read:

“It is to be noted that this epistle claims that this ‘burden’ was placed upon the nations because ‘it seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us’. It would have been more honourable for this flesh-controlled council to assume responsibility upon the Holy Spirit Whom they wholly ignored.”

How many other false views of the Acts have been linked up with so-called “apostolic mistakes”. Some, with wrong ideas as to the constitution of the Church, teach that the apostles made a mistake in Acts i. 6. Others find apostolic mistakes in other passages. And here, in Acts xv., not only are the apostles and elders found guilty, but Barnabas and Paul, Silas and Judas, men who were “prophets” and had hazarded their lives for the Lord, are all accused of moral cowardice and spiritual dishonesty. If these decrees were “fleshly” and not of God, how is it that we read in Acts xvi. 5: “And so were the churches established in the faith and increased in number daily?”

We have purposely refrained from naming the literature concerned, but those who have any knowledge of it will understand. We cannot help feeling saddened at such reading, but we remember that prayer is what is called for, and not censure.

Let us now come to the positive study of the Word. Before we can hope to understand the details of such a passage we must have a view of the whole, and we therefore give the structure as the next step in our exposition.

A reference to Volume XXVII, page 149 will show that the section before us is Acts xv. 1-35. At verse 36, Paul proposes to re-visit every city where he had preached, and the section relating to his “second missionary journey” begins. We have, therefore, a well-marked boundary at verse 35.

Upon examination we find that the passage falls into three pairs of corresponding sections as follows:

Acts xv. 1-35.

- A | 1, 2. Antioch. The Question. Paul. Barnabas. Men of Judæa.
- B | 3-5. Phenice, Samaria, Jerusalem. The Pharisees' demand.
- C | 6-12. Apostles and Elders. Peter. Why put a yoke?
- C | 13-21. Men and Brethren. James. Trouble not the Gentiles.
- B | 22-29. Antioch, Syria, Cilicia. No such commandment.
- A | 30-35. Antioch. The Answer. Paul. Barnabas. Judas and Silas.

The complete analysis of this passage would occupy considerably more than a full page of this magazine, and we shall therefore only give the above skeleton outline, and then fill in each section as it comes before us. Those who are keen students of the Word will be more than compensated for their pains, if they will take the trouble to reproduce the structure as a whole after the details have been set out.

The first member of the structure, in this epoch-making fight of faith, is comprised in the first two verses:

“And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts xv. 1, 2).

- A | 1, 2. Antioch. The Question. Paul, Barnabas, and the men of Judæa.
 - a | Certain men come down from Jerusalem.
 - b | Their teaching.
 - b | The dissension.
 - a | Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem.

The glorious doctrine of justification by faith apart from legal works of any kind, had been the central feature of Paul's gospel on this wonderful journey through the cities of Galatia.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are JUSTIFIED from all things, from which ye could not be justified by *the law of Moses*” (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

After such a gospel had been preached it was obviously nothing less than diametric opposition for anyone to say: “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” On such an issue compromise was utterly impossible, for essentials were at stake. When it was a matter of conscience with regard to the keeping of certain days, or of eating certain meats, Paul was most willing to meet the troubled believer more than half-way, but to suggest that the glorious doctrine of justification by faith should be dethroned from its place, and replaced by a legal ceremonial, was a call to arms that no follower of the Lord could fail to answer without shame.

“*Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them.*”—Apart from the Acts, *stasis*, “dissension” occurs only in the Gospels and in the Epistle to the

Hebrews. In the Gospels the three references relate to Barnabas, and are translated “insurrection” and “sedition”, the word in each case being associated with “murder” (Mark xv. 7; Luke xiii. 19, 25). In Heb. ix. 8, the same word is translated “standing” in the passage: “While as the first tabernacle was yet standing.” It is obvious, of course, that this passage has nothing to do with sedition or insurrection, but it is useful in drawing attention to the basic meaning of the word. *Stasis* is derived from the verb *istemi*, “to stand”. The underlying idea is that of “making a stand”, but like most things human, the word deteriorated and came to mean in most cases “uproar” (Acts xix. 40), “dissension” (Acts xxiii. 7, 10), or “sedition” (Acts xxiv. 5). We can verily believe that the Apostle would most gladly have “lived peaceably with all men” (Rom. xii. 18), but the sacred cause of truth outweighed all personal considerations, and the apostle of grace and peace earned for his faithfulness the unenviable titles:

“A pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts xxiv. 5).

The “dissension” at Antioch was two-fold. On the part of the apostles, it arose out of their stand for the truth of the gospel, while on the part of their opponents, it was due to their subversive views in connection with the law.

The word “disputation”—*suzetesis* derived from *zeteo*, to seek—is also of mixed meaning. While every “Berean” must necessarily be a “seeker” after truth, and must certainly “question” any proposition put before him, the tendency of human nature is to abuse this attitude, and the general use of the word is in an evil sense in the Epistles. In I Timothy we read of “interminable genealogies which minister questions” (I Tim. i. 4); and of the ignorant pride that “dotes about questions” (I Tim. vi. 4). In II Timothy we read of “foolish and unlearned questions” that gender strife (II Tim. ii. 23). The Apostle could write out of a full experience when he warned Timothy of the evil tendency of these things.

To return once more to the main narrative of our passage—it soon became evident that if the questions under discussion were ever to be settled, something more authoritative must be introduced. The Apostle Paul needed no rule from Jerusalem for himself, but the Judaisers in the Church rejected his authority, and suggested that the matter should be taken to Jerusalem, thinking probably that the case would go in their favour, especially as James was known to have very strict views with regard to the law.

“They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts xv. 2).

When we compare the record of Acts xv. with Paul’s own testimony in Gal. ii. we get the same facts presented from two different angles. Luke merely says that “certain other of them” accompanied Paul and Barnabas, but Paul tells us specifically that they were accompanied by Titus, an uncircumcised Greek believer. Luke says: “They determined that Paul and Barnabas should go up”, while Paul writes: “I went up by revelation.” There is, of course, no discrepancy here. A rather similar case occurs in Acts ix. 30 and xxii. 17, 18. In the earlier passage we read:

“Which when the brethren knew (i.e. that the Grecians went about to slay him) they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.”

If we wonder how it was that such an ardent spirit should so tamely submit, in the face of danger, to being hurried off from the scene of witness, we find a complete answer in the later passage (Acts xxii. 17, 18), together with the setting aside of Paul’s objections by the Lord Himself (verses 9-21).

The apostle’s going up to Jerusalem was of great importance, for it was there that two great battles were fought and won—first, with the Judaisers, who would nullify the cross of Christ by their insistence upon circumcision and the Law of Moses as essential to salvation; and then with that unbending spirit which confuses essentials and non-essentials. The Apostle who fought to the last against the imposition of the law *as a means of salvation*, was at the same time most willing that the susceptibilities of a weaker conscience should be respected. In this he probably disappointed the most headstrong among his followers—and, as the extracts quoted earlier in this article show, these two quite different points of view are still apt to be confused to-day.

Our next article takes us to the Council itself. Meanwhile, a reading of Gal. ii. and I Cor. viii. would be an excellent preparation of heart and mind for the next stage of our study in connection with the suggestions put forward by James (Acts xv. 13-21).

#27. The twofold Decision (xv. 3-21). pp. 117 - 122

We do not propose to deal in this series with the interval between the decision to go up to Jerusalem and the arrival there, except in so far as to supply the details of the structure that lack of space prevented us from giving previously.

- B | xv. 3-5. Phenice, Samaria, Jerusalem. The Pharisees’ demand.
 “It was needful to circumcise them and command them to keep the law.”
- c | They passed through Phenice and Samaria.
- d | Declaring conversion of Gentiles.
- e | The brethren.
- c | They came to Jerusalem.
- d | Declared all God had done.
- e | The Pharisees.

Whether the deputation was met by certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, who said “It was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses”, or whether verse 5 means that the apostles repeated the demand that had been made by these men from Judæa, is a little uncertain. The A.V. indicates the uncertainty

in the margin, but it is not a matter of any vital importance. The point is that the demand emanated from these men and it was the settlement of this question that was uppermost.

The Structure (*see above*, page 81) emphasizes two speakers: Peter, who, to the chagrin of the sect of the Pharisees, will have no compromise over the matter of circumcision and law-keeping in relation to salvation; and James, who first whole-heartedly endorses and confirms this attitude, and then introduces the *entirely new* question conciliating the susceptibilities of the Jewish believer. Two questions, therefore, are before us, and “right division” is as necessary here as in the vaster issues of dispensational truth.

C | xv. 6-12. Apostles and Elders. PETER.
“Why put a yoke upon the neck of disciples?”
f | Apostles and Elders consider the matter.
g | Much disputing.
h | Peter rose up.
i | Gentiles by my mouth should hear gospel.
j | Among us.
k | God knoweth.
l | Them and us.
m | PUT NO DIFFERENCE.
f | All multitude kept silence.
g | Give audience.
h | Barnabas and Saul.
i | Gentiles. Miracles wrought.
j | Among them.

There is no suggestion in verse 7 that the assembly at Jerusalem was dominated by either Peter or James, for there is “much disputing” before Peter stands up to speak. It should be noted that when Peter refers to Pentecost he speaks of “us” and “them”, the latter referring, not to some hypothetical Gentiles on the day of Pentecost, but to the first Gentiles to be addressed by Peter as recorded in Acts x. It is true that Paul may have preached to Gentiles before Peter went to Cornelius, but even so, this would not invalidate Peter’s words, for he says explicitly “God made choice among us”.

The incident recorded in Acts x. has already been considered in these pages, and Peter’s summary needs no exposition. He stresses the following points:

- (1) God knows *the heart*, the inference being that the Pharisees were more concerned with *externals*.
- (2) God gave *the holy spirit* to those believing Gentiles, and it is therefore impossible to teach that such cannot be saved *except they be circumcised*.
- (3) God put no difference between *us* and *them*. How can we dare to question God?
- (4) God purified their hearts *by faith*. What place in salvation, therefore, can *rites* and *ceremonies* have?
- (5) These legal obligations had been a yoke too heavy for *Israel*. Was it wise, then, to put the same yoke upon the *Gentiles*?
- (6) “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

Peter's argument was unanswerable. The law as a means of salvation was obsolete. The Jews themselves, who had the law by nature, were saved by grace, through faith. The emphasis on there being "no difference"—the central feature of the structure—must have rejoiced the heart of the Apostle of the Gentiles (see Rom. iii. 22; x. 12).

This noble testimony to salvation by grace coming from the leading Apostle of the Circumcision, silenced the disputants and prepared an audience for Barnabas and Paul. It should be noticed that the order in naming these apostles changes in the narrative. While they are at Antioch it is "Paul and Barnabas", but when they arrive at Jerusalem, the order is reversed. This reversed order is maintained in the actual letter drafted by the Council, but it should be noted that where Luke is recording the facts himself, he reverts to the old order (Acts xv. 22). It seems clear that Barnabas spoke first.

"Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts xv. 12).

The obvious parallel between the miracles and experiences of Peter and of Paul would not fail to make an impression. For example:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| PETER. | (1) The healing of the lame man (Acts iii., iv.). |
| | (2) The conflict with the sorcerer, Simon (Acts viii. 9-24). |
| PAUL. | (1) The healing of the lame man (Acts xiv.). |
| | (2) The conflict with the sorcerer, Bar-Jesus (Acts xiii.). |

To the Jew, confirmation by miracle would be a stronger argument than almost anything else, and it would seem, judging from the interval of silence that followed "After they had held their peace" (Acts xv. 13), that the multitude as a whole were convinced.

From Gal. ii. we gather that the Apostle, knowing only too well how easily a multitude can be swayed, and knowing that there were false brethren secretly at work, communicated the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles privately to them that were of reputation. Peter, James and John, therefore, were convinced that Paul's apostleship and gospel were of the Lord, and took their stand for the truth at the public gathering.

We must now pass on to the testimony of James, and before examining his words in detail, we give the structure of the passage.

- C | xv. 13-21. Men and Brethren. James. Trouble not the Gentiles.
 - "My sentence is that we trouble not the Gentiles."
 - f | James me.
 - g | Gentiles visited.
 - h1 | The agreement of prophecy.
 - h1 | The knowledge of the Lord.
 - f | James my.
 - g | Gentiles turn to God.
 - h2 | Write that they abstain.
 - h2 | Moses is preached.

James takes up the claim made by Peter—calling him by his Hebrew name Simon—and, directing his argument to those who revered the Old Testament writings, draws attention to a passage from one of the prophets:

“As it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth these things which were known from the age” (Acts xv. 15-18).

It should be noted that James does not say “This fulfils what is written by the prophet”; he simply says “To this agree the words of the prophets”. The word translated “agree” is *sumphoneo*, which gives us the word “symphony”, and as a noun is translated “music” in Luke xv. 25.

We could therefore interpret James’ meaning as follows:

“The inclusion of the Gentile upon the same terms as the Jew is in harmony with such a passage as Amos ix. 11, 12 (which in the Septuagint Version reads as above) and it is therefore clear that the spirit in which Peter enjoins us to act now, is that in which the Lord has revealed He will act in the future. He has known these things, which He has commenced to do, since the age, and to object, or to impose restrictions, is but to tempt God as our fathers did in the wilderness, with dreadful consequences, as we all know.”

The fact that James could give such hearty support to the position taken by Paul and subsequently by Peter, was a shattering blow to the Judaizing party in the Jerusalem Church. A little man might have been content with this victory and have ignored the susceptibilities of the Jewish believers. Not so, however, the apostle James. He realizes the feelings of shock and abhorrence which would almost inevitably result from the Jewish Christians coming into contact with the revolting customs of the Gentiles, and he therefore gives a double sentence:

- (1) With regard to the immediate question, as to whether believing Gentiles must submit to circumcision and the law of Moses, before they can be sure of salvation, my answer is “No”. “My sentence is, that we *trouble not* them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.”

In the body of the letter sent to the Gentiles it is categorically stated that such teaching was a “subverting of souls” and that no such commandment had been given by the leaders at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 24).

- (2) My sentence is not, however, harsh or mechanical. I am by nature and upbringing a Jew, and I know the horror that seizes the mind at the bare possibility of contact with those who have partaken of meat offered to idols, or with those who have not been particular about the question of blood. While we yield no ground with regard to justification by faith, we must not forget that we are called upon to walk in love, to remember the weaker brethren, and to be willing to yield our rights if need be. My sentence, therefore, is that we write to the Gentiles that believe “that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts xv. 20).

Three of these items we can readily understand as being offensive to a Jewish believer, though inoffensive to a Gentile. One, however, is a grossly immoral act and cannot be classed as in the same category. The reason for its inclusion here is not that James meant for a moment to suggest that sexual immorality was a matter of indifference, but rather that, knowing how the Gentile throughout his unregenerate days looked upon this sin as of no consequence, James realized that he was likely, even after conversion, to offend by taking too lenient a view. This is brought out most vividly in I Corinthians, an epistle that deals with the application of the decrees sent from Jerusalem, and which we must examine before this study is complete.

James follows his counsel of abstinence by a reference to Moses:

“For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day” (Acts xv. 21).

His meaning appears to be that there was no need to fear that, by reducing the appeal to only four points, the scruples of the more rigid Jewish believer would be invaded. Moses was preached every Sabbath day in the synagogue, and the synagogue was the nursery of the Church. If we will but put ourselves in the position of the early Church we shall see the wisdom of this decision. The coming into the synagogue of men whose practices filled the body of the people with horror, would be a serious hindrance to the advance of the gospel. It might even mean the destroying, for the sake of “meat”, of one for whom Christ died. We shall see presently that Paul’s spiritual application of the decrees of Jerusalem went much further than James’ four items. He would not eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that would cause his brother to stumble.

Such, then, was the two-fold decision of the Church at Jerusalem, a decision which, taking the state of affairs at that time into account, must commend itself to all who have any sympathy with the teaching of the apostle Paul. Such a state of affairs was not ideal, and could not last. It was, as the decrees put it, a question of imposing “no greater burden than these necessary things”—much in the same way as the Apostle Paul in I Cor. vii. enjoined abstinence “because of the present distress” (I Cor. vii. 26).

We must leave the consideration of the letter and of Paul’s application of its principle for the next article. Meanwhile let us learn from Acts xv. to be as inflexible as a rock where vital truth is at stake, but as yielding as grace will permit, where it is a question of our “rights” and the consciences of others.

**#28. The Decrees and Paul's Interpretation of their spirit
(xv. 22-35).
pp. 155 - 159**

The assembled church, together with the apostles and elders, agree with one accord to the appeals of Peter and James, and their decision is recorded in a letter sent by the hands of Barnabas, Paul, Silas and Judas. This letter is of intense interest, not only on account of its teaching, but also because it is the earliest church letter in existence. Let us take it out of its setting for the moment and look at it as a letter, complete in itself.

“The apostles, and the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, Greeting.

Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same things by mouth.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

Such is the letter itself. Its inter-relation with the context is best seen by expanding the structure of this section as follows:

Acts xv. 22-29.

- B* | xv. 22-29. Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.
 - “We gave no such commandment.”
 - n1 | IT SEEMED GOOD.
 - o1 | To apostles, elders and whole church.
 - p1 | Send chosen men.
 - q1 | Chief men among the brethren.
 - r1 | Greeting. No such commandment.
 - n2 | IT SEEMED GOOD.
 - o2 | Assembled with one accord.
 - p2 | Send chosen men.
 - q2 | Men who hazarded their lives.
 - r2 | Tell you the same things.
 - n3 | IT SEEMED GOOD.
 - o3 | To the Holy Spirit and to us.
 - p3 | Lay no other burden.
 - q3 | That ye abstain.
 - r3 | Fare ye well.

Three times the words “It seemed good” occur. First, “it seemed good to the apostles and elders, and the whole church”. Secondly, “it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord”. And thirdly, “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us”. To break this threefold cord, the whole church, with the apostles and elders, together with Barnabas and Paul, and Silas and Judas, as well as the Holy Spirit Himself, would have to be regarded as in the wrong. Any system of interpretation necessitating such an assumption is self-condemned.

It is certainly true that Peter acted hypocritically at Antioch, and was publicly rebuked for it by Paul (*see* Gal. ii.), but we are definitely told in this case that Peter was to be “blamed”, and it is in no way to be compared with the solemn agreement manifested in Acts xv.

We now turn to Paul’s application of these decrees, as we find it in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. In chapter v.-vii. the Apostle reproves the church with regard to fornication, while in chapters viii. and x. he deals with the question of meats offered to idols. It will obviously be profitable to consider the Apostle’s own interpretation of the Jerusalem ordinances as revealed in these chapters.

It appears that the Corinthian conception of morality allowed a man to “have his father’s wife”, and not only so, but the offence was made a matter of boasting. The Apostle had already written to this church, commanding them not to company with men guilty of such offences, but they had misunderstood him. He takes the opportunity now of correcting the misunderstanding by saying in effect:

“If I had meant that you were not to company with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: you would need to go out of the world. What I enjoin has reference to a *brother* who practices any of these things—with such an one no not to eat; but I have no idea of attempting to judge the world or of setting up a code of morals for the ungodly” (I Cor. v. 9-12).

He clinches his exhortation by showing that the sin of immorality is a sin against man’s own body, and that that body, if redeemed, should be regarded as a temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. vi. 13-20).

In I Cor. vii. the Apostle deals with the question of marriage, and explains that “for the present necessity” it would be as well for all to remain unmarried. But these statements were not to be taken as commandments for all time, nor even for all believers at that time. It was a counsel of abstinence, because the Lord’s coming and the dreadful prelude of the Day of the Lord were still before the Church. With the passing of Israel a change came, and the Apostle later encouraged marriage, as we find in his prison epistles. The fact that Eph. v. sets aside I Cor. vii. does not make I Cor. vii. untrue for the time in which was written—any more than the setting aside of the decrees of Acts xv. makes Acts xv. a compromise or a mistake. Each must be judged according to the dispensation that obtained at the time. The dispensation of the Mystery had not yet dawned either in Acts xv. or I Cor. vii.

With regard, to the pollution of meat offered to idols, the Apostle agrees that, strictly speaking, “an idol is nothing in the world” (I Cor. viii. 4)—and therefore one might say, Why should I refuse good food, simply because someone who is ignorant and superstitious thinks that its having been offered to a block of wood or stone has polluted it? This is true, rejoins the Apostle in effect, but “take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak”. The thing that must be uppermost in the mind, is not the safeguarding of the weaker brother for whom Christ died. To achieve this, the Apostle is willing to go much further than “the four necessary things” of the Jerusalem decrees. In I Cor. vii. 13 he writes:

“If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh (even though it satisfy the most scrupulous Jew) while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

A further interpretation of the spirit of the decrees is found in chapter x.:

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake but if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice to idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake conscience, I say, *not thine own*” (I Cor. x. 23-29).

If we can but keep in mind those words, “Not thine own”, we shall have no difficulty in understanding the principles involved in the decrees of Acts xv.

If man has failed under the law of Sinai, it is not surprising to find that he fails many times under grace. The moderate request that the Gentiles should abstain from the “four necessary things”, while the Jewish believers had “Moses preached in the synagogue every Sabbath day” would lead, in time, wherever the flesh became prominent, to a line of demarcation between the churches of Judæa and those of the Gentiles. This gradually grew to become “a middle wall of partition”, a division that could not be permitted in the Church of the One Body. The One Body was not, however, in view in Acts xv. Only those things known of the Lord “since the age”, only those things that harmonized with the O.T. prophecies were in operation in Acts xv., and nowhere throughout the Acts is there a hint that a Jew ceased from being a Jew when he became a Christian. On the contrary, he became the better Jew, for he was believing the testimony of the law and the prophets. Even justification by faith, as preached by Paul, was to be found in the law and the prophets and was, therefore, not part of a mystery or secret purpose.

We have, therefore, in Acts xv. two vastly different themes. One is *eternally* true, and independent of dispensational changes. The other is *relatively* true, but to be set aside when that which is perfect has come. The former is doctrinal truth, the latter the practical manifestation of graciousness and love.

Returning to Acts xv., we come to the conclusion of the matter.

Acts xv. 30-35.

- A | xv. 30-35. ANTIOCH. *The Answer.*
 - Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas.
- a | *Apoluo.* Dismissed.
- b | The epistle delivered.
- c | *Paraklesis.* Consolation.
- c | *Parakaleo.* Exhorted.
- a | *Apoluo.* Dismissed.
- b | Teaching and preaching.

We learn from these verses that, upon reading the letter from Jerusalem, the Gentiles “rejoiced for the consolation”. The word here not only means “consolation” but also “exhortation”, as can be seen in the next verse. We read further that Judas and Silas, “being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren and confirmed them”; and their work now being done, they return to Jerusalem. Verse 34 is an interpolation (*see Revised Text*), being evidently added by some scribe because of the presence of Silas at Antioch in verse 40.

There now remain two short passages to conclude our study of the large section that we have had before us (Acts xii. 24 - xvi. 5) of which the structure is given in outline in Volume XXVII, page 149. These further passages contain one or two features that are far-reaching, both in their effects, and in the way they manifest the superintending hand of God, Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will, and these we must consider in our next article.

#29. Preparation for a wider sphere of ministry (xv. 36 - xvi. 5). pp. 185 - 188

We come now to Paul’s second missionary journey. Although most of the ground that was covered by Barnabas and Paul as recorded in chapters xiii. and xiv. is traversed again here, the two apostles no longer share the joys and sufferings of mutual service for, alas, as they had themselves declared at Lystra, they were men of like passions with ourselves. We are sure that the removal of Barnabas and the substitution of Silas were of God, but it is equally true that the Lord does not need the failure of man to accomplish His purposes.

Paul early exhibited that lovable trait that shines out so brightly in his epistles—an extreme solicitude for the spiritual well-being of his young converts. The untranslated *de* in verse 36 indicates an element of urgency, and some think that its presence implies that Paul had raised the question of revisiting the churches of Galatia earlier to Barnabas. However this may be, we find that although Barnabas is named first in the separation to the work in Acts xiii., it is Paul and not Barnabas who expresses the desire to revisit the scenes of his sufferings and of the triumphs of the Lord’s grace.

In verse 37, we read that Barnabas wished to take with them his nephew “John, the one called Mark”. There may have been a variety of motives for this. Barnabas was a near kinsman of John Mark. No doubt he had felt grieved to think that his nephew had turned back at the first, and rejoiced now to know that he had returned and was willing to serve. We cannot say that Barnabas was entirely free from personal motives; his intentions, like those of most of us, were probably mixed. Neither is there any reason to regard Paul’s attitude as faultless. We know that Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips, and Asaph rebuked himself saying, “This is my infirmities”. David, also, said “in his haste” that all men were liars. Paul himself, when he stood before the High Priest, had to confess that he had spoken words not seemly to be uttered to one in such an office. We do not attempt, therefore, to apportion the blame.

The word used to indicate Paul’s decision is *axioo*—“Paul *thought* not good” (Acts xv. 38). This is the word that gives us “worthy” in Eph. iv. 1, and suggests a process of weighing, to ascertain the “worth”. The word occurs again in Acts xxviii. 22, where it is translated “desire”. In this passage the rulers of the Jews say in effect, We know that this sect is everywhere spoken against, but we feel the time has come for some sort of investigation to be made, and having weighed the matter over, we should like to know what you think.

Throughout the N.T. record, whether in the Acts or in the epistles, we find that Paul is kind and courteous, although he can be moved to burning point where the truth is at stake. He weighs the matter over here, and decides that the claims of the gospel and the success of these early ventures of faith must not be imperiled by allowing half-hearted service to be condoned, or by allowing the slightest intrusion of favouritism in the choice of witnesses. And so: “Paul did not deem it fitting to take with them one who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not to the work” (Acts xv. 38). So ended the fellowship that saw the planting of the gospel of the grace of God in Cyprus and Galatia. Paul does not re-visit Cyprus, leaving this for Barnabas and his nephew.

We now look beyond the movements of men, and see the hand of the Lord at work. Barnabas was a Levite and would therefore have considerable influence with his own people, but the Lord was about to call Paul and his associates to a wider field. Before this second missionary journey was finished, Europe was to be entered. In such a sphere a Levite would have no special influence, but a Roman citizen would be invaluable (Acts xvi. 37, 38). Possibly Silas had been present at Antioch when Peter and Barnabas had momentarily given way to the Judaisers, and being a Spirit-guided man, and a prophet, he may have foreseen what would happen. Paul would naturally feel the need for loyal companionship, and Silas seemed the heaven-sent man. The names of both Barnabas and Paul appeared in the letter sent from Jerusalem, and the absence of one of the principals might have given a handle to the enemy, but Silas was also named and his evidence would therefore be sufficient justification.

The Church seems to have endorsed Paul’s attitude for we read:

“And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches” (Acts xv. 40, 41).

These verses are the beginning of another section of the correspondence seen in the structure, and it will be useful to have the whole passage before us, shorn of detail, as we draw to its conclusion.

- A | xii. 24. The Word of God grew and multiplied.
- B | xii. 25. Barnabas and Saul. John Mark taken.
- C | xiii. 1-3. Barnabas and Saul. Separated.
- D | xiii. 4 - xiv. 28. The mission in Galatia.
- D | xv. 1-35. The conference in Jerusalem.
- B | xv. 36-39. Barnabas and Saul. John Mark to Cyprus.
- C | xv. 40 - xvi. 4. Saul and Timothy approved.
- A | xvi. 5. The churches established and increased.

The choice of Silas and Timothy is seen to be in correspondence with the separation of Barnabas and Saul by the Holy Spirit in Acts xiii. 1-3. The choice of Silas was important, but the choice of the next servant of the Lord was critical. Returning to Derbe and Lystra, the Apostle finds a certain disciple there named Timothy—his father a Greek and his mother a Jewess who believed. From what we can gather from the Scriptures, Timothy was a young man, and of a retiring disposition, one who needed to be reminded in a letter that the Lord had not given a spirit of cowardice, and to be told to be “no longer a water-drinker”. This young man had, from his infancy, been taught that Holy Scriptures, and was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. It will be remembered that Luke simply tells us that the church at Antioch decided to send Paul and Barnabas up to Jerusalem, and we only learn from Paul himself that he went up by revelation. So here, Timothy’s fitness for the work is set forth in everyday language. We learn, first, that he was “a disciple”; secondly, that his mother was a “Jewess who believed, but his father was a Greek”; and thirdly, that he was “well reported of”, not only in his own home town of Lystra, but also in the adjacent city of Iconium. He was, therefore, likely material.

Timothy’s more particularly spiritual qualifications we learn from Paul himself. In his first letter to Timothy, giving him his “charge”, the Apostle writes: “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee.”

We know that Silas was a prophet (Acts xv. 32), and it may be that he was inspired to indicate the Lord’s will with regard to Timothy. Something of this sort would have been necessary in view of the defection of John Mark, and Timothy’s youthful and timid nature. At some time also—and probably at the time of his call—Timothy received a spiritual gift, for we read:

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (I Tim. iv. 14).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (II Tim. i. 6).

Such gifts as these, together with “prophecy” and the “laying on of hands” do not properly belong to the Church of the Mystery. They are referred to in the Apostle’s prison ministry as something carried over from a previous dispensation and belonging to a special order of men who had pioneer work to do. They are not repeated, neither is there any reference to this supernatural endowment found in the epistles of the present calling. Perhaps Luke was constrained to omit the prophecies and the laying on of hands, and to concentrate attention upon discipleship, Bible training, and good report, so that we might remember that the teacher should be “apt to teach” as well as “marked out by prophecy”.

The fact that Timothy was a child of mixed parentage, was another qualification. He could sympathize with the Greek, and he could also understand the Jew. In this connection the large-mindedness of Paul again shines out. A smaller man, having won so signal a triumph regarding circumcision as Paul had done at Jerusalem, would have hesitated before circumcising Timothy. Not so the Apostle; to him circumcision and uncircumcision were nothing, the glory of God was all. If Timothy could better serve the Lord in the synagogue by being circumcised, then let the rite be performed at once. Spiritual gifts, prophecies, laying on of hands and a Jewish rite, all combine to fit this young servant for his high office.

And so these three set out on their journey, “delivering the decrees for to keep”. As a result, we read firstly that the “churches were established in the faith”—for the decrees made the imposition of circumcision upon the Gentile null and void; and secondly, that they “increased in number daily”—for the susceptibilities of the Jewish believers were now recognized and the causes of stumbling removed by the voluntary abstinence on the part of the Gentile believers from those things that caused offence. We are now on the verge of the next great movement in the Acts, and to this we must address ourselves in the next article.

**#30. The Second Missionary Journey (xvi. 6 - xix. 20).
pp. 228 - 232**

We now approach another section of the Acts, and a wider circle of witness. In the nineteenth chapter we have the separation of the Church from the Synagogue, and in the sixteenth chapter the call of the man of Macedonia. In response to this call the Gospel enters Europe. Such a chapter as this ranks in importance with Acts ii., xiii. and xxviii.

We have given in the Appendix to "*The Apostle of the Reconciliation*" an adjustment of the Structure of the Acts, so that this vision may at least be noted, but at best the outline suggested was a reconstruction of the work of others and cannot be allowed to take its place in this series. We therefore turn to the pages of the Acts afresh, examining each step as we go. The result of this investigation is that the outline on page 247 of "*The Apostle of the Reconciliation*" is found to be insufficient. It is true that the geographical terms are there, and in the order shown, but there is little value in a mere list of names—except of course, that they show the footsteps of the apostles and the opening up of the Roman world to the Gospel. Let the reader and the writer share together, as far as possible, the thrill of first discovery and see the light dawn as patience, persistence and prayer overcome obstacles. The obstacles are many and various. Chief among them is the wealth of detail and the amount of material. Look for instance at the places mentioned: Galatia, Phrygia, Asia, Mysia, Bythinia, Troas, Macedonia, Samothracia, Neapolis, Philippi, Thyatira, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Mars' Hill, Corinth, Syria, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Cæsarea, Antioch, Alexandria. To turn these geographical names into centres of real interest would demand a volume. And if we add to these the different peoples that cross and re-cross the path, and the varied experiences of the Apostle, from the prison at Philippi to the Acropolis at Athens, the difficulty grows.

To return to our quest, here then are the chapters awaiting us, and we are convinced that they are stamped with the hallmark of inspiration, that we have found throughout the Scriptures. We begin with the conviction that the vision at Macedonia is a feature of importance, and we therefore make a note of it. We write "*Macedonia: Vision*". As we do so, there comes to mind another vision, recorded in chapter xviii., and as this is a likely parallel, we make a note of that too. "*Corinth: Vision*". Philippi, which follows the Macedonian vision, occupies a large space, and we provisionally set aside the rest of chapter xvi. under the heading "*Philippi*". As we do so, however, we observe that there is recorded here the strange occurrence of the damsel possess with a spirit of divination, and that the spirit, instead of opposing the Apostle, apparently endorses his message, saying: "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." This is evidently an indication that the old enemy is adopting new tactics, and this item is therefore important. So we note, "*Spirit of Python: Way of Salvation*." As we do so, we recall that there is an incident parallel to this further on in the Acts, and to our delight we find waiting for us the record of the Jewish exorcists, who used the name of "Jesus, Whom Paul preacheth". This is so obviously a corresponding member

that we set it down in its place—“*Evil Spirit: Jesus, Whom Paul preacheth*”. We are now well started, and soon the hospitality of Lydia and of Aquila and Priscilla are noted, and at the last minute we find that minute perfectness necessary to confirm the whole scheme—the two references to Phrygia and the region or country of Galatia. We now have the main outline of the new section before us, and soon we have the joy of seeing it grow in beauty before our eyes. And not only so, but we have also exchanged a barren list of geographical terms for the living issues of apostolic witness and conflict.

What has taken a few minutes to recount here represents, of course, in practice as many hours of search and frustration. The pleasure which the reader has shared with us in the recounting cannot, therefore, be anything like as keen as the joy that comes from the initial discovery. Truly the searching of the Scripture brings its own reward, and it is not without reason that the central member stresses the “nobility” of the *Bereans*, who searched to see whether these things were so. We have deliberately taken up a certain amount of space in introducing this structure, as so many readers ask us “how it is done”. There is no royal road to success, and it is most important that there should be no invention. There are usually one or two obvious indications placed by the Lord on the surface, ready to give the lead to any who will follow. The structure of the passage is as follows:

**The Second Missionary Journey.
Acts xvi. 6 - xix. 20.**

- A | xvi. 6-11. |
 - a | 6. PHRYGIA, a country of GALATIA.
 - b | 6-11. THE VISION. MACEDONIA.
- B | xvi. 12-40. |
 - c | 12-15. PHILIPPI. Lydia.
Come into my house.
 - d | 16-18. PHILIPPI. Spirit of Python.
The way of Salvation.
 - e | 19-40. PHILIPPI. Result: Prison and salvation.
- C | xvii. 1-14. THESSALONICA and BEREIA. “More noble.”
- A | xvii. 15 - xviii. 23. |
 - b | xvii. 15 - xviii. 17. THE VISION. ATHENS and CORINTH.
 - a | xviii. 18-23. The country of GALATIA and PHRYGIA.
- B | xviii. 24 - xix. 20. |
 - c | xviii. 24-28. EPHESUS. Aquila and Priscilla.
They took him unto them.
 - d | xix. 1-16. EPHESUS. Evil spirits.
Jesus Whom Paul preacheth.
 - e | xix. 17-20. EPHESUS. Result: Name of Lord magnified.

We cannot deal with the vision of the man of Macedonia without going on to speak of the witness at Philippi. This, however, demands a complete article, and we will therefore content ourselves here with presenting the structure of this new section, and adding a few words with regard to Phrygia and the country of Galatia (xvi. 6, and xviii. 18-23).

“Now when they had gone throughout the country which is Phrygian and Galatic”
(Acts xvi. 6).

This is Sir William Ramsay’s rendering, to which he adds the note “A single district to which both adjectives apply”—“the country which, according to one way of speaking, is Phrygian, but which is also called Galatic.” If we turn back to Acts xiv. we find that the Apostles fled from Iconium to Lystra and Derbe, and so apparently crossed a boundary. In Acts xviii. 23 we find the order of the names is reversed, and we now read:

“ ‘He went over all the country which is Galatic and Phrygia’. The country denoted by the phrase in xvi. 6 is that which was traversed by Paul after leaving Lystra: it is therefore the territory about Iconium and Antioch, and is rightly called Phrygo-Galatic, ‘the part of Phrygia that was attached to Galatia’. But the country which is meant in xviii. 23 includes Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, and could not rightly be called ‘Phrygo-Galatic’.”

A glance at a map showing the political divisions of Asia Minor between the years A.D.40 and 63, explains the ground of Sir William Ramsay’s objection quoted above. The Galatian province had taken within its borders a part of Phrygia on the west, and as Derbe, Lystra and Iconium had originally belonged to Lycaonia, which had been absorbed on the east, the exactness of Luke’s description “All the country which is Galatic and Phrygian” is striking. No one who was acquainted with the geography of Great Britain would use the term “The London Scottish and Midland Railway”, and no one acquainted with the geography of the period covered by the Acts would expect any other description in Acts xviii. 23 than that used by Luke.

The reader may not be keenly interested in the arguments that prove that when Paul speaks of “Galatia” he means the Roman Province of that name, and not the smaller Northern Kingdom. We therefore take it as proven that Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe are the cities of Galatia wherein the churches of Galatia were formed, and to which the Apostle addressed his epistle. Should any readers wish for the complete array of facts and arguments, we must refer them to the writings of Sir William Ramsay as the matter is technical and would occupy far more space than we can spare.

Our main object in this article has been to introduce the new departure, and to set out the structure. We are now ready for the exposition of these epoch-making journeys—journeys which penetrated into Europe, and so brought the history of our own evangelizing a step nearer.

We append a rough map of this second missionary journey and hope that it will enable the reader to follow more closely the footsteps of these missionaries of grace as they break up new ground for the gospel message.

--- Illustration ---
(BE-XXVIII.232).

The Criterion of New Testament Interpretation.

“The Book of the Acts.”

pp. 41 - 44

Under the above title, the Bible Testimony, Dixonville, Pa., U.S.A., have issued a most illuminating and convincing circular, and we felt that our readers would so appreciate the evidence assembled therein that we have obtained the gracious permission of the Bible Testimony to re-print it in our pages. Readers will not only value this outline for its own sake, but also as an evidence of the interest in dispensational truth that is growing in the United States of America:

“The ministry during the period covered by the Book of the Acts is a continuation and confirmation, by the Apostles, ‘Of all that Jesus began both to do and teach’ (Acts i. 1).

Throughout the Book features that distinguish the ‘Acts Administration’ from the present ‘Body Administration’ are very distinct and outstanding.

Points in the Acts, that stand out prominently as being exclusively applicable to the presence of Israel, as a Nation, and the absence of the Church, the Body of Christ, are as follows:--

ACTS		
1:2	Confirmation of Christ’s Earth Ministry.	Heb. 2:3-4
1:2	The Twelve Apostles (Chosen ones).	Matt. 10:2-4
1:4	Jerusalem the Religious Center.	Joel 2:32
1:5	Baptism with the Holy Ghost.	I Cor. 12:13 R.V.
1:6	Looking for the Kingdom to Israel.	Luke 2:25
1:7	Times and Seasons.	I Thess. 5:1
1:8	Commissioning the Apostles.	Mark 16:14-18
1:10	Visible, Corporeal Ascension of Christ.	Luke 24:39
1:10	Appearance of Angelic Messengers.	Acts 10:30
1:16-20	Prominence of Old Testament Prophecy.	Psa. 69
1:21-22	Requirements for office of Kingdom Apostle.	Eph. 4:8-11
1:26	Giving of Lots.	Prov. 16:33
2:1	Pentecost.	Lev. 23:16
2:2-3	Supernatural Sounds and Signs.	Deut. 4:33-35
2:4	Speaking in Tongues.	I Cor. 14:22
2:5	Jews out of every nation. The term Jew is used 82 times in Acts.	
2:6-13	Proselytes and Jews of the Dispersion.	Deut. 9:7
2:16-20	Prophecy, Dreams, Signs, Visions. Pentecost was an earnest of Joel’s Prophecy.	Joel. 2:28-32; Deut. 4:33-35
2:22-36	The Davidic Covenant.	II Sam. 7:12-17
2:39	Promise to all Afar Off.	Dan. 9:7
2:42	Apostles’ Doctrine (Jesus, as the Messiah, Raised).	Acts 2:21-36
2:44-45	Common Ownership of Property.	Isa. 58:7-12
3:7	Gifts of Miraculous Healings	Isa. 35:6
3:19	Repentance (National).	Acts 17:30
3:19-20	Christ again offered as King to Nation.	Luke 23:34
3:21-22	Mosaic Covenant Preached	Deut. 18:18
3:25	Children of the Covenant (Israelites).	Gen. 12:3
3:26	Unto you (Israel) First.	Acts 13:46

4:25-27	Psalm 2:1-2 Fulfilled.	
5:1-10 5:12 5:15 5:17-18 5:19	Judgment for Sin against the Holy Ghost. Signs and Wonders by the Apostles. Healing by an Apostle's Shadow. Official Interference. Angelic Interception.	I John 5:16 Rom. 15:18-19 John 14:12
6:2-3 6:6 6:9	The Twelve Apostles in Authority. Laying on of Hands for Authority. Synagogue Worship.	Acts 15:23
7:2-53 7:2-19 7:20-46 7:47-50 7:56 7:59 7:60	Historical Summary of the Nation of Israel. Abrahamic Covenant Preached. Mosaic Covenant Referred to. Davidic Covenant Referred to. Son of Man Standing. Stephen Stoned. Prayer of Forgiveness by Stephen.	John 16:2
8:6-8 8:17 8:26 8:27-35 8:36-38 8:39	Philip performs Miracles in Name of Christ. Holy Ghost received by Laying on of Hands. Angelic Instruction to a Disciple. A National Official of Ethiopia Believes. Water Baptism Practiced. Supernatural Translation of a Disciple.	Mark 16:14-17
9:1 9:2 9:3-8 9:9 9:10 9:12 9:27 9:29 9:34 9:36-43	High Priest recognized as Ecclesiastical Authority. Synagogue subject to High Priest. Paul's Supernatural Conversion. Paul Supernaturally stricken with Blindness. Supernatural Vision given to Ananias. Supernatural Vision given to Paul. Paul personally converses with the Lord. Confirmation of Jesus' word. Health restored to the Sick. Life restored to the Dead.	Acts 9:14 Acts 9:14 I Cor. 15:8 Acts 9:17-18 Joel 2:28 Joel 2:28 John 16:2 Mark 16:18
10:1-3 10:4-8 10:9-20 10:21-48 10:28-33 10:34-48	An Angel ministers to a Gentile. A GENTILE HAS A VISION FROM GOD; Then directed to Peter, a Jewish Apostle. Peter receives a Vision from God. An Orthodox Jew preaches The Gospel to the Gentiles for the FIRST TIME. Peter Opens the Door of the Kingdom to the Gentiles. A GENTILE PENTECOST. Gentiles speak with tongues.	Acts 10:22 Acts 15:14-18 Matt. 16:19
11:1-3 11:4-17 11:16 11:19 11:27-28	Peter reproved for elevating Gentiles to Jewish Social level: "Didst eat with them." Gentiles Baptised with the Holy Ghost. CONFIRMATION OF CHRIST'S WORDS. Word preached to JEWS ONLY. The Gift of Prophecy Demonstrated.	Acts 11:3 Heb.2:3-4 I Cor. 12:29-30
12:7-11 12:20-23	Angelic interception. Peter freed by Angel. An Offensive, Arrogant ruler Visibly judged.	Dan. 4:30-37

13:3	Fasting.	
13:3	Laying on of hands in Confirmation.	
13:11	Apostles had power to strike Blind.	
13:14	SABBATH OBSERVED.	
13:16-37	Paul's preaching based upon Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic Covenants.	
13:17	Paul witnesses to Moses.	
13:33-35	Paul witnesses to Psalms.	
13:27	Paul witnesses to Prophets.	
13:24-25	Paul witnesses to John Baptist.	
13:27-29	Paul witnesses to the Ministry of Christ.	
13:30-37	Paul witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ.	
13:31	Paul witnesses to "them that heard".	Heb. 2:3-4
13:33	Paul witnesses to the fulfillment of the Promises.	
13:34	Paul witnesses to "the sure mercies of David".	
13:39	Paul contrasts between Moses and Christ.	
13:46-47	Paul witnesses to the First Commission.	
13:46	Paul preached to THE JEW FIRST.	Rom. 1:16
13:51	Ceremony of Shaking Dust from their Feet.	Matt. 10:14
14:1-18	Paul and Barnabas Preach and Perform Miracles.	
14:19-20	Paul Stoned (A Jewish form of punishment).	
14:22	The Kingdom of God entered through much tribulation.	
15:2	JERUSALEM THE SEAT OF DIVINE WORSHIP.	Joel 2:32
15:2	Authority of Apostles and Elders honored.	
15:2-30	The Jerusalem Council.	
15:23-31	GENTILES RELIEVED OF LAW OBLIGATIONS.	
TWO ORDERS OF WORSHIP PREVAILED DURING THE ACTS.		
16:3	The Jews Circumcised, and worshipped in their Synagogues.	
16:4	The Gentiles were governed by the Decrees of the Council.	Acts 15:1-32
16:9	Paul received a Vision.	
16:15	Household Baptism in Order.	Acts 16:31
16:18	Paul casts out Demon.	Mark 16:14-18
16:26	Paul and Silas freed by an Earthquake.	
17:1-7	PAUL PREACHED JESUS AS KING.	John 18:37
17:19-32	Paul witnesses against Gentile Idolatry in Athens.	
18:5	Paul testifies that Jesus is Christ (Messiah).	John 1:41
18:6	Paul witnesses to Jews first; then Gentiles.	Rom. 1:16
18:9	Paul receives a Vision from the Lord.	
18:18	Paul's head shorn "for he takes a vow".	Deut. 12:26
18:21	Feast Days Observed.	Lev. 23:1-44
19:8	Worship in Synagogues.	Psa. 74:8
19:11	Special Miracles Performed by Paul.	
19:12	Blessed Handkerchiefs.	
19:12	Blessed Aprons.	
19:12	Demons Cast Out.	
20:9-10	Paul restores the DEAD to LIFE.	
20:16	Pentecost observed at Jerusalem by Paul.	
20:27	"All the Counsel of God declared" (O.T. Revelation).	
20:28	The Church of God.	I Thess. 2:14
21:9	Daughters Prophecy.	Joel 2:28
21:20	Law Obedience, Many thousands of the Jews.	
21:21	Law Zealousy.	
21:23-28	Worship in the Temple of Jerusalem.	
21:26	Ceremonial Purification.	Acts 24:18
22:16	Washing away of Sins signified by Water Baptism.	

23:4 23:11	Temple Priesthood carried on through the Acts. Paul receives a Revelation from the Lord.	
24:2-9	Jews defend Tradition in preference to Truth.	
25:10-21	Paul appeals to Cæsar.	Acts 9:15
26:1-30 26:6-7 26:16 26:16 26:17-19 *26:22	Paul speaks before a King. Promise UNTO THE TWELVE TRIBES STILL IN VIEW. “These Things”—Things pertaining to the Nation. “THOSE THINGS”—Things revealed Later. Commission in accord with Old Testament Prophets. “Saying things Prophets and Moses did say should come.”	Acts 1:6 Eph. 3:3
27:23 27:33-44	Angelic Instruction given to Paul. Paul and Companions saved when Ship Wrecks.	
28:3-6 28:1-10 *28:20 28:23 28:25 28:26-27	Apostle Bitten by Viper: not harmed. Paul performs Miracles among Barbarous people. THE HOPE OF ISRAEL. The Source of Acts Teaching: “MOSES AND THE PROPHETS.” THEY (Chief of the Jews, [17]) WERE DISMISSED “Gk.”. JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED.	Mark 16:14-20 Matt. 13:14; John 12:39-40; Isa. 6:9-10.

* When the contents of the Acts is interpreted in the light of these two verses, the Student will see that the whole of the Acts confirms what is said in the Gospels and the Old Testament.

The Books of THE NEW TESTAMENT that were written during the Acts Period are, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I and II Thessalonians, James, I, II, III John; I and II Peter, Jude and Hebrews. The contents of these Books indicate their agreement with the subject matter of the Acts.

The Second Coming of Christ referred to in the above books has to do with Israel, and is not to be confused with His manifestation in glory (Col. 3:4).

I Thess. 4:13, through to 5:3, has reference to people under the Abrahamic Covenant, Jews and Gentiles. Sounds, Voice, Archangel, Trump of God, Times, Seasons, Day of the Lord: All belong to the time when Israel is first and the Gentiles subordinate.

Today the CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST, has no Covenant (Eph. 1:4). When the above Books were written THE CHURCH WAS A MYSTERY (Eph. 3:1-12) not yet revealed. Paul had an early and late Ministry. SEARCH.”

Fruits of Fundamental Studies.

#7. The Living God. pp. 22 - 26

Before leaving our study of God as Creator and Moral Governor of the world, we must give some consideration to the question of personality. In a previous article we quoted W. James as saying:

“In fighting against the God of the Absolutist, I am fighting *for* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

The God of Metaphysics* may be infinite and absolute, but He is not a person, and cannot be the “Living God” of revelation. An Infinite Being is unlimited, and Absolute Being is unrelated; and anything wholly unlimited and unrelated is, so far, as man is concerned, unknown and unreal. The God of the Scriptures, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is a living, loving Person.

God is limited not by limitations imposed upon Him by others, but by His own nature. Holiness, righteousness, love—these are Divine limitations everywhere recognized in the Word. God is “absolute” in the sense that He is self-sufficient, and is not “in need of anything” (Acts xvii. 25), but although He is independent in His fullness of relations with any other, His absoluteness is not such as to exclude His relationship with His creatures, nor does it prevent His self-sufficient fullness from flowing out to them. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.”

It has been objected that to describe God as a Person is to speak of God in terms of man. This, however, is not a valid objection; for this figure of Speech—known as Anthropomorphism—is precisely the language of Scripture. It is true that human persons are finite, but it does not follow that personality need be finite. God must either be personal or impersonal; there is no third possibility. Moreover, the ultimate revelation of God has been made in a Person—whose name is Emmanuel, “God with us”. This, however, is a subject that must be given due study in its own time and place. We mention it here so that its light may reflect back to the beginning, and that we may see that the Personality of God is vital to our faith.

[* - The term “Metaphysics” (*meta*, “after” and *physica* “physics”) owes its origin to a work of Aristotle’s that was placed in a collection of his manuscripts after his treatise on Physics. It has now come to mean theoretical philosophy as the ultimate science of being and knowing. Metaphysics deals with the first principles of things, including being, essence, substance, time, space, cause, etc.]

Matthew Arnold conceived of God as an impersonal “power not ourselves that makes for righteousness” but, as Fitchett points out, such a power “would be as incapable of personal relationships as, say, the Gulf Stream or Niagara. The denial of personality to God is fatal to religion. It thrusts God out of the moral realm; it makes personal relationship with Him impossible”. “A machine cannot reason, or love, or will. Who can love gravitation, or pray to electricity; or sing hymns, say, to the law of the conservation of energy?”

Philosophy has offered to us, in place of the Living God, Hegel’s “idea”, the “Blind Will” of Schopenhaur, the “Sublimated Unconscious” of Hartmann, the “Moral Order” of Fichte, and the “Eternal Not Ourselves” of Matthew Arnold. But what is an “idea” but an expression of conscious thinking personality? And what is “will” but another evidence of moral and mental personality? The personal God was really there, but the philosophers were not able to see Him.

When man examines himself, he discovers a personality: a self-conscious being, which thinks, wills, and feels. Is it possible that man is greater than his Maker? Can we believe that God has endowed the creature of His hands with a nobler nature than He Himself possesses? The Psalmist’s condemnation of heathen gods would need little revising to fit the Deity of the philosophers:

“They have mouths, but they speak not: Eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not; Noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: Feet have they, but they walk not; Neither speak they through their throat” (Psa. cxv. 5-7).

The whole creation testifies to a Personal Creator.

- (1) Nature is intelligible, else there could be no Science. This intelligibility implies intelligence.
- (2) Nature reveals a purpose. We know, without any book learning, that the direction of any force to an end or goal is the expression of will. Will is inconceivable apart from a person.
- (3) Nature is manifestly a coherent unity. Life and activity would cease unless the elements and forces of nature were correlated and held in balance. Intelligence, will and unity all demand that the Cause behind nature’s phenomena must be a Person.

Personality is essentially a trinity. We will not discuss at this juncture how far this is related to the doctrine of the Triune God, but it is clear that a person is conscious of three outgoings—he thinks, he wills, and he feels. We will not pursue this question further, at the moment. Possessing all Scripture, and rejoicing in the glorious fact that in the person of Christ God is manifested in the flesh, we defer further study in this connection, until we deal with the coming of Christ. We will not, however, leave this matter without some explicit testimony from the Word itself, and we therefore draw attention to some of the ways in which the Scriptures speak of the “living God”.

The first testimony to the fact that God is the “living God” is found in Deut. v. 26:

“Who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire?”

Looking back over the chapter with this statement before us, we shall realize, as never before perhaps, how definitely the giving of the law testified to the living God. He it was Who made a covenant with Israel (verse 2); Who talked with them face to face in the mount (verse 4); Who led them out of bondage (verses 6-11); Who instituted the Sabbath in connection with His own work of creation; and gave to Israel His holy law (verses 12-21).

The Lord proved Himself to be the “living God” when, under Joshua, He fulfilled His promise concerning the land (Josh. iii. 10). David, also, uses the title when he speaks of the blasphemy of Goliath in defying the armies of “the living God” (I Sam. xvii. 26).

O.T. consciousness of the living God seems to reach its zenith in Psalm lxxxiv.:

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Psa. lxxxiv. 2).

Passing over the many passages that use the phrase, “As the Lord liveth”, we turn now to the N.T. to see something of the weight of testimony there. As we read chapter after chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, conviction deepens until, when we reach chapter xvi., we find the echo of our own hearts in the testimony of Peter:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. xvi. 16).

When Paul spoke to the men of Lystra, who were attempting to offer sacrifice to himself and Barnabas, he said:

“We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God” (Acts xiv. 15).

This characteristic testimony of the Apostle is found again in I Thessalonians:

“How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (I Thess. i. 9).

In II Corinthians it is the “Spirit of the living God” that writes upon the heart of the believer; and the believer himself constitutes the “temple of the living God” (II Cor. iii. 3; vi. 16). In I Timothy the church is called “the church of the living God” (I Tim. iii. 15), Who is described in the next chapter as the “Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe” (I Tim. iv. 10).

There are further occurrences of the same title in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In Heb. iii. 12 unbelief is described as departure from the living God; and in ix. 14 the service of those whose consciences are purged is “unto the living God”. In x. 31, we read that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”; and in xii. 22 the goal before those who followed in the steps of Abraham and the “great cloud of witnesses” is “the city of the living God”.

It is because He is the living God, that we can speak of His attributes without loss. Justice, mercy, love, faithfulness—these attributes indicate a Person; they could not possibly be applied to a Power, or a Principle. In the O.T. the revelation of God as a Person is principally enshrined in the great name “I AM”. In the N.T. His Personality is brought nearer in the title “Father”, and is given an outline in the life and work of the Son. There can be no clearer testimony to the glorious Personality of the Creator than the final revelation we receive in the Word, the relationship of Father to Son. In these terms language is exhausted.

Let others speak in their darkness of “The Unknowable”, “The First Great Cause”, “The Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness”. For our part, let us glory in the grace that has illuminated our darkness, and revealed the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

#8. Jesus Christ is Lord. **pp. 69 - 73**

If man be left without a revelation, there is no way in which he can discover the truth about creation and the Creator, except by patiently sifting the evidence of might, wisdom, and benevolence to be found in earth, sea, and sky. This testimony must necessarily be partial, owing to the frailty of human investigation. Wild guesses may be mistaken for truths, and marvelous theories may be built upon sand. For ourselves, however, we possess in the Scriptures the written revelation of God, and, while this revelation does not attempt to answer all the questions that men of science or philosophy may put, it does speak in no uncertain language of creation and the Creator, and we must examine this testimony before we pass on to other related themes.

First of all we observe what the Scriptures say concerning the Creator Himself. God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the sea and “all that in them is”. This is the testimony of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. i. 1).

“Worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”
(Rev. xiv. 7).

God as Creator is the rightful Object of worship for the creature. When Isaiah rebukes Israel for their idolatry, and seeks to expose its utter folly, he says:

“Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth

out their host by number; He calleth them all by their names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of His understanding” (Isa. xl. 21-28).

It is this God of Creation that stands behind the covenant made with Abraham and with the Messiah.

“Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth earth, and that which cometh out of it, He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. I, the Lord, have called thee I am the Lord, that is My Name, and My glory will I not give to another” (Isa. xlii. 5-8).

Further light upon the purpose of creation, and the place of Gen. i. 2 is found in Isa. xlv. 18:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: He hath established it, He created it not in vain (*tohu* = ‘without form’, Gen. i. 2), He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord: and there is none else” (Isa. xlv. 18).

We trust that the reader will not fail to appreciate the nature of the testimony given by these inspired declarations. In Isa. xl., quoted above, we have the Divine challenge: “To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal?” The Hebrew word “to be equal” is *shavah*, and means “to be, or to be put upon a level or equality, to be made equal by comparison”. It is variously translated: for example, “counter-vail” in Esther vii. 4, where the idea of balancing “damage” is uppermost, and “to avail” in Esther v. 13, where the honours heaped upon Haman are counterbalanced by the attitude of Mordecai. It is also translated “profit” in Esther iii. 8, where the idea of “balance” is again implied.

In the second quotation given above from Isaiah, there is another challenging statement: “I am the Lord, that is My name, and My glory will I not give to another.” In the third quotation we read the equally emphatic statement: “I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

These passages are written in language that admits of no misunderstanding. If we discover in the N.T. that there is One Who claim equality with God, and to Whom the creation of all things in heaven and earth is ascribed, then we are faced with one of three possibilities:

- (1) The O.T. is to be believed, but not the N.T.
- (2) The N.T. is to be believed, but not the O.T.
- (3) Both Testaments are to be received as unequivocally true (even though some statements in each may appear contradictory) because they both refer to the same Person. There is no problem to be solved when once we perceive that the Lord Jesus Christ is “God manifest in the flesh”.

There are three passages in the N.T., each of which taken alone would be sufficient to establish this fact, and taken together their evidence is overwhelming.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John i. 1-3).

With this direct assertion should be read the words of Isa. xlv. 18: “I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominion, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. i. 16, 17).

Here not only the work of creation itself is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, but the “glory” of creation is His too: “All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things.” With this passage we may read Isaiah’s statement: “My glory will I not give to another.”

The third passage is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

“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).

Here the title given to the Son is “Lord”, the N.T. equivalent of the O.T. “Jehovah” (See, for example, Matt. iii. 3).

In connection with Heb. i. let us turn for a moment to Psa. civ.:

“Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great: Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment; Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire, Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever” (Psa. civ. 1-5).

Heb. i. and ii. were evidently written with this Psalm in mind. The words “honour and majesty” remind one of Heb. ii. 9 and II Pet. i. 17; and the reference to a garment has something in common with the folding up of a vesture, to which the passing away of creation is likened in Heb. i. Moreover, as in Heb. i., we have the angels spoken of as ministering spirits. In verse 5 we read: “Who laid the foundations of the earth” (Psa. civ. 5). If we turn the statement into a question, Heb. i. answers: “He Who in fullness of time was revealed as the Son of God.” If we ask, “Who stretched out the heavens like a curtain?” Heb. i. answers: “The heavens are the work of the hands of the Son of God.”

Job was confounded at the majesty of the Creator, when the Lord asked:

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding” (Job xxxviii. 4).

With the added revelation of the N.T., we now know that this Almighty Creator took upon Himself the nature of man and humbled to the death of the Cross. And we also know that the passage which reveals that wondrous condescension assures us that there was no “grasping” on His part to be “equal with God”, for it was His by right. What He laid aside for our sakes, however, He will take up again; and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 6-11).

We now turn back to Isa. xlv. We have already quoted verse 18, where, in connection with the great work of creation, God declares that “there is none else”. We discover further that in the new realm of salvation this is still true.

“There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isa. xlv. 21-23).

The writer of the Fourth Gospel seems to have had no difficulty in writing “The Word was with God, and the Word was God”. We must credit him with possessing at least as much alertness as ourselves, and yet he seems to see nothing incongruous in the statement and does not attempt to meet objections. Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has no difficulty over the fact that “God” should address the Son as “God” and “Lord”. Neither does the Apostle hesitate to quote Isa. xlv. 21-23 with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, even though this chapter declares: “I am God and there is none else.” To those who accept the revelation of Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ is “God manifest in the flesh” there is no problem—although there is and must be a “great mystery”. To those who deny the Deity of Christ, the statements of Isaiah and John, Hebrews and Philippians, can only be a set of contradictions that no argument can reconcile.

We advance no theories concerning the Godhead; we are content to believe what God has revealed. And as we think these things over, we begin to see more clearly that what has been revealed concerning Christ and the creation of man in the image of God, has an intimate and important bearing on His coming in the flesh and His dying for sinful man.

#9. The Unity of the Godhead.
“Elohim Let us our image” (Gen. i. 26).
pp. 138 - 142

We have so far considered some of the subjects that present themselves to the reader of Gen. i. Our studies may not have been as far-reaching as our desires, or as extensive as the magnitude of the subject would demand, but we trust they have been sufficient to point the way for any reader who should desire to explore the Scriptures further. Let us go over briefly what we have so far seen.

(1) *Creation implies a purpose.*—This theme is almost inexhaustible. The naturalist as well as the theologian can demonstrate in thousands of ways evident intention and purpose in the works of the Creator’s hands.

(2) *Creation bears evidence that “God is”.*—Man need not wait for conversion or spiritual sight to believe that most obvious fact in the universe, namely, that creation demands a Creator. This fact is so evident that even idolaters are held to be without excuse. The earnest student has here an enthralling study. The more he becomes acquainted with the world that surrounds him, and that is within him, the more he will become convinced of the impossibility of Atheism, and the awful gloom of Agnosticism.

(3) *God is the Moral Governor.*—Not only must a man believe that “God is”, but also that He rules in the sphere of moral government. “He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Moral government implies law, and law implies reward and punishment. Reward and punishment are only valid where there is moral responsibility. Wherever there is a denial of man’s moral responsibility, there also will be found a denial of the sinfulness of sin.

(4) *Is might right?*—In connection with the moral government of God, it is necessary to be very clear as to the nature of righteousness. Is it arbitrary, and by enactment? Or is it of necessity, arising out of the very nature of God Himself? Our answer to this question will influence the whole of our subsequent interpretation of the Word. We do not believe that Scripture countenances anywhere the idea that mere omnipotence justifies any course of action. Might is not necessarily right. God Himself regulates His omnipotence by His righteousness, and not His righteousness by His omnipotence.

(5) *The Self-Limitations of Omnipotence.*—This is an aspect of truth that demands care in presenting, but without it there can hardly be room for the self-sacrificing love that is so marked a character of the Almighty. Even creation itself, inasmuch as it has needs and demands constant care and upholding, is an evidence of God’s voluntary self-limitation. His tender mercies are over all His works, and if these words have a meaning, they indicate an element of responsibility on the part of the Creator. He rules the world that He made, in righteousness.

(6) *The Foreknowledge of God.*—God’s foreknowledge is differentiated from election and predestination, inasmuch as election is said to be “according” to foreknowledge, and predestination is predicated of those who were already foreknown. Foreknowledge does not mean fatalism, predestinarianism, determinism, or any of the other systems that would make heaven of brass and man morally irresponsible.

(7) *The Living God.*—God is living, loving Person, not a blind, omnipotent Force, or the Absolute of Metaphysics. No title of God, no name whereby He reveals His nature to us in the Scriptures, sounds such depths of fullness as the last of His titles, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

(8) *Jesus Christ is Lord.*—Reviewing the testimony of the Scripture to the nature of the Creator, we learn that He is without equal. He stands alone, there is none else, and His glory He will not share with another. The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as the Creator, as God, as the Lord. The moment we see in Him the God-Man all apparent contradictions vanish, and we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

These related themes must be kept in the background of our thoughts as we proceed with our study.

Let us now come to the creation of man.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Gen. i. 26).

“Let US OUR OUR.”—It is not extraordinary that Israel should have been called upon to witness, amid pagan idolatry, to the Unity of God, and yet that their very Scriptures should continually use for the great name of their God, a plural word: *Elohim*? Some impelling reason must account for this strange fact.

Some have suggested that the plural here is simply the Plural of Majesty, much of the same kind as that adopted by earthly monarchs, but this is not supported by the usage of Scripture. In Gen. iii. 22 we read:

“Behold the man is become AS ONE OF US.”

An earthly king might use a similar expression if he desired to include his *fellow-monarchs*, but Jehovah stands alone—there are no *fellow-gods*.

The use of the plural in Gen. iii. 22 confirms the R.V. translation of Gen. iii. 5: “Ye shall be as God”—not “as gods”, as in the A.V. If the plural (“gods”) is the correct rendering of Gen. iii. 5, why not read “gods” in Gen. i. 1, 2, 3, 4 and in all the twenty-seven occurrences of the plural word in Gen. i.?

A fact that cannot be set aside as unimportant is that the plural name of God is generally associated with verbs in the singular. This will be found to be the case about thirty times in Gen. i. On the other hand, it is also true that verbs, adjectives and pronouns are used in the plural in association with *Elohim*. For instance:

“Ye cannot serve Jehovah, for He is *a holy God*” (Josh. xxiv. 19).

Here the word “holy” is *qadoshim*, plural.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccles. xii. 1).

Here the word “Creator” is in the plural. So also are the words “Maker” and “Husband” in Isa. liv. 5.

To the above might be added such expressions as:

“The Lord God and HIS SPIRIT hath sent ME” (Isa. xlvi. 16).

The words here are uttered by One, Who Himself, in the former part of the verse, uses the language of Jehovah. (For a similar case see Isa. xlv. 19).

Returning to Gen. i. 26, we further observe that, while *Elohim* is plural, and the pronouns are “us” and “our”, the passage does not read: “And *they* said” but “And *He* said”, with the verb in the singular. We find the same thing in Gen. xi. 7:

“Jehovah said Let US.”

Here again the pronoun is plural but the verb singular.

The orthodox Jew at the present time rejects the idea of plurality in the Unity of the Godhead, but this has not always been the case. When Moses Maimonides wrote the thirteen articles of the Jewish faith, he gave an *absolute* sense to the oneness of the Godhead, which before had been understood as a unity. The modern Jew, in the synagogue service, rises when the “Shema” is reached, and cries: “*Shema Yisrael Adonai Elohenu Adonai echad*” (“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one”). The word *echad* here he regards as indicating an absolute, and not a compound unity. This, however, is unscriptural. The word *yacheed*, which is the true Hebrew word for absolute oneness, occurs some twelve times in Scripture, but is never once used to express the Unity of the Godhead. It is used three times in Gen. xxii. (verses 2, 12 and 16) with reference to Isaac as the “only” son, and also in Judges xi. 34 with reference to Jephthah’s daughter. In Psalm lxviii. 6 it is translated “solitary”. The word is never used, however, in connection with the Godhead. The word *echad*, which is in fact used, comes from the root *yachad*, meaning “to unite”, as for example in Psalm cxxxiii., where the Psalmist speaks of brethren dwelling together in unity. The same word (*echad*) is used in Numb. xiii. 23: “A branch with *one* cluster of grapes”; and in Judges xx. 1, where all the congregation of Israel assemble “as *one* man” (See also verses 8 and 11). These are all instances of a *compound* unity.

So, in Gen. i. 5, “the evening and the morning” are *yom echad*, “day one”. In Gen. ii. 24, the husband is to cleave unto his wife and they shall be *basar echad*, “one flesh”. And, again, in Ezekiel we read of the “two” sticks becoming “one”, *aitz echad* (Ezek. xxxvii. 16-19).

Because certain expressions in the creeds of the Church are almost unintelligible, or because some have attempted to prove the doctrine of the Trinity by triangles or by cloverleaves, this is no reason for denying or questioning the evidence of the Scriptures to the fact that the Unity of the Godhead is a compound unity (*echad*), and not an absolute unity (*yachad*). It is not our responsibility to demonstrate or to prove; it is our joy as well as our responsibility simply to believe what God has been pleased to reveal.

We must defer further comment on Gen. i. 26 for another article. This paper has served its purpose if it has established a link between the doctrine set forth in the preceding article—that the Creator is the Lord, Who in fullness of time became man—and this initial act of creating the first man in the image and likeness of his Lord.

#10. Why did God create at all. pp. 174 - 177

Before developing the underlying idea of this article, it will perhaps be helpful to say something about the necessity for certain laws of thought, and, in particular, about the question of “axioms”. Even the revealed truth of the Bible would become a mere sequence of curiously shaped strokes, or varied sounds, apart from grammar, and grammar presupposes intelligence and the laws of thought. Revelation and reason must, therefore, go hand in hand, even though we may have to confess that what passes for human reason may be very far from the truth. A *sinless* rational being would be obliged to acknowledge the truth of revelation.

At the foundation of all thought are the first principles that we call “axioms”. In mathematics, for example, an axiom is a self-evident proposition—such as “A straight line is the shortest distance between two points”, or “Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another”. Even if an angel from heaven should appear and tells us that these things were not so, and that, for instance, a curved line was shorter than a straight one, we should have to deny the very fundamentals of our being to give them up. Just as there are certain self-evident truths in mathematics, so also in other departments of thought, there are axioms that are self-evident and need no proof. We leave this point for the time, but shall return to it later.

The question that we have before us arises out of the opening verse of Scripture:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. i. 1).

It is at once evident that, if God created heaven and earth in the beginning, He must Himself have been in existence before this creation took place. There must, therefore, have been a time (we can use no other word than “time” here, owing to the limitations of our nature and knowledge), when God was, and nothing else existed. It is therefore evident that God must be self-sufficient. This is confirmed in Acts xvii., where the Apostle is speaking to philosophers, acquainted with the principles of reasoning concerning the nature of the Absolute:

“God that made the world and all things therein; seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men’s hands, AS THOUGH HE NEEDED ANYTHING, seeing He giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things” (Acts xvii. 24, 25).

The question is bound to arise sooner or later in the mind of the reader of Scripture and the student of the works of the Creator, *Why did God create anything?* If God be self-sufficient, and needs nothing from outside sources, seeing that He Himself is the Author of all things, why did He create at all? It is not sufficient to say that it was because He was all-powerful and so able to create heaven and earth, for even men are able to do many things which they are perfectly right not to do, even though, should they do them, they would still be perfectly right. The mere possession of power does not answer the question “Why?” We must look deeper, and here we are shut up to the revelation of the Word.

We turn to Rev. iv. and read:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. iv. 11).

Here, then, is one answer to our question. It is that He created all things “for His pleasure”. In another passage we read:

“Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation For thus saith the Lord that Created the heavens, God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited” (Isa. xlv. 17, 18).

We see here that part of God’s purpose is to have an *inhabited* earth.

In the Book of Proverbs, where “Wisdom” speaks in chapter viii., the passage ends with the words”

“Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. viii. 31).

Creation, then, is “for His pleasure”; He formed it for an habitation; He delights in its inhabitants. But again we may ask “Why?”

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things” (Rom. xi. 36).

The answer to this question seems to be found in the very being of God Himself. Let us pursue our enquiry with wondering hearts, for we are drawing near the holiest of all.

While some things may be known of God from the works of His hands, such as His eternal or invisible power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20)—so much so that the nations who fell into idolatry were without excuse—there are other things concerning His nature that are outside the sphere of evidence and beyond the range of reason. God is spirit, but that does not necessitate creation. God is light, but it is not self-evident that God, Who is light, should create the universe. But God also is *love*; and here we pause. Is it not self-evident that for love to abide alone, with none but self to love, with no opportunity to express itself in giving, to say nothing of sacrificing, is in the very nature of things impossible? All Scripture unites to testify that love must give. All Scripture shows that sacrifice is never far removed from love, and we may take without reservation the statement of the Apostle in its widest sense:

“He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love” (I John iv. 8).

However married human love may now be by the presence of sin, there is nevertheless in human love, the love of husband and wife (Eph. v. 25), the love of parent and child, the love of brethren, something which is the same in kind, though not in purity or degree, as that which dwells in the very heart of God. Human love, even apart from the illuminating and quickening of the Spirit, expresses itself in self-sacrifice:

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 7, 8).

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John xv. 13).

If, then, it is self-evident that love must express itself, that it must have an object upon which to bestow its gifts, it is clear that we have an answer to the question as to why God, Who is self-sufficient and perfect in Himself, should have felt it necessary to create heaven and earth, and to take upon Himself not only the initial launching of the universe, but its upholding moment by moment. The answer to the question must be, that He did it because He is love. When He made man in His own likeness, a living soul and a rational moral being, He knew that His creature could not be deprived of freedom of choice without denying his very nature. In His perfect foreknowledge He knew that, when He launched creation, it would one day cause Him “grief”, “repentance” and “anger”—and that it would demand at length nothing less than giving up of “His beloved Son”. If we still ask, Why, knowing all this, did He create heaven and earth? the answer must still be, Because God is love.

This fact not only lies at the threshold of Scripture; it is found again full-orbed at its consummation. The closing pages of Revelation reveal the goal of the ages, expressed in terms of a Father at home with his family (Rev. xxi. 3). Or, as I Cor. xv. 28 suggests,

the difference between the beginning, and the end is that “In the beginning God” (All in Himself); and at the end, “God All in All” (God and His redeemed people).

**#11. “After His Kind” or
Creation versus Evolution (Gen. i., ii.).
pp. 205 - 210**

The nature and purpose of our studies in the Word of God preclude the consideration of many subjects that are both attractive in themselves and in some ways useful. For example, such subjects as Astronomy, Geology and Biology are closely allied to the theme of Gen. i. and ii., but they demand specialized training, and are, after all, outside our own particular sphere. There is one point of view, however, accepted by modern and popular science, that we must consider before leaving these early chapters of Genesis, and that is the current theory of evolution. We speak of evolution as a theory, not slightingly but justly, for the scientist should accept nothing that is not capable of demonstration or proof. The most ardent advocate of evolution would admit that this process has never been either “demonstrated” or “proved”. It is unreasonable, therefore, to expect the believer in Christ quietly to remove the very foundation of his faith, simply because a popular theory is for the moment uppermost in the scientific world. How many theories have had their little day and ceased to be, since Moses penned the sublime opening of the Book of Genesis! How many more theories may be propounded before we “know even as we are known” we cannot predict, but of one thing we can be certain—that though heaven and earth will pass away, the Word written in the inspired Scriptures will stand for ever.

Those of us who are not scientists are apt to take the popular cry of the moment as the authentic voice of authority, and it may therefore be of service for us to quote what some of the men who are at the summit of their profession have said on the matter. Dr. Etheridge of the British Museum, “one of the highest authorities in the world”, has said:

“Nine tenths of the talk of the evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded upon observation and wholly unsupported by facts. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of their views. *In all this great museum, there is not a particle of evidence of the transmutation of species.*”

Professor Beale, of King’s College, London, says:

“There is no evidence that man has descended from, or is, or was, in any way specially related to any other organism in nature, through evolution or by any other process. *In support of all naturalistic conjectures concerning man’s origin, there is not, at this time, a shadow of scientific evidence.*”

Professor Virchow of Berlin writes:

“The attempt to find the transition from the animal to man has ended in failure. The middle link has not been found and never will be. Evolution is all nonsense. It cannot be proved from science that man descended from the ape or any other animal.”

The newspaper reports of the British Association Meeting in 1931 make interesting reading, especially when we remember how strongly some sections of the press have supported evolution in the past. Two extracts are given below.

“IS EVOLUTION WRONG?”

The famous theory of evolution lacks proof. We have been told that evolution has destroyed chapters in the Old Book. That explanation does not now suffice. *We are as ignorant as we were seventy years ago.*

(The Daily Express).”

The words in italics are the statement of Professor D’Arcy Thompson.

The Daily Telegraph had a leading article entitled “Evolution Overdone”, in which the following passage occurred:

“The immoderate evolutionists sometimes made nonsense of the theory they exalted. It has partly been a case of ‘Save me from my friends’.”

“Nonsense” said Dr. Etheridge! “Nonsense” said Professor Virchow!! “Nonsense” said the Editor of the Daily Telegraph!!! It would have been neither courteous nor wise for a layman in the realm of science to use the word “nonsense” in connection with a theory which is seriously entertained by men of standing, but it is certainly legitimate for men like Dr. Etheridge and Professor Virchow and the Editor of The Daily Telegraph to use this term if it represents their considered opinion—and the reader should remember it when urged to give up the inspiration of the books of Moses. “Not a particle of evidence.” “Not a shadow of scientific evidence.” “It cannot be proved from science.” These are weighty judgments and should make us pause before coming to any hasty conclusions.

Without dealing in any detail with the problems that arise out of this unproved theory, we just mention a few points.

- (1) There is an impassable gulf between the living and the non-living, which only the power of the Creator can bridge. Between the rock, and the living lizard that basks in the sunshine upon it, there is a tremendous gulf, which evolution can never span.
- (2) Reptiles have cold blood between 40 and 60 degrees. Birds have hot blood, ranging between 100 and 107 degrees. By what known or even imaginary process did the cold-blooded reptile change into the hot-blooded bird, and how did it manage to live throughout the “Laodicean” period of its existence?
- (3) Reptiles have a three-chambered heart. Birds have a four-chambered heart. How was the transition accomplished?

- (4) Natural selection cannot account for the instincts of the honey bee which has in effect anticipated some of the more profound discoveries of mathematics. The parents of the honey-bee—the queen and the drone—neither gather honey nor build the comb, yet their offspring do this with infallible accuracy. How is this instinct passed on and preserved?
- (5) Natural selection could not make use of slight initial changes. For example, what use would the reptile make of the first primitive feathers that it is supposed to have evolved? Would not these have been a hindrance rather than a help, and have led to the early elimination of such abnormalities.

We must now leave this realm of “dogmatic uncertainty”, and which is falsely called Science, and turn to the sure Word of the Living God. We cannot attempt an examination of the whole problem of creation, but we do draw attention to the persistent use in Gen. i. i. and ii. of a phrase which is certainly misleading if evolution be a fact. In the record of creation given in Gen. i. 3 - ii. 3 this phrase—“after his (or their) kind”—occurs ten times. It is used in the following connections:

- (1) The fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed was in itself “after his kind” (Gen. i. 11, 12).
- (2) The herb yielding seed “after his kind” (Gen. i. 12).
- (3) Great whales, every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly “after their kind” (Gen. i. 21).
- (4) Every winged fowl “after his kind” (Gen. i. 21).
- (5) The earth brought forth the living creature “after his kind”, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth “after his kind” (Gen. i. 24, 25).

No believer in the Divine inspiration of all Scripture can set aside this tenfold insistence upon the fact that each created thing, whether vegetable or animal, was created “after its kind”. If creation had proceeded upon the lines of any process involving the transmutation of species, these words would be misleading and untrue.

The Hebrew word for “kind” is *min*, and is derived from *manah*, a verb meaning “to distribute by number, order or the like”:

- “If a man can *number* the dust” (Gen. xiii. 16).
- “The Lord *had prepared* a great fish” (Jonah i. 17).
- “The Lord God *prepared* a gourd” (Jonah iv. 6).
- “God *prepared* a worm” (Jonah iv. 7).
- “God *prepared* a vehement east wind” (Jonah iv. 8).

The word *manah* also gives us *temunah*, “similitude” (Numb. xii. 8), and *maneh*, “a particular weight or sum of money” (Ezek. xlv. 12).

The translators of the Septuagint version were aware of the importance of the phrase “after its kind”, and knew also that the word *min*, “kind” was associated with *temunah*, “similitude”. Accordingly we find in the Greek version of Gen. i. 11, 12: “*Kata genos kai kath’ homoioteta*” (according to its kind, and according to its likeness). The word *genos* here supplies the scientific term “genus”, which is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as follows:

“A classificatory group comprehending (one or) a number of species, possessing certain common structural characters distinct from those of any other group.”

In the N.T. the word *genos* stands for “offspring”, “stock”, “kind”, “kindred”, and “nation”.

“To another (divers) *kinds* of tongues” (I Cor. xii. 10).

“*Diversities* of tongues” (I Cor. xii. 28).

“Many *kinds* of voices” (I Cor. xiv. 10).

The word which is added in the LXX version of Gen. i. 11, 12 is *homoioteta*, “likeness”, a word which is certainly rightly used in Gen. i. 16 of the creation of man. Whether or not the translators were justified in inserting the word “likeness” here as an expansion of the idea which they saw was resident in the Hebrew *min* and the Greek *genos*, there can be no doubt that to them the use of the phrase “after his kind” indicated a very distinctive element in the record of creation. Each *genus* was distinct and separate, and we must therefore—with the Hebrew original and Greek translation before us—regard the idea of the evolution of one species from another as being contrary to the express teaching of Holy Writ.

When dealing with the problem of the resurrection body in I Cor. xv., the Apostle turns to the works of God in order to provide an illustration and an argument. We are not concerned, at the moment, with the question of the resurrection, but the passage may help us to understand what Moses meant when he wrote “After his kind”.

“It may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body” (I Cor. xv. 37, 38).

Kai ekasto ton spermaton to idion soma (“and to each of the seeds its own peculiar body.”).

“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beast, another of fishes, and another of birds” (I Cor. xv. 39).

There is no word in the original of this verse for “kind”, but it contains the untranslated conjunction *men de* which demands recognition, as follows:

“There is one flesh on the one hand, of men, but on the other hand, there is the flesh of beasts.”

The Apostle’s argument falls to the ground if evolution be admitted.

Returning to Gen. i. 11, 12, we further note that the fruit tree yielded fruit “after his kind”, that its seed was “in itself”, and that this seed also was “after its kind”. In addition to this very specific statement concerning the creation of separate species of plants, we read in Gen. ii. 5:

“And every plant of the field BEFORE it was in the earth, and every herb of the field BEFORE it grew” (Gen. ii. 5).

These words make it even more difficult to believe the record of Genesis, and at the same time the theory of evolution, for evolution is a process taking place while plants and animals “grow”, whereas these plants, which, according to chapter i., were “after their kind”, were according to chapter ii. created thus “before they grew”.

We again meet the phrase “after his kind” in the record of the flood in Gen. vi. 20 and vii. 14. The fact that each fowl and beast “after its kind, or genus”, was carried through the deluge in order that seed might be preserved alive, is a further indication that one species did not evolve from another, for if that had been the process of creation at the beginning, it could have been repeated after the flood, and the need for carrying into the ark so great a variety of living creatures could have been avoided.

We have already seen that the words “after his kind” are used in the record of the creation, and of the flood, and we find them used once more in the Levitical law concerning clean and unclean animals: “The kite after his kind”, “every raven after his kind”, etc. This proves that the words had a specific meaning, and were used by Moses to indicate that the whole species was included. There are thirteen occurrences of the phrase “after his kind” in connection with clean and unclean animals, and there is one further reference in Ezek. xlvii. 10. In this last passage, the changed conditions which will obtain at that time will bring a larger variety of fish into the Dead Sea than would have been possible under normal conditions, and the sentence, “Their fish shall be according to their kinds” is expanded into “As the fish of the great sea, exceeding many”.

If the animal and vegetable worlds came into being by any process of evolution, the words “after his kind” in the record of Gen. i. and ii. would seem to be redundant and unscientific. We have no alternative, therefore, but to believe that this expression is purposely used in the record of the creation to indicate that the different orders of life, each belonging to its own separate genus, were the result of a specific act of creation. This must not, however, be misconstrued as denying a very wide range of “variety”, that could and did develop in response to time and circumstance.

Much of the “science” of to-day will be discarded for the “science” of to-morrow, and one theory will give place to another. Those facts that have been brought to light, founded upon evidence and capable of demonstration, will remain, and not one of them will be found to be out of harmony with the simple teaching of Scripture. The Christian who believes the Scriptures need not be ignorant or prejudiced. He can be as truly “scientific” as the word implies. He will accept without demur every fact that is attested, but he will distinguish carefully between unsubstantiated theories that militate against the Word of Truth, and the evidence of facts that establish the common authorship of the Works and the Word of God.

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JUDGES.

#4. The thirteen Rulers of Israel. Abimelech the Antichrist. (viii., ix.). pp. 7 - 12

There are thirteen rulers mentioned by name in the Book of Judges. This is an ominous number, but is quite in keeping with the general tenor of the book. The last verse of the last chapter is in a sense a summary of the whole book:

“There was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

If we add to this the two occasions when the making of an Ephod played an important part in the downgrade movement of the book, the antichristian character of its prophetic and typical teaching becomes evident.

Twelve of Israel's judges were called of God; the thirteenth was Abimelech, a usurper, and an evident type of the Man of Sin. Moreover, we observe that Abimelech, the usurper, is the sixth name in the record. The number 6 is “the number of man”, and is associated with Goliath, Nebuchadnezzar and the Beast of the last days.

Dr. Bullinger went to the trouble of adding up the numerical value of the names of the twelve judges and found that it was a multiple of 8; whereas the title of Abimelech, *Ben Jerubbaal*, is a multiple of 13.

It is sad to think that Gideon was the father of Abimelech and that Abimelech was the offspring of a concubine:

“And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech” (Judges viii. 30, 31).

“And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal (i.e. Gideon) went to Shechem” (Judges ix. 1).

It seems that, by this time, Shechem had become a centre of apostasy. And yet it was at Shechem that God had first appeared to Abraham in Canaan (Gen. xii. 6); and at Shechem Jacob had built his altar (Gen. xxxiii. 20). Here also had been pronounced the blessings and cursings from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. And here, after the death of Gideon, is established the worship of Baal-berith (Judges ix. 4).

In the opening verses of Judges ix., Abimelech suggests to the men of Shechem that Gideon's seventy sons are seeking dominion over them. This was a most unreasonable and unlikely suggestion, but it suited Abimelech's plan to give it currency.

“And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother’s brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother’s father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh” (Judges ix. 1, 2).

Abimelech’s words had the desired effect, and the men of Shechem made him king. Sixty-nine out of the seventy sons of Gideon were slain at Ophrah “upon one stone”. Possibly this refers to the rock that figures so prominently in Judges vi. 21-26. If so, this would indicate another blow at the worship of the true God, and the triumph of Baal. Moreover, the place chosen by the men of Shechem for making Abimelech king was “by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem”. Here Joshua had made a covenant with Israel (Josh. xxiv. 1-26), and had set up a great stone under the oak (see margin of Judges ix. 6), declaring that this stone would be a witness against them if they denied their God. Here, too, the sanctuary of God had stood, as we see from Josh. xxiv. 26. It is evident, therefore, that Abimelech’s coronation was a direct attack upon the sovereignty of the Lord. And yet in Abimelech we have *Israel’s first king*, a tragic foreshadowing of the time of the end.

One Son of Gideon escapes death, and his name is Jotham, meaning *Jehovah is Perfect*. The bearing of this name will be evident when we observe how Jotham uses the very word “perfect” in Judges ix. 16:

“If ye have done truly and sincerely (perfectly).”

The connection is confirmed when we notice that at this same spot, Joshua had said:

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity (perfectly)” (Josh. xxiv. 14).

The Lord had said to Abraham, “Walk before Me, and be thou *perfect*” (Gen. xvii. 1) and had called upon Israel saying: “Thou shalt be *perfect* with the Lord thy God” (Deut. xviii. 13). An examination of the contexts will leave us in no doubt as to the meaning of the term.

There is one further point which is perhaps more important than everything else. Abimelech had been made king at the very place where the sanctuary had stood. At this place, therefore, the priest would have received answer by Urim and Thummim. Now the word Thummim is the word “Perfection” put into the plural. There is but one King that will successfully rule and reign for God on earth, and He will be a *King-Priest* “after the order of Melchisedec”. There will be but one Kingdom on earth that will receive Divine approval, and that will be a “Kingdom of Priests”. In this lies the secret of all human failure in this respect. Man desires a King. Even Israel would have taken Christ and made Him King; but External law, however righteous and good, breaks down before the impotence of unregenerate hearts. A Priest as well as a King is needed to put away sin, and to write the laws upon the hearts of a saved people. Gideon apparently had some inkling of this truth:

“The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son’s son also And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you” (Judges viii. 22, 23).

Gideon nobly repudiates Kingship here, but the next verse records what is apparently a strange action. He requests the golden ear-rings that had been taken as a prey, and we read:

“Gideon made an Ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah. And all Israel went thither a-whoring after it, which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house” (Judges viii. 24-27).

Gideon apparently felt the need of priestly service, but he transgressed the will of the Lord in providing a substitute for the real thing—always a fruitful cause of failure and sin.

The reader may remember that the structure of the book as a whole given in Volume XXVII, page 131, places the Ephod of Gideon and the Ephod of Micah in correspondence.

We must return, however, to Jotham and his parable. The actual word “parable” is not used in Judges ix., but this is evidently what is intended. In Matt. xiii. “the parable of the sower” is not *called* a parable specifically, but it is a parable nevertheless. Just as the Lord spoke to the people in parables, because He had been rejected by them (see Matt. xi. 20-24; xii. 6, 41, 42 and the articles on the parables in Volume II, III, IV, V and VI), so Jotham uses the same method after Israel’s rejection of the Lord as King.

“Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a King over them: and they said unto the OLIVE TREE, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said to the FIG TREE, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the VINE, Come thou and reign over us. But the vine said unto them, Should I forsake my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said all the trees unto the BRAMBLE, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon” (Judges ix. 7-15).

It may be very true that in Scripture the Fig, the Olive, and the Vine foreshadow and typify three phases of Israel’s blessedness. It may be that the Fig represents Israel’s national privileges, the Olive their religious privileges, and the Vine their spiritual privileges. All this may be true, but it is not necessarily true in the parable of Jotham. In this parable, the three trees are separate entities, and they each refuse in turn to leave the work to them by God. It is impossible to apply the answers of these three trees to any period of Israel’s failure or acceptance. The point of the parable is in the self-assertion of the Bramble. The other trees speak humbly of their “fatness”, their “sweetness”, their

“wine”, and of the ministry of honour and cheer that each afforded in fulfilling his appointed service. The Bramble, however, has no such humble conception of his office. He does not speak of oil, or wine, or even of sweetness. He says nothing about honour to God or to man, but vaingloriously usurps the Divine prerogative and says: “Put your trust in MY SHADOW.”

In the prophetic utterance of Moses in Deuteronomy we read:

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect Where are their gods, their rock in whom they *trusted?*” (Deut. xxxii. 4, 37).

And in that beautiful record of faithfulness in a period characterized by utter lack of faith, we read in the Book of Ruth:

“The Lord God of Israel, under Whose wings thou art come to *trust?*” (Ruth ii. 12).

As the Psalmist writes:

“Is it better to *trust* in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Psa. cxviii. 8).

The opposite course is described in Isa. xxx. in relation to Egypt:

“Woe to the rebellious children that take counsel, but not of Me to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to *trust in the shadow* of Egypt” (Isa. xxx. 1, 2).

The same words that are rightly used of the Lord, both “trust” and “shadow”, are boldly appropriated by Abimelech, the Bramble. It is the spirit of Antichrist manifesting itself in the nation of God’s choice, a prophetic foreshadowing of the awful days to come. The Bramble speaks of his shadow, but in fact he had none. He provides neither honour, sweetness, nor cheer, and serves only as fuel for the fire. The word for “bramble” is translated “thorn” in Psalm lviii. 9, where the passage refers to the boiling of a pot over a fire.

In the Gospels we read:

“Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Matt. vii. 16).

As the Lord spoke these words, the parable of Jotham would come to the minds of many of His hearers. When He spoke, also, of the seed being choked with thorns and so not bringing forth fruit unto *perfection* (Luke viii. 14), those of his hearers who knew the Hebrew meaning of Jotham, and of his use of the word “perfect”, would again think of the degeneracy of the days of the Judges and of the danger of their recurrence. When the apostle used the figure of the land bringing forth thorns and briers and being nigh unto cursing (Heb. vi. 8), his hearers would no doubt go back in mind to this same parable.

We will not pursue the sad story of Abimelech’s reign. He died an ignominious death, at the hand of a woman, although he saved his face by calling upon his armour-bearer to

thrust him through, so that no man should say “A woman slew him” (Judges ix. 54). He was, moreover, slain by a millstone, another mark of degradation in those days (see Judges xvi. 21); and by the breaking of his skull. If we read the account of the death of Sisera we find a repetition of very similar circumstances. Is it fanciful, therefore, with these things in mind, to see both in Jael and in the Woman that shall bruise the serpent’s head? And to see in the tent-peg and in the millstone allusions to the final overthrow of Satanic dominion.

JUDGES.

#5. The Six Deliverers of Israel. Othniel, Ehud and Barak (iii. - v.). pp. 54 - 58

While there were five complete servitudes of Israel—resulting in 93 years being eliminated from God’s reckoning of the national calendar (see the article: “*Lo-ammi, or a Prophetic Principle Examined*” pages 207-211 of Volume XXVII)—there was also a partial servitude which necessitated the call of Jephthah, and this must not be omitted. The fact that there were six servitudes and six deliverances prepares one for a record of failure, for six is the number of man. We shall expect that each deliverer will possess some good quality that will foreshadow the one true Deliverer of Israel, the Lord Himself, but that each will also show many evidences of human frailty and failure, so turning the heart of the believer away from all types and shadows, to trust freely and only in the great Deliverer Himself.

The Six Deliverers of Israel.

- A | OTHNIEL.—The Lion of God (iii. 9).
- B | EHUD.—Union. The Fords. Gilgal. (iii. 15).
- C | BARAK.—Lightning. Deborah a prophetess. Under a palm tree (iv.-v.).
“*I will surely go with thee*” (iv. 9).
- C | GIDEON.—The Hewer. A man a prophetess. Under an oak tree (vi.-viii.).
“*Surely I will be with thee*” (vi. 16).
- B | JEPHTHAH.—The Opener. The Fords. Mizpah. (xi. - xii. 7).
- A | SAMSON.—Like the Sun (xiii.-xvi.).

We do not propose to devote a separate article to each of these six deliverers, but rather to provide sufficient information for the reader to be able to explore their typical histories for himself.

We give below a list in structural form of the enemies of Israel from whom they were delivered by the judges. It will be seen that three of Israel’s foes were related to them by blood, Moab and Ammon through Lot, and Midian through Keturah and Abraham (Gen. xix. 37, xxv. 2). The reader will not fail to note the important lesson here.

It will also be noticed that the Amalekites are associated with Midian; and together they represent the flesh, which, in its various manifestations, brings the redeemed of the Lord into bondage.

The King of Mesopotamia, and the Philistines, and the Canaanites were descendants of Ham—a people connected with Babylonian idolatry and high-handed rebellion. Altogether a formidable host.

The Six Foes of Israel.

- A | CHUSHAN-RISHATHAIM.—The Cushite of Double Evil.
- B | EGLON.—A Bull Calf. A Fat Man.
Moab related through Lot and associated with Amalek.
- C | JABIN.—Intelligence. Canaan the Cursed Seed.
- C | MIDIAN.—Contention.
Associated with Amalekites, and with Israel through Keturah.
- B | AMMON.—Fellow-countryman. Related to Israel through Lot.
- A | PHILISTINES.—Related to Cushite (Gen. x. 14). Migrator.

The “double evil” of the first oppression seems to cover the last also, indicating that both the King of Mesopotamia and the Philistines represent the same evil thing, namely the world as opposed to God. Moab and Ammon clearly represent the flesh, for both are associated with Lot and his daughters. Midian also, as well as Israel, could claim descent from Abraham, but they were never “in Isaac” and so were not “counted for the seed”. They, too, represent the claim of the flesh intruding into the realm of the spirit. Canaan are particularly the people of the curse, a people not to be evangelized or tolerated, but to be exterminated. They stand for the Devil and all his works. Israel’s six foes, therefore, represent most clearly the three elements of the redeemed—the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

The weapons used by the deliverers, although insignificant and weak in themselves, are of importance in their typical teaching.

In the case of Othniel and Jephthah no weapon or instrument is mentioned. All that the Scripture records is:

“The spirit of the Lord came upon him and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, into his hand” (Judges iii. 10).

“Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah and the Lord delivered them into his hands” (Judges xi. 29-32).

Apart from the jaw-bone of the ass, Samson accomplished his deliverance of Israel by a power whose source was not evident to the outward eye. With regard to Ehud, we read that his weapon was a dagger with two edges, and that he was a left-handed Benjamite. The name “Benjamin” means “Son of my right hand”, yet in spite of this the Hebrew of Judges iii. 15 records that Ehud was “shut of his right hand”. Here we have a picture of grace and the power of the Spirit, in contrast to all the boasted powers of the flesh—

looking forward, surely, to the “weakness of God” that was stronger than men, manifested at the Cross of Calvary.

Sisera was slain at the hand of the woman by means of a tent-peg. In the case of Gideon, trumpets, pitchers and lamps were all that were used by his depleted army of 300 men to rout the host of the Midianites.

Let us now, as briefly as is consistent with clarity, consider some of the chief points that are recorded in connection with these three Judges.

The record of Othniel’s triumph is simple, and is to the Book of Judges what the triumph over Jericho is to the Book of Joshua. It was the ideal victory, though followed alas by faulty behaviour on Israel’s part subsequently. Othniel, as the Lion of God, foreshadows the complete emancipation which will be accomplished under the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Coming, in the capacity of “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah”.

Ehud sets out to attack what represents the flesh in type. Eglon, the King of Moab, is described as “a very fat man” (Judges iii. 17). Such fatness is unhealthy; and symbolizes the flesh. The same word is used by Asaph of the ungodly, who prosper in this world, “whose strength is *firm* (margin *fat*)” (Psa. lxxiii. 4). It was this fat that sealed Eglon’s doom, for we read that “the fat closed upon the blade” (Judges iii. 22) (Compare Psa. xvii. 10: “They are enclosed in their own fat”, and Psa. lxxiii. 7: “Their eyes stand out with fatness”).

While we naturally expect a king to have some outward signs of his high rank, there seems to be some particular reason for the Spirit to record the fact that the summer parlour where Eglon was slain had been made “for himself alone” (Judges iii. 20). It seems to be an added witness to the selfish and fleshly character of this enemy of Israel.

What moved Ehud were the “graven images at Gilgal” (Judges iii. 19 margin). At Gilgal the “reproach of Egypt” had been rolled away by the rite of circumcision and “the flesh” had been repudiated (Phil. iii. 3, Col. ii. 11 R.V.). Yet at this same spot the “graven images” had been set up. Ehud’s action sets forth the mortifying of the members, using the two-edged sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Passing on now to Barak, it seems strange at first sight to find, in the record of his call by Deborah, the interpolation of Judges iv. 11:

“Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim which is by Kedesh.”

We learn, however, from verse 17 that there was peace at that time between Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite, so that when Sisera fled, he turned his steps in the direction of Heber’s tent.

Jael’s action is praised without reservation by Deborah.

“Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be. Blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen’s hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead” (Judges v. 24-27).

In the previous chapter, before Barak had started his campaign, we have Deborah’s prophecy:

“The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman” (Judges iv. 9).

It appears that when Sisera was first received by Jael it was in perfectly good faith, for her husband at that time was at peace with Jabin. After Sisera had entered, however, Jael seems to have been moved by God to destroy this enemy of Israel, and Deborah’s words suggest a miraculous power above and beyond the strength of Jael’s own arm. Ehud, too, it will be remembered, first gave Eglon a present, and then turned back after he had got as far as Gilgal. The league between Heber and Jabin was a wise move on the part of Israel’s foes, but no covenant made by man can thwart the purposes of the Most High. In the very tent of Heber, Sisera dies.

Jabin, meaning “Wisdom”, and Hazor, meaning “Power” represent the strength of our spiritual foes, while the “stake” in the hand of Jael stands for the Cross of Christ, in which true wisdom and power were manifested. Jael was but another type illustrating the basic prophecy of Gen. iii. 15.

Deborah’s song should be compared with the “Magnificat” of Mary in the Gospel of Luke:

“Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be” (Judges v. 24).

“Blessed art thou among women” (Luke i. 28, 42).

“All generations shall call me blessed” (Luke i. 48).

Is it not also significant, when we think of Jael and Mary, that Heber is not mentioned except as the husband of Jael? The tent is called “The tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite”.

It is not possible, in the space at our disposal, to complete our survey by dealing with the exploits of Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, and we must therefore leave these for another article. Meanwhile let us ponder these lessons that speak so eloquently of our spiritual foes, the world, the flesh and the Devil: and let us glory in the Cross of Christ, having no confidence in the flesh.

JUDGES.

#6. The Six Deliverers of Israel (*cont.*). Gideon, Jephthah and Samson (vi. - xvi.). pp. 88 - 98

Gideon.

The reader will remember that we were unable to complete our survey of the account of the six deliverers of Israel in the last article (pages 54-58) of this series when we compared them with each other and gave some attention to the more outstanding details that are recorded of the first three. We now proceed to consider the outstanding typical features of the exploits of the remaining three, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.

The oppression of Israel by the Midianites and the execution of Zeba and Zalmunna by Gideon are referred to by later writers of Israel, as being of prophetic interest.

“For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in *the days of Midian*” (Isa. ix. 4).

“And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to *the slaughter of Midian* at the rock of Oreb” (Isa.x. 26).

“Do unto them as *unto the Midianites*; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb, yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna” (Psa. lxxxiii. 9, 11).

These references indicate the necessity of a knowledge of the record of Judges if the prophecies given later in the Word are to be appreciated.

The oppression of the Midianites was very great. Israel were driven to dens and caves of the earth, while much that they had sown in the fields was consumed by their enemies. Before Gideon was raised up as a deliverer, a prophet was sent who reviewed the history of Israel's defection and their sad departure from the Lord, in spite of His deliverance of them from the oppression of Egypt. The appearance of the prophet seems to indicate the failure of the priest, and this is borne out by the history of the time. Following the prophet, came the angel of the Lord, and Gideon asked for signs in order that he might be assured that his commission was of the Lord. His first act of deliverance was the breaking down of the altar of Baal which his own father had set up (Judges vi. 25). This earned for Gideon the title Jerubbaal (Judges vii. 1), or “Let Baal plead”. The argument of Joash concerning Baal pleading for himself is like that of Elijah at Mount Carmel.

The host of the Midianites and the Amalekites is likened to locusts, or the sand of the sea, for multitude, whereas the total number of Gideon's men is said to be, in the A.V., 32,000. Had an army of even this size vanquished the Midianite host the victory would have been a signal one, but the Lord, Who knew the heart of men, said to Gideon.

“The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me” (Judges vii. 2).

Gideon was therefore instructed to issue a proclamation allowing all who were fearful to withdraw, and twenty-two thousand men took advantage of the release and withdrew. But there were still too many, and the remainder were subjected to a test which only 300 of the 10,000 passed.

“By the three hundred men that lapped will I saved you” (Judges vii. 7).

The principles underlying this selection seem to be that:

- (1) In all our dealings with the enemy, only the glory of God, and not the magnifying of self, or faith, or suffering, or anything, apart from the cross of Christ, can be permitted as a *goal* or accepted as a *means*.
- (2) Only those who “use this world as not using it to the full” (I Cor. vii. 31), can be trusted with victory. To all others victory would be worse than defeat.

In view of Judges vii. is it not folly to boast in numbers?

Before leaving verse 3, we draw attention to a most difficult yet important matter, namely the true principle of Hebrew numerical computation. The A.V. of Judges vii. 3 tells us that the number that returned of Gideon’s army was “twenty and two thousand”, and it has been assumed that this is just the same as “twenty-two thousand”. This however is by no means the case. Indeed it is necessary to undertake a fairly exhaustive analysis of the Hebrew Bible before even competence to express an opinion can be gained. This matter of numbers has often been made the starting point for hostile attack upon the Scripture, whereas the attack should have been directed against the attempt to compute ancient sums upon modern lines.

In English, “twenty and two thousand” does not usually mean “two thousand and twenty”, but it is only custom that has so decided, for twenty and two shillings is the same as two and twenty shillings. Not the actual wording in the Hebrew decides the matter but the custom of the times which therefore must be ascertained. Let us turn to another passage which provides a good example of the problem of Hebrew computation. In I Sam. vi. 19 we read that “fifty thousand and three score and ten men” were slain. Do we realize that this figure represents about twice the population of a town like Brentwood in Essex, or about the same as the town of Luton in Bedfordshire? and that this terrible destruction fell upon the men “who looked” into the ark of God? Is it also remembered that the ark stood in “the field” of Joshua the Beth-Shemeshite, and have we attempted to estimate how long it would take for this vast concourse to walk past the ark? In short, what a set of complicated problems have been set by those who have decided to add up Hebrew figures by modern methods!

The actual words and their order in the Hebrew, are “seventy men, fives and thousand men”. The word translated “fives”, if used in the singular, means simply “five” as in verse 4 of this chapter, but why the plural form should mean that five is multiplied by ten,

no living man can now decide: all that can be done is to accept the fact and work accordingly. Dr. Robert Young, whose knowledge of Hebrew and of Oriental languages is such as to command universal respect, renders the passage thus: "He smiteth among the people seventy men—fifty chief men." Twice the word "men" occurs and twice Dr. Young uses it. The word *eleph*, translated 1000, also means a family, a tribe, and the head of a tribe, examples of which can be found by anyone able to use a Concordance. If therefore 50,070 can be the alternative of 70, of which 50 were chief men, are we not right in saying that the whole subject needs serious investigation?

All we will do at the moment is to suggest that 2,020 and not 22,000 men returned from mount Gilead, and that the number that fell at the fords of Jordan (Judges xii. 6) was 2,040 and not 42,000, a number that exceeds the census of the whole tribe that is recorded in Num. xxvi. 37, even if we take the figure of 32,500 as given in this version.

Emphasis upon the small and the despised is found in the record of the battle itself, first in the dream of barley loaf, and secondly, in the use of pitchers and lamps in place of weapons. The dream is as follows:--

"Lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, and the tent lay along" (Judges vii. 13).

The interpretation is:

"This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host" (Judges vii. 14).

Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book" page 447, says:--

"Nothing is more common for the poor of Canaan at this day to complain that their oppressors have left them nothing but barley bread to eat; and if the Midianites, were accustomed to call Gideon and his band 'eaters of barley bread', as their successors, the haughty Bedouins, often do to ridicule their enemies, the application would be more natural."

Upon hearing the dream Gideon called upon his little band to arise and prepare for victory. He divided them into three companies and provided each man with a trumpet, a pitcher and a torch. The pitcher is a symbol of the human body in its frailty (Eccles. xii. 6). Eastern watchmen often carried a smouldering torch in an earthen vessel so that when a blaze was needed it could be withdrawn and waved in the air. These simple instruments find their parallel in the Apostle's words when he wrote:--

"For God who commanded the LIGHT to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in EARTHEN VESSELS, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves" (II Cor. iv. 6, 7).

And so in the case of Gideon, the Lord says:

“Lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me”
(Judges vii. 2).

When victory over Midian was complete, the men of Israel said to Gideon: “Rule thou over us”, but he refused, saying, “The Lord shall rule over you”. He, however, made a request which resulted in the making of an Ephod, which became a snare to Israel. It is evident that the priests of Israel were lax in their high duties, and as Gideon had already been permitted to offer a sacrifice, so he ventured to make an Ephod, probably with the idea that by its means he would, in future, be able to consult the Lord as to His will.

A great temptation in days of failure is to make do with substitutes, but such makeshifts are not according to the will of the Lord. Nothing can take the place of the finished work of Christ, and it is better to walk in a solitary path, without the slightest external evidence of faith or hope, than attempt the smallest substitution, in matters of worship and service, for that which the Lord has commanded. Thus every “denomination” has been formed in the spirit here exhibited by Gideon. Those who instituted them meant well, yet they have but furthered the schism of the church and veiled the supreme glory of the risen Christ.

“Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”
(I Sam. xv. 22).

Jephthah.

We have already considered the story of Abimelech, and seen how he made capital out of the degraded character of his birth. Jephthah, too, was the son of an harlot, but, instead of being allowed to remain to stir up strife, he was thrust out of home by his father’s other sons who said: “Thou shalt not inherit in our father’s house; for thou art the son of a strange woman” (Judges xi. 2). He then appears to have become an outlaw, and his followers are described as “vain men”. Now the word “vain” means empty, and is employed to describe the “empty pitchers” of Gideon (Judges vii. 16), but where it is used of men it always means vain. Such was the type of men hired by Abimelech (Judges ix. 4), and gathered together by Jeroboam, and they are further described as children of Belial (II Chron. xiii. 7).

Jephthah, by reason of his birth, was classed with the Ammonite and Moabite (Deut. xxiii. 2, 3), so that his employment in Israel’s deliverance and his acceptance by the men of Gilead indicate how far the priests and leaders of the people had failed in their office.

The cause of Ammon’s antagonism to Israel was ostensibly the question of the land that had been taken by Israel at their entry into Canaan.

“Jephthah’s argument is one that would be advanced now in a Court of Law. If the lands are yours, why have you not claimed possession during the 300 years they have been held by us?” (Companion Bible, Appendix 50/iv.).

We now turn to what has unnecessarily been made one of the most difficult features in the book of Judges, viz., the vow of Jephthah. Various suggestions have been put forward as solutions of the moral difficulties created by the vow. First there is the acceptance, as a fact, of the idea that Jephthah did actually offer up a human sacrifice—his own daughter. We are reminded of the wild state of the times, and of the prevailing ignorance of God’s law and character. That Jephthah was an outlaw, and had been leading the life of a Rob Roy or Robin Hood, and that we must, therefore, not expect to find that he possessed too nice a sense of what is righteous or holy in the sight of God. The fact that the spirit of God came upon him for the work of delivering Israel, no more sanctified his every action, or rendered him infallible, than did the coming of the spirit upon Samson mean that all his actions were acceptable unto the Lord.

Against this acceptance of the record as it appears on the surface, is the objection that Jephthah is included in the examples of faith in Heb. xi., a fact indicative of something more personal and sanctified than the equipment of a leader of an expedition.

Even if it be admitted that so rash a vow had been made, there is weighty objection to the idea that God would allow it to be carried out. Indeed Scripture, in such passages as Lev. xviii. 21 or xx. 2-5, forbids such an act.

Some commentators have supposed that the words of Judges xi. 31, “and I will offer it up for a burnt offering”, might be rendered, “or I will offer”, etc., thereby indicating that the vow was of an alternative character. *Either* he would *dedicate* the first person who came out of his home to meet him on his return, *or*, if he were met by an animal, he would *offer it up as a burnt offering*. But most Hebrew scholars are against the idea that *vav* (the word translated “and”) can be translated “or” here, though it is sometimes found with the meaning “or” where there is no opposition, as for example.

“From the sheep *or* from the goats” (Exod. xii. 5).

“He that smiteth his father *or* his mother” (Exod. xxi. 15).

but the usage is not comparable.

Having considered these opinions let us come to the touchstone of Scripture and examine the original Hebrew of Judges xi. 31, “And I will offer it up for a burnt offering”. The Hebrew equivalent of “for a burnt offering” is *l’olah*, *l* meaning “for” and *olah* “burnt offering”. Any enquirer can see this usage for himself by looking at the original of such a passage as Lev. v. 7, “for a burnt offering”. But to our amazement, we discover that in Judges xi. 30, there is no *l* before *olah*. “For a burnt offering” therefore is an error of translation. What Scripture says is: “And I will offer it up a burnt offering.”

In Gen. xxii. 2 where we read “offer him up *for* a burnt offering” the Hebrew explicitly reads *l’olah*. There, the Lord, having accomplished His object of proving Abraham’s faith, intervened to prevent the actual slaying of Isaac.

Thus encouraged we look again. The word translated “it” is *huah*, and while it can stand for the third person in either the masculine, feminine or neuter gender it is usually masculine in significance. The passage can therefore read: “And I will offer *Him* a burnt offering.” We look once more. The A.V. reads: “shall surely be the Lord’s”, and we find that the name Jehovah is prefixed with *lamed* (*l’*) and so reads “to the Lord”. The meaning is quite clear in a similar passage in I Sam. i. 11 where *l’Jehovah* is translated “unto the Lord”.

Putting together these findings we can now see that Jephthah’s vow may be translated as follows:--

“If Thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I shall return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be for the Lord, and I will offer Him a burnt offering” (Judges xi. 30, 31).

It is, we trust, now clear that the problem we have been considering existed only in the translation of the passage and not in the Scripture itself.

Jephthah’s distress on seeing his daughter and realizing his rashness is fully explained by the words: “beside her he had neither son nor daughter.” Yet in spite of his grief he recognized the sacredness of the vow and said: “I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.” In this attitude his daughter nobly supported him, saying: “Do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth.” She then asked as a favour, permission to bewail her virginity for a period of two months, and at the end of the time returned to her father who did according to his vow, that is, he devoted her to the Lord, “and she knew no man” (Judges xi. 39).

Let us note the confirmatory character of this conclusion. What sense would there be in saying of a young maid who was offered up as a burnt sacrifice, “and she knew no man”? If on the other hand the devotion of Jephthah’s daughter to the Lord involved the renunciation of all hope of being a mother in Israel, the words are poignant with significance. Moreover, while at this time there may have been laxity in the observance of the law, the book of Ruth proves that there were some who knew it and sought to put it into force. In view of the publicity of Jephthah’s vow, even if he had rashly vowed to offer his own daughter as a burnt offering (which we have made plain is not our belief), can we believe that there was no priest or Levite, who, neither for love nor for lucre, would inform Jephthah, that for thirty shekels (Lev. xxvii. 1-4), he could redeem his daughter from the consequences of his impetuosity?

In Judges xi. 39 we read: “And it was a custom in Israel”: the margin says “or ordinance”. Actually the passage reads, “And it became a statute in Israel”. What became a statute? “That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.” Here the word “lament” perpetuates the original error. In the Hebrew it is *tanah*, the meaning of which the margin gives as “to talk with” and refers to Judges v. 11, where the future tense is translated “shall they rehearse”. These yearly visits seem to have been the only relief allowed to the daughter

of Jephthah in her separation unto the Lord, but it is conclusive proof that she lived out her life and had not been sacrificed.

Thus we see that there is no necessity to find extenuating circumstances for the barbarity of literal human sacrifice or strain the meaning of “and” by making it read “or”. In dealing with the matter we have but followed the obvious course of passing by demonstrably inaccurate translations and seeing for ourselves just exactly what is stated in the Scriptures. No great learning is called for in doing this: only the ability to recognize the presence or absence of the Hebrew letter *lamed*; yet how many pages have been written on the subject, based upon inaccurate versions of the passage!

Except for one point, the rest of the story of Jephthah’s life must be left to the reader to study. That exception is in connection with Judges xii. 6, “Say now Shibboleth”. The inability of the men of Ephraim to pronounce “Sh” in the word “Shibboleth” finds confirmation in the Tel-el-Armarna tablets. The entire district occupied by the men of Ephraim had been Amorite territory (Josh. x. 1-5). The Tel-el-Armarna tablets show that the substitution of “S” for “Sh” was a peculiarity of the Amorites. “Shiloh” for example appears as “Silu”. Conder says:--

“This has always presented the difficulty, that the “S” is not the proper representative of the Hebrew “Sh”. Perhaps, as in the other cases, the peasant pronunciation represents the Amorite rather than the Hebrew sound.”

The Ephraimites, by continual contact with the Amorites, had fallen into their manner of speech, and these ancient tablets have been preserved to bear their witness to the fact in our day.

Samson.

We now come to the last of the Judges (Samson) whose acts of deliverance are recorded in this book. He foreshadows Christ, in that his birth was foretold by an angel: “Thou shalt conceive and bear a son” (Judges xiii. 3; Isa. vii. 14; Luke i. 31), and that he was a Nazarite, though it is hardly necessary to say that that state was fully exemplified only by Him Who was, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. vii. 26).

Samson’s exploits are twelve in number, and are the probable origin of the Greek story of the twelve labours of Hercules. These twelve exploits are associated with three women, and fall into three groups of four, as follows:--

Samson's Twelve Exploits in Judges.

- A | WIFE, A WOMAN OF TIMNATH.
 - a | The lion rent (xiv. 5).
 - b | Thirty men slain (xiv. 19).
 - a | Jackals and firebrands (xv. 4, 5).
 - b | Philistines smitten hip and thigh (xv. 7, 8).
- B | HARLOT OF GAZA.
 - a | Cords become like burnt flax (xv. 14).
 - b | A thousand slain with jaw bone (xv. 15).
 - b | He drank of water that came out (xv. 19).
 - a | Carried the gates of Gaza to hill top (xvi. 3).
- C | DELILAH, PROBABLY A JEWESS (see Josephus).
 - a | Seven green withs (xvi. 8).
 - b | New ropes (xvi. 11).
 - a | Seven locks of hair (xvi. 13).
 - b | Over 300 slain at his death (xvi. 27-30).

Samson's first act, the slaying of the lion, the production of sweetness from its carcass, and the evident humility that restrained him from telling his parents, are a clear foreshadowing of the work of Christ. The attitude of the men of Judah who said: "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?" (Judges xv. 10, 11), and their attempt to deliver Samson over to the Philistines is parallel with the attitude of the Jews who said: "We have no King but Cæsar" (John xix. 15), and who delivered the Lord up to their Roman rulers.

Samson however develops vanity and self-praise, and although in his own person he is still used, he becomes less and less a type of the Lord.

Delilah is not spoken of as a Philistine. She betrayed Samson for eleven hundred pieces of silver (Judges xvi. 5), exactly the same sum as was used to make the Ephod, and which finally became a curse to Samson's own tribe (Judges xvii. 2). The name Delilah means effeminate, or enfeebling, qualities which are the opposite of the Nazarite character. Three times over did Delilah tempt Samson, and three times over did he rebut here with lies. What a contrast with Christ, Who met the threefold temptation in the wilderness, with a quotation from the Word of truth! Samson, having so far departed from the spirit of a Nazarite, was deprived of its outward symbol, his long hair, and was taken, blinded, and degraded.

On a set day the Philistines called for Samson to be brought out in order that they might make sport of him (Judges xvi. 25), just as the Lord was blindfolded, mocked and abused before His death.

Whilst Samson's last prayer is for vengeance,

"Strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges xvi. 28).

that of Christ was for the forgiveness of His murderers:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”(Luke xxiii. 34).

The analysis of Samson’s acts is rendered difficult by the strong intermixture of the flesh with the leading of the Spirit.

Samson “began to deliver” (Judges xiii. 5), but it was left to another, Samuel, more completely to realize the true type of deliverer. He also was dedicated to the Lord before birth, but did not fall from his high calling by giving way to the lusts of the flesh as did Samson. The strongest man, and also the weakest man, of the book of Judges is Samson. What a lesson for ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in “God that quickeneth the dead!”

No treatment of Samson’s life and deeds can be considered complete that does not deal with the meaning and purpose of the Nazarite vow. Insufficiency of space, prevents our giving the subject consideration here, but we refer the interested reader to the article on the subject in the series entitled “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” in Volume XXII, page 123.

The Book of RUTH.
#1. The book as a whole;
and the loss of the inheritance (i. 1-22).
pp. 127 - 132

The Book of Judges ends on a sad note:

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges xxi. 25).

It would be difficult to exaggerate the deplorable condition of Israel during many of the years covered by the Book of Judges. On the other hand it would be a mistake to paint the whole picture in the same somber colours. In Judges x., for example, we have the names of the two men who judged Israel for a period of 45 years, and there is nothing recorded of that period except the fact that Jair had 30 sons, who rode 30 colts and possessed 30 cities, so that it would appear that during this period things were fairly normal. The Book of Ruth gives us a glimpse of one of these periods “when the judges judged” (Ruth i. 1).

The book of Ruth fulfils several purposes:

- (1) It reveals that even during the dark days of the Judges, there were some who lived their simple lives in the fear of the Lord.
- (2) The example of utter faithfulness presented by the story of Ruth the Moabitess, stands out in bold relief against the dark background of the times, and gives encouragement to us in our own day of darkness and apostacy.
- (3) The book supplies an important link in the genealogy of Christ as the Son of David.
- (4) The introduction into that genealogy of a Moabitess illuminates the character of the God of all grace, prefiguring the acceptance of the Gentile, and indicating something of the gracious work of the Saviour.
- (5) But perhaps more important than all is the light this book throws upon that most important typical figure, the Kinsman-Redeemer.

If we turn to Eph. i., we find there a twofold presentation of redemption:

- (1) REDEMPTION FROM BONDAGE.
 "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7).
- (2) REDEMPTION OF A POSSESSION.
 "Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. i. 14).

In the first passage the word *aphesis* ("forgiveness") is used, meaning "setting free from bondage" (See Luke iv. 18). In the second passage, sin and bondage are not in view. The figure is an "earnest" *now* in view of a "possession" *then*; and as the possession has been forfeited, redemption is essential. It is this second aspect of redemption that finds so beautiful an illustration in the Book of Ruth, and makes its study so profitable.

The central and longest portions of the book revolve round the figure of Boaz as the Kinsman-Redeemer (*Gaal*). The word *gaal* and its derivatives, which are variously translated "redeem", "right", "right to redeem", and "kinsman" occur no less than twenty times in these central chapters.

The simplest analysis of the book seems to be as follows. The first chapter simply puts us in possession of the circumstances that involved the forfeiture of the inheritance, while the closing verses of the fourth chapter reveal its redemption.

A		A		i. 1-18.	\	Sons dead.
					}	No more sons possible.
		B		i. 19-22.	/	Inheritance suspended.
		B		C		ii. 1-23. Kindness to living and dead.
				C		iii. 1 - iv. 13. Name of dead not cut <i>off</i> .
					/	Redeemer.
A		B		iv. 14-18.	\	Better than seven sons.
					}	Genealogy to David.
		A		iv. 19-22.	/	Inheritance redeemed.

In this article we propose to clear the way by examining chapter i., so that the central chapters (ii. 1 - iv. 13) may be considered together as a whole next time.

We are not told why Elimelech should have felt constrained to move from Bethlehem owing to famine, for there must have been many families similarly stricken. Perhaps the names of his children indicate that they were very delicate, for *Mahlon* means “Sickly” and *Chilion* “Pining”. There is more significance, however, in this than the merely physical. In direct contrast with the names meaning “sickly” and “pining” we have *Boaz*, “Strong”, who alone is able to redeem that which by weakness and death the two sons of Elimelech had lost. The reader will realize that in the Apostle’s reference to “the weak and beggarly elements”, in contrast with Christ the Redeemer, we have a continuance of the same lesson in New Testament terms.

The name Elimelech means “My God is King”, a splendid name during the dark days of the Book of Judges, when there was “no king in Israel”. It balances the close of the book, where, in the last verse, we read of David, the first king of God’s choice. There is also significance in the fact that *Bethlehem* means “The House of Bread” and *Ephratha* “Fruitful”, though neither of these titles were fulfilled in the case of Naomi, until the advent of the Kinsman-Redeemer. Again, Naomi’s name means “Sweetness”, and here the book itself assures us that it has a typical meaning. In i. 20 we read that Naomi changed her name to *Mara*, meaning “bitter”. This word is used of Israel in Exod. i. 14, and also of their initial experience as the redeemed of the Lord in Exod. xv. 23, where, at the waters of Marah, sweetness was produced by the application of a tree—an obvious type of redemption.

The Book of Ruth is read by the Jews in their synagogues at Pentecost, the period of harvesting, since much of the book is concerned with reaping and gleaning. Pentecost is the prophetic pledge of the final restoration of Israel, and the two houses, Judah and Israel, are typified by the two loaves baked with leaven (Lev. xxiii. 17). This twofold character of the restoration is set forth in Zech xi. 7 under the symbol of the two staves “Beauty” and “Bands”. In case the reader should wonder what this has to do with the Book of Ruth, it must be explained that Naomi, “Pleasant”, is the same word as “Beauty”, while “Bands”, meaning “Pledge”, is linked up with the idea of a “Surety”, as the parallelism of Prov. xx. 16 shows. All this may not be very obvious to the Gentiles reader, but the Hebrew mind would seize upon these associations and see in the restoration of Naomi at Pentecost by a Kinsman-Redeemer, a prophecy of the future restoration of all Israel.

The structure of the opening verses focuses our attention upon the *two sons*.

Ruth i. 1-3.
From Bethlehem to Moab.

- A | A | i. 1-3. |
a1 | A certain man. Unnamed at first.
b1 | Bethlehem-Judah.
c1 | Sojourn. Moab.
a1 | He and his wife.
d | TWO SONS.
a2 | Names given.
b2 | Bethlehem-Judah.
c2 | Continued. Moab.
a2 | He died.
d | TWO SONS.

After the death of Elimelech, the two sons married two women of Moab, and lived together for ten years. In both cases the marriages were childless, and at the death of the two sons, the three widows were faced with a serious problem. Elimelech's inheritance which passed on to Mahlon and Chilion was temporarily suspended owing to the fact that no child had been born to either of the two sons. This gives point to the otherwise rather strange reference that Naomi makes to the idea of the two widows waiting until she, Naomi, might re-marry and have further sons—a far-fetched argument to our ears, but not so when read in the light of the law of Moses, to which we must make reference later. We do not propose to give here the full outline of this first chapter, but pass on to the fourth member which is as follows:

Ruth i. 8-18.

- A | A | i. 8-18. |
d1 | Ye dealt kindly with me.
e1 | "Rest" in house of husband.
e1 | "Tarry" for husband.
d1 | The Lord against me.
f | Orpah. Kissed.
Ruth. Clave.
d2 | She has gone back.
e2 | Her people. Her gods.
d2 | Intreat me not to leave.
e2 | Thy people. Thy God.

In those days the lot of an unmarried woman was such that marriage with almost anyone, however irksome, was preferable. Naomi speaks of Orpah and Ruth "finding rest" (*menuchah*) in the house of a husband. The same word is repeated in Ruth iii. 1: "Shall I not seek rest for thee?" This figure, too, is prophetic; for in Isaiah we find marriage terms employed to describe the glory of that future day when Israel shall be restored. In Isa. lxii. we read that Israel shall be called *Hephzi-bah*, "My delight is in her", and the land *Beulah*, "Married" (Isa. lxii. 4). Again, in Isa. xxxii.:

“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places (*menuchah*)” (Isa. xxxii. 18).

The contrast between Orpah and Ruth is most marked. Orpah “kissed” her mother-in-law; but Ruth “clave” to her. Orpah went back to “her people” and to “her gods”, but Ruth chooses Naomi’s “people” and Naomi’s “God”.

The beauty of the words of Ruth as recorded in verses 16 and 17 will move the heart so long as the world endures. They are comparable with the lowly act of love which the Saviour said should be remembered wheresoever the gospel was preached (Matt. xxvi. 13).

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth i. 16, 17).

And so these two took the long road back to Bethlehem, and arrived there at the beginning of the barley harvest. There are no accidents in God’s providence. His hand guided; His heart planned, and Boaz, all unwittingly, was awaiting his appointed time and work.

We are now ready to take up the great story of the Kinsman-Redeemer as it is unfolded in the central section of this beautiful little book. May the faithfulness of Ruth be an inspiration to each of us in these days when so many seem to do “that which is right in the sight of their own eyes”.

For the sake of those readers who appreciate structural outlines in detail, and wish to have them as complete as possible, we give below the structure of verses 19-22.

Ruth i. 19-22.

A | B | i. 19-22. |
g | Came to Bethlehem.
h | Is this Naomi?
i1 | Call me not Naomi.
j1 | Call me Mara.
 The Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.
i1 | I went out full.
j1 | Brought back empty.
i2 | Why call me Naomi?
j2 | The Lord testified against me.
 The Almighty hath afflicted me.
g | Came to Bethlehem.
h | Beginning of barley harvest.

The Book of RUTH.
#2. The Kinsman-Redeemer (ii. 1 - iv. 22).
pp. 165 - 171

The central sections of the Book of Ruth are mainly concerned with the Kinsman-Redeemer. It is evident, therefore, that before we can rightly appreciate the narrative of Ruth ii.-iv., we must be well acquainted with the teaching of Scripture concerning this important office.

Ruth ii. opens with the statement: "And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband", and this note is repeated with variations throughout the section. In verse 3 we read that Ruth's "hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was *of the kindred of Elimelech*".

In verse 20, when Ruth returns to her mother-in-law with her gleanings, we find that Naomi links up the thought of kindness to the dead, with that of nearness of kin:

"Blessed be he of the Lord, Who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen" (Ruth ii. 20).

There are four words used in connection with Boaz and his kinship with Naomi, which may be set out as follows:

- (1) He was a "kinsman" of Elimelech (Ruth ii. 1). Here the word translated "kinsman" is *moda*, derived from *yada*, "to know". The word implies very intimate knowledge, as the usage of Gen. iv. 1 indicates, and is used in Isa. liii.: "By His *knowledge* shall My righteous servant justify many" (11). When we realize the relationship between this word and the "Kinsman" and "Kinsman-Redeemer" we begin to see a fuller reason for its use in Isa. liii., and a deeper meaning in many of the N.T. references to "knowledge".
- (2) We also read that Boaz was of the "kindred" of Elimelech (Ruth ii. 3). Here the word translated "kindred" is *mishpachah*, from the root *shapach*, "to join" or "associate". *Mishpachah* is translated "after their kinds" (Gen. viii. 19), "after their families" (Gen. x. 5); and is the word "family" in Ruth ii. 1. Ruth uses the word twice in ii. 13 in reference to herself as a "handmaid". Once again profound doctrine is resident in these facts. To be redeemed one must be of the same "family" or "kind" as the redeemer. It was a necessity, therefore, that the Lord from heaven should become man and that the Word should be made flesh.
- (3) In Ruth ii. 20 Naomi says of Boaz: "The man is near of kin to us." Here the word translated "near of kin" is *qarob*. Readers who depend upon Young's Analytical Concordance should note that this reference is omitted both under "Near" and "Near of kin". The verb *qarab*, "to come near", is used in the same intimate sense as the verb "to know" (see Gen. xx. 4), and once again the instructed reader will appreciate the fuller meaning behind the N.T. references to drawing near, both on the part of the Saviour Himself, and of those whom He has redeemed.
- (4) This is perhaps the most important reference and is found in Ruth ii. 20: "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen." Here the margin informs us

that the passage may be translated: “One that hath right to redeem.” The word here is *Goel** (* - In the Concordance, *Goel* is found under *Gaal*, “to redeem”), or “Kinsman-Redeemer”.

The “Kinsman-Redeemer” played an important part in the Hebrew economy and is referred to in Lev. xxv., where we find the first statement of the law concerning the redemption of land. Under the law of Moses it was not possible for a man to sell the land that formed part of his true possession “in perpetuity”. In every transaction with regard to the sale of land, it was compulsory to “grant a redemption” (Lev. xxv. 23, 24). If a man had “sold away” any part of his possession, on account of poverty, his “next of kin” had the right to redeem it. A special provision was made for the safeguarding of the inheritance to the rightful family, which is set out at length in Deut. xxv. 5-10:

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife, then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband’s brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her: then shall his brother’s wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”

This law was certainly in the minds of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, and its recognition makes the reading of Ruth ii.-iv., vivid and plain. Before turning to Ruth, however, we must mention the other aspect of the Kinsman-Redeemer’s work—that of the “avenger of blood”. The word *Goel* is translated “avenger” or “revenger” in 13 passages, and we are told in Numb. xxxv. that cities of refuge were provided so that a man could get a hearing and a trial in the event of having slain another without premeditation. This aspect of the Kinsman’s duty does not, however, come into the story of Ruth.

With the information we have gathered, both as to the various words used for kinship and the law concerning the kinsman and his brother’s widow, let us return now to Ruth and read the story again in the light of these facts. First of all let us see the structure of the passage.

Ruth iii. 1 - iv. 13.

- A | iii. 1-9. | a | c | Shall I not find rest for thee?
d | Is not Boaz of our kindred?
b | e | When Boaz finishes eating and drinking.
f | Mark the place where he shall lie.
g | Uncover his feet.
h | Lay thee down.
i | He will tell thee what to do.
i | All that thou sayest I will do.
e | When Boaz had eaten and drunk.
f | He went to lie down.
g | Uncovered his feet.
h | Laid down.
a | c | Who art thou?
b | j | I am Ruth, thine handmaid.
k | Spread thy skirt over.
j | Thou art a near kinsman.
- B | iii. 10-13. Boaz explains about the nearer kinsman. Promises to redeem.
C | iii. 14-18. Ruth assured.
B | iv. 1-6. Boaz advertises the other kinsman. Fulfil his promise to redeem.
A | iv. 7-13. The inheritance secured. Ruth becomes wife to Boaz.

We have not felt justified in setting out the whole of the passage in detail. We have given the sections, and set out the first one as an example, so that the reader should find little difficulty in completing the structure if it be deemed necessary.

Naomi's words in chapter iii. find a parallel in Ruth i. 9:

"The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband"
(Ruth i. 9).

"My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be will with thee?" (Ruth iii. 1).

No longer has Naomi to speak of a possible husband and future sons (Ruth i. 12, 13) for now she can say: "Is not Boaz of our kindred?" (Ruth iii. 2).

It was the custom at threshing time for the owner to remain all night on the threshing-floor, until the harvest was safely gathered. Naomi knew this and instructed Ruth how to act. Judged by modern standard of morality Ruth would probably be condemned, but Boaz bears testimony that "all the city of my people dost know that thou art a virtuous woman" (Ruth iii. 11).

When Ruth said: "Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid for thou art a near kinsman" (or, one who has the right to redeem) (Ruth iii. 9). Boaz knew that she was asking him not only to redeem the land that had been lost, but also to marry her and so save the name of the dead husband from being blotted out. Boaz is touched by the fact that Ruth had not followed after young men, but had let her choice fall upon one who was apparently many years her senior.

Boaz was not Ruth's brother-in-law and was, therefore, under no compulsion in the matter, for the law of Deut. xxv. is concerned with the "husband's brother", and the case of "brethren dwelling together" (Deut. xxv. 5, 6). By removing to Moab Elimelech had made impossible the second of these conditions, and Boaz, though of the kindred of Elimelech, was not the deceased husband's brother.

We find this practice of the marrying of the brother's widow in operation before the giving of the law (*see* Gen. xxxviii. 8), and we have records of its existence in Athens, in Persia, in Tartary and Circassia, and among the Druzes. Niebuhr writes:

"It does indeed happen among the Mohametans that a man marries his brother's widow, but she has no right to compel him so to do."

We shall discover in the Book of Ruth a blending of the law of Moses and also the more ancient custom referred to above.

Boaz was obliged, in fairness, to defer complying with Ruth's request, for, said he: "It is true that I am thy near kinsman, howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I" (Ruth iii. 12). However, Boaz probably guessed that the marrying of the Moabitess would be a stumbling-block in the other kinsman's way, and promises to perform the office of the kinsman himself, should the nearer kinsman fail.

It is interesting to note that, while Ruth's virtue could not apparently be called in question, and neither she nor Boaz had any cause for shame, they did not in anyway flaunt their innocence, but sought rather to preserve their good name from the smallest suspicion of evil:

"Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor" (Ruth iii. 14).

Naomi's immediate question: "Who art thou, my daughter?" (Ruth iii. 16) does not mean that she was unable to distinguish Ruth owing to the early hour of the day, but rather expresses her intense desire to know what had transpired (compare Judges xviii. 8). In Ruth ii. 19 Naomi had enquired where Ruth had gleaned, and when she was shown the ephah of barley she immediately perceived that the Lord's hand was in it. So here, when she sees the six measures of barley, she expresses her confidence that Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled.

In Ruth iii. 15 the A.V. reads: "And she went unto the city." This, however, is incorrect, the true rendering being: "And *he* went into the city." Boaz meant to lose no time in bringing the matter to a head. Sitting down in the gate where all public transactions were carried out, he hails the other kinsman and, in the presence of the ten men that had been secured to make the transaction legal, he says to him:

"Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee: and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What

day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”

While the nearer kinsman was quite willing to redeem the parcel of land, he was not willing to marry the Moabitess and he therefore relinquishes his right. Boaz and the other kinsman then follow a custom that was even then ancient in Israel, whenever redeeming and changing were to be confirmed:

“A man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel” (Ruth iv. 7).

To place one’s shoe upon anything was a symbol of possession. To take off one’s shoe and pass it to another was a symbol of transference. The spreading of the skirt already alluded to was another symbol of transferred authority. Even to this day it is the custom to associate old boots with weddings, and although this is now simply a piece of harmless fun, the custom has its origin in these distant times.

It would seem that the nearer kinsman who failed probably sets forth the failure of man to redeem either himself or his brother, and that the transference to Boaz is an indication that Christ’s alone is strong enough to undertake the task.

We next read that Boaz calls upon the elders and the people to witness that he has bought all that was Elimelech’s, Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi, and further, that he has purchased Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, to be his wife, and that he intends to play the kinsman-redeemer’s part and to “raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off”. In reply, the people not only declare themselves witnesses, but also express their pleasure by adding words of blessing. There is pointed meaning in the reference they make to “Pharez whom Tamar bare unto Judah”, for in Gen. xxxviii. we have the story of one who, by refusing to do the kinsman’s part, not only involved himself in death, but his brother’s widow in immorality. Boaz, it is implied, represents the reverse of all this.

We now reach the conclusion of the book:

<i>A</i>		<i>B</i>		iv. 14-17.	
		<i>a</i>		The Woman.	
		<i>b</i>		Blessed be the Lord a kinsman to thee.	
		<i>c</i>		Name famous in Israel.	
		<i>d</i>		Nourisher.	
		<i>d</i>		Nurse.	
		<i>a</i>		The Women.	
		<i>b</i>		A son born to Naomi.	
		<i>c</i>		Name Obed (Jesse, David).	
<i>A</i>		iv. 18-22.		<i>e</i>	
				The generations of Pharez.	
				Pharez begat David.	

Not only is Ruth, the Moabitess, graciously brought under the wing of the God of Israel, and her temporal needs satisfied by the love and wealth of Boaz the Strong, but a link is also made in the chain that binds Adam to Christ, and Ruth finds an honourable place not only in the line of David, but in the genealogy of David's greater Son (Matt. i. 5).

When we remember that the Scriptural redeemer must be a kinsman and an Israelite, and also that the Redeemer of Israel is set forth as Israel's Lord and God (*cf.* Isa. xli. 14; xliii. 14; xliv. 6, 24, etc.), we are confronted with a problem which can only be solved in the light of the person of Christ as "God manifest in the flesh".

With this delightful story the O.T. narrative passes on from the days of the Judges to the times of Samuel. We can but be thankful for the presence of this interlude of simple faith and love in the midst of much that is a record of failure and departure. It would almost seem that the God of Israel points to the faith of the Moabitess here in much the same way as, when in the flesh, He drew attention to the faith of the centurion (Matt. viii. 10, 11).

Blessed be God for every one that can say with Job: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

The Book of SAMUEL.
#1. The Closing Days of the Judges.
(I Samuel i. 1 - viii. 3).
pp. 211 - 215

Rather in the same way as the Book of Ruth establishes a link between the days of the Judges and the days of David, so the opening book of Samuel begins with the days of the Judges and ends with the death of Saul. The books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles form a complete whole, and were apparently written by the three prophets, Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

"Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all this reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the countries" (I Chron. xxix. 29, 30).

It is evident that the prophets often wrote the history of their own times, for we read:

"Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and write it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (I Sam. x. 25).

The prophet Gad comes into touch with David just after his escape from the cave of Adullam (I Sam. xxii. 5), and is called "David's seer" in I Chron. xxi. 9. Nathan also was closely associated with David, and continued on into the days of Solomon.

"Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the books of Nathan the prophet?" (II Chron. ix. 29).

The records contained in the first four books of Kings are, therefore, the work of these three prophets, Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

The reader may, perhaps, be surprised at the phrase we have just used: "The first four books of Kings." The name of the book we are now studying is given in the A.V. as "The First Book of Samuel, otherwise the First Book of Kings". The books that are now called I and II Samuel were always reckoned by the Hebrews as one book, the present sub-division being derived from the Septuagint. That there was no break between the two books is evident from the *Sedarim*, or cycles for public reading. The twentieth *Sedarim* begins with I Sam. xxx. 25 and ends with II Sam. ii. 6, without showing the slightest break.

As to the purpose of these records, we are assured that beyond the mere preservation of the historical facts there was a more important purpose served. Speaking of the rejection of Christ and His Second Coming, Peter refers to the testimony of the prophets as follows:

"Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts iii. 24).

In several ways Samuel stands to David as John the Baptist stands to the Lord. Both were born to mothers who were naturally barren. Samuel was dedicated as a Nazarite all his days, while of John it was said: "He shall neither drink wine nor strong drink." Samuel anointed David as King, while it was the special office of John the Baptist to testify at the baptism of Jordan that the Messiah had come. Samuel was rejected by the people, while John "decreased" until at last he suffered death in prison.

Hannah's song at the birth of Samuel has often been compared with Mary's song in Luke i. 46-55, but few seem to have noticed the close parallel between Hannah's song and that of Zacharias. Of Samuel, also, it is written: "And the child Samuel grew before the Lord" (I Sam. ii. 21), while of John we read: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke i. 80). As Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, so John was the last of the prophets and the first of the disciples.

The first seven chapters of I Samuel take us back to the days of the judges and show us the sad state of the times, the failure of the priests, and the great need for a wise and firm ruler. With the opening of chapter viii., we find Samuel aged and his sons made judges; but alas, they follow in the footsteps of Eli's sons rather than in those of Samuel their father. The result of this is that Israel demand a king. They were certainly wrong to do so, but it was the misrule of Samuel's sons that was the main cause.

It is evident, as one reads I Sam. viii. 1-3, that there is an intended parallel here with the record of Eli and his sons.

“And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (I Sam. viii. 1-3).

“Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel I hear of your evil dealings by all this people” (I Sam. ii. 22, 23).

The nature of our exposition, the amount of the material before us, and the necessity to make some selection, make it impossible for us to deal with the lovely story of Hannah’s faith, and young Samuel’s innocence. Neither can we give detailed structures; if we were to do this, it would be fairly safe to say that we should be dealing with these Books of Kings for the remainder of our days. In this series we are simply endeavouring to point out the more important features in the onward movement of the purpose of the ages, and to give enough material to guide the earnest seeker into a fuller understanding of the passages under examination. We cannot, therefore, attempt a detailed analysis. The reader will find much to his hand in the margin of *The Companion Bible*.

Leaving the structure set out in *The Companion Bible*, we give instead the following analysis, which, as the reader will see, has the merit of focusing the attention upon the essential features, but, of course, omits much more than it can include.

I Samuel i. 1 - viii. 3.

- A | i. 1 - ii. 21. Hannah. Her son.
The song.
Exalt the horn of His anointed.
- B | ii. 22-26. Eli. Very old. His sons’ evil dealings.
- A | ii. 27 - vii. 17. A man of God. Eli’s son.
The prophesy. “Faithful Priest.”
“Before Mine Anointed.”
- B | viii. 1-3. Samuel. Old. His sons turned aside.

Hannah’s song, in the first section of the structure, demands our attention. While its origin is the birth of Samuel, its burden is prophetic. It speaks of the enemies of the Lord being silenced and, as the song nears its conclusion, its Messianic character becomes more and more apparent.

“The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces. Out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed” (I Sam. ii. 10).

With this song should be compared Mary’s song and the prophecy of Zacharias in Luke i.—particularly the words of verse 69: “And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.”

There is no need to enlarge upon the abominable actions of the sons of Eli, but we might notice in passing the way in which the sad story is punctuated, as it were, by the record of Samuel's growth:

“And the child Samuel *grew* before the Lord” (I Sam. ii. 21).

“And the child Samuel *grew on*, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men” (I Sam. ii. 26).

“And Samuel *grew*, and the Lord was with him” (I Sam. iii. 19).

It has been objected that Samuel was but a Levite, and not a Priest, and that therefore his offering of the sacrifices was illegal. There are two good answers to this objection:

- (1) When the Ark was in its place, and the worship of the Lord centralized, the specific duties of the priests could be enforced; but at this time the Ark was taken by the Philistines and Israel were without it for a period of twenty years (I Sam. vii. 2).
- (2) In the days of apostasy the Lord has the right to suspend his laws to replace them by others. This does not, of course, give man the right to change the ordinances of the Lord on his own initiative.

The people had become so degraded that the ceremonial service, that should have enabled them to see the truth of atonement and sanctification, had degenerated into an unclean superstition, and Samuel was raised up, much like the prophets that succeeded him, to tell the people that incense so offered was an abomination.

“Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifices and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Sam. xv. 22).

Two very suggestive names occur in this section of Samuel, namely Ichabod and Ebenezer. When the punishment fell upon Hophni, Phinehas and Eli, and the Ark of the Lord was taken by the Philistines, the news brought to the wife of Phinehas at a critical time, for “she was with child, and near to be delivered” (I Sam. iv. 19). When she heard what had happened she bowed herself and gave birth to a son.

“And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband” (I Sam. iv. 20, 21).

The second name, “Ebenezer” means a “Stone of Help”. The stone was erected to commemorate deliverance and was so named when the Philistines were obliged to return the Ark whose capture had been associated with the name Ichabod. In these two symbolic words we have a summing-up of the whole of Israel's history. No glory while the Presence of the Lord is removed from them, but when at last that glory returns, as we find in the closing chapters of Ezekiel, the sadness of the cry Ichabod will be turned to rejoicing and the people will say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.

The reader will already be acquainted with the incidents of Samuel's early boyhood, and with the things that happened to the Philistines while they retained the Ark of the Lord, so that he will be able to supplement these notes as the occasion demands. We have but cleared a path through these opening chapters, leading up to the section which deals with the choice of Saul and the history of his reign. This section we must consider in our next study.

Great Plainness of Speech.

#3. The Difference between Doctrinal and Dispensational Truth. pp. 21, 22

While we have insisted upon the fact that the Mystery is revealed for the first time in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians by Paul when he was the Lord's prisoner, we have also insisted upon the basic character of much that he taught in the Epistle to the Romans. For instance, without the teaching of Rom. v.-viii., the great superstructure of Ephesians would stand upon no solid doctrinal foundation. But there is no contradiction in thus setting Romans aside *dispensationally* and retaining it *doctrinally*. It is because we believe that the pre-eminence of the Jew no longer obtains that we set Romans aside so far as its dispensational teaching is concerned. But we re-instate it so far as its great doctrine is concerned, for that doctrine of sin and death is as true for the Mystery as for the New Covenant blessings. We do however insist upon distinguishing between foundation and superstructure; between gospel and mystery; between that which is permanent and that which is passing. Quoting from the introduction to the Booklet entitled *Roman Stones for the Ephesian Temple* we read:

“The cause of truth is sometimes damaged by the excessive zeal of its supporters. We believe most surely that the revelation of the Mystery in Eph. iii. and Col. i. marks the introduction of something as absolutely new as a ‘new creation’; but the very new creation itself, which is yet to be, will have vital connections with those former things that pertain to the work of redemption, even though other ‘former things’ are to pass away.”

It is for the sake of clearness, that we have used the term “Dispensational Truth”, in order to distinguish such truth from “Doctrinal Truth”. An example will help. The doctrinal truth of the inspiration of Holy Scripture belongs to all ages, callings and dispensations. We find it asserted by Moses and the Prophets, by the Evangelists, by Peter, and by Paul. But does the acceptance of that common doctrine nullify all the distinctions that are to be found existing between the inspired writings of Moses, Matthew, Peter and Paul? Most certainly not. The great basic doctrine of redemption by blood is found in all parts of Scripture, but the fact that redemption is a fundamental doctrine of the teachings of Paul, Peter and the Book of the Revelation does not in any sense alter the fact that the calling, sphere and destiny of those teachings differ essentially. If possible, still further to make clear these distinctions we seek to state as simply as possible the essential difference between “Doctrine” and Dispensation”.

By “Doctrinal Truth” we mean that fundamental teaching of the Scripture which touches what is common to all men as sinners and to all believers as saints. The doctrines of sin and death, of forgiveness, justification, sanctification and future glory, entered by resurrection, belong exclusively to no one dispensation. The teaching of Scripture concerning the Person and work of the Son of God belongs to no one dispensation, but is as wide as the needs of the sons of Adam.

By “Dispensational Truth” we mean those revealed truths that belong exclusively to some one dispensation. The “promise” of the Land to Israel must be distinguished from the “promise” that was made in Christ before the overthrow of the world. The “hope” of the glory of the New Jerusalem must be distinguished from the “hope” of the glory that shall be enjoyed in heavenly places at the right hand of God. While believers, during the Acts and in the dispensation of the mystery, were and are justified by faith, that common basis must not be used to nullify the totally different structures that God has been pleased to erect upon that common basis. We therefore urge upon all the necessity of distinguishing between the “doctrinal” teaching of Romans, true now as it was when written, and the subsequent revelation of the mystery, true only since Acts xxviii.

The interested reader who desires further information upon these features is directed to the following:

Doctrine and Dispensation	Vol. xx. 48; x. 113, 114.
The Gospel for To-day	Vol. xii. 103, 139.
Common Features of Paul’s Epistles	Vol. xi. 126.
Differing Features of Paul’s Epistles	Vol. xi. 127.
Mystery and Rom. xvi. 25, 26	Vol. vi. 111.
The Dispensation of the Mystery	Vol. xviii. 81, 117, 145.
Things that Differ	Vol. xviii. 15, 177.
Ephesians via Romans	Booklet.

#4. Spiritual Gifts. pp. 68, 69

In tabulating the “things that differ” in the two sets of Paul’s epistles, prominence must be given to the subject of spiritual gifts. To say, as some do, that “miracles do not happen to-day” is not quite true. Every Divine interposition, or even answer to prayer, is a miracle. It is, however, true to say that there are no *evidential* miracles in the dispensation of the Mystery. The presence of evidential miracles is an important characteristic of the dispensation that preceded Acts xxviii., just as their absence characterizes the dispensation which was given to Paul as the Lord’s prisoner.

The reader is asked to observe, however, that we do not say that in no circumstances to-day are evidential miracles possible; we are careful to speak only of the dispensation of the Mystery. If the Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, before the end comes, then we must be prepared to find pioneers in heathen lands experiencing some of the evidences of the faith that belongs to the Kingdom. Confining ourselves, however, to the two sets of Paul’s epistles, before and

after Acts xxviii., we can say quite definitely that evidential miracles are characteristic of the former, while their complete absence is equally characteristic of the latter.

The classical passage in connection with spiritual gifts is, of course, I Cor. xii. It is important here that the thought of the “body” should be considered in relation to the context, namely, as an illustration of the “diversity in unity”, which the Apostle sought to teach respecting the many and varied gifts that were given by the self-same Spirit. The “gifts” mentioned in Eph. iv. are not miraculous gifts, but gifts of men specially qualified as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. A comparison of Eph. iv. 11 with I Cor. xii. 28-30 will show how fundamental in this respect is the difference between the two dispensations.

Spiritual gifts such as healing the sick, raising the dead, immunity from the fatal results of snake-bite or poison, continue through the story of the Acts right up to the last chapter. They were in operation in the Churches founded by Paul, and were so much in evidence that instructions had to be given as to their regulation in the Church. Further, the possession by the Gentile believers of these spiritual gifts was allowed in order to provoke Israel to emulation, and to warn them of their approaching rejection. While Israel remained a people, and while their repentance was humanly possible, evidential gifts remained, but immediately Israel were set aside at Acts xxviii., and the dispensation of the Mystery was inaugurated, these gifts ceased, and have never been revived in connection with this dispensation. The Apostle, in I Cor. xiii., compares spiritual gifts with childish things, which will be “put away” when that which is perfect is come. Without teaching that Paul had the Mystery in mind when he wrote these words to the Corinthians, we can see now that they point to an obvious truth. Spiritual gifts belong to childhood, while the Church of the One Body has to do with the stature of the fullness of Christ and the perfect man. Accordingly we affirm that spiritual gifts, such as tongues, healings and miracles, have no place in the dispensation of the Mystery.

The interested reader will find fuller details in the following:

The Gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. xii.-xiv.) Vol. i. 20-27 (i. 19-25); xiv. 102, 103.
Things that Differ (I Cor. xii. & Eph. iv.) . . . Vol. xviii. 177-182; xv. 26; xii. 73.
The Apostle of the Reconciliation Pages 154-160.

#5. What is the Hope of our calling? pp. 122, 123

It is an amazing thing to discover that even when the distinctive nature of the dispensation of the Mystery has been seen, there are some who go back to I Thess. iv. for the revelation of their hope. In the nature of things, the hope of any calling must be in agreement with its peculiarities of sphere and constitution, and it is therefore impossible that the hope of Israel should also be the blessed hope of the Church of the Mystery. It may, of course, be objected that I Thess. iv. does not represent the hope of Israel. This, therefore, we must examine.

The Acts of the Apostles opens with the hope of Israel, both before and after Pentecost (Acts i. 6, iii. 19-36), and closes with the hope of Israel in Acts xxviii. 20. This hope, therefore, is in operation throughout the whole book and period. It is outside the scope of this series to do more than point out simple facts, and we will therefore deal only with the hope of the Church at the time when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans. This must, however, be identical with the hope of all other churches that came under the same dispensation.

In Rom. xv. 12, 13 the Apostle writes:

“Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles hope. Now the God of the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in the hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

The reader has only to turn to Isa. xi., to which this passage refers, to prove beyond the possibility of doubt, that the hope to the Church in Rome at this time was Millennial. The reference to the Archangel in I Thess. iv. makes another link with Israel, as does the connecting passage in II Thess. ii. where the Man of Sin is spoken of. In I Cor. i. 7 the “coming” of the Lord is actually the “revelation” or “apocalypse”.

The hope of the Church of the Mystery must be the realization of the calling that places it far above all principalities at the right hand of God, a hope that is far removed from Isa. xi. It is set forth in Col. iii. 4, where it is associated with the manifestation in glory, when Christ Himself shall be made manifest.

The hope of any company of believers must of necessity be the realization of their calling. It is obvious that the calling of the Church in Ephesians differs materially in sphere, constitution, and destiny from that of the Church at Rome or Thessalonica during the Acts. The hope of these churches must be the fruition of the covenants that were then in force, namely, the covenant with Abraham and the new covenant with Israel and Judah. Members of the Church of the Mystery are taught to set their minds on things above, and that their hope is that when Christ

shall be manifested, they will be there with Him, not in the air, or in the New Jerusalem, but “in glory”.

The interested reader will find articles dealing with the distinctive hope of the Church of the Mystery as compared with that of the early Church in the following Volumes:

The Hope of the Mystery	Vol. xi. 125.
The Hope of I Thess. iv.	Vol. xii. 61-63; i. 122 (<i>i. 112</i>); iii. 74 (<i>ii./iii. 120</i>).
Parousia and Epiphaneia	Vol. xx. 169, 224-230; iii. 70 (<i>ii./iii. 117</i>).

#6. Dispensational Truth. pp. 159, 160

The word “dispensation” is in continual use in these studies, and it is important that we should not misunderstand its meaning. It has sometimes been confused with the word “age”, with the result that some have thought it to be impossible that two or more dispensations could be running together. While, of course, a dispensation must occupy time, and have a beginning and an end, the question of time is not so much in view as the characteristics that mark any special period in the outworking of the purpose of the ages, particularly in so far as this purpose has to do with various spheres and callings. The word comes particularly into prominence in the ministry of the apostle Paul. Until the time came for God to recall to favour the far-off Gentiles, there was no need to lay great stress upon the necessity of right division or of distinguishing dispensations. With the call and commission of the Apostle to the Gentiles, however, came the necessity to distinguish between Kingdom and Church, Jew and Gentile, and Bride and Body.

The word translated “dispensation” means “stewardship” or “house management”. When, therefore, Paul claimed that to him had been given the dispensation of the Mystery, he claimed to be the God-given steward and administrator of the Church of the One Body. While Paul fulfilled his appointed commission among the Gentiles, Peter, James and John were equally fulfilling theirs among the circumcision; and for many years the two dispensations, represented by Paul and Peter, ran concurrently.

A “dispensation” in Scripture indicates that some distinctive phase of the purpose of the ages is in view, and that some group of characteristics mark it off from other phases. Usually some chosen instrument—for instance, Moses or Paul—is identified with the revelation of its terms and the administering of its laws.

“Dispensational truth” indicates a particular revelation of God’s will to man during some particular administration. It is not so much concerned with doctrine common to all ages and to all men (e.g., the fact of sin, the inspiration of

Scripture, etc.), but with points of difference (e.g., the hope set before any particular company, the sphere in which it will be enjoyed, etc.).

The interested reader will find fuller notes in the following Volumes:

Dispensation, its Meaning Vol. xii. 23; xviii. 105.
Dispensation and the Ages; Dispensation and Doctrine
Vol. x. 113, 127; xii. 12.
See also “Dispensational Truth” pages 30-32.

#7. The Ages. pp. 182, 183

We remarked in No.6 of this series that the word “dispensation” is often confused with the word “age”, and it may therefore be helpful if we now consider the meaning of this second word. The meaning and importance of the “ages” in Scriptural teaching has been obscured by the fact that in most places the words *olam*, *aionios*, and *aion* are translated in terms of eternity—“for ever” or “everlasting”—instead of in terms of time. The purpose of the ages in one complete whole but the dispensational sub-divisions in its outworking are many. While the sphere of blessing of the Church of the Mystery differs most essentially from that of earthly Israel, both callings are an essential part of the one purpose of the ages. This is not the place to discuss the varying translations of *olam* and *aion*. In this article we are simply stating our conclusions as clearly as possible. The references given to articles in *The Berean Expositor* will, however, supply the reader with a fairly comprehensive survey of the usage and meaning of the words concerned.

The words OLAM, AION and AIONIOS, usually translated “for ever” and “everlasting” in the A.V., do not refer, either in themselves or in their usage, to eternity, but to time. The one word “age”, with its variants, “age-long”, “age-abiding”, “ages of ages”, etc., gives a complete presentation of the truth of Scripture. It is therefore important to discover whether any particular reference in the A.V. is a translation of these words, before any doctrine is deduced involving the idea of eternity as distinct from that of the ages.

For a fuller treatment of this subject and allied themes, the reader is referred to the following pages in *The Berean Expositor*:

THE AGES (*Aion* and *Olam*) Vol. i. 89 (i. 83); vi. 38, 69-72; x. 62-64;
xiii. 44; xiv. 120; xv. 41.

#8. Three “Adoptions” and three Spheres of Blessing. pp. 221 - 223

Covenants, Dispensations, Ages and Callings, with their associated doctrines, walks and peculiarities, testify to the fact that there are several spheres of blessing, viz., the Earth, the New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Places of Ephesians. These spheres are clearly indicated by name and characteristics in the Scriptures.

The Earth, both during the millennial reign of Christ and afterward, is to be blessed and inhabited by a redeemed people. The O.T. Prophets abound with references to this sphere, while such passages in the N.T. as “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven” confirm the literality of these predictions. Associated with this earthly sphere is a city, Jerusalem, which is to be the centre of rule and light to all the nations of the earth.

One of the finest demonstrations of the fact of these three spheres that Scripture provides, is the use of the word “adoption”, which means the “placing as a son”, and includes the idea of the making of a will and appointing the heir. It also includes the idea involved in the Scriptural meaning of the Firstborn. It is manifestly impossible for a man to have three first-born sons, unless, like Abraham, he has had three families; and if Scripture reveals three different callings that have the “adoption”, it will be a clear proof that there must be at least three different spheres of blessing.

In the earthly sphere, the adoption pertains to Israel.

“My kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption” (Rom. ix. 3, 4).

It is impossible to speak of a “spiritual Israel” with this plain passage before us, so we are compelled to interpret literally.

In the second sphere, the adoption pertains to both Jew and Gentile who walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham—the father of all who believe. These are severed from the Jerusalem which is below, and find their calling and sphere of blessing in the Jerusalem that is above.

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. iv. 5).

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 14).

“If ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29).

“Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. iv. 26).

The epistle to the Hebrews (which some, with good reason, believe was written at the same time as Galatians) speaks of “birthright”, “the heavenly Jerusalem”, “the Church

of the firstborn” (Heb. xii. 16, 22, 23), and makes it clear that to Abraham two sets of promises were made viz., (1) The Land, and (2) The heavenly City. Israel according to the flesh will inherit the first, and believing Jews, and Gentiles called during the Acts period, will inherit the second.

The third sphere is limited to the Dispensation of the Mystery. The adoption of Eph. i. 5 cannot be the same as that of Rom. ix. or Gal. iv., but pertains to the third sphere of blessing which is in “heavenly places”, far above all principality and power, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Israel are called the Firstborn on the earth (Exod. iv. 22). Those who inherit the New Jerusalem are called the Church of the Firstborn whose names are written in heaven, while the Church of the Mystery constitute the body of Him Who is the Firstborn from the dead.

To each sphere of blessing pertains a citizenship. To the earthly sphere, the citizenship of Zion goes with the adoption (Psa. lxxxvii.). To the second sphere pertains the citizenship of the New Jerusalem, and to the third sphere, the citizenship which is in heaven where Christ now sits in the holiest of all (Eph. ii. 19, Phil. iii. 20—“conversation” [*politeuma*] = “citizenship”). In each sphere, those who have the adoption have pre-eminence. In the earth, Israel will be the head, a Kingdom of Priests, and “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (Israel) shall perish” (Isa. lx. 12). In the second sphere, the pre-eminence that belongs to the adoption is not national but spiritual: “The saints shall judge angels” (I Cor. vi. 3), and in the heavenly city, where there is an innumerable company of angels, the saints have the pre-eminence, being the “Church of the firstborn” (Heb. xii. 22, 23). To angels God has not subjected the world to come (Heb. ii. 5). In the third sphere, neither nations nor angels are mentioned, but principalities, powers, might, and dominion—the very aristocracy of glory. “In Christ” the Church of the Mystery is far above even such.

We therefore hold and teach that there are three spheres of blessing, viz., the Earth, the New Jerusalem, and the Heavenly Places, which by way of distinction we call the super-heavens (en tois epouraniois), closely allied with three distinct Callings, the Kingdom, the Bride and the Body. We believe the recognition of three spheres honours the record of Scripture which speaks of three distinct adoptions, reveals three phases of the “second coming” as the hope of each separate company, introduces order where there is confusion, faces the presence of miraculous gifts in the Acts period (and their absence now) with clear sighted understanding, and makes the walk that is worthy of each separate calling clear and definite.

The following articles should be consulted for details and fuller exposition:

Adoption Vol. xx. 47-51.
Heavenly Places Vol. xi. 75; xiv. 41; xix. 29, 30; xx. 109, 128, 148.

Light for the Last Days.

*A series of studies in Scripture concerning the character
of the closing days of this age.*

#14. The Rebuilding of Palestine.

**An approximation to prophecy, though not a fulfillment.
pp. 15 - 19**

It is a mistake to look upon the various movements of the nations at the present time as being equivalent to the budding of the fig tree referred to in Matt. xxiv. or Luke xxi. One has only to consider the context of the parable to see that this cannot be true. Matt. xxiv. 33, 34 speaks of "these things", referring to the tribulation and signs in the heavens (Matt. xxiv. 29). The same phrase is used in Luke xxi. 31, where the reference is to the encompassing of Jerusalem with armies, and signs in the heavens. These things have not yet taken place, and therefore much that is being done in Palestine may yet be overthrown and destroyed. Nevertheless, there is an undoubted movement in the "valley of dry bones". There are certainly *approximations* to prophecy, even if the *fulfillment* is yet future. No one can consider the rapid developments in the land of Palestine that are at present taking place, without realizing how they confirm the fact that all the prophecies of Israel's restoration shall be literally fulfilled.

Among the many evidences of an awakening of national consciousness is the new Palestine coinage. The name "Palestine" occurs on the coins in three languages, English, Hebrew and Arabic. The most significant feature, however, is not always noticed, even by those who have handled the coins. After the Hebrew word for Palestine come two letters in brackets, Aleph and Yod. These two letters stand for "Eretz Israel", meaning "The Land of Israel". The same abbreviation occurs on the postage stamps and all official documents, and its use is sanctioned by the British Government.

- - - Illustration - - - (BE-XXVIII.16).

Another noticeable change is the revival, after many centuries, of the Hebrew language as a living tongue. Until recently Hebrew was known only to the scholar, the spoken language being Yiddish. A number of years ago a well-known Jewish leader, E. Ben Yehuda, initiated a movement to make Hebrew the language of the people in Palestine, and to-day the ancient language of the O.T. is the national language of the Jew from one end of the land to the other. Books and papers in Hebrew are now issued and circulated in Palestine, just as English books and papers are here.

One of the most remarkable features of the new Palestine is the amount of building that is going on. More than 2,500 years ago, Isaiah gave a graphic picture of what will yet take place in Palestine:

“And they shall build the old wastes, and they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations” (Isa. lxi. 4).

The time for the fulfillment of this prophecy is the “acceptable year of the Lord”, when Israel shall be named “The priests of the Lord”. This time has not yet come, but the great rebuilding of which Isaiah speaks is being anticipated by the people who are returning to their land now in unbelief. The “old wastes” are indeed being built again.

The prophecy of Ezek. xxxvi. 33-35 is much to the same effect:

“The wastes shall be builded, and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden: and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited.”

This however, will not be fulfilled until the day when “clean water” shall be sprinkled upon them “and they shall be clean”. A new heart is also to be given them at this time. We are therefore under no delusion about the building activity that is going on in Palestine by unbelieving Israel at the present time. The very activity, however, indicates that the “dry bones” are moving, even though they may not yet “live” in the sight of the Lord (Ezek. xxxvii.).

In the early days of Jewish colonization, it took about 60 acres of land to support a family. To-day, with irrigation and intensive cultivation, only 5 acres are needed. Jaffa (the “Joppa” of Scripture) is already famous for its oranges, and millions of boxes of this fruit are exported yearly.

A vast amount of building is actually going on in Jerusalem itself. This city has suffered 46 sieges and has been razed to the ground 17 times, yet it still exists and is growing daily. It is tolerably certain that most people, if they were shown a view of modern Jerusalem, would not recognize the city from the photograph.

Jeremiah, in the same chapter that introduces the New Covenant, forecasts the extent of the Jerusalem of the future:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord: it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever” (Jer. xxxi. 38-40).

Modern Jerusalem is not yet “holy unto the Lord”, but it is intensely interesting to see the predictions of Jeremiah being anticipated before our eyes. The writer to whose book we are indebted for much of this article says:

“Here is an Israelitish prophet daring to predict with the precision of a surveyor the exact building development of a great city, thousands of years after his words were penned.”

The hill Gareb is outside the walls of old Jerusalem, and it was about 50 years ago that building reached this spot. During the past few years the city has extended as far as Goath, a point some distance west of the hill Gareb. The “place of ashes” was reached some 40 years ago, and the line of building is now just touching the “valley of dead bodies”. The final measurement given by the prophet, to “all the fields unto the brook of Kidron”, is now reached. No limit, however, is imposed upon the development of the city to the south, and it is towards Bethlehem that it is now extending.

The water supply of Jerusalem is mentioned in Scripture, in connection with Hezekiah (II Chron. xxxii. 2-4) and later, Pontius Pilate. To-day, water is being brought from the springs of Ras-el-Ain some 38 miles away. Six pumping stations are used to pump the water along its course, each pump raising the water 600 feet. Tel-Aviv, which is near the springs of Ras-el-Ain, is an entirely modern Jewish city, with more than 120,000 inhabitants. This city is only a few miles from Jaffa.

The Dead Sea, also, is being utilized. Two valuable chemicals are found in abundance in its waters, Potash and Bromine; and a Palestine Company has already put down extensive and up-to-date plant for retrieving this mineral wealth for the benefit of the country. Major Tulloch, in a lecture given recently before the Royal Society of Arts, stated that there is sufficient Potash in the Dead Sea to supply the world’s needs for the next 2,000 years. When the day of blessing dawns, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the living waters that will flow down from Jerusalem shall cover the Dead Sea. Meanwhile the present profitable use of this Sea, so long as a synonym for death and dreariness, is suggestive.

So also is the approximation to prophecy of the use of Haifa as the Mediterranean outlet for Mesopotamian oil. In Deuteronomy we read:

“Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil” (Deut. xxxiii. 24).

Whatever the true fulfillment of this prophecy of Moses may prove to be, it is significant that Asher’s territory has been chosen for the delivery of over 2,000,000 tons of Petroleum a year, which is brought for nearly 1,000 miles by “the greatest pipe line ever carried through as a single enterprise”.

None of the items enumerated above are *fulfillments* of O.T. prophecy, but they *approximate* to them sufficiently to cause the most skeptical to pause, and the believer to rejoice. The “fig tree” is about to bud. Israel are returning. They have yet to look upon

“Him Whom they pierced”, they have yet to go through their time of trouble, Jerusalem is yet to be invested with armies before the times of restitution shall begin—nevertheless, when we consider present events in Palestine we cannot help realizing that the sands of time are running out.

Most of the material for this article has been supplied by an interesting book by George T. B. Davis entitled: “*Rebuilding Palestine According to Prophecy.*” Providing that the reader substitutes for “according to prophecy” some such phrase as “approximating to” or “anticipating prophecy”, the book can be most warmly commended.

Letter from Believing Jew in Palestine. p. 103

The letter printed below is from a believer in Palestine. He signs himself: “I am yours ‘Hid with Christ in God’,” and the problems he has to face are very real.

“Please reply thru the medium of the ‘Berean Expositor’ to the following:

- (1) Does a Jew cease to be a Jew when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ?
- (2) Is he forbidden to circumcise his males on the eighth day?
- (3) Must he change his day of rest and worship from Saturday to Sunday?
- (4) Is he forbidden to celebrate with the rest of his people the Jewish feasts and fasts?
- (5) Must he estrange himself from his people and their aspirations?
- (6) Does he fall from grace by wishing to express his Jewishness?
- (7) Is it possible for a pure-blooded Britisher to live and feel like a Chinaman or vice versa even as saved people?

I am asking you all these questions because an article in your paper, entitled ‘Israel’s Privileges’, created in me the confidence to do so. Thanking you in advance, and eagerly awaiting your replies.”

We have already replied to these questions as we do not think the reader of the Berean Expositor would wish its pages to be occupied with matter so far removed from the ministry of the mystery. We cannot feel however that such an enquiry can be treated with indifference, for just as a straw shows the direction of a current, so an enquiry of this nature—so reminiscent of the days and problems of the early Acts—is but another sign that the sequel to the Pentecostal dispensation is about to be inaugurated, and that the suspended hope of Israel is about to be reinstated.

Such things should but make us the more concerned that we buy up every opportunity for making known the mystery, realizing that the time for such witness must be short. The prayers of all readers are asked on behalf of the enquirer and for all who find themselves in similar circumstances.

Letter from Believing Jew in Palestine.
p. 183

A man's skeleton, estimated to be 12,000 years old, which has been found in Gough's Caves at Cheddar, is regarded as the most important discovery made in this century. It completely destroys the popular conception of the cave man of the palaeolithic age as a simian creature

Professor Rix said yesterday that the skeleton proves the slowness of evolution in the last 12,000 years.

If the man were alive to-day, he would not attract attention because he would be completely normal.

Flint tools found in the cave indicate that the man used the place as a workshop (*The News Chronicle*, 22nd July, 1937).

The statements: "It completely destroys the popular conception of the cave man of the palaeolithic age (earlier part of the prehistoric 'stone age') as a simian (ape-like) and that if he were alive to-day he would be 'completely normal', are important concessions." If science can "completely destroy" one part of its own conclusions, there is hope that it may yet be led to reduce the 12,000 years to the shorter and Biblical period of a little less than 6,000 years. Nothing yet discovered or "proved" justifies the slightest modification of Gen. i. 26, 27.

#15. “Learn a parable of the Fig Tree.”
pp. 202, 203

Students of Scripture and particularly students of prophecy, realize the important place that the people of Israel occupy in the purpose of the ages. Since the call of Abraham, with the one exception of the dispensation of the mystery, the people of Israel have always been a factor to be reckoned with.

To those of us who have seen that the Book of Revelation speaks of a future “Day of the Lord” and that a resumption of Kingdom purposes is foretold, any movement among the Jews themselves, or against them by other nations, assumes an importance far greater than the event justifies if considered merely historically. We believe that the seven churches of Asia fall within the prophetic times of the last days, and will be very like the church of the early Acts, and consist mainly of Jewish believers. This being so, we cannot but take notice of a movement among Hebrew Christians, the object of which is to consider the advisability of forming a Hebrew Christian Church.

A Commission was appointed some little time ago to consider:

- (1) What is the extent and distribution of Hebrew Christians?
- (2) The necessity or otherwise of a Hebrew Christian Church?
- (3) If such a Church is needed, what should be its Basis of faith and constitution?

The facts brought to the notice of the Commission led the members to the unanimous conclusion that the formation of a Hebrew Christian Church is imperative. The Commission says:

“A Hebrew Christian Church has an historic and apostolic precedent, and its present revival would give a status and incentive to Hebrew Christianity, and constitute a valuable living witness to the Church, the Jews and the World in general, in respect to the Faith as revealed in the Old and new Testaments.”

In drawing up the Articles of Faith and Constitution, the Commission

“was mainly guided by the principle of keeping close to Synagogal worship, and the polity of the Apostolic Church.”

“In its recommended Constitution it kept the polity of the ancient faith and practice of our fathers in view. It worked out a Presbyterian-Episcopal Polity because *a majority* believe that in these two systems it comes nearest to the Apostolic Church.”

We believe our readers will see in this movement a sign of the times, and will watch with interest the progress or otherwise of this effort. It is not for us to praise or to blame, but we are interested spectators of a movement that is vitally associated with all we hold most dear.

Light upon the Purposes of Prayer.

#5. “In nothing anxious in everything make request.” pp. 12 - 15

The prayers of Eph. i., iii. and vi. are definite. The prayer of Phil. i. 9-11 is specific and complete, but there are prayers throughout the epistle to the Philippians that may evade our definition and yet are true and real. Among these we would place the opening verses of chapter ii.

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. ii. 1-3).

There is not one of us but could with profit turn every point of these verses into daily prayer.

Again, the words of Phil. iii. 10, “That I may know Him” (of which Eph. i. 15-19 is but an expansion), is the quintessence of prayer. So also, the principle of the beseeching of Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. iv. 2), which is parallel with ii. 1-3, is one which should ever have its place with us.

In Ephesians we observed that one prayer was connected with the apostle’s circumstances—“all my affairs, and how I do”—and we saw that the apostle’s great concern was not the amelioration of his bondage, but for grace to glorify the Lord therein.

In Phil. i. there is a statement marked by several features illustrative of the purposes of prayer. Let us quote the passage.

“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. i. 19-21).

The prayer of the apostle in Eph. vi. shows how completely he had risen above that which is merely personal, and so the prayer of the saints on his behalf recorded here can be calmly reviewed and gratefully endorsed. For when a man can truthfully say, “For me to live is Christ”, the circumstances of that life, whether bond or free, will take but a relative place.

We may here learn an important lesson regarding prayer. There appear to be three links in the chain.

- (1) YOUR PRAYER.—This is the first link.
- (2) THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.—The central link.
- (3) MY EXPECTATION.—This is the third link.

Now it is very possible that a prayer may not be “answered” because of the absence of the third link. Others may be praying for me, the Lord may hear and have all supplies necessary, but unless I, too, share in the intercession in the sense of being really desirous that the Lord’s will be done in the matter, it may be best for all concerned if the supplies be withheld until I, too, shall be led to “expect”. Or, prayer may have ascended on my behalf, the Lord have heard, and I have an “earnest expectation and hope”, yet it may be but to “consume upon my own desires”. In the case of the apostle he had that special “salvation” in view that pertains to the prize, but his earnest expectation was, “as always”, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death, and when a man has reached that stage of spiritual growth there need be no withholding of supply or limiting of prayer.

In Phil. iv. 5-7 we have further light upon the purposes of prayer.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand, Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 5-7).

The word “moderation” is derived from the verb *eiko*, “to submit”, which we find in Gal. ii. 5. There is in the word a combination of the ideas of gentleness, agreeableness, ready yielding of rights, or, as one has put it, “the sweet reasonableness” of Christianity. Many times we may be right, but we may be more right not to insist. To illustrate by an opposite, we all know what we mean by a “stickler” and knowing that, we also know from this passage that such a person is the antipodes of the “moderate” believer.

Anyone who is ever ready to consider others better than themselves will naturally possess this gentle attitude. It is a sensitive quality, however, and develops only in the conscious presence of the Lord. The statement that “the Lord is at hand” does not refer to the second coming but to the presence of the Lord here and now. As in Eph. vi., so in Phil. iv., we have a prayer that comprehends “all my affairs and how I do”. This prayer knows no limits, but extends from *nothing* to *everything*.

“In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer make your requests”

The final test of prayer however is in the answers promised. While we allow nothing to worry, and do not limit our prayers to any one aspect of need, the answers indicate to a large extent in what direction our prayers should tend. We may, legitimately, pray for “daily bread”, but the answer that is absolutely assured is not “daily bread” but “the peace of God that passeth all understanding”. We may pray for deliverance from trouble, but the answer, whether we are delivered or whether we are sustained through the trouble, is “the peace of God”. We may pray concerning every single feature of our life, from the lowest physical necessity to the highest spiritual experience, but God has not pledged to

answer affirmatively, and in kind. He has however pledged that, whether we are abashed or whether we are exalted, whether we suffer hunger or are full, whether we abound or suffer need, the peace of God shall “garrison our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” and, like Paul, we shall be able to say:

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am, to be independent I have strength for all things through Christ which empowereth me” (Phil. iv. 11, 13).

So then, moderation and yieldingness do not involve supine dependence: they can go with a downright independence of man’s frown or reward.

Somewhat parallel with this prayer, and much in the same spirit, is the language of Matt. vi. 31-34:

“Do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For all these things the nations seek after, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye are needing all these things. But be seeking first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Prayer therefore is the cure of anxiety, but to be effective it must flow from a gentle spirit that has grown up in the conscious presence of the Lord. It goes without saying that anxiety cannot live in His Presence.

The prayers of Philippians are intensely practical: “That ye may be sincere.” “That ye be not anxious.”

#6. Walk worthy; Stand Perfect. (Col. i. 9, 10 and iv. 12). pp. 61 - 63

Two more prayers complete the number that is found in the prison Epistles. These are written in Col. i. 9, 10 and iv. 12. Let us look at the earlier one and see what light we receive upon the purposes of prayer.

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. i. 9, 10).

Like the parallel prayer of Eph. i. 15-19, this prayer is the outcome of the Apostle’s hearing of their faith and love, and like that prayer it speaks of *epignosis*, or realization. Like the prayer of Phil. i. it speaks of fruitfulness and, further, expresses a desire which is not found in either Eph. i. or Phil. i.

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.”

Notice for a moment the double reference to knowledge or realization.

“That you may be filled with the realization of His will increasing in the realization of God.”

To know or to realize God is a process, and we can only know God as we get to know the way in which He has revealed Himself. Thus if we know His will, we make a beginning; if we know His grace, His love, His wisdom and His faithfulness we are growing up in the realization of God. To fully know God would mean a perfect comprehension of all His attributes and the mysteries of His Being, but, like the love of Christ, this passeth knowledge. The magnitude of the theme however must not deter us; we each have our measure, and more is not expected of us. Let us, however, observe the connecting links that unite the opening knowledge of His will with the closing knowledge of Himself.

His will—wisdom—walk—all pleasing—God.

The walk too is of an extraordinarily high standard. Eph. iv. exhorts us to walk worthy of our calling, and Phil. i. exhorts us to live worthy of the gospel, but Col. i. exhorts us to walk worthy of the Lord. How can this be attained? Only by closely following the course here laid down. It is impossible to think of walking worthy of the Lord while contravening His Will. So far as we are concerned His Will is His Word. His Word being given to us, we need, as Eph. i. 15-19 showed, the transforming power of prayer, so that revelation may be turned into realization, and the “spirit” of that revelation may be given us, or, as Col. i. puts it, “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”.

A walk that is worthy of the Lord will be unto all pleasing. The great desire of the heart will be that He may be well pleased with us. This will have the negative effect of making us independent of the approval of man. Well pleasing is not confined to sound speech; it is inclusive. It is the Lord’s good pleasure that the root shall produce fruit, and consequently this Colossians prayer is for an all-round development and growth in grace. To this we must add the prayer of Epaphras in Col. iv. 12.

“Labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

Here is another gathering up of the prayer themes of Ephesians and Philippians. The prayer that the saints may stand “perfect” takes up the whole epistle to the Philippians, and especially chapter iii., where the Apostle stretches out toward the goal. It includes the prayer of Phil. i., where “discernment” is the mark of the perfect (Heb. v.). It embraces also the prayer of Eph. iii., where the goal is that the believer should be filled unto all the fullness of God, for Epaphras not only prayed that the Colossians should stand perfect, but also complete, a word that answers to the fullness of Eph. iii. Further, it rounds off the prayer of Col. i., for this standing, whether it be perfect, or whether it be complete, is “in all the will of God”.

The two prayers of Colossians therefore have for their object the consummation of the will of God by means of spiritual wisdom, worthy walk and fruitful life.

One thing we should observe very closely. True prayer never attempts to question the will of God. In its desires it can only follow along the lines of the will of God, regarding all else as evil and an abuse of a wonderful privilege. We can say therefore that, among other features, the prayers of Colossians exemplify the Lord's own attitude throughout the days of His flesh, when He said: "Thy will be done."

We trust that the survey of the prayers of the Lord's prisoner will have shed some light upon the question: "What are the purposes of prayer?"

None Other Things.

“Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts xxvi. 22).

#1. Paul’s defence must be understood as literally true. pp. 65 - 68

When the Apostle declares, in Col. i. 26, that the Mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, has now been made manifest, his words are a commentary upon the essential nature of a “mystery” or “secret”. We shall search in vain the pages of the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, II Timothy, Philemon) for any references to the law and the prophets, in so far as the distinctive revelation of the Mystery is concerned. We have already seen, in earlier Volumes of *The Berean Expositor*, that Paul’s apostolic ministry falls into two parts, and Acts xxvi., which supplies us with the sub-title of the present series, provides information on this point. Speaking of his conversion and commission on the road to Damascus, the Apostle tells us that the Lord said to him:

“I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee” (Acts xxvi. 16, 17).

The word “both” here cannot be set aside; it indicates two ministries. We read of “*these things*” and “*those things*”; of the “things which thou *hast* seen”, and the “things in the which I *will* appear unto thee”. Here obviously we have two ministries. Further, while the Apostle soon found that his own “people”, Israel, were opposed to him, he also found during the early part of his ministry, that the Gentiles, especially the Roman soldiers, were often his protectors. Proceeding from this statement, the Apostle leads on to the verse cited at the head of this article.

We must remember, in reading this passage, that Paul is a bondman, that he has appealed unto Cæsar, and that the only reason for this special hearing before Agrippa, is that Festus, the new Roman Governor, is in a predicament—for, he says: “It seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.” Paul, therefore, has to offer a defence, and, knowing that the Jewish religion, with its temple worship and sacred books, is a religion sanctioned by Roman authority, his defence is that he has not gone outside the teaching of the law and the prophets, and so has committed no crime against the laws of Rome.

With regard to his ministry which he had fulfilled, the Apostle says:

“I shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts xxvi. 20).

This is reminiscent of the Apostle’s words to the Thessalonians in I Thess. i. 9, 10:

“Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.”

Returning to Acts xxvi., we read:

“For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me” (Acts xxvi. 21).

The Jews did not accuse Paul of denying the teaching of the law and the prophets. They unjustly charged him with desecrating the Temple by taking a Gentile into it (Acts xxi. 28); but the fact that they found him in the Temple, and that he had gone there to refute the charge made against him that he taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses (Acts xxi. 21), would be evidence that his teaching was in harmony with the O.T. Scriptures.

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts xxvi. 22).

It has been suggested that we must not press these words too far, and that all that Paul intended to convey was that he was not an irresponsible iconoclast. When a man of ordinary honesty is making a statement before a judge we expect his statement to be true, and without a double meaning. And if such can be said of the ordinary man, how much more should we expect the apostle of truth to speak with great plainness of speech. If we were to find, in face of this statement, that his early epistles contained teaching that neither the prophets nor Moses had said should come, then it would be difficult to offer any defence. In this series of articles we intend to examine the Apostle’s early ministry, as found in the epistles written before Acts xxviii., in order to discover whether or not his statement before Agrippa was literally true.

His own extension of the statement is given in verse 23:

“That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts xxvi. 23).

This refers particularly to the gospel which Paul had preached. A little earlier we read:

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers” (Acts xxvi. 6).

This refers to the character of the hope which was in operation during the Acts period, and which is to be found in the epistles of that time.

While we are dealing with the question of Paul's defence, let us turn back to the preceding chapter and read his statement before Festus:

"Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all" (Acts xxv. 8).

Before Felix, in the previous chapter, the Apostle had said:

"This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 14, 15).

On the surface it appears that the Apostle intended to convey quite literally that up to the time of his imprisonment in Cæsarea his ministry had been but the legitimate expansion of Old Testament prophecy, whether with reference to the gospel, the hope, the outpouring of spiritual gifts, or the inclusion of the Gentiles. None of these things has any reference to the Mystery as made known for the first time in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

If in all Paul's ministry up to the date of Acts xxvi. he had said "none other things than those that the prophets and Moses did say should come", then it is both vain and unbelieving to look for the Mystery in these early epistles. If upon examination it should be found that the early epistles do contain truth which neither the prophets nor Moses did say should come, then there will have to be a drastic readjustment of our teaching. At the moment, however, our position is that the Mystery is not found in these early epistles, and that they belong to a different dispensation. Salvation by the blood of Christ, and justification by faith, are taught in both sets of epistles, but this does not touch the subject of the Mystery. Until a man is saved, no dispensational position is possible for him, either in the earthly kingdom, the heavenly city, or "far above all".

So far as the Acts of the Apostles is concerned, our examination enables us to affirm that there at least the Apostle is found saying "*none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*".

**#2. The gospel as preached by Paul was in accordance with
the testimony of the law and the prophets.
pp. 125 - 127**

It would probably not be easy to find complete agreement among our readers as to the chronological order of Paul's epistles. This question does not, however, influence our present investigation, and we will therefore take the canonical order and commence with the Epistle to the Romans though here we may all be in agreement that it was the last epistle written before the change of dispensation. If we can prove that this epistle fulfils the Apostle's claim as cited at the head of this article, the case is practically settled, for if the latest epistle of the series adheres closely to the law and the prophets, the earlier ones must have done so also.

We commence reading this epistle, and in the second verse we are faced with the fact that "the gospel of God", to which the Apostle had been "separated", was "promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom. i. 2). This gospel was "for the obedience of faith among all nations" (Rom. i. 5), and its power was the provision of righteousness by faith—a provision to be found promised in the prophets:

"As it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17: Hab. ii. 4).

After having proved both Jew and Gentile to be under sin, giving in Rom. iii. 13-18 a continuous and composite series of quotations from the Psalms, the Apostle returns to the subject of the provision of righteousness by faith, which constitutes the basis of the gospel:

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. iii. 21).

This righteousness by faith belongs to the believer by imputation, and in Rom. iv. both Abraham and David are quoted:

"For what saith the Scriptures? *Abraham* believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3).

"Even as *David* also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins covered" (Rom. iv. 6, 7).

Pursuing this theme, we come to Rom. x. There the Apostle speaks of Christ as being the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth", and declares that it was "ignorance" on the part of Israel that led them to attempt to produce a righteousness of their own. For even though Moses described the righteousness which is of the law—"That the man that doeth those things shall live by them" in Deut. xxx. 12, 13 he is insistent upon the nature of the gospel message (Rom. x. 6-10), as also are the

prophets: “For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. x. 11).

Moses, the Psalms and Isaiah are quoted in the remainder of Rom. x. in proof of the fact that “faith cometh by hearing”, and that the extension of the gospel to the Gentile was intended to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Coming now to I Corinthians, we find the preaching of the cross confirmed by quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah:

“That accordingly as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Cor. i. 31).

In I Cor. v. Christ is spoken of as “our Passover” and in I Cor. xv. as “the Firstfruits”. Both of these terms refer back to the law of Moses.

In I Cor. xv. 3, 4 the Apostle affirms:

“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, *according to the Scriptures*; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, *according to the Scriptures*.”

The Epistle to the Galatians insists upon the fact that the gospel is entirely in harmony with the O.T. Scriptures:

“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8).

“The Scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. iii. 22).

The Epistle to the Hebrews is in some measure outside the present enquiry. Being written to the Hebrews, we naturally expect an appeal to be made to the Old Covenant Scriptures. Nevertheless, it is significant that, while the Apostle sets aside the Old Covenant with its ceremonies and sacrifices that did not touch the conscience, he quotes the prophets for the bringing in of the New Covenant (Heb. viii.) and cites the fact that the tabernacle which was erected by Moses was an earthly copy of the pattern shown to him in the mount:

“Who 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” (Heb. viii. 5).

We will not, however, pursue this investigation further. So far as our present purpose is concerned there is no controversy with regard to this epistle, which, by its very theme, is an expansion of O.T. type and shadow, and raises no problems in connection with Gentile admission or hope. At the moment we are concerned with how far Paul’s words uttered in defence before Agrippa are true and binding with reference to the teaching of his early epistles as the apostle of the Gentiles. This subject we must take up in its different aspects in subsequent studies. Meanwhile we believe that there will be full

agreement among us all, that, so far as the basic theme of the gospel was concerned—redemption by blood, and the imputation of righteousness by faith—the Apostle preached “*none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*”.

#3. The inclusion of the Gentile in Gospel and Promise was never a secret. pp. 161 - 164

While it may readily be admitted that the basic terms of the gospel are to be found in the Law and the Prophets, it may nevertheless be contended that the extension of the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles, and their inclusion among Abraham’s seed, does, in fact, go beyond what is written in the O.T. Scriptures. It is undoubtedly true that the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles took the early Church by surprise, and the contention of those of the circumcision at Jerusalem with Peter after they had heard of his visit to Cornelius (Acts xi. 3), and Peter’s own attitude (Acts x. 28), most certainly show a deep prejudice against such an inclusion of the Gentile. But prejudice, however, deep, is not the standard of our faith; and our quest must still be: “What saith the Scriptures?”

In Acts xv. we have another exhibition of traditional bias. In verse 14 we read:

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord Who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts xv. 14-18).

If we turn to the prophet Amos, and consult the context of the passage cited by James (Amos ix. 11, 12), we shall perceive that James very rightly says: “To this *agree* (or harmonize) the words of the prophets” (plural—the prophets as a whole), for Amos ix. 11, 12 looks forward to a yet future time for its *fulfillment*. There was much that took place during the Acts that was of a tentative nature, waiting to see (speaking after the manner of men) whether Israel would repent and the kingdom be set up, or whether they would refuse, and the kingdom purpose fall into abeyance.

In Acts xiii. we find the apostle Paul using the O.T. Scriptures in much the same way. When the Jews manifest their envy at the Gentile acceptance of the gospel, the Apostle says:

“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. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts xiii. 46-47).

Commencing once again with the Epistle to the Romans, we observe that the gospel which was “promised afore in the Holy Scriptures”, was also for the “obedience of faith unto all nations” (Rom. i. 1-5).

In chapter iii. the Apostle brings forward as an argument, the fact that God is One.

“Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom. iii. 29-31).

This basic fact was evidently in the Apostle’s mind when he addressed the men of Athens and commented upon the worship of the “Unknown God”.

“God, That made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men that they should seek the Lord now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts xvii. 24-30).

Another argument is brought forward in Rom. iv. 9-10:

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only? How was it then reckoned? When he (Abraham) was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”

We can only dimly realize the blow that this question and its answer must have been to Jewish prejudice and exclusiveness. The Jews had boasted with pride that Abraham was their father, but had forgotten that Abraham was not an Israelite, but a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldees. Abraham was already justified by faith and the heir of the promises, before the rite of circumcision was instituted, and before Isaac was born. He was therefore--

“the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised Abraham, who is the father of us all. As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations” (Rom. iv. 11-17).

With this passage should be compared the argument of Gal. iii.:

“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8).

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16).

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And it ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 27-29).

It is evident from the testimony of James, and of Paul, that the inclusion of the Gentile in the blessings of the gospel and the Abrahamic promise, was no mystery but the consistent witness of Moses and the Prophets.

Both these authorities are quoted in Rom. x. with regard to the inclusion of the Gentile:

“First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me” (Rom. x. 19, 20).

With reference to the gospel, the Jew and the Gentile stand level. Both are sinners, and “there is no difference”, either in the matter of guilt or of salvation (Rom. iii. 22, 23; x. 12). When we come to dispensational privileges, however, we find, during the early ministry of the Apostle, that the Jew is “first”. In Rom. xi., after showing that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, are Abraham’s seed and heirs, the Apostle writes:

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches” (Rom. xi. 17, 18).

This dispensational distinction we must keep well in mind, for while it lasted and until the middle-wall was broken down, no church of the One Body with the threefold equality of Eph. iii. 6 was possible.

In Rom. xv., the Apostle speaks of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ as being concerned with the “circumcision”:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8).

This testimony is explicit. The “Gospels” are primarily concerned with the “circumcision” and with the confirmation of promises made “unto the fathers”. We have already seen, however, that in the great promise made to Abraham the Gentiles were included, with Israel as the channel of blessing. Consequently Rom. xv. 8 is followed by xv. 9-12:

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy: as it is written and again He saith And again And again” (Rom. xv. 9-12).

Apparently no opposition was anticipated to the exclusiveness of Rom. xv. 8, for the Apostle had already alluded to the strength of Jewish prejudice by asking, “Is He the God of the Jews only?” Today, however, the whole aspect of things is reversed. Anyone who dares to believe Rom. xv. 8 and teach that the Gospels are primarily “Jewish” must prepare to meet criticism and opposition, while in most congregations the hope of the Jew is so far forgotten or spiritualized that to-day one would have to ask “Is He the God of the

Gentiles only?” The inclusion of the Gentile, even as a wild olive in the olive tree of Israel, presupposes Paul’s glorious teaching concerning the reconciliation of the world in its dispensational aspect (Rom. xi. 15), even as the gospel he preached (II Cor. v. 21) necessitated the reconciliation of the world, in its doctrinal aspect (II Cor. v. 19, 20).

For our present purpose Rom. xv. 8-12 provides an abundant confirmation of the fact that the inclusion of the Gentile was no new thing. We do not intend to make these articles at all lengthy. Further evidence can be gathered from the remaining epistles of the period, but enough, we trust, has been brought forward to establish the fact that the inclusion of the Gentile, both in the gospel and in the Abrahamic promise, demands for its confirmation “*none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come*”.

#4. The Hope of the Church of the Acts still the Hope of Israel.
(*Containing a quotation from Dr. Bullinger’s last words
on the place of I Thess. iv.*).
pp. 197 - 202

The conclusions that we have so far reached with regard to the gospel, and the inclusion of the Gentile during the Acts, do not make a very great demand upon the believer whose position is what we may call “orthodox”. There are, however, other subjects so close to the heart of the redeemed that anyone suggesting that present traditional views with regard to strong opposition, but also to endure a good deal of misunderstanding and possibly abuse. Among these sensitive themes is that of the Hope of the Church. Many a believer who would be prepared to endorse all that has been put forward in the three opening articles of this series, would nevertheless affirm with conviction that *the hope of I Thess. iv. is the hope of the Church of the Mystery*.

Now, if Paul taught “none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come”, it follows that the hope set before us in Romans, Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians must be the hope of Israel, and further that, if this hope is also the hope of the Church revealed in Paul’s Prison Epistles, then the word “mystery” loses its meaning, at least in so far as it can be applied to the *hope* of the Church. In this article we shall be content to present to the judgment of the reader exactly what is written concerning the hope of the Church during the Acts administration, and we believe that he will find abundant evidence to prove that, as in the case of the gospel and the inclusion of the Gentile, this hope agrees with the testimony of Moses and the Prophets, and cannot therefore be the hope of a company called under terms which were unrevealed until the Apostle became the “prisoner of the Lord”.

While I Thess. iv. is the passage to which we naturally turn for a definite statement concerning the hope of the Church of the period, we will follow the rule adopted in the earlier articles and investigate first the Epistle to the Romans. In Rom. xv. the Apostle

not only speaks of the inclusion of the Gentile, as we saw in our last article, but also associates the believing Gentile with the hope of Israel.

“And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xv. 12, 13).

There can be no question here as to whether the Gentiles referred to are in the Church, for the presence of such words as, “all joy and peace in believing” and “the power of the Holy Ghost” is conclusive. We are dealing here with the hope of the believer, and therefore with the hope of the Church at that time.

We must first draw the reader’s attention to the fact that the word “trust” here is *elpizo* in the original, and that the word “hope” is *elpis*. The noun and the verb are from the same root, and both demand the same English word. Also, before the word “hope” in verse 13 we have the definite article, and the two words should therefore be translated “that hope”. Putting in these corrections, we have:

“In Him shall the Gentiles *hope*. Now the God of *that hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”

This hope of the believing Gentile is found in the prophet Isaiah, and a reference to Isa. xi. will reveal that it is millennial. We might have anticipated this by observing the clause “rise to reign over the Gentiles”, a statement consistent with the hope of Israel and the Kingdom, but impossible of application to the Church of the Mystery. The hope here in Romans is, therefore, millennial, and, if Romans was written after I Thess. iv., then it is impossible that the hope of I Thess. iv. should be other than this same hope.

In dealing with I Thess. iv., it is of the utmost importance to remember that there arose a misunderstanding in the Church as to the Apostle’s teaching concerning the hope, and that he consequently wrote a second letter with the express purpose of correcting these errors. It is patent, we trust, to all our readers, whatever may be their views concerning the Coming of the Lord, that any interpretation of I Thessalonians that ignores the inspired corrective, II Thessalonians, must necessarily fail.

The Thessalonians had been led astray with regard to the Second Coming of Christ, both by teachers speaking under the influence of an evil spirit, and by a spurious epistle, and had come to believe that the Day of the Lord was at hand (II Thess. ii. 2). Instead of telling these anxious believers that their hope had *nothing whatever to do with the Day of the Lord*—which would have been the simplest solution, had it been true—the Apostle occupies the bulk of this second epistle with a detailed account of that awful day, and also reminds them, when dealing with the great antichristian blasphemy of Rev. xiii., that he had told them these things when he was with them (II Thess. ii. 5).

In I Thess. iv. he comforts the believer by referring to the descent of the Lord from heaven; and in II Thess. i. 7 he comforts him with the prospect of “rest” at the

“revelation of the Lord Jesus”. The descent “from heaven” and the revelation “from heaven” are the same in the original, *ap ouranon* being used in both passages. In I Thess. iv. the descent “from heaven” is associated with the “voice of the Archangel”, and, as we shall prove presently, with the Lord’s “holy angels” (I Thess. iii. 13). In II Thess. i. this is repeated with added details: “With His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance.”

In Dan. xii. 1 we read that, when Michael the “Archangel” stands up: “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” There can be only one such time of trouble, and Dan. xii. 1 must therefore synchronize with the even spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 21 and Rev. vii. 14.

If it be objected that this makes the hope before the Church of the Thessalonians identical with the hope of Israel, we would reply that this is not an objection, but actually the truth of the matter. The hope of Israel was the only hope in view in Acts i. 6, and the hope of Israel was still in view in Acts xxviii. 20. We have seen that the church at Rome was taught to abound in this very hope, and we also find that all that is written concerning the hope in I and II Thessalonians links it to this same hope of Israel. Michael, according to Dan. xii., “stands for the people of Israel”; and the coming of the Lord “with all His saints” is a fulfillment of Zech. xiv. 5. The “saints” here are angels, as a comparison of Deut. xxxiii. 2 and Psalm lxviii. 17 will show.

The only other mention of the “Archangel” in the N.T. is in Jude 9, and Jude speaks of the days immediately preceding the dreadful Day of the Lord.

The whole of the prophetic passage in II Thess. ii. is taken up with teaching concerning the Beast and the False Prophet. If the hope of the Thessalonian Church was the blessed hope of the Mystery, why should the Apostle spend so much time describing a period that has nothing to do with this hope?

It may be necessary to say a word here on II Thess. i. 10. The translation “When He shall have come” is to be preferred to the A.V. rendering, but there is no warrant for teaching from this that the hope of the church will have been fulfilled before “He shall have come”. The context points the other way, and there is no possibility of this meaning in other passages where the same tense is used.

“When the Lord of the vineyard shall have come.” This leads on to what He will *then* do (Matt. xxi. 40).

“When ye shall have done all these things”—say, “We are unprofitable servants” (Luke xvii. 10).

“Of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He shall have come” (Mark viii. 38).

“When He (the Messiah) shall have come (then, and not before), He will tell us all things” (John iv. 25).

“This is My covenant unto them, when I shall have taken away their sins” (Rom. xi. 27).

“When He shall have delivered up the Kingdom when He shall have put down all ruler” (then, and not before), God shall be all in all” (I Cor. xv. 24-28).

So, when He shall have come, in that day, to be glorified in His saints, then, in that same coming, He will take vengeance and punish with *aionion* destruction those who know not God and obey not His gospel. It is not possible to appeal to this passage as evidence of a hope entertained by these saints before “that day” when He shall have come.

In I Thess. iv. 15-17, the Apostle speaks of the “order” that will govern the resurrection, and it may at first sight be felt that here is a distinct revelation—something more than can be found in Moses and the Prophets. While it is true that the actual words of I Thess. iv. are not found in the Law or the Prophets, they are but a legitimate expansion of what the O.T. revealed, and if this is so, Paul’s claim is not invalidated.

Take for example the passage in Dan. xii. that appears to have coloured the language of I Thess. iv. with reference to the Archangel. Daniel speaks of two companies, one living in the time of trouble and delivered out of it, the other sleeping in the dust of the earth and awakened. Daniel knew that he himself would “rest”, and would “stand in his lot at the end of the days” (Dan. xii. 13), but he neither affirms nor denies the precedence either of the living or of the dead. Paul, however, does affirm that these two companies go “together”, and we understand, therefore, that this is implicit in Daniel, though explicit only in Paul. This does not mean, however, that Paul is saying something more than the Law and the Prophets allowed. It was all within the framework of the O.T. and was by no means a secret “hid” in God.

The Apostle makes very full use of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, and his conclusion at the end of Heb. xi. to the effect that “they without us” should not be perfected, could easily be substantiated from the story of Caleb and Joshua. These two men qualified for entry into Canaan at the time of the spies, but they had to wait the full period of the wilderness wandering, and finally entered the land “together” with the rest of the people.

It is not our custom to quote the writings of others in confirmation of our teaching; we prefer to stand or fall by the Book itself. In this case, however, some readers may be interested to see the last words of Dr. Bullinger on the dispensational place of I and II Thessalonians and their teaching concerning the hope of the Church. Speaking of the fact that in all our versions the Epistles to the Thessalonians come *last* he says:

“It must be evident to us all at the outset that, as long as Jehovah’s promise to ‘send Jesus Christ’ was not withdrawn, while it was still open to Israel to see the fulfillment of ‘all that the prophets have spoken’ on the one condition (of repentance) laid down, while the imminence of the Lord’s speedy coming was everywhere the testimony of ‘them that heard Him’, whether spoken or written, the waiting for God’s Son from heaven, and deliverance from the wrath to come would necessarily be the central point of all testimony during the Dispensation of the Acts.

The Pauline Epistles be exempt from this conclusion (our italics). If any one is disposed to hold that the promise made in Acts iii. was withdrawn at any time before Acts xxviii., it is incumbent on them to point out where such an epoch-making event is recorded. But this cannot be done. There is not a tittle of evidence that can be produced. *Indeed, the very first epistle written by Paul (I Thess. i. 10) emphasizes this, and the second letter cannot even be understood apart from it.”*

These words of Dr. Bullinger's were published in 1911-12 in "*Things to Come*", and in 1913 it will be remembered he fell asleep. Readers who know only the Doctor's "Church Epistles" should note carefully his own correction of his earlier views.

In the same series, after having quoted I Thess. iv. 13-18, Dr. Bullinger writes:

"Paul was here confirming what the Lord had said in Matt. xxiv. 'This great trumpet' is the 'trump of God' in I Thess. iv. and the gathering is the gathering of 'them that are alive and remain'. This is the work assigned to the angels."

We will not multiply quotations, but must give the following, because of its bearing upon our own position.

"We can quite understand, and fully sympathize with those who, like ourselves, have spoken or written on I Thess. iv. as being the great charter of our hope of the Lord's coming. *But we ought thankfully to relinquish it when we find we have a better hope* (our italics), which we can enjoy all the more because we need not reproach ourselves with having robbed Israel of their hope, which is only postponed, and will yet have a wondrous and literal fulfillment for them." (*Foundations of Dispensational Truth*, Dr. E. W. Bullinger).

We trust that sufficient has been set before the reader to lead to the conviction that the hope before the Church of the Acts was in entire harmony with what "the Prophets and Moses did say should come".

#5. The Gifts of the Spirit, and the Abrahamic Promise. pp. 235 - 238

The present series of studies was suggested by a correspondent who, among other things remarked, "Surely the *Charismata* cannot come under this heading". This is certainly an important point, and if it can be shown that the endowment with supernatural gifts, which was the peculiar privilege of the early Church, is unrelated to the testimony of Moses and the Prophets, or goes beyond anything they have said, then it will be necessary for us to reconsider our position.

We begin our investigation, where spiritual gifts first make their appearance, viz., in Acts ii. The day of Pentecost having fully come, and the number of the twelve having been completed, a most wonderful thing happened.

"They were all filled with the holy ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 4).

The assembled multitude were "confounded" and "amazed saying one to another, What meaneth this?" Others mocked and said, "These men are full of new

wine” (Acts ii. 6-13). It is evident from the reaction of the multitude that something extraordinary had happened, but the fact that these Jews, who were “devout men”, did not recognize the fulfillment of the O.T. prophecy when they saw it, is no proof that the prophets and Moses did not say that these things should come. The nation rejected their Messiah, in spite of the fulfillment of prophecy and type.

Most of our difficulties in connection with this matter vanish when we consider Peter’s inspired answer in verses 14-40, and particularly in verse 16:

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts ii. 16).

If we turn to chapter ii. of this prophecy, we shall find in verses 28-32 the complete testimony to this great event. It is true that the seven wonders in heaven and earth have not yet taken place, but this is explained by Israel’s failure to repent. All that we are at the moment attempting, however, is to prove that the “gifts” of the early Church were promised before in the Holy Scriptures.

Peter not only refers to Joel, but later in his explanation to the testimony of David.

“David being a prophet seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, *He hath shed forth this*, which ye now see and hear” (Acts ii. 29-33).

It is evident from the above references that Peter would have been surprised to hear any one deny, or even question the fact that the gifts bestowed on the Day of Pentecost were spoken of by the prophets of the O.T. The term “Moses and the prophets” and the term “the law and the prophets” are synonymous, yet we should be unscriptural to draw a hard and fast line, and limit the term “law” to Moses. In John x. 24, quoting Psalm lxxxii. 6, the Lord says: “Is it not written in your law?” And in I Cor. xiv. 21, the prophet Isaiah is quoted as “the law”, with reference to the spiritual gifts of the early Church. “Moses and the prophets” in its common usage simply stands for the O.T. Scriptures.

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet, for all that, will they not hear Me, saith the Lord” (I Cor. xiv. 21).

On the Day of Pentecost, the gifts were received by Jews only. It is pure imagination that peoples Jerusalem on that day with both Jews and Gentiles, then and there baptized into one body. One reading of Acts ii., with this tradition of the elders in mind, is enough to dispel such an interpretation for ever. That Peter himself held no such belief is made abundantly clear in Acts x.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the holy ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were *astonished*, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the holy ghost” (Acts x. 44-45).

There were two converging reasons for the abundance of gifts that were poured out upon the early Church. The first of these is given in Gal. iii.:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*” (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

Here it is made clear that the promise to Abraham, which we have already seen includes the gospel as preached in Romans, and was, as Gal. iii. 8 testifies, “foreseen” by the Scriptures, includes also “the Spirit”. It may perhaps be objected that this reference to “the Spirit” does not include “spiritual gifts” but just gospel grace. The same chapter in Galatians, however, contains a complete proof that “spiritual gifts” are in view.

“Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit *and worketh miracles* among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of the faith? Even as Abraham believed” (Gal. iii. 2-6).

It is clear, therefore, that the spirit given through the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, is also the spirit associated with “working miracles”, and that being so, our case is proved.

The outer line of teaching associated with spiritual gifts is that found in I Cor. xiv. 21. Those addressed in I Cor. x.-xi. were by nature “Jews”—for it obviously could not be written of Gentiles that “*all our fathers* were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea” (I Cor. x. 1). To those who have “ears to hear” this fact and its bearing upon the only reference to the Lord’s Supper in Paul’s writings (in I Cor. xi.) will speak with no uncertain sound.

In I Cor. xii., however, the Apostle turns from the Jewish section of the Church and addresses the Gentiles:

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles” (I Cor. xii. 1).

To those who believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” these things will be the end of all argument.

I Cor. xii.-xiv. deals with these spiritual gifts from various angles. We are not at the moment concerned with the nature of these gifts, their variety, permanence or cessation, but we are concerned with the reason why Isa. xxviii. should have been quoted. This quotation from Isaiah is rather similar to the passage in Deut. xxxii.:

“I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation” (Deut. xxxii. 21).

This passage is quoted or referred to in Rom. x. 19, xi. 11, and xi. 14. After having stressed the blessing of the Gentile, the Apostle uses the illustration of the olive tree. The

Gentile believer is likened to a wild olive grafted in contrary to nature, partaking in both the root and the fatness of the olive tree. The Apostle magnifies his office as the Apostle of the Gentiles “if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them” (Rom. xi. 14).

We learn from these passages that one of the reasons for the abundance of spiritual gifts that characterized the Gentile Churches, was that Israel might, if it were possible, be awakened to see their prerogatives passing to the uncircumcision, and so be provoked to jealousy, and repent and be saved. This, however, was not to be. Israel were not provoked; they passed out into their present blindness, and the gifts ceased.

There can be no doubt after considering the testimony of these Scriptures that the gifts enjoyed by the early Church were well within the sphere of those things “which the Prophets and Moses did say should come”.

Notes and jottings from an old Bible.

#14. Seven Qualifications for Service found in Judges vi. 11-27. p. 98

- (1) THERE MUST BE HEART EXERCISE AND CONCERN FOR THE LORD'S WORK AND PEOPLE.
"If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" (13).
- (2) THERE MUST BE THE ASSURANCE OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE.
"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (12).
- (3) THE LORD'S COMMAND AND ENABLING MUST EQUIP.
"Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel have not I sent thee?" (14).
- (4) THERE MUST BE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.
"My family is poor I am the least" (15).
- (5) ALL SERVICE PRESUPPOSES GRACE.
"If now I have found grace in Thy sight" (17).
- (6) SERVICE IS ONLY POSSIBLE BY VIRTUE OF CHRIST.
"Then Gideon built an altar and called it Jehovah-Shalom" (19-24).
- (7) SERVICE DEMANDS OBEDIENCE AND TESTING.
"Gideon did as the Lord had said bring out thy son, that he may die" (27-30).

#15. Abraham's Bosom.
p. 143

In Luke xvi. 22 and 23, the Lord speaks of Lazarus being carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The Rabbinical teaching speaks of three states after death, for the righteous.

(1) "IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN."

“ ‘He shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of waters’. This is Abraham, whom God took, and planted in the land of Israel: or whom God took and planted in the garden of Eden.”

“When our master Moses departed into the garden of Eden, he said unto Joshua, etc., etc.” (*Midrash Tillin, and Temurah*).

(2) "UNDER THE THRONE OF GLORY."

In chapter x. of Avoth R. Nathan is a long story of how the angel of death failed to take away the soul of Moses, so that

“God taketh hold of him Himself, and treasureth him up under the throne of glory”, adding, a little after, that “the souls of other just persons also are repositied under the throne of glory.”

(3) "IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM."

This phrase is met in the writings of the Talmudists. Levi speaks of Rabbi Judah as being “in Abraham's bosom”. Josephus in his discourse on Hades writes:

“There is one descent into this region they are conducted down by angels guided to the right hand wait for that rest and eternal new life in heaven. This place we call The *Bosom of Abraham*.”

In contrast with all this tradition, the Saviour said: “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead” (Luke xvi. 31). Where, in Moses and the Prophets, is there anything approaching the Rabbinical tradition quoted here?

#17. John iii. 16.
p. 223

GOD	<i>Almighty Authority</i> “The gospel of God” (Rom. i. 1).
SO LOVED	<i>Mightiest Motive</i> “Love of Christ constraineth” (II Cor. v. 14).
SON	<i>Greatest Gift</i> “He spared not His own Son” (Rom. viii. 32).
WHOSOEVER	<i>Widest Welcome</i> “Unto all” (Rom. iii. 22).
BELIEVETH	<i>Easiest Escape</i> “And upon all them that believe” (Rom. iii. 22).
NOT PERISH	<i>Divine Deliverance</i> “Delivered from so great a death” (II Cor. i. 10).
LIFE	<i>Priceless Possession</i> “He that hath the Son hath life” (I John v. 12).

Occasional Meditations.

#1. The Suretyship of Christ (Gen. xliii. 1-10 and xliv. 18-34). pp. 180 - 182

The historic incident contained in these verses is full of teaching, both regarding Christ, the Christian, and the final restoration of Israel. The special thought to be impressed, however, is: The Suretyship of Christ.

“I will be surety” (Gen. xliii. 9).—The word surety, in Hebrew, comes from a word which means “to mix”, and is once translated “woof”, i.e., the threads which run across the “warp” in weaving. Thus the idea of a surety is one who so identifies himself with the one at fault as to be treated in his stead. Substitution is hereby emphasized (*See* Heb. ii. 14-18, iv. 15, 16; II Cor. v. 21).

“Of my hand shalt thou require him” (Gen. xliii. 9).—Compare Gen. xxxi. 36; II Sam. iv. 11. The word involves payment exacted in full, and vengeance falling if unsettled.

“. . . . let me bear the blame for ever” (Gen. xliii. 9).—The word “blame” is rendered “sin” 165 times in O.T. Hence Judah’s words may be rendered “let me bear *sin* for ever”. Herein we see the responsibilities of Suretyship. If our Beloved Lord had failed, He would be still bearing sin, but He was raised from the dead “*because of our justification*” (Rom. iv. 25); hence every claim is met, all liability discharged, and the penalty endured.

This is still more forcibly brought out in Gen. xliv. 32-34. The erring sinful man Judah understood the solemnity of Suretyship. In verse 33 the precious word “instead” occurs. Christ dying “instead” of “me” means irreversible salvation. Poor Judah contemplated remaining a bondman, but Christ could not be holden by the grave, seeing that He had a personal righteousness which the imputation of sin could not obliterate; consequently He was raised from the dead and became the first-fruits of His people.

“How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?” (Gen. xliv. 34).—Let us spend a few moments in meditation upon this verse. What unfathomable depths of Divine consolation are here for every redeemed child of God. This is a question which, in essence, our Beloved Lord might also have asked. Praise His name for the words spoken immediately after His resurrection in John xx. 17: “Go to My *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father.” Hence all was accomplished; the great atonement was made, and He ascended to present it once and for ever in the Heavenly Holiest of All.

“With me” said Judah: And so also the Saviour, and because He lives, we shall live also. If we died with Him, we shall also live together with Him—and even now we have been raised together with Him, and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places.

May we here apply the truth to those who may be unsaved. The law of God is holy; it demands perfect obedience, failing which, it can pronounce nothing but the penalty. You, like all men, have failed to obey that law, for it extends to the thoughts of the heart—from the cradle to the grave—and needs a perfect man to obey its precepts. Your condition is truly terrible, for you are *under the curse!* Your only hope is, not that you may evade the claims or penalty of the law, but that the Lord Jesus had said in the presence of His Father: “I will be Surety for him—of My hand shalt thou require him.” If you feel your helplessness; if you see yourself as a condemned rebel, yet see that God is righteous Who taketh vengeance—then turn to the Lord Jesus Who came to save His people from their sins. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

#2. Psalm xl. pp. 227, 228

This Psalm, written by inspiration of God, gives us in the first place, David’s own experience as a saved sinner; secondly, the experience of the redeemed in all dispensations; and thirdly and chiefly, the heart utterances of the Lord when here on earth. It may perhaps seem strange at first sight that this Psalm should speak of the perfect, sinless, Holy One of God, but, if we keep in mind the passage considered in the first article of this series in connection with Suretyship, we shall be the better able to enter into its wonderful teaching. By nature man was in the “horrible pit”, and to this “pit” the spotless Son of God descended. He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and the Gates of Hell (or Hades, the unseen place) could not prevail against Him.

Verses 6, 7 and 8 are quoted in Heb. x. as the Lord’s words, when He entered upon His substitutionary work—when He Who was God over all, blessed for ever, became flesh and tabernacled among us. Verse 8 makes it very clear that Christ was *perfectly righteous*, and we must keep this in mind as we read verse 12—which speaks of “*Mine iniquities*”, and “*My heart faileth Me*”. The sinless One speaks of “*Mine iniquities*”! Here indeed we see the full extent of substitution. So completely does our Surety enter into our position that, while in His Own nature perfectly sinless and righteous, He graciously bears our sins in His Own Body on the tree, and there receives the stroke and dies as the great Sin-bearer. Hallelujah—What a Saviour!

It should be noted that the passage does not speak of “*our iniquities*” but “*Mine iniquities*”. The Saviour can have no fellowship with us here, for He and He alone can put away sin. He and His Father *alone* accomplished the work of Redemption. No man is called upon to help; no one could do anything but mar such a work. Grace is supreme, and the glory is the Lord’s.

Let us look back now to verse 5. In this verse blessings are the theme, and they are innumerable. In verse 12 sins are the theme, and they are more in number than the hairs

of one's head. In verse 12 Christ stands alone, for when the sword was raised against Jehovah's shepherd "they all forsook Him and fled". But in verse 5 it is "*to usward*". He was alone in the bearing of sin, but He is in fellowship with His own in receiving the blessing. Dear fellow-believer, every blessing you enjoy now or will enjoy throughout eternity is the result of the vicarious Atoning Work of Christ, and you cannot enter into one of them apart from fellowship with Him. Is your life in harmony with this glorious fact?

The powers that be.

*(Being a series of studies of Roman history,
and Roman laws and customs,
in so far as they throw light upon the N.T. narrative).*

#3. Tiberius. Tetrarchs. High Priests (Luke iii. 1, 2). pp. 4 - 7

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanius the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John, son of Zacharias, in the wilderness” (Luke iii. 1, 2).

Luke tells us in the opening of his Gospel, that having had perfect understanding of all things “from above” (*anóthen*), he proposes to write “in order, a declaration of those things most surely believed among us”. There is no scarcity of historical data in the verses quoted above. The call of John the Baptist is fixed by the reign of an Emperor, the governorship of Pilate, the tetrarchy of Herod and his brother Philip, and the presence of two High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas, at the same time. What do we know of these historical facts that are important enough to have found a place in Holy Writ? By seeking to elucidate points of this kind we trust that this series of articles will help to make the inspired background of the N.T. clearer and more intelligible.

Augustus who lived to see the death of all his direct descendants with the exception of one weak-minded youth, was forced to adopt Tiberius, the son of Livia, his wife by an earlier marriage. Augustus personally disliked him, but he was unquestionably an able man and reigned for twenty-three years.

“The picture of that reign irresistibly impressed on our minds by the great Roman historian Tacitus, who was born some twenty years after it ended, is lurid and repulsive; nor can it be doubted that in certain of its aspects the reign was lurid and repulsive in actual fact. Nevertheless it assuredly had another side Tiberius was deaf to the beguilements of vested interests, popular agitation, or family influences Apart from hard drinking, however, we hear nothing of the emperor’s addictions to animal vices till after his retirement to Capreæ in the twelfth year of his reign (A.D.26), when he was nearly seventy” (*Hammerton*).

During the mild administration of Augustus the people were never forced to any act of worship. Tiberius, however, in the latter part of his reign, visited with severe penalties any act of impiety (*asebeia*), and the revival of these laws by Nero provided a convenient means of persecuting the Christians. The prominence of the word *eusebeia*, “godliness”, in the pastoral epistles is explained by this historical fact.

Tiberius adopted a different policy from that which his predecessors had followed, in that he seldom changed the governors of the provinces. “Should I send a succession of

governors”, he said, “my subjects would be pillaged without mercy; but if the same prefect be continued for a number of years, he will plunder eagerly enough at first, but when he has filled his coffers, his rapacity will lose its edge” (Josephus Ant. xviii. vi. 5). Consequently although his reign lasted twenty-three years, Tiberius made only one change in the Procuratorship of Judæa. Valerius Gratus was appointed in A.D.15, and was replaced by Pontius Pilate in A.D.26.

Concerning the death of Christ during the reign of Tiberius, Tacitus writes:

“The author of that name (christian) or sect was Christ, Who was capitally punished in the reign of Tiberius by Pontius Pilate.”

Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, suppliciter affectus erat (Ann. lib. xv. c. 44).

There are quite a number of points of importance, with regard to Roman law and its administration, associated with Pilate, but as a consideration of these will occupy all the space we can devote to one article, we propose to reserve what must be said of Pilate for another occasion.

The history of the Herods is a tale of tragedy, blood and intrigue, sufficient to justify Shakespeare’s phrase: “It out-Herod’s Herod.” But this again will require a separate article.

Pursuing our survey of Luke iii. 1, 2, the next point that calls for mention is the title of “tetrarch”. By derivation the word signifies the governor of the fourth part of a province, and this was the original meaning. It was subsequently used, however, without too close an adherence to the idea of a fourth part. In the reign of Tiberius, Herod’s kingdom was divided into *three* parts, and his three sons were made “tetrarchs”. Archelaus became tetrarch of Judæa, Samaria and Idumæa; Philip tetrarch of Trachonitis and Iturea; and Herod tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa. While originally the tetrarchs wore no diadem, and did not bear the title of king, in course of time the title was allowed.

One further point demands our attention, namely, Luke’s reference to “Annas and Caiaphas being the High Priests”. In his earlier essays Lightfoot suggests that Annas was the “Nasi”, or Head of the Sanhedrin, representing Moses, while Caiaphas represented Aaron. Those who quote Lightfoot should remember, however, that he subsequently wrote:

“I was once of another mind, I confess; and supposed Annas to be called high priest, because a priest, and head of the Sanhedrin, in which I was too credulous to Baronius, a man far better skilled in Christian antiquity than in Jewish. But now I find that never any such man was head of the Sanhedrin at all; and therefore, I am now swayed to believe, that Annas is called high priest, as indeed having once been so, but now deposed, and now *sagan* under Caiaphas” (*Lightfoot’s Works ix. 39*).

The editors of the Companion Bible have adopted Lightfoot’s earlier view, but have apparently failed to note his own retraction (See marginal notes to Luke iii. 3, John xviii. 13, 24 and Acts iv. 6). The *Sagan*, to whom Lightfoot refers, was a priest

appointed as a reserve in case, by any act of defilement, the High Priest should be unable to perform his duties. Josephus gives one example of this, and other examples are found in the Talmud.

Gratius, the predecessor of Pontius Pilate, deprived Annas of the high-priesthood, and appointed successively Ishmæl, Eleazar and Annas, Simon, and then Caiaphas. It is probable that the Jews resented this and, while being obliged outwardly to accept the nominees of the Roman Governor, they probably retained the title for the man who had succeeded to the office in the orthodox way. As late as Acts iv. 6, we read of “Annas the High Priest, and Caiaphas”—which lends colour to the suggestion of strong Jewish antipathy towards Roman interference.

Within the limits we have allotted for these articles we cannot say very much, but we trust that what is brought forward from time to time will help gradually to build up a mental picture of the people and events that form the background in the great N.T. drama of light and darkness.

#4. Caligula, the Mad, and Claudius, the Wise Fool. (Acts ix. - xi). pp. 50 - 54

Before the accession of Caligula, Tiberius had thrown Agrippa into prison on the evidence of his coachman's report of a conversation overheard between Agrippa and Caligula. As soon as he heard of Tiberius' death, Agrippa freed-man came running to tell Agrippa the news, saying in the Hebrews tongue: “The Lion is dead.” Upon his accession, Caligula set Agrippa at liberty and placed upon his head a royal diadem. He also made him king over the tetrarchy of Philip and gave him a golden chain of weight equal to that of the chain with which he had been bound in prison.

The name Caligula means “bootling” and had been given by the soldiers to Gaius, the son of Germanicus, as a pet name. As a child he had been the idol of the army, and at his accession to the throne of the Cæsars, all Rome rejoiced. His brothers and his mother were dead, and his sister Agrippina at this time was about to become the mother of the future emperor Nero. The first few months of his reign were full of promise. He liberated prisoners, recalled exiles, and publicly burned incriminating documents. But he soon fell sick with a fever, and arose from his bed a maniac. He became possessed with the idea of his own divinity, and indulged in a lust for blood the record of which is sickening to read. Once, when annoyed by the populace at a public entertainment, he expressed the wish that the Roman people had but one neck so that he might sever it at a single blow. He made his horse, Incitatus, a consul; and his crazy reign ended with his assassination by one of the officers of the Praetorians.

Josephus tells of one incident that occurred during Caligula's reign that is connected with the temple at Jerusalem. The people of Alexandria worked upon the passions of Caligula by telling him that, whereas all other countries in the Empire signalized their loyalty and devotion by erecting altars and temples in the Emperor's honour, the Jews refused to do any such thing. Thereupon Caligula sent Petronius to be President of Syria, with the charge that the Jews should erect a statue to himself in their temple. Petronius, however, was met by tens of thousands of Jews who told him that, while they could not think of meeting the Roman armies in warfare, they were nevertheless willing to die rather than dishonour the Name of God. For a continuous period of forty days the Jews assembled thus, and all agriculture was neglected. So much so that Petronius was obliged to write to the Emperor and tell him that if he persisted in his design, not only would it mean the massacre of tens of thousands of Jews, but also famine and loss of tribute. Agrippa eventually extracted from Caligula the rescinding of the order, and God showed His approval of the Jews' attitude by a remarkable supply of rain when it was least expected. Petronius was ordered to become his own executioner, but news of Caligula's death arrived before this order reached him.

It is true, of course, that none of these details are to be found in the Acts of the Apostles, but it is interesting to remember that the conversion and commission of Paul were events that took place during this appalling reign.

Upon the assassination of Caligula, and while the Senate debated the various claims to the succession, the Guard took the matter into their own hands, dragged Claudius out from behind a curtain, and hurried him off to the camp, where he was hailed as Emperor. Claudius had owed a great deal to the advice and mediation of Agrippa, and in return he restored to Agrippa his grandfather's dominions, and made him king over Judæa and Samaria. This Agrippa is the Herod whose tragic death is recorded in Acts xii., and about whom more must be said in a later article.

Claudius had lived a retired life, and was rather of the student type. Many, however, considered that he was deficient mentally. To this view of his capabilities he probably owed his life, and so found himself at the age of fifty the successor to the Imperial purple that had been worn by his nephew Caligula. Claudius added three new letters to the Roman alphabet—which were afterwards dropped—built the harbour at Ostia, and erected the aqueduct that bears his name. Julius Cæsar had made an attempt at the subjugation of Britain, but it was Claudius who actually added this island to the Roman Empire. Claudius came here in person, and at Brentwood (the district where the present writer is preparing this article) first came into contact with the British forces. The possibility that the name of a British Princess is to be found in one of Paul's epistles and its connection with the campaign of Claudius will be considered when dealing with the Epistles to Timothy.

Among the items of interest that connect Claudius with apostolic history must be mentioned the famine of Acts xi. 28, and the expulsion of the Jews from Rome (Acts xviii. 2).

“Agabus signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar” (Acts xi. 28).

Josephus places the time of the famine as that of Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, so that it must have occurred between A.D.44 and A.D.48. Both of these prefects exercised their authority during the reign of Claudius.

As a parallel with the Church’s effort to meet the conditions brought about by famine the following extract from Josephus will be of interest. Izates, King of Adiabene, and his mother Helena, the Queen Dowager, had lately become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and Josephus writes as follows concerning the Queen’s coming to live at Jerusalem:

“Now her coming was of infinite service to the people of Jerusalem: for a famine about that time oppressing the city, and many dying of want, Queen Helena sent some of her servants to Alexandria, with money to buy a great quantity of corn, and others of them to Cyprus to bring a cargo of dried figs She distributed to those that were distressed” (Josephus Ant. xx. ii. 5).

In the Pembroke collection there is a coin issued in the reign of Claudius bearing a pair of scales, the recognized symbol of famine.

Before dealing with the edict that expelled the Jews from Rome, it will be of interest to record one other incident in the reign of Claudius. The robes of the High Priest had been held in custody by the Romans from A.D.6 up to A.D.37, when they were restored to the Jews. Fadus, however, upon being appointed in A.D.44, received orders from Claudius to withdraw the robes from the custody of the Jews. Agrippa, however, interceded with Claudius, and the Emperor relented. His rescript throws an interesting light upon his character.

“Claudius Cæsar Germanicus, Tribune of the people for the fifth time, Consul elect the fourth time, Imperator the tenth time, the Father of his country—to the Magistrates of Jerusalem, the Senate, the People, and all the nation of the Jews, greeting.

My Agrippa (whom I have educated, and retain with me as most dutiful) having introduced to me your ambassadors who came to thank me for the care I had taken of your nation, and earnestly, anxiously entreated that the holy vest and the crown might be in your custody, I grant it, as was done by the most noble and excellent Vitellius. And I am of this mind, first from my own sense of religion, and my desire that all men should live according to the customs of their fathers, and next because I know that in so doing, I shall highly gratify King Herod himself, and Aristobolus the younger, with whose loyalty to myself and zeal for your interests I am well acquainted, with whom I have the greatest friendship, as they are most worthy and esteemed of me. I have also written about these matters to Cuspius Fadus, my Procurator.

The bearers of the letter are Cornelius, son of Keron, Typhon, son of Theudion, Dorotheus, son of Nathaniel, and John, son of John. Dated the 4th before the Kalends of July, in the consulship of Rufus and Pompeius Sylvanus (28th June, A.D.45).”

Another event which occurred during the reign of Claudius was the expulsion of the Jews from Rome. The incidents connected with this expulsion led to the appointment of Felix, and the fellowship of Aquila and Priscilla with Paul. The hostility between the

Samaritans and the Jews had led to bloodshed at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The news which reached Claudius was probably exaggerated, and he became apprehensive lest the Jews living in Rome might be led on to some act of treason. He therefore issued a decree that all the Jews should be expelled. This is probably the expulsion referred to by Suetonius, Claud. 25:

“Judeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma exhulit.”

“The Jews, who were constantly making disturbances, Chrestus being the mover, be banished from Rome.”

Chrestianus is found in Tertull. Ahol c 3, and *Chrestum* in Lactant. Instit. iv. 7, which would suggest that *Chrestus* here means “Christ”. As we have seen, the expulsion was overruled to bring about the association of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla.

Claudius abolished the laws of impiety, and forbade his subjects to offer him sacrifice or any other form of worship. It was during the thirteen years of his reign, that the Christian faith had time to spread.

We have rather exceeded the space we intended for an article of this series, and we will therefore leave the narrative here, trusting that the historical points dealt with will be of service to all students of the New Testament who read these pages.

#5. Nero, the Monster. (II Tim. iv. 17). pp. 85 - 87

On the death of Messalina, the infamous wife of Claudius, Pallas, one of his freedmen, strenuously advocated the claims of Agrippina. Agrippina was the younger sister of Caligula, the widow of Domitus Ahenobarbus and mother of Nero. She became the wife of her uncle Claudius, and persuaded him to pass over his son Britannicus in favour of her own son Nero. When this was accomplished, she poisoned Claudius and set Nero upon the throne. She was finally murdered by the very son for whom she had committed so much evil. Such was the beginning of Nero’s reign; and it was before this monster of cruelty and vanity that Paul had to stand his trial. Nero’s parents were conspicuously vile even in their day. His father Ahenobarbus declared that with himself as father and Agrippina as mother “a monster only could be born”. And a monster he became.

Four years after his adoption by Claudius, Nero succeeded to the throne.

“At the commencement of his reign his conduct excited great hopes in the Romans; he appeared just, liberal, affable, polished, complaisant, and king; but this was a mask which hid the most depraved mind that ever disgraced a human being.”

Among the tutors of the young Nero was one of high repute, the philosopher Seneca. There are letters extant that purport to have been written by Paul and Seneca to each

other. These were known to Jerome, and, although they are spurious, they indicate the place that Seneca occupied in the world of moral philosophy. He utterly failed, however, to curb the immoral tendencies in his pupil—demonstrating once again the utter necessity of the grace of God, and the powerlessness of human wisdom. Seneca was accused by Nero of treason, and died by opening his own veins. Don Cassius ascribes the revolt of the Britons under Boadicea to the distress to which they were driven through the rapacity of Seneca and his agents.

Nero poisoned Britannicus in the year following his own accession to the throne. He was married to Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, a woman of singular virtue, whom he accordingly detested, lived an immoral life with a courtesan named Acte, and in adultery with Poppæa, whose two husbands were still living. He married Poppæa in A.D.62, a year or two before the Apostle's release at the end of Acts xxviii. Strangely enough Josephus tells us that Poppæa was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and occasionally she protected the Jews and conferred favours upon them. Even Nero himself was conversant with the Jewish religion and was assured by his friends that the fates had destined him to be King of Jerusalem* (*Suet. Nero 40*).

In A.D.59 Nero added to his series of crimes that of matricide. At the jealous instigation of Poppæa, he was responsible for the murder of his mother Agrippina. After this his nerves became frayed and, not daring to return to Rome, he retired to Naples. The servile Senate, however, urged him to come back to Rome, and now that the restraining power of Agrippina was removed, he gave free indulgence to his every whim. He became charioteer, singer and player upon the guitar. Gallio, who is mentioned in the Acts, had the degrading office of announcing "Nero Claudius is about to sing" (Don Cass. lxi. 20). Tears ran down the cheeks of the honest old soldier Burrhus, as he saw his master thus disgrace the name of Cæsar.

Nero actually encouraged new forms of vice by payment, with appalling results. As Lewin writes:

"If the passions of men cannot be subdued even by stringent laws, it may well be supposed what license prevailed when the chief magistrate himself offered a premium to depravity."

On the night of July 19th A.D.64, soon after Paul's release at the end of Acts xxviii., a fire broke out in Rome that raged for six days and seven nights. It was commonly reported that Nero himself was the incendiary, and that his object was to obtain a clear space in which to erect a magnificent palace. To provide a scape-goat for the multitude, he started the calumny that the Christians were the culprits, and persecution on a large scale began.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, writes as follows:

[* - For the close parallel between Seneca's writings and the teaching of Scripture, the reader is referred to the series *Wisdom, Human and Divine*, Volume XXVI, page 104.]

“To put an end therefore to this report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, upon a set of people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar, Christians. The founder of that name was Christ, Who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his Procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again and spread, not only over Judæa, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither everything bad upon the earth finds its way, and is practiced. Some who confessed their sect were first seized, and afterwards, by their information, a vast multitude were apprehended, who were committed, not so much of the crime of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery, for some were disguised in the skin of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs, some were crucified, and others were wrapped in pitched shirts, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night. Nero lent his own gardens for these exhibitions, and exhibited at the same time a mock circussian entertainment, being a spectator of the whole in the dress of a charioteer, sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the spectacle from his car. This conduct made the sufferers pitied, and though they were criminals and deserving the severest punishment, yet they were considered as sacrificed, not so much out of regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man” (*Tac. Ann. xv. 44*).

Perhaps the reader will more fully appreciate, after reading this extract, the intensity of meaning in the Apostle’s words to Timothy:

“Wherein I suffer trouble *as an evil doer*, even unto bonds” (II Tim. ii. 9).

When the Apostle writes in the same epistle: “I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (II Tim. iv. 17) he is probably referring to Nero, just as at the death of Tiberius, the information was imparted by the words “The Lion is dead”.

When Nero perceived that nothing could save him from the consequences of his shame, he made several attempts at suicide, and eventually died with the words of vanity upon his lips: *Qualis artifex peres*—“What an artist to perish!”

We shall have more to say concerning Nero when we come to deal with Paul’s trial, but for the moment we must conclude. We trust that as the series proceeds, the dark background against which the early ministers of the faith lived and died, may become more real and living.

#6. Gallio, who “cared for none of these things”.
(Acts xviii. 12-17).
pp. 132 - 135

With Roman history after Nero, the student of the New Testament is not, in general, so vitally concerned—although it is true that the Apostle John lived on through the reigns of several more Emperors. For the benefit of those who may appreciate the tabulation of facts, we give below the Emperors, and their dates, together with various supplementary names, and events that took place either in secular history or in the life of the Apostle Paul. With one or two exceptions and modifications, the list is substantially the same as that given in Farrar’s *Life and Works of Paul*, and the chronological tables in *Conybeare and Howson* and *The Companion Bible*.

A.D.	Emperors.	Procurators.	Legate of Syria.	Kings.	High Priests.	Events in the life of Paul.
14.	Tiberius.	---	---		---	
25.	---	---	---		Caiaphas.	
26.	---	Pilate.	---		---	
34.	---	---	Vitellius.		---	
37.	Caligula.	Marullus.	---		Jonathan.	Paul’s conversion.
38.	---	---	---		Theophilus.	
39.	---	---	Petronius.	Herod	---	
40.	Orders statue in the Temple.	---	---	Agrippa i.	---	First visit to Jerusalem at Tarsus.
41.	Claudius.	---	---		Simon.	
44.	Famine.	Cuspus Fadus.	Cassius Longinus.	Death of Herod	---	
45.	---	---	---		---	Second visit to Jerusalem.
46.	---	Tiberius Alexander.	---		---	
47.	---	---	---		Ananias.	1st missionary journey.

48.	---	---	Quadrutus			
49.	---	Cumanus.	---	Agrippa		
50.	Caractus at Rome.	---	---	ii.		Paul at Corinth. Gal., I & II Thess.
51.	---	---	---			Third visit to Jerusalem.
52.	Jews expelled.	---	---			
53.	---	Felix.	---			
54.	Nero.	---	---			
59.	Murder of Aggripina.	---	---			
60.	---	Festus.	Corbulo.			Sent to Caesarea.
61.	Baodicea.	Albinus.	---			At Rome.
63.	---	---	---		Jesus.	Paul liberated. Eph., Phil., Col.
64.	Fire at Rome.	---	---			
65.	---	---	---			I Tim., Titus.
66.	---	---	---			II Tim., Martyrdom.
68.	Nero's suicide. (June).	---	---			

The reader will find an account of the closing years of Paul's ministry in the third article of the series on the Second Epistle to Timothy. A.D.66 appears to be the best authenticated date for Paul's martyrdom, but absolute certainty is impossible. Lewin gives A.D.66; Farrar and Conybeare and Howson, and The Companion Bible give A.D.68. As Nero died in June A.D.68 this must of necessity be the latest possible date. The outbreak of fire in A.D.64 marks the beginning of the persecution responsible for the Apostle's death, which must have occurred, at the latest, within four years from this date.

Some account must now be given of the men with whom Paul came into contact in the Acts.

“And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, *Gallio* said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or of wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters And *Gallio* cared for none of these things” (Acts xviii. 14-17).

Through not understanding either the character of the man or meaning of the scriptural comment, *Gallio* has become a symbol of indifference just as *Ananias* has become a symbol of falsehood. This, however, is an entire misconception.

Gallio was the deputy or pro-consul of Achaia. It is a testimony to the historical accuracy of Luke that he uses the correct title here, for the government of Achaia had been in a state of constant change. Under Augustus it had been in a state of constant change. Under Augustus it had been pro-consular, then for a time imperial under Tiberius, then again pro-consular under Claudius, free under Nero, and again pro-consular under Vespasian.

Gallio's brother Seneca, wrote of him:

“No mortal man is so sweet to any single person as he is to all mankind.”

And, in another place:

“Even those who love my brother Gallio to the very utmost of their power yet do not love him enough.”

“He was the very flower of pagan courtesy and pagan culture—a Roman with all a Roman's dignity and seriousness, and yet with all the grace and versatility of a polished Greek” (*Farrar*, ref. to *Dion Cass. lx. 35*).

The Jewish religion was a *religio licita*—i.e., licensed by the state—and the charge brought by the Jews against Paul was that he was teaching something contrary to the Law of Moses, and consequently something unlawful in the eyes of Rome. Gallio, however, was not moved by these specious charges. Had the charge been one of *civil* wrong (*adikema*), or *moral* outrage (*rhadiourgema*), he would have listened to them, but questions about “words”, “names”, and “your law”—“Look ye to it”, says the truly disdainful Roman, and drives them from the judgment-seat.

“While we regret this unphilosophic disregard, let us at least do justice to Roman impartiality. In Gallio, in Lysias, in Felix, in Festus, in the Centurion Julius, even in Pilate, different as were their degrees of rectitude, we cannot but admire the judicial insight with which they at once saw through the subterranean injustice and virulent animosity of the Jews in bringing false charges against innocent men” (*Farrar*).

Tacitus informs us that Gallio died in the year A.D.65. From Pliny we learn that, *after his consulship*, he had a serious illness and went on a sea voyage, and Seneca tells us that he went on this voyage from Achaia. We also know that Seneca was not in favour at Rome until A.D.49 when he returned from his exile in Corsica. These facts taken together place Gallio in Achaia between A.D.52 and 54, which is in harmony with the chronology of the Acts.

We have already seen that Augustus was unconsciously responsible for the birth of Christ taking place at Bethlehem, and that Claudius brought about the friendship of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla. We now see that Gallio, quite unwittingly, was used to fulfil the Lord's promise to Paul:

“Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God amongst them” (Acts xviii. 9-11).

Here for the moment we must stop; we shall hope to deal with the lives of Felix, Festus and others in subsequent articles.

**#7. Felix and others who came into touch with Paul.
(Acts xxiv. - xxviii).
pp. 171 - 173**

When Paul was apprehended after the uproar at Jerusalem (Acts xxii.). Claudius Lysias, discovering that he was a Roman citizen, sent him with a letter to "Felix the governor".

Felix, together with his brother Pallas, had been imported as slaves, and purchased by Antonia, the mother of Claudius. They were both exceedingly clever, and soon were entrusted with great responsibilities. Pallas ruled the financial affairs of the house of Claudius, while Felix held office in the army. In A.D.52 Felix was appointed Procurator of Judæa, and, as Tacitus writes, "wielded the sceptre of a monarch with the soul of a slave".

"He was not a Roman by birth, and he had none of the Roman qualities; artful and perfidious, and stirred by revenge, even to the use of the assassin's knife, a votary of pleasure and regardless of the feelings he wounded in the pursuit of it, ostentatious and extravagant, and feeding his wasteful indulgences by peculation and extortion" (*Lewin*).

Agrippa had known Felix in Rome, and the acquaintance brought Felix into touch with Drusilla, the wife of Azigas, King of Emesa. Ready to hand was an instrument only too willing to assist in any evil work—Simon the Magician. Simon called himself the Almighty, the Christ, and the Paraclete, and took about with him a courtesan Helena, exhibiting her as an emanation of his own godship. He is thought by some, though without definite proof, to have been the Simon of Acts viii. 18, and his name is perpetuated to this day in the hateful word "Simony" which means "traffic in ecclesiastical preferment".

Felix employed this man to seduce the Queen of Emesa from her husband:--

"Because she was desirous to avoid her sister's Berenice's envy, for she was very ill-treated on account of her beauty. She was prevailed upon to trespass the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix."

The Queen, together with the son born of this marriage, perished in the eruption of Vesuvius.

The usual duration of a procuratorship was two or three years, but Felix had already held the office for six years. The apostle Paul was cognizant of this, and the fact gives point to the opening of his defence before Felix:

"Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself" (Acts xxiv. 10).

When Felix came back to Jerusalem we read that “he came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess”, and that he “sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ” (Acts xxiv. 24). We do not know what line of testimony the Apostle followed. For the sake of the Jewish Drusilla, he may have expounded the O.T. Scriptures and proved that Jesus was the Christ, as he is seen doing elsewhere in the Acts, but whether this is so or not, we know that he applied the truth to the guilty consciences of the two before whom he stood:

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled” (Acts xxiv. 25).

The more convenient season of which Felix spoke never came, and his sordid love of gain kept Paul a prisoner for two years. Then, wishing to gain all the influence possible in his favour on his return to Rome “Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound” (Acts xxiv. 27).

The Jews, however, were not to be so easily disposed of, and sent a deputation to accuse him to the Emperor:

“And he had certainly been brought to punishment, unless Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time had in greatest honour by him” (*Josephus Ant. xx. viii. 9*).

Festus, who succeeded Felix in A.D.60, died the following year, and so provides another definite date in the chronology of the Acts—the other dated event, which has not yet been brought forward in this series, being the death of Herod in A.D.44 (Acts xii.). There is little to be said of Festus that would be of service to the Bible student, and the conduct of Paul’s case before him and Agrippa will come before us when we are considering the procedure of the Roman trial.

We pass on, therefore, to the Centurion, Julius, to whose care Paul was consigned in Acts xxvii. 1. Some years ago a full-length effigy of a centurion was unearthed at Colchester, showing the breastplate, girdle and greaves, shoes, and military cloak and sword—equipment which figures in the imagery of Eph. vi.

Prisoners who came to Rome in order to appeal to the Emperor were delivered to the care of the Prefect of the Prætorium. The nature of the prisoner’s treatment while in custody depended a good deal on the character of the charges against him. Some of them would be fastened by a chain round the right wrist to the left wrist of a soldier, but would otherwise enjoy a certain measure of liberty, and within prescribed limits would be permitted to hire a room for themselves. Such appears to have been the treatment meted out to Paul.

It was usual for two Prefects to be in charge of the Prætorian guards, but during the year in which Paul arrived at Rome, there was only one, Burrhus. For the first five years of Nero’s reign the government was directed by Seneca and Burrhus, the latter bearing the character of a bluff, honest soldier. His treatment of Paul, the prisoner, would have

been vastly different from that which Paul had to endure on his second imprisonment at Rome, under the Prefect Tigellinus. Burrhus had been removed by poison, and Tigellinus was the evil genius of Nero, and the instigator of the Christian persecutions.

We must give our attention next to the family of the Herods, and then go on to a consideration of the bearing of Roman law upon the teaching of the New Testament.

#8. The Herods of the New Testament. **pp. 215 - 217**

We have so far considered very briefly the story of the Cæsars connected with the Scriptural narrative, and we must now begin the history of another line of kings, subject it is true to the imperial sway, but important actors nevertheless in the drama of the ages.

“The years of the Son of God on earth were spent under the sway of three Herodian princes. His infancy narrowly escaped the massacre dictated by the ruthless jealousy of the first Idumæan King; the place chosen for the predestined home of His childhood was decided by the dread inspired by the cruel tyranny of the second (Archelaus); the third (Herod Antipas) was the murderer of His kinsman and forerunner, and, after the frustration of attempts to seize His person, took part in His cruel mockery and precipitated His earthly doom. The fourth (Agrippa I) imprisoned and beheaded His chief apostle, and scattered His disciples from Jerusalem to preach the Gospel to all the world. The fifth (Agrippa II) listened to the defence of the greatest early convert to His faith, and jestingly professed to be half ready to assume that designation of its votaries, which in those days had already become the synonym of ‘evil-doer’.” (*Farrar*).

To get some idea of the Herods one must go back a little to the Maccabean period in Jewish history. The first Maccabee to assume the title of King was John Hyrcanus. He ruled for twenty-six years in Palestine, and then sent his sons, Aristobolus and Antigonus, to attack Syria. He also subdued the Idumeans and compelled them to adopt Judaism. From these forcibly converted Idumeans sprang Antipater and the family of the Herods. Antipater was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau.

In B.C.64, troubles at Jerusalem, including a siege of the Temple, caused the Roman power to intervene, and Pompey the Great came to Damascus. Jerusalem was stormed and 12,000 Jews massacred. On the Day of Atonement (Tisri 10th or Sept. 22nd, B.C.63) Rome and Judæa first came face to face, and the King, Aristobolus, together with Alexander and Antigonus, were carried away as captives to Rome, to grace Pompey’s triumph. Alexander, however, escaped, and in B.C.54 attacked Judæa. He was defeated by Mark Anthony.

The Jews then expressed a wish that their country should become a Pentapolis, that is, governed by five aristocratic sections of the Sanhedrin, at Jerusalem, Jericho, Gadara, Amathus and Sephoris. This state of affairs continued until Julius Cæsar restored Hyrcanus as Ethnarch (*see* Volume XXVII, page 163).

Antipater, whose history we are tracing, remained a friend of Pompey until B.C.48, when Pompey was defeated by Cæsar (Augustus) at Pharsalia. At this a lesser man might have despaired, but not so Antipater. He immediately transferred his allegiance, and rendered Cæsar such service in an hour of peril that Cæsar became the friend of the Idumeans. Consequently when Antigonus complained to Cæsar that Antipater had robbed him of his kingdom, he was dismissed, and Antipater made a Roman citizen and Procurator of all Judæa (B.C.47). Antipater was now practically King, and made his elder son governor of Jerusalem, while Herod his younger son received the governorship of Galilee. It is at this point that the name of Herod enters the pages of Jewish history.

On March 15th B.C.44 Julius Cæsar was assassinated, and in B.C.43 Antipater, the founder of the house of Herod, died of poison.

“But he had already gratified the highest hopes of his ambition, and in Herod he left a son who inherited all his energy, his subtleness, his marked daring, his political ability, his magnificence, his personal beauty, and the singular power of fascination by which he won over in succession even the greatest of the Romans to support his cause” (Farrar).

Such is the history, in brief, that leads up to Herod the Great.

It is impossible to condense the story of Herod into closing paragraphs of this article. We must devote at least one complete article to the subject, and will therefore close this outline of Herod’s ancestry by indicating the family tree of the Herods as they come into the Scriptural record.

Antipater was poisoned in B.C.43. He had four sons and one daughter. Phasaël committed suicide; Joseph was killed in battle; Pheroras died a natural death. His daughter Salome was the mother of Berenice.

Herod the Great is the Herod mentioned in Luke i. and Matt. ii. He married several wives. Mariamne the Asmonæan was the mother of Aristobolus, who married Berenice, and was executed in B.C.6. Of this marriage there were two sons—Herod, King of Chalcis (A.D.48), who married his niece (Acts xxv. 13) and Agrippa I, whose death in A.D.44 is recorded in Acts xii.

Another son of Herod the Great by Mariamne the Boethusian was Herod Philip, who married Herodias (Matt. xiv. 3) and had a daughter Salome II. Malthase, a Samaritan, bore him Antipas and Archelaus. Antipas is the Herod mentioned in Luke iii. 1 and 19; ix. 7; xiii. 31; xxiii. 7; Matt. xiv. 1 and 3; and Mark vi. 14. Archelaus is the king mentioned in Matt. ii. 22.

Agrippa I, whose pedigree we have traced above, was the father of Agrippa II (Acts xxv. 13), and of Berenice (Acts xxv. 13), and of Drusilla, who married Felix (Acts xxiv. 24). The son born of this marriage with Felix bore the name of Agrippa and, together with his mother, perished in A.D.73 in the eruption of Vesuvius. So ended the

house of Herod. It came in by bloodshed, it was sustained by murder, and it ended in flame and smoke.

The Epistle to the Romans.

#68. God's Sovereignty Established (ix. 14-29).

pp. 26 - 34

It is of the utmost importance in our study of Rom. ix. that we keep steadily in mind the fact that the objector in this chapter is a Jew and not a Gentile. A Gentile might object to the rejection of Esau, but no Jew would ever suggest that God was unrighteous because he rejected Edom and chose Israel. The pride of the Jew, so manifest in the Scriptures, would make such a suggestion impossible. The question of Rom. ix. 14 concerning the possibility of unrighteousness with God goes deeper; it arises out of the choice of the remnant according to the election of grace, and the corresponding passing by of the bulk of the nation. It is this, and not the "hating" of Esau, that would create a difficulty in the mind of the Jew. So with the question of the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart. No orthodox Jew would have the slightest scruple or difficulty about this. What would trouble him would be the possibility that any one of the literal seed of Abraham should not find mercy. With ourselves, the point of view is different. We see a difficulty in the rejection of Esau, and in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, but it is important to realize that, while these problems demand their own solution, they are not strictly relevant to the exposition of Rom. ix.-xi.

Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He must have known the different words used in the O.T. in connection with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and all the arguments that different schools of the Rabbis had put forward; yet he does not enter into the debate at all. It is possible to suggest as a kind of extenuation of the Divine act that Pharaoh is finally to be numbered among the saved, but of this suggestion Paul has nothing to say. It would also be possible to soften the statement by referring to the evident fact that many things are said to be done by the Lord that He really only permits others to do in their self-will and rebellion. Again, the Apostle makes no mention of such a plea. He is here meeting the objection of the Jew, who boasts that, being a son of Abraham, he cannot fail of the kingdom of the Messiah. The Apostle draws attention to the most evident exercise of sovereign choice in the call of Abraham, the selection of Isaac, and the rejection of Esau. The doing of good or evil in no way influenced the choice of Jacob or the rejection of Esau, and, in continuance of his argument, the Apostle gives two further instances from O.T. history, in which the sovereignty of God is exercised in saving mercy, and in punitive hardening.

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth" (Rom. ix. 14-18).

The words of Luther on this section are to the point:

"The *ninth* chapter of the Epistle to the Romans *is* the ninth. Learn first the eight chapters which precede it."

If we have done this, we shall see Rom. ix. in its true light, but if we come to it independently of what has gone before, we shall probably darken its teaching with our own shadows. When we read in Rom. ix. that God “hardeneth” whom He will, we shall remember Rom. i. 24, where we read: “Wherefore God also gave them up.” This is no mere arbitrary action, however, for the “giving up” of the nations is only consequent upon the nations giving up God. In Volume XVII, page 132, we set out in parallel columns what God says of the nations in Rom. i., and what He says of Israel in Psalm cvi. There was nothing to choose between them. If God shows mercy to one nation, and withholds it from others, the question of righteousness or unrighteousness is not involved. As Shakespeare wrote:

“Though justice be thy plea, consider this, That in the course of justice none of us should see salvation.”

And again:

“The quality of mercy is not strained” (*Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1).

It is contrary to the “quality of mercy” to bring in the question of righteousness at all, seeing that “all” have sinned, both Jew and Gentile, and all alike are amenable to judgment.

The two passages cited by the Apostle in dealing with the objection raised in Rom. ix. 14 are taken from the Book of Exodus.

In Exod. xxxiii. Moses prays: “I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” The Lord replies:

“I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19).

It is important to remember that these words have a context. Anything may be made of them if the context be ignored, but if we go back step by step to that which led to the revelation of Divine sovereignty, all debate concerning the possible “unrighteousness” of God in the bestowing of His grace, or the infliction of His wrath, is for ever stilled. In the opening section of Exod. xxxii. we find that Israel had become idolaters, and were worshipping a golden calf. The Lord calls them a “stiff-necked people” against whom His wrath “waxed hot”. So far from the Lord being in any sense obliged by the terms of His covenant to endure and bless this people, He says to Moses:

“Let Me alone that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation” (Exod. xxxii. 10).

Consequently, with this passage in mind, Paul could argue that, had God carried out His threat, He would have been clearly within His rights, even though it meant the blotting out of thousands of Israelites. Indeed, Moses himself called upon the house of

Levi to consecrate themselves, and as a result there fell about 3,000 men by the sword (Exod. xxxii. 26-30).

Immediately following this incident there occurs a passage that closely resembles the words of Paul in Rom. ix. 3:

“Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin ---; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written” (Exod. xxxii. 32).

The Angel of the Lord now goes before the people, and we read in Exod. xxxiii. 3:

“I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way.”

By the time we reach the verses quoted from Exod. xxxiii. in Rom. ix. 15, we know without further debate that mercy extended to such a people must proceed from the sovereign choice of God alone. All reasoning based upon mere physical association with Abraham is inadmissible. God could have raised up a great nation through Moses, and no injustice would have been done. Indeed, as the Baptist declared:

“Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matt. iii. 9).

It is a great mistake to go to Rom. ix. 15, lift the verse out of its context, and then to use it as a basis upon which to build a doctrinal system. The basis of our faith is found already firmly laid in the first eight chapters of Romans. In ix.-xi. things are viewed from the *dispensational* standpoint.

If God has the unchallengeable right to “love” whom He will, He also has the sovereign right to “hate” whom He will, “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. This is the Apostle’s second argument.

“For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth” (Rom. ix. 17, 18).

The LXX translates this passage: “Thou wert preserved to this day”—instead of: “I have raised thee up.” This has led some expositors to believe that there is a direct reference here to the fearful plague that had fallen upon all the Egyptians. There may be some truth in this suggestion, for it appears that all suffered from the plague.

The Apostle, however, passes by the LXX and translates the Hebrew for himself. The word he uses is *exegeiro*. In the LXX version this same word is used by Hezekiah in Isa. xxxviii. 16, where there is an evident reference to recovery from illness, as also in James v. 15. On the other hand, *exegeiro* is found in Zech. xi. 16: “I will raise up a shepherd against the land.” And in John vii. 52: “Out of Galilee no prophet is raised up.” The passage in Romans, therefore, might well mean:

“For this same purpose I raised thee up, not only in the first instance as king, but even now, from the dire effects of the recent plague, that I might show in thee My power, etc.”

Pharaoh apparently was not concerned with either evidence of the sovereign power of God. Indeed, he sets God at nought, saying: “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord” (Exod. v. 2).

It was the Lord’s express purpose that Pharaoh should know Him, and that, through him, His name might be declared throughout all the earth. There are no less than sixteen different occasions in the Book of Exodus where it is stated that the Lord’s object is to make either Israel or the Egyptians know that He is the Lord. For example:

“The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt” (Exod. vii. 5).

“In this shalt thou know that I am the Lord: behold I will smite the waters and they shall be turned into blood” (Exod. vii. 17).

One cannot help going back in mind to the passage in Exodus already considered, where the Lord “proclaimed the name of the Lord” to Moses. His name is “proclaimed” by the mercy shown to Israel, and by the judgment that fell upon Pharaoh. It is not one God that saves, and another that condemns; the “Man Christ Jesus” Who became the Saviour is also the One to Whom all judgment has been committed. Grace and wrath proceed from the same source, and both are only answerable to the Lord’s sovereign and righteous Will.

In his Song after the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Moses remembers this declaration of the name of the Lord:

“The people shall hear and be afraid all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away” (Exod. xv. 14, 15).

The news had traveled ahead of advancing Israel, as we know from what was told to the spies by Rahab the harlot (Josh. ii. 9-11).

To return to our passage in Romans, the Apostle now anticipates another objection:

“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? (Rom. ix. 19).

The Jew was evidently prone to this type of reasoning. A rather similar passage is found in Rom. iii. 1-8, where we have the objection concerning the advantage of the Jew. The advantage is admitted, summed up in this instance in the entrustment of the oracles of God, and this is immediately followed by the arguments in Rom. iii. 1-8:

“Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?”

“Is God unrighteous Who taketh vengeance?”

“If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why am I judged as a sinner?”

The Apostle's answer to the question of Rom. ix. 19 is a stern reminder that no criminal at the bar, no one who lives only by mercy, no creature in the presence of the Creator can dare to question the righteousness of any of His actions.

It is noteworthy that throughout the argument of Rom. ix. the Apostle meets all cavils and questionings by an appeal to O.T. Scripture. Should the Jew object to this, he would immediately cut the ground from under his own feet. The O.T. was decisive. When dealing with Gentile hearers, the Apostle sometimes "speaks after the manner of men", using familiar illustrations—such as the bondage and freedom of slaves, the games and the prize. But here his appeal is to the O.T., which emphasizes again the strongly Jewish character of chapters ix.-xi.

So, the illustration that follows of the potter and the clay is taken from Isa. xxix. 16 and xlv. 9. Here, once again, let us keep in mind that the Apostle is not advancing doctrine at the moment, but answering the cavils of his opponent. To take the figure of "clay" from this verse, and to argue from it concerning "free-will" is not treating the passage fairly. Man is very different from a piece of clay. He is a responsible being; he can be put under law; he can be rewarded or punished. The Apostle is using the illustration of the clay here to show his opponent how unreasonable are his objections to the sovereignty of God. Moreover, in the words of verse 21, "Of the same lump", he refutes all charges against the righteousness of God, showing that between the saved Israelite and the condemned Egyptian "there is no difference". The figure of "the same lump" is, moreover, taken from an O.T. passage, and is probably used by the Apostle to counteract any tendency to fatalism that might possibly be produced by the preceding argument of the potter and the clay.

If one reads the first four verses of Jer. xviii. and stops there, one might proceed to argue that God assumed responsibility for the failure of Israel, just as the clay was marred in the hands of the potter. But if we lay aside our reasonings (not our reason, which is quite a different thing) and allow the Lord to draw the inference, we shall see that no doctrinal question as to human responsibility is involved, and no idea that God is the Author of Israel's failure. The only point that is picked out and expounded is the Lord's right to treat all nations as He sees fit (Jer. xviii. 6-10). Leaving these figures, the Apostle proceeds to speak in more open terms:

"What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"
(Rom. ix. 22-24).

The difference between the two "vessels" here is inescapable. The vessels of wrath are endured with much longsuffering, and are "fitted to destruction". How different are the words concerning the vessels of mercy, "which He had afore prepared unto glory". He did not fit the vessels of wrath for perdition by some eternal decree; *they fitted themselves*. The saved, however, did not by any means fit themselves for glory; the Lord

Himself “afore prepared them”. In connection with the vessels of wrath the Apostle speaks of God, “willing to show His wrath and make His power known”; but in connection with the vessels of mercy, “that He might make known the riches of His glory”. He does not speak of the “riches of His wrath”.

It is utterly impossible to teach that God “endured with much longsuffering” vessels that of His own sovereign will He had Himself fitted to destruction.

The passage which the Apostle quotes in support of this argument is taken from Hos. ii., where again Israel are clearly in view. The Apostle knew this, and so did his Jewish opponent. The point that he makes is this. If God can confer the title of “My people” upon those who were “Not My people” when dealing with one nation, namely, the Jews, there can be no objection if, in the sovereignty already established in the preceding verses, He should take as “vessels of mercy” some from among the Gentiles. The Apostle does not follow up this argument as He does in Rom. iv. 9-12, or in Gal. iii. 27-29, for he is not here concerned with the doctrinal aspect of the subject. Moreover, it is entirely foreign to the Apostle’s intention to read unto Hos. ii. any reference to the “Church”. He is simply using the passage to establish his argument concerning the sovereignty of God.

The Apostle concludes with further quotations from Isaiah concerning the place and purpose of the remnant that should be saved. The rejection of the Jewish people in the Apostle’s own time was no more contrary to the promises of God than the rejection of the ten tribes who were carried away into captivity by the Assyrians; for though the number carried away were like the sand in multitude, a remnant returned. Instead of reproaching God with the smallness of the remnant, the Apostle says that we should rather be glad to think that a remnant had been spared at all, for, as Isaiah has already said, the people had become like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord, apart from His sovereign Will, might have left them also to perish.

Before concluding, let us review this intensely difficult passage in broad outline.

Romans ix. 6-29.

First Proposition.

God’s promise has not been broken by the failure and rejection of the bulk of Israel (6-13).

- (a) The children of ABRAHAM (7-9).

Everything depends upon what we understand by “Israel”. We have Abraham’s children, Ishmael and Isaac, but in Isaac the seed was called.

- (b) The children of ISAAC (10-13).

The purpose of God according to election was signally manifested in the choice of Jacob and the rejection of Esau.

Second Proposition.

God is therefore just when He shows mercy on some, and allows others to go the natural road to perdition. This is later proved by the argument from “the same lump” (14-18).

- (a) As to MERCY.—This prerogative is claimed by God Himself in Exod. xxxiii.
(b) As to HARDENING.—This is written large in His dealings with Pharaoh.

Third Proposition.

God, therefore, has always acted in accordance with His sovereignty, and in harmony with O.T. Scripture (19-29).

- (a) Man as a creature has no right or power to reply to God.
- (b) God has dealt with “vessels of wrath” and “vessels of mercy” according to His sovereign will.

Fourth Proposition.

In the inclusion of Gentiles and the saving of a remnant of Israel, God is acting in harmony with O.T. Scripture.

- (a) Quotation from Hosea.—He calls a people “My people”, who once were “Not My people”.
- (b) Quotation from Isaiah.—He saved but a remnant at the captivity of Israel years before.

**Structure of Romans ix. 14-29.
The Sovereignty of God Established.**

- A1 | 14. WHAT SHALL WE THEN SAY?
 - B1 | 15-18. | MOSES AND MERCY. \ Divine election established
PHARAOH AND HARDENING. / from the Law.
- A2 | 19. THOU WILT THEN SAY.
 - B2 | 20-24. | POTTER. \ Divine election, an essential prerogative of
VESSELS. / the Creator, illustrated from common usage.
- A3 | 25. AS HE SAITH.
 - B3 | 25-29. | HOSEA.—NOT MY PEOPLE. \ The purposes of Divine
ISAIAH.—REMNANT. / election further illustrated
from the Prophets.

#69. “God hath not cast away His people, whom He foreknew.”

(A study of Rom. ix. 30 - xi. 10, revealing that Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are but two sides of one truth).

pp. 73 - 78

No part of the Epistle to the Romans can be considered “milk for babes”; most of it is “strong meat” indeed for the most mature. As we realize on the one hand the magnitude of the theme, and on the other the limitations of the writer, the small amount of space at his disposal, and the varied stages of attainment and growth of those who read these articles, there will be no need to stress the difficulties that must attend the exposition of such a passage as Rom. ix.-xi. It will help us, however, as we face the problems before us, to remember that *the theme* of Romans is righteousness. We meet it in the earlier part of chapter i., where it constitutes the very power of the gospel, and again at the close of the chapter when we read of the failure of the Gentile world. And it is with us in one aspect or another in every succeeding chapter.

For the moment, the failure of Israel, the blindness of so many of the chosen nation, and the inclusion of Gentile believers, have presented such a sheaf of problems, that all other considerations have been set aside, while the great answer, “God is sovereign”, has been given. Divine sovereignty, however, in a moral world is but one half of the truth. There is another side of equal importance, namely, human responsibility. This principle, therefore, now emerges, and occupies the central section of Rom. ix.-xi. In this section we have such expressions as “seeking by faith”, “not submitting”, “confess”, “believe”, “hearing”, “preaching”, “stretching forth the hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people”.

The two apparently opposite aspects of truth represented by sovereignty and responsibility meet together in Rom. xi. 1, 2, summed up in the word “foreknew”. But this we must deal with in its place. Were the Bible nothing but Rom. ix. 14-29, we might all be Calvinists. Were it nothing but Rom. x., we might all be Arminians. As it is, we cannot be either to the exclusion of the other, for each system contains an element of truth in spite of the admixture of error.

Rom. ix. 30 - x. 21 deals with the question of Israel and righteousness, and it has been suggested that the subject is handled in a threefold way: Israel’s failure in spite of the prophets (ix. 30-33); Israel’s failure in spite of the law (x. 1-11); and Israel’s failure in spite of the gospel (x. 14-21). Upon examination, however, it would seem that this subdivision of the subject-matter is not justified. It will be observed that the Apostle uses twice over one particular quotation from the prophet Isaiah: “Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. ix. 33, x. 11). This fact must certainly be given a place in any structural outline. Further, we notice that the Greek word *skandalon*, “offence” (Rom. ix. 33) and “stumbling-block” (Rom. xi. 9, 10), is used in two passages with evident and intentional parallelism. This, too, must find a place in the structure, and extends the section beyond the limits of Rom. x. Again, we observe that the

subject-matter of Rom. ix. 30-32—the fact that the Gentiles attained what they did not follow after—is echoed in Rom. xi. 6, 7. These items are decisive, and demand recognition. We accordingly give them their place in the structure, which is as follows:

Romans ix. 30 - xi. 10.
“The Election hath obtained it.”

- A | ix. 30-32. | a | What shall we say then?
 - b | Gentiles followed not; yet attained.
Israel followed; yet attained not.
 - c | Faith *versus* Works.
- B | ix. 33. *Skandalon*. The rock of offence.
- C | ix. 33. *Kataischuno*. Whoso believeth, not ashamed.
 - D | x. 1-10. | d | Paul’s prayer for Israel.
 - e | Israel ignorant and not submissive.
 - f | The word of faith which we preach.
 - C | x. 11. *Kataischuno*. Whoso believeth, not ashamed.
 - D | x. 12 - xi. 3. | f | The word of faith that we preach.
 - d | Elijah intercession against Israel.
 - e | Israel gainsaying and murderous.
- A | xi. 4-7. | a | What saith the oracle of God.
 - c | Grace *versus* Works.
 - b | Israel seek but obtained not.
Election obtain.
- B | ix. 9, 10. *Skandalon*. The stumbling stone.

The word translated “follow after” in Rom. ix. 30 is *dioko*, “pursue” and indicates that the Apostle is resuming the theme of ix. 16: “Nor of him that runneth”. It is clear, however, that Israel were not prevented from attaining unto righteousness by Divine decree. Their failure was due to stumbling at the fact of justification by faith, which, like the cross, was an “offence”. They failed to attain unto righteousness “because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works of law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone”. It was a question of pride and ignorance:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. x. 3, 4).

They were ignorant of the nature of the righteousness which alone satisfies God, and, like Paul in his unregenerate days, they boasted of “the righteousness of the law”. But such is of no avail in the presence of God. Even in the prophets we read: “all our righteousness are as filthy rags” (Isa. lxiv. 6).

Turning again to Rom. x. 4, we read: “Christ is (1) the end of the law, (2) for righteousness, (3) to every one that believeth.”

The Lord was “the end” in the sense of a Goal:

“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal. iii. 24, 25).

He was “the end” in the sense of the Antitype:

“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).

He was “the end” in the sense of the Perfecter:

“The law made nothing perfect” (Heb. vii. 19).

He was “the end” in the sense of Fulfillment:

“What the law could not do, in that in was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us” (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

He was “the end” in the sense that in Him the believer had died to the law:

“Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ” (Rom. vii. 4).

To all this wealth of teaching, and its provision of righteousness by faith, Israel was blind.

Returning to Rom. x. we read:

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man that doeth those things shall live by them” (Rom. x. 5).

But no one ever had fulfilled or ever could fulfil the requirements.

The Apostle does not allow the Jew to shield himself behind the plea that the doctrine of the gospel is difficult to comprehend. In verse 9 we read:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9).

We are all familiar with these words, but we may not be so familiar with the O.T. passage concerned, and the line of argument which the Apostle is pursuing.

Once again we must remind ourselves that the Apostles is speaking to Jews, using a type of reasoning familiar to the followers of Rabbinical methods, but foreign to the logical processes of the Greek. He makes free use here of the passage in Deut. xxx., where Moses tells the people that the commandment of God is “not hidden” or “far off”, not “in heaven” or “over the sea”, but “very nigh”, both in “heart” and “mouth” (Deut. xxx. 11-14). This passage is balanced by Deut. xxix. 29, where the “secret things” and the “revealed things” are spoken of. Dr. Ginsburg draws attention to the

fact that the words “Unto Jehovah our God” in this verse are “dotted”, and should not appear in the translation. The sense of the passage is as follows:

“The secret things, and (even) the revealed things belong to us and to our children for ever, if we do all the words of the law.”

The balancing of these two passages stresses the fact that obedience renders the commandment plain and understandable. The language used by Moses and by Paul is highly figurative, but would be easily interpreted by the Jew. To the Jew, knowledge that was too wonderful for his grasp was “high; I cannot attain unto it” (Psa. cxxxix. 6; Prov. xxiv. 7). And the impossible would be suggested by such expressions as “ascending up unto heaven” or “making the bed in hell” (Psa. cxxxix. 8). There is no such difficulty, however, in believing the gospel. Confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, and belief in the heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, mean salvation.

Returning to the excuses that might be offered by the Jew, the Apostle concedes that it is not possible to call upon the Lord without believing Him, or to believe on Him of Whom they have not heard. But this was no excuse for Israel. They had heard, preachers had been sent to them, but they had turned a deaf ear to the gospel message. As Isaiah had said: “Lord, who hath believed our report?” (Rom. x. 16). This is followed by further quotations bearing upon Israel’s responsibility.

“But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses But Esaias But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. x. 18-21).

With the opening of Rom. xi., the Apostle begins to draw his conclusions. Stated briefly, they are as follows:

- (1) God hath not cast away His people: *Proof*.—I also am an Israelite, and saved.
- (2) God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew” *Proof*.—In Israel’s darkest days, God had reserved unto Himself a faithful company, unknown even to Elijah himself.
- (3) There is now also at the present time “a remnant according to the election of grace”.

Those who form this “remnant” have believed in the Lord and are justified. Their standing is in grace, and not in works. Israel as a whole have entered into a period of darkness and blindness, but the salvation of “the election”, foreknown by God, is in perfect harmony with God’s sovereignty as discussed at length in Rom. ix. No Israelite was coerced into believing; no Israelite was prevented from believing. God’s foreknowledge covers the whole problem, without doing violence either to the principles of morality or of Divine sovereignty.

The quotation from Psa. lxxix. with which the Apostle concludes his argument is suggestive. The Psalm is Messianic, and contains the verse quoted by Peter concerning Judas: “Let their habitation be desolate.” Israel had betrayed the Lord. Their self-righteousness had blinded their eyes, and the great fact that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth became a stumbling-block and an

offence to them. Only a remnant believed, and that elect company was not exclusively Jewish, but included those who walked in the steps of Abraham's faith. There was no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him".

Towards the close of Rom. x. the Apostle quotes the statement of Moses, that the Lord would provoke Israel to jealousy "by them that are no people". This he now unfolds in connection with the great subject of the reconciling of the world, which is dealt with in Rom. xi. 11-36. This, however, we must leave for the moment.

The subject-matter of Rom. ix.-xi., the peculiar style of the Apostle's argument, the many quotations and analogies from O.T. Scriptures, make the study of these chapters hard, and perhaps a weariness to the flesh. The extreme importance, however, of great theme of justification by faith demands that it shall be considered in all its bearings, whether in connection with the Law of Moses, the Call of Abraham, the Headship of Adam, or, as in the passage before us, the Failure of Israel, and the Election of the Gentiles. Principles are brought to the light in these passages that are of vital importance to every believer who desires to understand the ways of God with men.

#70. The Olive Tree and Israel's National Position (xi. 11-32). pp. 108 - 117

In the earlier verses of Rom. xi. the Apostle has shown that the failure of the bulk of the nation of Israel in no way invalidates God's purpose or His faithfulness. We have seen that the prophets foretold "a remnant according to the election of grace", and we also learn that the defection of Israel had been overruled to bring about the reconciliation of the Gentile world. Looking on to the close of the chapter, we find that "all Israel" shall be saved, because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance". The words "all Israel", "Jacob", and "Zion", together with the prophecy alluded to, preclude our making any deduction from these verses but one—namely, the national restoration and blessing of Israel according to the terms of the New Covenant. Quite a number of questions suggest themselves as we read this section, but it is evident that the Apostle, when he wrote about the olive tree, had no intention of introducing a theological argument at this point. He had one and only one purpose before him—to seek to show by the figure of the olive tree how the Lord had used Gentile believers in order, if it were possible, to "provoke" the nation of Israel "to emulation". This, and this only, is the reason for introducing the figure, and the recognition of this will save us from almost endless argument as to the ultimate destiny of the branches that remained.

Before attempting any exposition of these verses, it will be wise to see what particular parts of the passage are emphasized by the structure, which we set out as follows:

Romans xi. 11-32.

- A | 11-25. ISRAEL'S FALL occasions GENTILE RECONCILIATION.
- B | C1 | 11. PROVOKE. "If."
 - D1 | 12. FULNESS of Israel.
- C2 | 13-15. PROVOKE. "If."
 - D2 | 16. FIRSTFRUIT.
- C3 | 17-24. PROVOKE. "If."
 - D3 | 25. FULNESS of Gentiles.
- A | 26-32. MERCY TO GENTILES occasions ISRAEL'S RESTORATION.
- B | E | 26. All Israel shall be saved.
 - F | 26. Deliverer; turn away ungodliness.
 - G | 27. The covenant.
 - H | 28. Enemies. Gospel. For your sakes.
 - H | 29. Beloved. Election. For the fathers' sakes.
 - G | 29. The gifts and calling.
 - F | 32. Concluded in unbelief.
- E | 32. Mercy upon them all.

It is evident that the Apostle is speaking here of the *dispensational* aspect of truth, for no Gentile could be justified by being placed in the position forfeited by one of the natural branches of Israel's olive tree. No believer, who is justified by faith, can ever be separated from the love of God, or can ever be condemned (Rom. viii.), so that the threat of excision in Rom. xi. 22 must refer to the dispensational position which then obtained.

In endeavouring to understand the various factors in this presentation of truth, let us first seek an answer to the question: "What does the Olive Tree represent?"

In attempting to answer this question we do not propose to quote the parable of Jotham given in Judges ix. 1-15. Jotham's purpose in the parable is simple and evident, and it would seem to be a distortion of the context to make the Olive, the Fig and the Vine in the parable stand for different aspects of Israel's privileges. The O.T. passages with which we are most concerned are to be found in Jeremiah. In Jer. xi. we read:

"The Lord thy God called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit
the branches of it are broken" (Jer. xi. 16).

Not only does Paul take the figure of the olive tree, and its broken branches, from Jeremiah, but he also refers to Jer. xxxi. 31. In Rom. xi. 27, where the olive tree is once more complete. There are some who have sought to show that the olive tree of Rom. xi. is to be found in Christendom to-day, but such teaching is contrary to Jer. xi. and xxxi. & Rom. xi. alike.

The Book of Jeremiah consists of fifty-one prophecies, each introduced by some such phrase as "The word of the Lord came". The opening prophecy is indicative of all the rest:

"See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant" (Jer. i. 10).

The subjects of this prophecy are clearly “nations” and “kingdoms”—not churches, either real or professing. Also the prophecy is two-fold: first, judgment in the form of “rooting out”, and then, restoration in the form of “planting”.

The second prophecy in Jeremiah occupies only two verses, which we give in full:

“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My word to perform it” (Jer. i. 11, 12).

The word for “almond tree” is *shaked*, and the word for “hasten” is *shoked*, the almond being called the “watcher” or “early waker”. When the time comes for the people of Israel to be restored, the same word is again used:

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them (*shoked*) to pluck up so will I watch over them to plant, saith the Lord I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” (Jer. xxxi. 28, 31).

Moreover, in verses 36 and 37 Israel are assured that they shall not cease from being *a nation*, and that they shall not be cast off on account of their misdeeds—a passage which finds an echo in the words of Rom. xi. 29: “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

Returning to the prophecy of Jeremiah, we observe that where the green olive tree with the broken branches is spoken of, the prophet interprets the symbol as referring to Israel:

“But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord” (Jer. xii. 17).

If we examine the context of Rom. xi. we shall find that there also Israel is portrayed as an olive tree.

“To Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. x. 21).

“Blindness in part is happened unto Israel and so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. xi. 25, 26).

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes” (Rom. xi. 28).

There can be no misunderstanding of these references which stand on either side of the passage which refers to the olive tree. It is not a church that is in view, but Israel as a nation. The “they” that stumbled are Israel (xi. 11); “my flesh” (xi. 14) refers to Israel; and those who were “cast away” and who are yet to be received are Israel (xi. 15).

We have next to consider the “branches” of the olive tree.

“There is a remnant according to the election of grace” (xi. 5).

“God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew” (xi. 2).

“Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (xi. 7).

The branches that were broken off were the unbelieving among Israel, the remaining branches constituting a remnant. Into the place from which the unbelieving of Israel had been broken off, the Gentile believer had been grafted, “contrary to nature”.

Why does the Apostle use the expression “contrary to nature”? The root and fatness of the olive tree belonged to Israel, and if Israel had repented and had been restored at that time, no Gentile would ever have shared it with them, even temporarily. It was something exceptional that was in view. It is clear that Paul cannot be referring to the great promise of justification by faith for two reasons. In the first place, he warns the believing Gentile that he might be “cut off”—a warning that cannot refer to justification by faith, for Rom. viii. makes separation for ever impossible; and secondly, Abraham himself was an uncircumcised Gentile when he was justified by faith, and so can be the father of all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, without any necessity for a grafting in “contrary to nature”. So far as justification was concerned, the oneness of all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, was so close that many have taken the words of Gal. iii. 27-29 as though they were written in Ephesians. “Contrary to nature” cannot, therefore, be used of the great *doctrine* of Rom. i.-viii.; it can only apply to the *dispensational* teaching of Rom. ix.-xi. The *doctrinal* truth remains; the *dispensational* aspects change, and pass away.

We have now seen enough, we trust, to convince us that “Church” truth is not in view in Rom. xi. Before passing on to the great conclusion, however, we must examine more carefully the Apostle’s figure of the olive tree, and to discover why he speaks of the process as engrafting into the true olive tree, branches of the wild olive, contrary to nature.

To provoke unto jealousy.

If the reader will glance at the structure of Rom. xi. 11-32, he will see that the word “provoke” is given three times. Two of these references actually occur (in verses 11 and 14) while in verses 17-24, instead of stating the fact for the third time, we find that the Apostle uses the figure of the olive tree. It is the usual custom in grafting to take a slip of the choice variety, whether it be apple, or pear, or rose, and graft it into the stock of some stronger, though not so choice, a variety. For example, in the case of the standard rose, the tall stem is the briar, and upon this is budded the more fragile flower. Paul appears to reverse all this, and there are many who bluntly say that he did not know anything about the culture of trees, and must not be taken literally. This, however, cannot be. He hangs the whole argument of Rom. xi. upon this figure, and if he is wrong in this, he may be wrong altogether. Paul himself recognizes that the process is “contrary to nature”, but those who criticize, and suggest that he is using a far-fetched illustration, are themselves in error. While the engrafting of a wild olive into the true was “contrary to nature”, it was by no means contrary to practice. Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, a Latin writer on Agriculture, Gardening and Trees, deals with the cultivation of the olive tree, and speaks of the very practice under consideration. It was found that when an olive tree

began to cease fruit-bearing, the insertion of a wild graft had the same effect upon the tree that Paul hoped the insertion of the Gentile would have had on Israel; it “provoked” the flagging olive tree to “emulation”. The practice has been revived in our own day to provoke certain shy-bearing pear trees to fruitfulness. Columella flourished about A.D.40, so that Paul was not speaking “without the book”.

The fact that the Gentiles who believed had received “the blessing of Abraham” in the form of the promised “spirit” (Gal. iii. 14), and that they possessed the gifts associated with Pentecost (I Cor. xiv. 21), was intended to provoke Israel to wake up to the fact that their unique position was going. The whole point of the olive tree in Rom. xi. lies in the purpose with which the wild olive was graft in—namely, to provoke Israel to jealousy. Gentile nations are not in view in Rom. xi., for such cannot be addresses as “brethren”, neither do they stand “by faith”.

If we teach that the “olive tree” position still continues after Acts xxviii., let us see what the Apostle’s words imply. Into that same olive tree from which some of the branches had been broken out, God assures us that He will graft them again. We shall see by the references yet to be adduced that when this takes place Israel *as a nation* will be restored. How is it possible for Israel to be restored as a nation by having any number of branches graft in to any existing Christian community? Will any present-day calling ever eventuate in a restored Israel? There is but one answer. Only while Israel existed as a people, was it possible for believing Gentiles to be graft in among the other believing branches, and so become linked up with the blessing of Abraham, and partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree. We are preserved from any attempt at spiritualizing the expression “All Israel shall be saved”, by the fact that the Apostle quotes Isa. lix. 20, where the Deliverer Who comes out of Zion shall turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*. We have never met anyone who would teach that “Jacob” can mean anything but the literal people of Israel.

Moreover, all this is in fulfillment of the New Covenant:

“For this is My Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. xi. 27).

Under the terms of the New Covenant, the forgiveness of sins leads to the restoration of the Nation (Jer. xxxi. 31-37), and in verse 37 we read:

“If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord” (Jer. xxxi. 37).

With the knowledge of this promise under the New Covenant, the Apostle writes:

“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” (Rom. xi. 28, 29).

By the gracious permission of our brother Mr. S. Van Mierlo, we are able to reproduce in English form the diagram used in his book (in Dutch) dealing with the

Dispensation of the Mystery. The diagram demonstrates the whole story of the olive tree, and it will be seen that the first cutting off of “some of the branches” occurred when Israel in the land rejected the Lord.

Before the quotation of Isa. vi. 9 in Matt. xiii. we have a series of events leading up to this critical point:

- (1) The failure of Israel to repent, even though the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum would have brought about the repentance of notorious cities of the Gentiles like Tyre and Sidon (Matt. xi. 20-24).
- (2) The threefold rejection of the Lord Jesus in His three offices, as Priest, Prophet and King. “In this place is one greater than the Temple” (Priest). “A greater than Jonah is here” (Prophet). “A greater than Solomon is here” (King) (Matt. xiii. 6, 41, 42).
- (3) Consequent upon this rejection and non-repentance come the “*mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven”, and the citation of Isa. vi. 9 (Matt. xiii. 11, 14).

At the close of the Acts we find a repetition of this crisis, but on a larger scale. This time Israel are set aside, but no command is given to make a fresh proclamation, as in Acts i. The quotation of Isa. vi. 9 is followed by the dispensation of the Mystery, in which the olive tree and its branches, as such, have no place.

- - - I l l u s t r a t i o n - - - (BE-XXVIII.114).

Between Matt. xiii. and Acts xxviii. there were several excisions of the branches because of unbelief, of which two are noted in the diagram—at Antioch and at Corinth. That neither of these was final or intended to set aside the nation, Paul’s own action towards Israel makes clear. After Antioch he still preached in the synagogues; and after Corinth, he still gave Israel and Israel’s hope first place (Acts xxviii. 17, 20).

It is a difficulty with some students that the Apostle does not actually speak of the cutting down of the olive tree in Rom. xi., but only of “some of the branches” having been broken off. The answer is that the Epistle to the Romans was written before Acts xxviii. and still expressed the hope that, even at the eleventh hour, Israel would be provoked unto emulation and be saved. No indication is given that the “fullness of the Gentiles” would not be attained until nearly two thousand years had elapsed. We have only to turn to Rom. xv. 12, 13 to see that Paul and the Church were still expecting the fulfillment of Isa. xi. as well as Jer. xxxi. The “hope of Israel” was still the one hope before them all. It suffices for the Apostle in Rom. xi. that “some of the branches” had been broken off, and, to provoke the olive tree to emulation, some wild branches had been grafted in. What would happen to the olive tree if that effort failed is not revealed in Rom. xi., and in the nature of things could not be. Now that we have the light of all Scripture, we know that Israel were to be “plucked up” and scattered”, and to enter into a

“Lo-ammi” condition, while a new dispensation was introduced. But though all this is true, it was not revealed in Rom. xi.

When the Apostle in Rom. xi. speaks of the regrafting of the natural branches he is referring to the restoration of Israel as a nation (*see* Jer. xxxi. 36), and it is not possible that the olive tree should represent any other nation, or any church to-day.

If the olive tree survived the crisis of Acts xxviii., where is it? It cannot be the scattered nation of Israel, for they are manifestly *Lo-ammi*. It cannot be any of the denominations of Christendom, for if this were true it would follow that the denomination concerned would eventually receive back the broken-off branches of Israel, and resolve itself into the restored nation of Israel—which is manifestly impossible, for the restored nation of Israel will be made up of the very nation that is now scattered. If we will but distinguish between the *doctrinal* position of Rom. i.-viii., that has no reference to the olive tree, and the dispensational position of Rom. ix.-xi., we shall see that it is quite in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, for justification by faith to be enjoyed, independently of the position of Israel as a nation. The fact that the “believing” branches are called “firstfruits” no more argues for the unbroken perpetuation of the olive tree up to the present time, than the fact that Christ is said to be the “firstfruits of them that slept” proves that, ever since, in unbroken sequence, they that have fallen asleep in Christ have passed straight into glory. The firstfruits were the pledge of a future harvest, and in the type, the harvest naturally followed without a break. In the antitype, however, the harvest is the end of the age, and the interval between the first Pentecost and the present moment is nineteen hundred years.

A very real difficulty that some feel in connection with this passage is the fate of the believing section. If the whole tree is cut down by the roots at the end of the Acts, then believer and unbeliever are treated alike. Yet the believing remnant constitute a firstfruit, and are holy. We must be very certain of all our terms here. If the olive tree represents the nation and its national standing, then whatever the problem may be, it is clear that, as Israel *as a nation* before God does not exist, the olive tree has been cut down. The believing branches, therefore, must have some other ground of blessing. If we change the figure from the olive tree to that of a divorced wife, as in Jeremiah (Jer. iii. 1 & xi. 16), we may perhaps see more clearly that the believing remnant lost nothing when the national position of Israel was altered at Acts xxviii. Israel as a restored *nation* is represented as a divorced wife received back by the Lord (Jer. iii. 1), but the believing remnant is spoken of as the “Bride of the Lamb”. The “divorced wife” is restored to the land, but the “bride” is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem. There is, therefore, a great difference between the destinies of the believing and the unbelieving branches. In some cases the change was even greater. Paul himself lost his national association with Israel when the nation was set aside, but he entered into a sphere of blessing so great as to enable him to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Others would find their sphere of blessing set forth in John xiv.-xvii., and learn that though they were no longer branches in the olive tree of Israel, they were branches in Christ as the True Vine, and so had lost nothing. If we recognize the dispensational standing may change to our advantage, as it manifestly did in the case of Timothy, Luke

and Paul, our difficulty about the believing branches of the olive tree will be resolved. *Doctrinal* standing is not in view in Rom. xi. The grafting in of the unbelieving branches into their own olive tree at the end represents the restoration of Israel's *national* position "in that day". The rest of the natural branches that were left standing in the olive tree manifested the same unbelief that had caused the removal of so many before them—so that at the close of the Acts, we have a believing remnant of Jews and Gentiles, already being prepared for their higher position as the Bride, and also the unbelieving nation which, having resisted all the overtures of grace, is set aside. At the present time the Jew is not first. Neither in Paul's Epistles of the Mystery, nor in John's Gospel for the "world", can the olive tree be discovered. The New Covenant and the hope of Israel are in abeyance, and not until God's good time will they be put into operation. Hosea, speaking of the day of Israel's restoration, uses the same figures as we have been considering—the restoration of the separated wife (Hosea ii., iii.), and the spreading branches of the olive (Hosea xiv.). Any difficulties we may have as to the fate of the believing remnant during the Acts, or of the branches representing believers, are solved if we distinguish between the dispensational terms of Rom. ix.-xi. and the doctrinal terms of Rom. i.-viii.

We have more to consider, but as this article is already longer than usual, we must close, realizing only too well how little we can do in so vast a field.

#71. Fullness, Reconciliation and Doxology (xi. 11-36). pp. 148 - 155

Most of our time was occupied in the last article in discussing the purpose behind Paul's illustration of the olive tree. We saw that the grafting in of the wild olive was with the intention of provoking the flagging tree to new fruitfulness. The salvation and blessing of the Gentiles during the Acts, before the nation of Israel were saved and ready for their great mission to the families of the earth, were "contrary to nature", and intended to "provoke Israel to jealousy". We must now return to the opening verses of this section to give a little closer attention to the blessings that accrued to the Gentiles as a result of Israel's hope.

The Apostle here uses an argument which may be described as *a minori ad majus*:

"If their fall has brought about so much, what must we not expect as a result of their restoration?" (Rom. xi. 12).

The failure of Israel is expressed in the following terms: the "fall" (*paraptomai*: verse 11); the "diminishing" (*hettema*: verse 12); the "casting away" (*apobole*: verse 15); "broken off" (*ekklao*: verse 17); "spared not" (*pheidomai*: verse 21); "blindness" (*porosis*: verse 25); "enemies" (*echthros*: verse 28); and "concluded in unbelief" (*sugkleio*: verse 32). In these eight terms, we behold the "severity" of God (verse 22).

The “fall” of Israel is likened to the “offence” of Adam, the word *paraptoma* being translated “offence” in Rom. v. 15, 16, 18 and 20. The word literally means “to fall aside”. Israel follow very much in the steps of Adam. Both fail of their high purpose, and are set aside; and both will realize their destiny only when “in Christ”. Just as in Rom. v. 20 the abounding “offence” was overruled by God unto much more abounding grace, so in Rom. xi. 12, 15, we discover something of the same argument—an argument which, approached from the wrong angle, has been resolutely set aside in Rom. iii. 7, for no amount of overruling grace can minimize the positive wickedness of individual sin, however much good may result by the intervention of grace.

In Deut. xxvii., xxviii. Moses gives the people the solemn words that were to be pronounced from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Among the blessings we find, in verse 13:

“And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath” (Deut. xxviii. 13).

This high position Israel forfeited because of unbelief, but a day is coming when the Redeemer shall come to Zion (Isa. lix. 20), and Israel shall be restored, and enter into their high glory:

“The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Isa. lx. 12).

“But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord, men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles” (Isa. lxi. 6).

With this high destiny in mind, coupled with Israel’s terrible fall, the Apostle uses the word “diminish”. The primary meaning of *hettomai* is to be overcome as in battle or in a law-suit (II Pet. ii. 19, 20), and so to be inferior (II Cor. xii. 13). Israel, by their unbelief and failure to repent, were losing their high prerogatives, set out so fully in Rom. ix. 4, 5. This high position, now in danger of being forfeited, was not, of course, given to them on account of any intrinsic worth in themselves, but rather because of their place in the scheme of blessing. And so, when they fail, the Apostle speaks of them as being “cast away”—as the blind man is said to have cast away his garment that apparently encumbered him, or as the ship that was wrecked was “a loss” (Acts xxvii. 22). Israel had made shipwreck of their calling; they had fallen aside; they were becoming inferior; they were “a loss”. And so through all the terms used by the Apostle to explain their condition.

This failure of Israel has been overruled by God to the blessing of the Gentiles, and has resulted in their “reconciliation”, and their “riches”. These “riches” find an exposition in the Epistle to the Romans itself, as well as in the other epistles of the period:

“Riches of goodness” which, though despised, would have led to repentance (Rom. ii. 4).

“Riches of His glory”, lavished upon those vessels of mercy which the Lord had afore prepared unto glory, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles (Rom. ix. 23).

The “riches of the world” and the “riches of the Gentiles”, resulting as we have seen from Israel’s failure (Rom. xi. 12).

The “riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God”—calling forth the Apostle’s doxology at the close of chapter xi. (Rom. xi. 33).

With these passages we must also read Rom. x. 12:

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is *rich* unto all that call upon Him.”

When dealing with the structure of Rom. ix.-xi. (page 157, Volume XXVII), we noticed that the whole passage is bounded by the conception that God is “over all”:

“Who is God over all, blessed for ever” (Rom. ix. 5).

“The same Lord of all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Rom. x. 12).

“Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things” (Rom. xi. 36).

This is assurance indeed that the purpose of God shall be achieved, whatever the failure of His instruments, and however dark at times the prospect may appear.

The reconciling of the world, contingent upon the failure of Israel, is a most important part of Paul’s ministry. The Apostle was not commissioned on the day of Pentecost. Israel had the opportunity of hearing the Word, with signs following, for a considerable period before the apostle to the Gentiles received his commission. Immediately after Acts ix. and the commission of Paul, comes Acts x. and the indication to Peter that the unique and separate position of the Jew was passing. In Acts xiii.-xiv. the door of faith opens to the Gentiles, and Israel are warned lest that “come upon them, that was spoken by the prophets” (Acts xiii. 40, 41).

The very call of Israel was associated historically with the failure and apostasy of the Gentile world, for Abraham’s call in Gen. xii. follows the failure at Babel in Gen. xi. From the call of Abraham up to the time of the Acts of the Apostles, God had concentrated His attention upon that one people:

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos iii. 2).

The Apostle speaks of this period of Israel’s ascendancy and the corresponding Gentile darkness, when addressing the philosophers on Mars Hill, but he also indicates that a change has come:

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts xvii. 30).

Israel lose their high position of favour, and the far-off Gentiles, through the instrumentality of the Apostle’s ministry, are brought back:

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office” (Rom. xi. 13).

The “reconciliation of the world” is dispensational. It does not mean that the world was or will be saved, or justified or glorified, but simply that the barrier that kept the nations at a distance and in the darkness has been removed, and “all men everywhere” take the place of “Jews only” (Acts xi. 19). The reconciliation which is individual and doctrinal is found in Rom. v. 1-11.

The Apostle not only draws attention to the riches that have come to the Gentile world through the fall and diminishing of Israel, but goes further, saying: “How much more their fullness?” A reference to the structure of Rom. xi. 11-32, given on page 108, will show that the “fullness of Israel” is balanced by the “fullness of the Gentiles”, and we must therefore study them together.

“The fullness of Israel”, spoken of in verse 12, is most obviously restated in verse 15 as the “receiving” of them back again into favour, and the ambiguous “How much more?” of verse 12 is expanded as “life from the dead”.

The “fullness of Israel” would include their priestly office, the elevation of Jerusalem as the “joy of the whole earth”, the blessing of the “land of promise”, and the fulfillment of all those wonderful prophecies, that, with restored Israel as a centre, describe the earth as filled with blessings until it appears like another Eden. The “fullness of the Gentiles” is set in another context:

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. xi. 25).

If the “fullness of Israel” means their restoration to privilege, glory and blessing, so also does the “fullness of the Gentiles”. The failure of the nations took place before a single Israelite existed, and in the Covenant made with Abraham, the blessing of the Gentile is implied:

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8).

The salvation and justification of the Gentiles by faith, therefore, instead of causing doubts or murmuring among the Jews, should have caused them to rejoice—and the Apostle himself does rejoice as he beholds the wisdom of God working all things after the counsel of His own will.

In Isa. vi., where the fateful passage that speaks of Israel’s blindness is found, we read that “His glory is the fullness of the whole earth” (Isa. vi. 3, margin)—so that the same passage that speaks of the failure of Israel prophetically, implies also the inclusion of the Gentiles.

We must remember also the remarkable words of John the Baptist to those who were relying on the fact that Abraham was their father:

“I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham”
(Matt. iii. 9).

And the Lord’s own words concerning the great faith of the centurion:

“Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out”
(Matt. viii. 11, 12).

The first occurrence of *pleroma* (“fullness”) is found in Matt. ix. 16 where it is translated “to fill up”, indicating a patch in a torn garment. This is evidently the Apostle’s intention in Rom. xi. 25. The failure and diminishing of Israel had, as it were, caused a “rent” in the purpose of God, and the “fullness”—“that which fills up”—is supplied by the believing Gentiles.

The completion of the period of Israel’s blindness synchronizes with the Coming of the Lord, when they shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced and so “all Israel shall be saved”. We must remember here that the term “Israel” has already been defined. In Rom. ix. 4 the Israelites were those to whom the covenants and glory pertained, and we must remember that while every Israelite must be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, every descendant of these patriarchs is not necessarily an Israelite in the true meaning of the term:

“For they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called the children of the promise are counted for a seed” (Rom. ix. 6-8).

Every true Israelite is a child of promise, an elect person, and it is not, therefore, true to say that the “all Israel” of Rom. xi. 26 must necessarily include every descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who has lived in the past, or who shall be living at the time of the end. God alone knows whom He has chosen, and these must be saved. Just as we discovered that the sovereign choice of Jacob had no reference to his having “done good”, and the rejection of Esau had no reference to his having “done evil” (Rom. ix. 11), so we find that the purpose of God according to election stands, even though many true Israelites were “enemies” because of the gospel. The election of God stands firm, for “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”.

An attempt has been made by some to teach the doctrine of “Universalism” from Rom. xi. 32. We can hardly believe, however, that anyone who has once perceived the scope of Rom. ix.-xi. will be deceived by such handling of the text.

“For God hath concluded *them all* in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon *them all*” (Rom. ix. 32).

In both instances “all” is *tous pantas*, “*the all*”—some particular “all” that is under discussion. The only “all” under discussion here is “all Israel”, and Rom. ix. has already warned us against a universal application of the word even so far as Israel is concerned.

With the contemplation of God’s great overruling, using the blindness of Israel for Gentile blessing, and Gentile mercy for Israel’s ultimate salvation, the Apostle ends his reasoning and breaks into a doxology:

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to Whom be glory for ever, Amen” (Rom. xi. 33-36).

At the close of the great doctrinal section of Romans, we have the glorious “persuasion” that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. viii. 38, 39). At the close of the dispensational section, we have the doxology quoted above. And at the close of the epistle itself there is a further ascription of praise: “To the only wise God” (Rom. xvi. 25-27).

In Rom. xi. 33-36, the Apostle is thinking particularly of the wisdom, knowledge and judgment of God in the working out of His purposes—wisdom that infallibly uses and overrules all means to one end, knowledge that sees the end from the beginning and can never be taken by surprise, and judgments or decisions that are beyond the understanding of man, being indeed “unsearchable” (*anexereunetos*). Parallel with this last phrase is the statement that “His ways are past finding out”, the word “past finding out” (*anexichniastos*) being translated “unsearchable” in Eph. iii. 8. The word is a compound from the Greek for “a footstep”, and emphasizes the fact that we are completely dependent upon the revealed will of God. Apart from His Word what knowledge should we have? Or how should we set about acquiring it? If the Apostle himself, whose reasonings and explanations given by inspiration of God are so difficult to comprehend, has to cease from argument and exclaim “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God”, how much more we of so much lower calibre. Full as are the words already considered, they are but the steps that lead to the sanctuary itself. There, in a blaze of glory that robs the eye of its natural vision, we perceive something of the glory of Jehovah, the One “Who was, Who is, and Who is to come”.

HE WHO WAS.	“Of Him.”	<i>Ex</i> - origin.	In the PAST.
HE WHO IS.	“Through Him.”	<i>Dia</i> - cause.	In the PRESENT.
HE WHO IS TO COME.	“To Him.”	<i>Eis</i> - goal.	In the FUTURE.

“All things” here it *ta panta*, a form to be distinguished carefully from *panta*, without the article. The Apostle uses these terms with discrimination. “All things”, without reserve, are made to work together for good, but it is “*the* all things” (not the evil as well as the good) that are freely given us with the gift of Christ (Rom. viii. 28 and 32). In Rom. ix. 5 Christ is set forth as “over all things, God blessed unto the ages”. No discrimination is intended here; the evil as well as the good, defective Israel as well as the believing Gentile, Esau as well as Jacob are all included. In Rom. xi., however, it is not all things, evil as well as good, that find their origin, cause and goal in Him, but rather those “all things” that are a matter of promise and election. So in Col. i. 16-20, we have *ta panta*: “For in Him were created *the* all things.” The Apostle’s intention here is not to

teach that Christ is the Creator of the Universe—that is a subject treated elsewhere—but rather that “the all things” were created “in Him”. These “all things” were created through Him—*dia*, and unto Him—*eis* (compare Rom. xi. 36), and “in Him” “the all things” have been “placed together” or “consist”.

And so, with every acknowledgment of the immensity of our theme, and of our own incapacity to plumb its depths, we leave this great dispensational section of a mighty epistle, glad at the close to have come to the silencing of all argument, not because of the challenge, “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?” but because worship has taken the place of argument, and adoration fills our hearts with song.

We have not given the structure of verses 33-36, believing that it will be obvious to all who will search and see, and feeling that to have introduced it here would have been somewhat of an intrusion.

“To Him be glory unto the ages, Amen.”

#72. Romans xii. and xiii.
“Your Reasonable Service” (xii. 1, 2).
pp. 191 - 197

The great dispensational section of this epistle has brought before us the overwhelming depths and heights of divine sovereignty, foreknowledge and predestination; but, far from such high doctrines inducing the irresolution of fatalism, we find that the Apostle opens this practical section by “beseeching”, and even speaks of “yielding your bodies” and of “logical service”. The Apostle never hesitates to bring to bear the greatest of doctrines upon the lowliest points of practice. He uses, for example, the sublime descent of the Lord from the high pinnacle of equality with God, to the deep abasement of the death of the cross, in order to encourage the believer to seek “that mind which was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. ii. 5-8). So, with Rom. i.-viii. behind him, and the marvelous exhibition in Rom. ix.-xi. of the mercy of God as revealed in His dispensational dealings with Israel and the Gentiles, the Apostle turns to the practical working out of this truth in the various departments of daily life.

He addresses himself to the believer in four capacities:

- (1) As AN INDIVIDUAL POSSESSING BODY AND MIND.—He deals with both in their relation to Christian service (Rom. xii. 1, 2) by teaching that is derived from renewal and separation.
- (2) As A MEMBER OF A CHURCH ENDOWED WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS.—He refers all to the measure of faith. (xii. 3-8).
- (3) As ONE DWELLING AMONG FELLOW-BELIEVERS AND IDOLATORS.—In this he shows that hatred of evil is not incompatible with rendering to all their dues, or with living peaceably, as far as is possible, with all men. (xii. 9, 18; xiii. 7).

- (4) As ONE WHO IS HASTENING THROUGH TIME--WITH ETERNITY EVER DRAWING NEARER.—While presenting the body in service to the Lord, no provision for the lusts of the flesh should be tolerated.

The structure of Rom. xii. and xiii. divides the subject-matter into five sections as follows:

- A | xii. 1, 2. Be not conformed to this age. *Suschematizo*.
- B | xii. 3-16. Grace given.
- C | xii. 17 - xiii. 7. Vengeance and civil government.
- B | xiii. 8-10. Law fulfilled.
- A | xiii. 11-14. Put off the works of darkness. *Euschemonos*.

With these main divisions in mind, the reader will be able to follow quite easily the details of the first section as set out below. As the complete structure is lengthy, we propose to set out in each article only that section which is under consideration at the time, trusting that the reader will, at the end, reassemble the whole so that its balance of parts may be appreciated.

Romans xii. 1, 2.

- A | xii. 1, 2. This Age. The Body. The Mind Renewed.
 - a | c | I beseech that:
 - d | Mercies of God. Bodies presented.
 - e | *Acceptable*.
 - b | f | Logical service.
 - g | This age. Not conformed (*Suschematizo*).
 - f | Mind renewed.
 - a | c | You prove what:
 - d | Will of God.
 - e | *Acceptable*.

Let us now gather up some of the teaching that is to be found in this great exhortation.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. xii. 1, 2).

The structure throws the word “acceptable” into prominence, and reveals the intimate connection between our acceptableness to God, and our consequent recognition of the acceptableness of His will. We know that the will of God must be “good”, we know that it must be “perfect”, but is it always “acceptable”? This is an experimental word and only so far as our service is acceptable to the Lord, will His will be acceptable to us. The moment we think, speak or act in a way that is not acceptable to God, His Will for us in that respect will cease to be acceptable to us.

Our practical acceptance with the Lord is the result of yielding our bodies as a living sacrifice. This, adds the Apostle, is not an act of fanaticism, not something done in the

white heat of enthusiasm, but something that is calmly and quietly and thoughtfully rendered—it is our “reasonable”, or “logical”, service. There is one sacrifice, and one only, which has been offered to God that involved death, and that is the sacrifice of Christ Himself. *In that we can have no share*—as it is written of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement: “There shall be no man in the tabernacle until he come out and have made an atonement” (Lev. xvi. 17). What is permitted, however, and what is enjoined, is the yielding of our bodies as a *living* sacrifice.

What is involved in this “living sacrifice” may be gathered from the way in which this aspect of service is referred to elsewhere.

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour” (Eph. v. 2).

The believer’s “walk” here is to partake of this sacrificial character, and just as the Apostle stresses “the body” and “the mind” in Rom. xii., so here, there follows immediately the “but” of verses 3-5 with their reference to the sins of the body and mind, leading up to a further parallel, in verses 8-10, with Rom. xiii. 12-14:

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. v. 8-10).

Still further parallels are to be found in the exhortation to “awake” in Eph. v. 14, and the same exhortation in Rom. xiii. 11; “the redeeming of the time” in Eph. v. and “The night is far spent” in Rom. xiii.; and “understanding what the will of the Lord is” in Eph. v., and “proving what is that acceptable will of God” in Rom. xii.

The sacrificial nature of service is further seen in Phil. ii. and iv. In the second chapter we have the service of the Apostle, while in the fourth chapter it is the service of the unnamed believers at Philippi.

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all” (Phil. ii. 17).

“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” (Phil. iv. 18).

The “things” described in this last passage could not have been of great size or value, for they had to be carried many miles, and were to help the Apostle in his narrow confinement. Yet, being given in the spirit of Christ, they were “acceptable, well pleasing unto God”.

Writing to the Hebrews, in an epistle in which “sacrifice and offering” had been set aside once and for all (Heb. x. 5-10), the Apostle says:

“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. But to do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. xiii. 15, 16).

In a later section of Romans, the Apostle speaks of the “offering up of the Gentiles” being “acceptable” (Rom. xv. 16).

The word “present” in Rom. xii. 1 should be translated “yield”. The word is *paristemi*, and is used in Rom. vi.:

“Neither *yield* ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but *yield* yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. vi. 13).

Here we have the “presenting of the body”, we have the stress upon the “living sacrifice”—“as those that are alive from the dead”—and also another connection that is not so obvious to the English reader. The word “instruments” (*opla*) occurs once more in this epistle, in Rom. xiii. 12, where it is translated “armour”; and the structure shows that this passage in Rom. xiii. is in correspondence with Rom. xii. 1, 2. The Apostle is thinking of the body as a whole in Rom. xii., and the members separately as “instruments” or “weapons” in Rom. xiii.

This yielding of the body in sacrificial service the Apostle calls “your reasonable service”. Paul, the man of faith, was also a man of reason. He saw nothing irrational in faith, nor anything unbelieving in reason. It is true that what often passes for reason is most irrational, but anything that is actually irrational is necessarily untrue, and cannot therefore be acceptable to God. An unbiased mind, unswayed by evil or ignorance, undimmed by darkness or superstition, and free from the dominion of sin, would inevitably arrive at the conclusion reached by the Apostle.

The introduction of the word “reasonable” naturally leads the Apostle to a consideration of the mind. He looks to the renewed mind for this rational power, and points out that we cannot hope for such a mind if we conform to this age. We must be transformed by the renewing of our mind, if we are to prove the acceptableness of the will of God.

The words used for “conform” and “transform” are compounds of *schema* and *morphe*. *Morphe* (“form”) is organic, while *schema* (“fashion”) applies more to what is external. The reader should refer to the structure for a moment to note that *suschematizo* in Rom. xii. 2, is balanced by *euschemonos* (“well-fashioned”), or as our version puts it, “honestly”—with the marginal alternative “decently”. This balance of truth is a necessary corrective. Fanaticism flies in the face of all reason and is apt to think that to be old-fashioned or extreme is a sign of sanctity. Such is by no means the case. In I Cor. xiii. 5 we read that “love doth not behave itself unseemly” (*aschemoneo*)—or as we might almost render the passage: “Love does not disregard prevailing fashions *unnecessarily*.” It is a matter of complete indifference to the child of God whether he wears a felt hat, a silk hat, a straw hat, or a cloth cap; there is no sanctity in any of them, and there is no sanctity in discarding them. While resolutely refusing to allow this age to fashion our thinking, we shall not willingly offend against the ordinary conventions of propriety under the mistaken conviction that such indicates spirituality.

While we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, it is to be “reasonable” service and we are to give none offence, while doing all to the glory of God (I Cor. x. 31, 32).

Metamorphoomai is the word translated “transfigured” in Matt. xvii. 2, and occurs also in II Cor. iii. 18:

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord *are changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.”

This transfiguration is associated with the “renewing” of the mind. The word is a compound derived from *kainos*, “new”, and takes us back once more to Rom. vi. & vii., where, in the same context as the “yielding” of our members, we read of “newness” of life and “newness” of spirit (Rom. vi. 4, vii. 6).

Following on from II Cor. iii. 18, which we have just quoted above, we read in II Cor. iv. 16 of the “renewing” of the inward man. The presence of the word “image” in II Cor. iii. 18 and the “renewing” of II Cor. iv. 16 find a full explanation in Col. iii. 9, 10:

“Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

The reader will have observed also the presence of the words “put on” which have already appeared in Rom. xiii. 12 and 14. And so the wonder of the Word grows upon us the more we study it, and the more we search for its treasures.

In this epistle to the Romans, the Apostle has dealt with tremendous issues, involving predestination and foreknowledge, and the arguments of Rom. ix.-xi. Yet, if we imagine that we shall find a treatise on this aspect of the Will of God in Romans, we shall be disappointed. *Thelema*, “Will” occurs four times in Romans, as follows:

- A | i. 10. Making request that I may have a prosperous journey,
by the *Will* of God, to come unto you.
- B | ii. 18. And knowest His *Will* and approvest (*dokimazo*) the things
that are more excellent.
- B | xii. 2. That you may prove (*dokimazo*) what is
that good and acceptable and perfect *Will* of God.
- A | xv. 32. Pray that I may come unto you with joy,
by the *Will* of God.

Here, it will be perceived, the subject is just two-fold. In the opening and closing members, it is simply the recognition of the Will of God that must always temper our requests and plans—a thought so simple that a believing child can understand it. In the central members it is a question of the approval of the Divine Will by man. In the first passage, taught only by law, and unrelieved by mercy, man’s approval is superficial—the “form of knowledge and of the truth in the law” (Rom. ii. 20)—while in the second passage we have the far deeper experience of Rom. xii. 2.

Of the fifteen occurrences of *thelo*, “to will”, four only have reference to God: namely, Rom. ix. 15, 18, 18 and 22. While the will of God itself does not change, it assumes different aspects according to our approach to it. It may appear formidable, overwhelming, unfathomable, fixed as “fate”. Yet to those whose service is “reasonable”, whose bodies are “yielded”, whose minds are “renewed”, it may appear as the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of One Who, though almighty, is also gracious, and though God, is also Father. It is this aspect, and not the deterministic one, that it is the Apostle’s object to present to the believer, not to intimidate him, but to captivate his affections.

The apostle Paul was ever mindful to place practice over against doctrine. He bids the Ephesian saints to walk worthy of their calling. He calls upon the Philippians to live in a manner worthy of the gospel. And now here, he shows the Roman believers what their reasonable service must be. While we realize that in our flesh “dwelleth no good thing”, yet the life we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, and instead of “neglecting the body”, we rejoice to learn that this same body that was once an instrument of unrighteousness, may now, by virtue of redemption and a renewed mind, be yielded in holy acceptableness to God.

May the beseeching of the Apostle and the contemplation of the mercies of God not be in vain.

**#73. Romans xii. and xiii.
Grace Given (xii. 3-16).
pp. 238 - 243**

- B | xii. 3-16. Grace given.
- c | h | 3. Not think highly.
- i | 3. Think soberly.
- d | j1 | 3. *The Measure of Faith.*
- k1 | 4, 5. Members one of another.
- j2 | 6-9. *The Analogy of Faith.*
- k2 | 10. Kind one to another.
- j3 | 11-15. *The Measure of Service.*
- k3 | 16. Same mind one to another.
- c | h | 16. Mind not high things.
- i | 16. Condescend to lowly.

We have already seen in the first two verses of this chapter (Rom. xii. 1, 2) that the yielding of the body to the Lord constitutes our “reasonable service”, and that only with the renewed mind can we prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. The next section (Rom. xii. 3-16) is addressed to the Church in the days when

supernatural gifts were enjoyed, and it is therefore clear that some parts of its teaching will not apply directly to us in their primary force. There are, however, abiding principles, true for all time, which we may consider with profit.

Although the words of this section are addressed to a Church possessing supernatural gifts, the Apostle carries on the line of thought already begun with reference to the mind, and we find the section bounded by the following:

“Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly”
(Rom. xii. 3).

“Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate” (Rom. xii. 16).

One is conscious in reading Paul’s epistles that his mind, as taught by grace, had an instinctive horror of foolish adulation. When, because of necessity, he enumerates his sufferings for Christ’s sake, he says that he has been acting like a fool in his boasting, and to offset this, he refers to the deep humiliation of having to leave Damascus, not as the proud emissary of the Jewish Sanhedrin, but in a basket let down from the wall. He refers also to the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he should become vain and boastful on account of the many visions he had received.

“But now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me” (II Cor. xii. 6).

When the Apostle is seeking to impress upon the consciences of the Ephesian saints the unique character of the ministry he exercised as the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles, claiming to be the one through whom the dispensation of the Mystery should first be made known, he breaks into the narrative to add:

“Unto me, less than the least of all saints, is this grace given” (Eph. iii. 8).

Writing to Timothy some thirty years after his conversion, that is to say after thirty years of such devoted service and suffering as has known no equal since, instead of feeling that such a record gave him the right to regard himself as above the saints, the Apostle is found reminding himself and Timothy, that he had been “a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious” though acting ignorantly “in unbelief” (I Tim. i. 13).

Those who worked with the Apostle were called upon to share this same humble estimate of their work.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor. iii. 5).

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (I Cor. iv. 6).

“Casting down reasonings (though not service that was ‘reasonable’—see Rom. xii. 1, 2) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. x. 5).

Again, in Eph. iv. 1, 2, at the outset of the practical section of the epistle, we find the Apostle stressing the need for “all lowliness and meekness”.

In contrast with “high mindedness”, and being “wise in your own conceits” (Rom. xi. 25; xii. 16) the Apostle places “think soberly” and “condescending to men of low estate” (Rom. xii. 3 and 16).

The English word “sober” is derived from *sobrius*, the opposite of *ebrius*, “drunk”. The first thought that it brings to the mind is associated with temperance, especially in connection with intoxicating drink, while its secondary meaning indicates that a sober person is grave, serious, and solemn. Connected with this second meaning we have the rather colloquial word “sobersides”, indicating that a sober-minded person is rather a “wet-blanket” or “kill-joy”. With all this the original of the word “sober” has nothing to do. The word in the Greek is derived from *so**, meaning “save” (giving us “salvation” and “Saviour”) and *phronema*, “mind”. The latter has reference to the “bent” or “inclination”, and so, coupled with the word that means salvation, it indicates that quality of mind, bent or inclination that arises out of the condition of being saved. This would of necessity be a bent that would avoid drunkenness, and intemperance of all kinds, but it would also increase, and not decrease, the keenness of one’s wits, and the response of the mind to joy, mirth and gladness as well as giving sanity and clearness of judgment.

While all this is true, however, the uppermost thought in the Apostle’s mind in writing Rom. xii. 3, is that of humility which necessarily accompanies salvation from sin, or, as the corresponding passage puts it, “condescending to men of low estate”. The word translated “condescend” here is remarkable. It is *sunapagomai*, and means “to be led away with”. The word can have an evil meaning, indicating a weak will being led away to evil things by yielding to a stronger, but here it is in contrast with that high-mindedness which is so unchristian. The word suggests the gentleness and simplicity of the little child. We are never called upon in the N.T. to be “childish”, but we are enjoined to be “childlike”, for such lowliness of mind is in harmony with salvation.

The remote sequence of the injunction to think soberly is found, as we have seen, in the corresponding section; “Condescend to men of low estate” (xii. 16). The immediate sequence is, of course, found in the words of Rom. xii. 3: “Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” What the Apostle means by “the measure of faith” is seen in the argument that follows:

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the proportion of faith” (Rom. xii. 4-6).

[* - The reader will notice that the prefix *so* is also found in the English word “sober”. This, however, is purely accidental and indicates a negative through the French and Latin.]

“The measure of faith the proportion of faith.”—The reader will see in Rom. xii. 4, 5 an argument that has already been used by the Apostle in a similar context in I Cor. xii. Spiritual gifts, says the Apostle, vary as much as the differing functions of the human body. The faculty of sight is precious, and one would give much to preserve one’s vision. Yet, says the Apostle, if the “whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?” And again, “The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee” (I Cor. xii. 17, 21). To be proud of the possession of a *gift* is foolish, for a gift is unmerited. To be boastful of a particular gift because it *appears* more important than another is also foolish, for several organs of the body whose functions are vital, are hidden and scarcely even mentioned in ordinary conversation. A sober mind would not forget that all the various gifts were held by grace, and differed by grace—“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us”—and would gratefully acknowledge that good, acceptable and perfect will which has set the various members in the body, or the varying gifts in the Church, not as marks of merit, but in the exercise of free grace. Boasting and despising would be unknown, and edification would result.

The gifts mentioned by the Apostle here are prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling and showing mercy, and these seven gifts are to be used according to the proportion or analogy of faith. Analogy is primarily an arithmetical term, indicating an equality of ratios. The relation that 3 bears to 7, 6 must bear to 14, or 9 to 21. Superficially, he who possesses 6 gifts may appear greater than one who possesses 3, but the proportion settles whether this is really so. If the man possessing 3 gifts produces results corresponding to the number 7, he is exactly the same proportionally as he who has 6 gifts and produces results corresponding to the number 14. That the Lord actually recognizes this principle is evident from the parable of the talents. The man, who, having two talents, produced another two, was proportionately just as successful as the man who, having five talents, had produced another five. For example, if we compare ourselves with such a man as Paul, we must not forget that Paul was a five-talent servant—apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher—while we ourselves may have but one gift—that of an evangelist, perhaps, or of a teacher. If we are as faithful in our smaller measure as Paul was in his larger measure, we shall receive the same “Well done”. Moreover, a believer who had received the gift of prophecy, would not be held responsible for the exercise of the gift of healing. The minister is to minister, and the teacher to teach, each one thankfully and humbly receiving the gift that God entrusts, and then diligently using it to His glory.

The reader will not, we trust, misunderstand our teaching here. We do not suggest that any believer belonging to the dispensation of the Mystery receives the gift of prophecy or of healing, but the analogy nevertheless holds good. Whatever the Lord may have given us the grace to do for him, we shall find guidance in the principles laid down in Rom. xii.

At verse 9 there is a transition from faith to love, and at verse 12 a further step to hope. “These three” are often found together, and it may be helpful to see the three groups in this section set out as indicated below (i.e. page 243).

The reader should prayerfully and conscientiously ponder these matters. Some of the points mentioned will apply to all, while others will have a more particular application. Beneath the specific acts mentioned there is revealed an underlying principle, and this principle is traced back to one or other of the three graces, Faith, Love and Hope.

FAITH (Rom. xii. 6-8). Seven Gifts. |

- Prophecy.
- Ministry.
- Teaching.
- Exhorting.
- Giving.
- Ruling.
- Showing Mercy.

LOVE (Rom. xii. 9-11). Seven Aspects. |

- / Abhor evil. \
- \ Cleave to good. \
- / Kindly affectioned. \ Serving the Lord.
- \ In honour preferring. /
- / Not slothful in business. /
- \ Fervent in spirit. /

HOPE (Rom. xii. 12-15). Seven Consequences. |

- / Patient in tribulation. \ *Yourselves.*
- \ Continuing in prayer. /
- / Distributing to necessity. \ *Others.*
- \ Given to hospitality. /
- / Bless them that persecute you. \ *Yourselves.*
- \ Curse not.* /
- / Rejoice with them that rejoice. \ *Others.*
- \ Weep with them that weep. /

[* - "Curse not" is a negative extension of the positive command "Bless", and so must not be counted separately.]

We find the same sort of relationship in I Cor. xii. and xiii. as we have already found in Rom. xii. I Cor. xii., with its figure of the one body and its many members, which is introduced, as in Rom. xii., to illustrate the diversity and yet essential unity of the various gifts, is followed by I Cor. xiii., with its emphasis upon faith, hope and love. And just as I Cor. xiii. declares at the close, that love is greater than all, so after the interval of Rom. xii. 17 - xiii. 7, the Apostle returns to the fullness of love as the all-inclusive grace. This, of course, is as true to-day as when it was written. The changing of the dispensations makes no difference to the pre-eminence of love, except perhaps to make that pre-eminence more intensely true.

Things above.

#4. “Where Christ sitteth” (Col. iii. 1). pp. 1 - 4

We shall not have completed our examination of the Scriptures that speak of Christ sitting on the right hand of God, until we have considered the definite statement that is included in several of the citations of Psalm cx. 1:

“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”

This we will now do. The verse is quoted seven times in the N.T. The references are: Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 34; I Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13 and x. 13; and it will be observed that the three references in the Gospels and Heb. i. 13 centre round the question of our Lord’s Person. “Whose Son is He?” “What think ye of Christ?” “To which of the angels said He at any time?” The quotation in Heb. x. 13 has in view the completeness of the Lord’s one sacrifice for sin, as I Cor. xv. 25 looks forward to the end of the ages when the last enemy, Death, shall be destroyed.

There are therefore the two remaining declarations of truth to be considered before we complete our survey of these references to the seated Christ at the right hand of God. They are references to His enemies, and His own questions concerning Himself.

The Psalm is a psalm of war and of victory. The conqueror is not only a King, but a King-Priest, for the heart of the Psalm reveals the burden of the epistle to the Hebrews.

“The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec” (Psa. cx. 4).

In the wisdom of God, kingship and priesthood were kept distinct in Israel, the dreadful fate of Uzziah revealing the seriousness of any attempt to break down the distinction. Just as Moses broke down when called upon to undertake the leadership of Israel, thus necessitating the passing on of the priesthood to Aaron, so no son of Adam is capable of combining these great offices. This high glory is reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ. Melchisedec set Him forth in type, and Zechariah spoke of Him in prophecy saying: “He shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a priest upon His throne” (Zech. vi. 13), and when He enters into this double office, at the time of the end, then redeemed Israel shall become a kingdom of priests unto God” (Rev. i. 6).

This King-Priest rules “in the midst of His enemies”: He shall “wound the heads over extensive territories” (Psa. cx. 6). These words refer to the Day of the Lord and the judgment on the Beast, the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

Whatever the enemy, whether Devil, Death, or any agency of either, we are assured that the Lord will sit there at the right hand of the Father, until they are made the footstool of His feet.

When therefore we seek those things where Christ sitteth, we are associating ourselves with the mighty Victor over all the power of the enemy, and anticipating by faith the goal of the ages.

From the references to this Psalm in the Gospels, we discover that the Lord used this passage mainly to prove to His hearers, that though, according to the flesh, He was the Son of David, He was, in fact, infinitely more.

In Matt. xxii. where we meet with the quotation for the first time, the Lord had been subjected to a series of questions designed, if possible, to entrap Him into some statement that would imperil His life or shake His hold upon the people.

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son? And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any questions” (Matt. xxii. 41-46).

The Lord does not give an answer to His question. He leaves it with His hearers; but it is a question that demands an answer, for it touches the vitals of our faith. The Saviour was most certainly David’s Son. His genealogy is given in Matt. i. with the express purpose of showing His right to the throne of David. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary concerning her first-born Son, that:

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David” (Luke i. 32).

Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says of Him:

“Which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh” (Rom. i. 3).

“According to the flesh!” In speaking of every other man, the qualification would amount to absurdity. How else than “according to the flesh” can man be associated with his parents? Such are called “fathers of our flesh” (Heb. xii. 9). But we know that Christ was in communion with God before His birth in Bethlehem, and moreover spoke of the body that had been prepared for Him.

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me Lo, I come” (Heb. x. 5-7).

What son of Adam ever spoke of his own body before his own birth? But this was the utterance of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, Who, though the Son of David according to the flesh, was nevertheless David’s Lord. Now there can be no doubt as to who was David’s

Lord. He who loved the law of God as did the writer of the Psalms, would have most heartily subscribed to the majestic passage in Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

Whether David could have answered our Lord's question in verses 43 and 44 of Matt. xxii. is another matter; possibly he would have confessed: "Great is the mystery of godliness" (I Tim. iii. 16) and have realized that the child born of the virgin was none other than the "Mighty God" (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6, 7), and bowed in His presence, acknowledging His name as Emmanuel. The fact that Thomas was convinced that the risen Christ had "flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39), and that he was invited to thrust his hand into the Saviour's side, did not prevent him from falling at His feet, saying, "My Lord and my God". Neither did the fact that the Lord was the Son of David according to the flesh (Rom. i. 3) prevent Paul from saying concerning Him in the same epistle:

"Who are Israelites whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen" (Rom. ix. 4, 5).

We may not be able to satisfy the barren logic of the Unitarian, but when we "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God", we have the twofold satisfaction of knowing that, being Man, He is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities, and being God manifest in the flesh, all things under His omnipotent and gracious control. What encouragements therefore are held out to us in Scripture to "*Seek those things which are above*".

#5. "Not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 2). pp. 45 - 50

We have now looked at the positive aspect of this wonderful theme. Not only have we learned that "things above" are "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God", but we have caught a glimpse of what that session at the right hand means.

We now learn, negatively, that "things above" mean "not things on the earth". While these words, as words, are simple and require no explanation, the inspired intention may not be so obvious, partly because of erroneous views that most of us have entertained. A canvass of the opinions of our friends will reveal that in the estimate of the majority "things on the earth" mean such mundane pleasures as theatre-going, smoking, and according to temperament, such arts as music, literature and paintings. One will even rebuke, as being of the earth, the spontaneous joy evoked by the sight of a bluebell wood, a sunset, or a bank of primroses. We cannot discover support for such opinions in the Scriptures, to which we now turn to discover from its teaching what the expression "things on the earth" really means.

Let us first of all see how the earth, and things pertaining to it, are referred to in Colossians itself.

“For by Him were all things created, that are in the heavens, and on the earth (*epi tes ges*) visible and invisible” (Col. i. 16).

Here we learn that “things on the earth” are as much the creation of the Lord as are the things in the heavens. Moreover, the words “visible and invisible” seem explanatory, thus:

A | Things in the HEAVENS.
B | Things on the EARTH.
B | VISIBLE things.
A | INVISIBLE things.

It is the function of earthly, visible things to set forth the invisible heavenly realities. Let us see this from the Word.

“From the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. i. 20).

This however is but the teaching of spiritual infancy: a robust faith “endures as seeing Him Who is invisible”, or as II Cor. iv. has it:--

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are for a season, but the things which are not seen are age-abiding” (II Cor. iv. 18).

When we turn to the great central section of Colossians, we find a reference to “the world” instead of “the earth”. Both terms are, however, used similarly. Let us see this and note how parallel it is.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are *a shadow* of things to come: but *the body* is of Christ Wherefore if ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (*such as*) touch not, taste not, handle not If ye then be risen with Christ, seek set not on things on the earth” (Col. ii. 16, 17, 20, 21; iii. 1, 2).

Here we have the rudiments of the world, constituted of “shadow of things to come”, set in correspondence with “things on the earth” which are “visible” and “for a season”, not heavenly and age-abiding. In the one case the argument is: “If ye *died* with Christ”, whereas in the other it is: “If ye then be *risen* with Christ.”

The phrase *epi tes ges* “on (upon, or in,) the earth” occurs too many times for us to give a list of occurrences here, but we note its twofold usage as follows:

USED IN A “GOOD” SENSE.

“Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. vi. 10).

“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” (Eph. i. 10).

“Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. iii. 15).

“Honour thy father and mother that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. vi. 2, 3).

“And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. v. 10).

USED IN A “BAD” SENSE.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Matt. vi. 19).

“For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest” (Heb. viii. 4).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly” (Heb. xi. 13-16).

When attempting to assess the true value of the term “things on the earth” what we need to remember is that there are two points of view to be kept in mind, and that an undue emphasis upon either must lead to erroneous views.

We remember that the earth, because of man’s sin, has come under a curse, but we must remember too, that the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. Though under a curse, the earth is not cursed for its own sake, but for the sin of man, and it is a poor judgment that would conclude that the things of earth must be sinful in themselves when we are definitely told that these things on the day they were created were “good”. Man’s altered condition has rendered it necessary that many a blessing that once was legitimate must be foregone: that many an innocent pleasure may now take upon itself the character of vice. Things on the earth include both food and raiment. Both are vital necessities, both are the gift of God, and both the subject of legitimate prayer and thanksgiving. If we confine ourselves to such physical things as “bread” and “water” it is evident that “things on the earth” cannot be ignored, but if we confine ourselves to things that are above the physical plane it is not so evident.

Should a believer, out of a false interpretation, refuse to participate in the things on the earth that minister to his physical needs, he would speedily die, and his folly would be evident to all. Man is called upon to love the Lord his God with heart, soul and mind, as well as with strength, yet he may starve his mind by a false repudiation of things on the earth, and utterly fail to render God His due, without that failure being so patent to the observer.

Paul did not hesitate, in the highly spiritual epistle to the Philippians, to draw attention to “whatsoever things are lively, or of good report” and urged upon his hearers the duty of searching for these things, saying, “If there be any virtue” think of these things. The writer of these lines had known for years that the apostle had urged “prayer for all men” (I Tim. ii. 1), but it came to him very forcefully one day that the apostle also said: “giving thanks for all men”, and this he had never done. That the apostle is not speaking of thanking God for believers, the context makes obvious, and the “all men” of verse 1

would include many a pagan and philosopher who had no knowledge of Christ. If I ought to thank God for the unrequited labours of Dr. Young in his splendid concordance, should I not also thank God for those who laboured in the English Dictionary, which I also use, even though those who thus laboured may not have been doing the work “as unto the Lord”. If I thank God, as I should, for the Christian poetry of Cowper, should I not thank God for the mighty genius of Shakespeare, so evidently given in the most critical period in the history of our tongue?

If I thank God for the beauties of flower, field and forest, should I not thank Him for the genius of Turner, Constable, David Cox and others, who have by their brush drawn our attention to the delightsomeness of our countryside? If I thank God for the composers of our hymn tunes, shall I refuse thanksgiving after hearing Beethoven’s mighty Fifth Symphony? Are these the things on the earth that the apostle forfeits? We believe they are not. They each and all may become an evil, even as the necessities of life may be abused, but we would do well to remember the sane principle contained in the words of inspiration, regarding meats in particular,

“Neither if we eat are we the better: neither, if we eat not are we the worse”
(I Cor. viii. 8).

and to realize that in these things our own conscience, or the respect for the tender conscience of another, and not the things themselves, is what most matters.

Before leaving this particular aspect of our subject, it may be well to anticipate one or two objections, as the point of view advocated is not what is generally considered “spiritual”. We have mentioned, for example, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, and we readily agree that there is no more spirituality in that magnificent composition than there is in the food that we use for our physical needs, yet for these we unreservedly give thanks, even though the butcher and the baker and all the other folk engaged in their production and distribution were far from God in their thoughts.

Again, we may be reminded that the father of all who handle the harp and the organ was of the line of Cain. The answer is that any argument that proves too much defeats itself. Both the harp and the organ are mentioned with approval in the Scriptures; moreover the line of Cain fathered not only musical instruments, but the keeping of cattle and the work in brass and iron. This would involve Abraham and Israel and Bezaleel and every reader of these lines too.

Regarding Phil. iv. 8, the word translated “think” is the same that is rendered “count” in Phil. iii. 8, or “lay to one’s charge” in II Tim. iv. 16, or “impute” in Rom. iv. 22. If we can see any virtue, beauty, loveliness anywhere, we must not hesitate to “reckon” it, even though we clearly distinguish between that which is spiritual and that which is not. Turner, Constable, and David Cox may or may not have been believers; the man who delivers my morning milk or daily bread may or may not be a believer. If I can give thanks for that which is physical food, shall I withhold it from that which is mental food? Both the landscape and the painter of it are involved in the curse and subject to vanity, and there are some who as consistently shut their eyes to the transient beauty of field and

hedgerow, as others do to canvas and etching, but whether they are justified is the point in question.

Coming to I Tim. ii. 1, 2, we anticipate a difficulty in connection with the injunction to “give thanks *for* all men”. There is no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the words. “Pray *for* all men”. The word translated “for” is the Greek preposition *huper*. The primary meaning of *huper* is “over”, but this is modified in usage. We could speak of praying “over” anyone, but it would not be good English. “For”, is the natural idiom, and out of some 134 occurrences of *huper*, the A.V. renders 105 of them by this word.

Now the preposition is a servant (not a master) and it must be flexible. When I pray “for” another I may think mostly of his future deeds—as when one prays for kings and all that are in authority, *that we may lead a peaceable life*, but when I give thanks “for” another, I mostly think of his past deeds—as when I give thanks for kings and all in authority. We have actual evidence that “thanks” refers to the past, as the usage in the apostle’s own case proves.

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith cease not to give thanks *for* you”
(Eph. i. 15, 16).

There are only three occurrences of *eucharistia* = “thanksgiving” in the pastoral epistles. One refers to “kings and all in authority”, the other two refer to meats over which some had scruples (I Tim. iv. 3, 4). Is it possible that some of our readers would have no hesitancy in thanking God for “bacon”, who would hesitate (forgive the play on words) to do the same for “Shakespeare”. Is food for the body so very much more spiritual than food for the mind?

Now we are aware that this emphasis on the possible legitimacy of some earthly things will be misunderstood by some, and for this we are sorry; this however is no adequate reason for countenancing misinterpretations of the Scriptures, nor for allowing shackles to be imposed where grace has set free, for we have seen minds and spirits cramped and starved, in consequence of mistaking the denial of “natural affection” for “holiness”. For most of us however the pressure of circumstances and the demands made by higher things will cause us to forego the transient pleasures that are lawful, whether we will or not, and although this be so, and we find—at the right hand of God where Christ sitteth—more than all the world can give, let us not despise or judge those whose leisure permits the enjoyment of some of these lesser blessings that help to lighten the pilgrim journey.

There are other aspects of this subject that demand attention. These we must leave for another article, praying that what has been seen may be a means of true liberty to those who have been raised with Christ and who seek those things which are above.

**#6. “Not on things on the earth” (Col. iii. 1, 2).
pp. 98 - 103**

We have seen that things on the earth are, of themselves, neither good nor evil: they become either, to the user, according to his approach to them. For example (borrowing an illustration from the physical world) none can live without water; yet water will drown the person who is submerged in it. We could scarcely live in this climate without artificial fire, yet fire, should it become master instead of servant, is a destroyer. Therefore we reply to the objector to our findings in the previous article: It is not the use of things on the earth but their *abuse* that calls for the discernment of the believer. This important aspect of the subject is found in the words of Col. iii. 2: “Set your affection (*phroneo*) on things above, not on things on the earth.”

What does the apostle mean by the words “Set your *affection*”? The word *phroneo*, translated “affection”, occurs elsewhere in the prison epistles, but only in Philippians, where in the space of four chapters it is found eleven times. This fact demands more than passing reference: it demands investigation, for it is evident that Philippians will supply us with the intention of the Apostle in Col. iii. 2. We are the more induced to this belief because we already know that in Phil. iii. 19 there is a parallel with the warning of Col. iii. 2, where the Apostle speaks of those who “mind (the same word as ‘affection’) earthly things” (*ta epigeia* being parallel with *ta epi tes ges*).

At least we must do two things. We must look at the eleven references in Philippians, and we must look at them in the light of the special theme of that epistle. We shall then be better prepared to interpret the Apostle’s words in Col. iii. 2.

Phroneo in the Prison Epistles.

- A1 | Phil. i. 7. It is meet for me to think (*phroneo*) this concerning (*huper*) you.
Phil. ii. 2. Same mind (*to auto phroneo*).
- B1 | Phil. ii. 2. The one thing (*to hen*) minding (*phroneo*).
Phil. ii. 5. Let this mind (*phroneo*) be in you. Christ’s DESCENT.
- B2 | a | Phil. iii. 15. As many as would be perfect (one thing, *to hen* verse 13)
be thus minded (*phroneo*).
b | Phil. iii. 15. Otherwise (*heteros*) minded (*phroneo*).
a | Phil. iii. 16. Where attained walk mind (*phroneo*)
the same thing (*to auto*).
b | Phil. iii. 19. Who mind (*phroneo*) earthly things (*ta epigeia*).
- A2 | Phil. iv. 2. Same mind (*to auto phroneo*).
Phil. iv. 10. Your care (*phroneo*) concerning (*huper*) me
ye were also careful (*phroneo*).
- B3 | Col. iii. 2. Set mind (*phroneo*) on things above. Christ’s ASCENT.

Although the word conveys much more than mere mental process, it is evident that the translation “affection” in Col. iii. 2 does not do justice to the word *phroneo*. Let us make a more detailed examination of this collection of references to the word. We

observe that the Apostle used it when he told the Philippians that he was sure that the Lord would be perfect that good thing He had begun in them, and at the close of the epistle he speaks of their kindly thought concerning himself and his needs. The word is used in the following passages with the phrase *to auto* (the same):--

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be *like minded*” (Phil. ii. 2).

“Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind *the same thing*” (Phil. iii. 16).

“My longed for, my joy be of *the same mind* in the Lord” (Phil. iv. 2).

These passages bring us nearer to our theme. Apparently there is to be singleness of eye among those who would walk worthy of their high calling. This is definitely expressed in the next reference.

“Being of one accord, of *one mind*” (Phil. ii. 2).

This exhortation is practiced by the Apostle himself, for although *phroneo* is not actually used in Phil. iii. 13, 14, the same spirit is manifest when he said:--

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark” (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

This is to be the “mind” of those who would be perfect (Phil. iii. 15). Here we get further light upon our theme. To set the mind on things above, and not on things on the earth, is to forget the things that are behind and to reach forth for the things associated with the prize of the high calling. The history of Israel illustrates the principle. After their deliverance out of Egypt, instead of forgetting the things which were behind, we read that they said “we remember”, and this remembrance of things left behind proved their undoing.

Most of our readers are aware that, in a lower sphere, Philippians finds its most perfect parallel in the epistle to the Hebrews (For demonstrative evidence of this feature the reader is referred to Volume XX, page 231). In Heb. vi. 1 we have the exhortation: “Therefore leaving let us go on.” To mind things that are on the earth may therefore have regard to the ignoring of dispensational changes, as, for instance, mixing the things of the kingdom with the things pertaining to the church of the mystery, and this is prominent in the exhortation of Col. iii. 1, 2.

We now observe that the N.T. uses two expressions:

“Things on the earth” (*Ta epi tes ges*, Col. iii. 2).

“Earthly things” (*Ta epigeia*, Phil. iii. 19).

We have already seen that the phrase used in Col. iii. 2 may refer to good things, such as the future kingdom that is to be on the earth, and that the only evil connected with such “things on the earth” arises from an undispensational use of them. There is the same

double meaning attached to this expression, *Ta epigeia*, as to *Ta epi tes ges*, that is a thing can be good in its right place or it may be positively, and not merely relatively, evil.

As the phrase occurs seven times, we had better record the references. Two references are found outside of Paul's epistles, the one, in John, being an example of dispensational usage, the other, in James, being an example of positive evil.

"If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not" (John iii. 12).

"This wisdom descendeth not from above but is earthly sensual, devilish" (James iii. 15).

The remaining occurrences are found in the epistles to the Corinthians and the Philippians.

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies *terrestrial*: but the glory of the celestial is one; and the glory of the *terrestrial* is another" (I Cor. xv. 40).

Here the subject is the resurrection body and the two spheres in which the raised believer will enjoy his inheritance. There is nothing evil about the terrestrial body, in fact it has its own peculiar glory.

"For we know that if the *earthly* house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. v. 1).

Here the contrast is between the earthly, mortal, state and the heavenly and immortal state (see verse 4).

The remaining references in Philippians are:

"That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in *earth*" (Phil. ii. 10).

"Whose end is destruction (or waste) who mind *earthly* things" (Phil. iii. 19).

These references to "mind" in Philippians are focused on Phil. ii. 5 which finds its complement in Col. iii. 2.

Let us consider this reference in Phil. ii. 5.

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

The verses that follow this exhortation contain some of the most sublime statements that are to be found in Scripture. Yet the passage is primarily introduced to provide an example for the believer to follow!

A superficial objection to the use of the passage as illustrative of what is intended in Col. iii. 1, 2 would be, that the example does not fit the exhortation. The Lord left the heavenly glory and came to earth, whereas we are told to leave earthly things and set our mind on things heavenly. It is true, that on the surface, the two passages appear to move in opposite directions. The same class of criticism would find fault with the examples of

Joseph and Moses given in Heb. xi. 22-26, for Joseph not only remained in Egypt, but sat on the throne and received high honour, whereas Moses refused the riches of Egypt and would not stay in the land. Superficially, therefore, the two examples are not comparable, but basically they are one, for in their different lines of action both men of God were actuated “by faith”. In Joseph’s day, it was a part of the outworking of the divine plan that a protector should be raised up for Israel who would provide for them an asylum while they grew in numbers preparatory to their entry into the land. Moses, however, was born when the close of that preparatory dispensation was imminent. His office was to lead the prepared people out of Egypt into their inheritance. What therefore was good and fitting for one would, owing to dispensational purposes, be evil for the other. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Joseph *appears* to have been whole-heartedly absorbed with the affairs of Egypt, we have it recorded as his great act of faith that

“He made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Heb. xi. 22).

It is manifest therefore that Joseph, though surrounded with the riches of Egypt, had his mind on the things that belonged to God and His people, and though he apparently denied himself nothing, he as surely esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, as did Moses after him.

The giving up by the Lord of the glory that was His, and His condescension to human form and earthly conditions, was the manifestation of that spirit which, in its turn, will renounce many legitimate pleasures and rights of earthly citizenship, and set its mind on things above.

We have accomplished little more than indicate the importance of the occurrences of “mind” in Philippians as a divine comment on Col. iii. 1, 2. But we write for those who will make these things their own and who do not wish to be deprived of opportunity for independent search. Accordingly we leave the matter there, trusting that out of the study of these passages there will come abundant illumination of the exhortation for those desire it is to “*set their mind on things above, not on things on the earth*”.

**#7. “Set your mind on things above” (Col. iii. 2).
The intimate association of the exhortation with race and crown.
pp. 135 - 137**

Every part of the great work of Christ is an object of faith and a source of inspiration: His cross, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, and his session and manifestation in glory. And each of these phases has its own associated doctrine and practice. To attempt enumeration of them here were impossible, nor would it be within the scope of this series, for at the moment we are concerned with those aspects of the faith that are associated with “things above where Christ sitteth”. One of these aspects of faith is connected with the race and the crown. This we will consider, looking first at those scriptures that link together the look heavenward with the attainment of reward, prize, or crown.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, *while we look not at the things which are seen*” (II Cor. iv. 17, 18).

“If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. viii. 25).

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Heb. xi. 26).

The word translated “to have respect” is *apoblepo*. In II Cor. iv. 18 the same word is translated “to look”, with the preposition *apo*, “away from”, prefixed. Moses looked away from the things that were upon the earth to the things that belonged to “the invisible” (Heb. xi. 27). The whole of creation is summed up as being either “things visible”, or “things invisible”, or, as explained in the passage, “things on earth” and “things in heaven”. Moses therefore looked away from the earthly to the heavenly, from the visible to the invisible. Abraham, who desired a better country, that is an “heavenly”, manifested the same spirit, being content to be a pilgrim and a stranger because of that which, except to the eye of faith was invisible (Heb. xi. 13-16). The knowledge which we gain from Scripture that those who thus act “seek” a heavenly country, helps us to understand how we, too, can “seek” those things which are above, for, while the truth of the mystery is not revealed in the O.T., nor is the calling of Hebrews the same as that of the church of the One Body, the parallels in walk and witness are very real and written for our learning.

In the estimate of faith this invisible and heavenly city had “the foundations” and was alone worthy of the hopes and affections of faith.

In Heb. xii., in connection with the race and the prize, the believer’s attention is drawn to the importance of seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth:

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of

faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. xii. 1, 2).

Here we have the runner, and the motive of the race that is set before him is parallel with “the joy that was set before Him”. Christ is here seen as the “Captain” (Author) and “Perfecter” (Finisher) of “faith” (not of *our* faith). Over against (*anti*) the joy that was set before Him, was the cross with its shame which He endures. The word for “looking” in the phrase “looking unto Jesus” is the Greek word *aphorao*, “to look away from”, which brings this important verse into line with those already considered.

It is in connection with the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that we have the warning not to follow those who “mind earthly things”. In the pursuit of this prize the apostle says, “one thing I do”, thus emphasizing the fact that it is not possible while “minding things on the earth” to run for the prize. To do so would be to attempt the simultaneous accomplishment of two incompatible acts. The apostle is also said: “forgetting those things which are behind”, which is another way of putting the exhortation, “seek set”, of Col. iii. 1, 2. The opposite is sadly illustrated in Israel’s history, for, instead of forgetting the things left behind in Egypt, they said “We remember”, with the result that their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they became examples of those who, minding earthly things, forfeit the prize. Again, the Apostle said: “I press toward the mark.” This is impossible unless the runner sets his mind upon the mark. The whole attitude of the triumphant runner of Phil. iii. is summed up in verse 20:

“For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour.”

The word “look” in this passage is *apekdechomai*, “to expect (from some other place) away from (this one).”

In his last epistle the apostle said that “the crown” was for all those that have loved the appearing. This is in immediate contrast with the attitude of Demas who “loved the age that is now”.

We find therefore many illustrations of the meaning of the apostle’s exhortation in Col. iii. 1, 2. “Things above” are “things not seen”; things that are heavenly and real, not temporal and passing. Pleasures that are for evermore are contrasted with the pleasures of sin which are transient. Moreover we have seen that there can be no possibility of attaining the goal, finishing the course, receiving a crown, attaining to the prize of the high calling, apart from this faith that “endures as seeing Him Who is invisible”.

**#8. “Saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10).
“Saved by hope” (Rom. viii. 24).
pp. 177 - 180**

It is but natural that the sinner seeking forgiveness and deliverance from his bondage, should regard with such importance that phase of salvation which is immediate, that the salvation which is continuous, which is associated with hope and the future, fails to be appreciated at its full value. Yet it is important for the believer’s true peace, and for his power to overcome and attain “unto perfection”, that that salvation which is associated with the sphere “where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God” should be realized as something which is equally the work of grace and the result of the finished work of Christ.

While there may be no need to quote the verses in Romans that speak of that initial salvation, associated with justification by faith, which is the glory of that great epistle, we feel that there may be need to remind the believer of those other aspects of salvation that are also to be found in Romans.

“We shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. v. 9).
“We shall be saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10).
“We are saved by hope” (Rom. viii. 24).
“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. xiii. 11).

These references are in themselves sufficient proof that salvation includes much more than the initial deliverance in which we so greatly rejoice. But if we add to them the intimations found in other epistles, the evidence becomes overwhelming, and the demand upon our attention and faith insistent. Let us look at some of these intimations.

“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation” (Phil. i. 19).
“To them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is graciously given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. i. 28, 29).
“For an helmet the hope of salvation, for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. v. 8, 9).
“That they may also obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus with *aionion* glory” (II Tim. ii. 10).
“Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28).

These statements fully establish the fact that salvation is a term that applies not only to the past, but also to the present and the future.

Bearing in mind that in this series of articles we are especially concerned with those doctrines which flow from the present position of Christ seated at the right hand of God, let us look now at Heb. vii. 25. Here we have a passage that has something of supreme

importance to say to those who, having been saved out of their spiritual Egypt, would also be saved throughout the wilderness journey until they reach the land of promise.

“Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. vii. 25).

However much we may stress that in the gospel of grace we have an “uttermost” salvation, the fact remains that this passage is not a gospel text for the unsaved, but a message to the believer. The sinner is saved, not because Christ makes intercession for him, but by His death. Moreover this “salvation” in Heb. vii. is not *from* the uttermost depths of sin but *unto* the uttermost—*eis to panteles*. Most of our readers know that the key-word of Hebrews is “perfect”, and that the exhortation is that we should “go on unto perfection” (Heb. vi. 1). The word “perfect” is *teleios*, which is kindred with *telos*, “the end”. The word *panteles* in Heb. vii. might almost be translated “all perfection”.

In order that the full bearing of Heb. vii. 25 and its association with the perseverance of the believer may be appreciated, we give below some of the occurrences of *telos* in Hebrews and of *teleios* and its derivatives.

Telos, the end.

“If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm *unto the end*” (Heb. iii. 6).

“We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope *unto the end*” (Heb. vi. 11).

Teleios, and cognates.

“Strong meat belongeth to them that are *of full age*” (Heb. v. 14).

“Let us go on unto *perfection*” (Heb. vi. 1).

“*To make* the captain of their salvation *perfect* through sufferings” (Heb. ii. 10).

“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be *made perfect*” (Heb. xi. 40).

“Looking unto Jesus, the Captain and *Perfecter* of faith” (Heb. xii. 2).

The initial salvation of the believer may be likened to the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, effected once and for all by the blood of the Passover Lamb, and never to be rescinded. The Red Sea rolled between the redeemed people and Egypt, remembering the onions and garlic, and though they even suggested that they should find a captain to lead them back to their bondage, their return was never permitted. So also in the case of the believer—he can never undo his salvation, he can never become unredeemed. *This* salvation rests for ever unmoved upon the finished work of Christ.

Returning to our type, we observe that the redeemed people of Israel did not, as an undivided company, journey triumphantly onwards through the wilderness, across the Jordan, and into the Land of Promise. On the contrary, we read that “with many of them God was not well pleased” and the N.T. is emphatic upon the typical importance of this failure:

“I keep under my body lest I myself should become disapproved (*dokimos*). Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that ALL our fathers were under the cloud, and ALL passed through the sea; and were ALL baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea: and did ALL eat the same spiritual meat; and did ALL drink the same spiritual drink but with MANY of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. *Now these things were our examples*” (I Cor. ix. 27 - x. 6).

This same point is stressed in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

“With whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 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 For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, *apart from sin*” (Heb. iii. 17; iv. 1, 15).

We must remember that salvation from sin is not here in view, nor are the temptations here the temptations of the unsaved; on the contrary, they are parallel to the trials of the wilderness. Grace, however, is ever available, and is to be found at the throne of grace, where Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God. This brings us once again to Heb. vii. 2. He is able to save His people “unto the uttermost”—that is to say, in the language of the type, He enables the redeemed Israelite, not only to leave Egypt and cross the Red Sea, but He also enables him to pass through the wilderness, and takes him triumphantly into the Land of Promise. The believer is saved “unto the uttermost” by the living, seated, Intercessor at the right hand of God.

#9. That Blessed Hope. **pp. 218 - 221**

In this series of studies we have taken the exhortation of the Apostle, “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth”, and looked at it from various angles.

We have sought a scriptural answer to the question, “Where” is it that Christ is described as sitting? We have further sought to understand “Why” He is now seated. Moreover there were lessons of deep importance connected with the fact that the Lord is “at the right hand of God”. These also we sought to appreciate. We then observed that “things in heaven” could also be understood by considering their opposites, “things on the earth”, and found that, in some cases, not anything intrinsically vicious was indicated by “things on the earth”, but things undispensational, things right and good in their own sphere. We also found that there were earthly things that were a snare to the believer, and, in connection with the reference in Phil. iii. to those who “mind earthly things”, we obtained light on the word “affection” in Col. iii. The fact that it was almost impossible for any doctrine to be found in Phil. iii. that was not connected with the subject of the

race and the prize led on to the thought of the seated Christ as the One Who saves to the uttermost those who, being redeemed, are pressing toward the mark.

This brings us back to Col. iii. for the consideration of one more point, namely, the association of this “seeking” and “setting” with the hope that is before us.

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. iii. 3, 4).

We would here draw attention to one interpretation of this passage which places “the appearing with Him in glory” *after* the millennial reign of Christ. There are many valid and scriptural objections to such an interpretation, the first being the use of the word “life” in the passage. While it is true that the believer’s life is “hid with Christ in God”, so that it cannot be enjoyed until the day of manifestation, for Christ Himself is here said to be “our life”, the interpretation would shut us up to the impossible position that, while saints of other, and lower, callings had been raised and blessed, the Church of the One Body awaited resurrection life and glory throughout the thousand year reign of Christ! To resort, in order to cover this difficulty, to some undefined intermediate state will not do, for “life” would be needed even if glory were future. The refutation of such an interpretation lies in this passage which places the entry into life and glory at one and the same time: “When then.”

The word “appear” is the word *phaneroo* and, together with the variants *epiphaneia* and *epiphaino*, is specially used in the epistles of the present dispensation to define the hope of the Church at the peculiar phase of the second advent of Christ that will usher in the consummation of the blessed hope of the Church.

Let us see how the word is used in connection with the hope in other epistles of the same dispensation.

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing (*epiphaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times he shall show, Who is King of kings and Lord of lords” (I Tim. vi. 14, 15).

That Christ appears as King of kings *before* the Millennium, is stated in Rev. xvii. and xix., the Millennium not commencing until chapter xx. is reached.

“We should live looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 12, 13).

This is a reasonable exhortation if at the close of the present dispensation or age this hope is to be realized, but how anyone can “live looking” for an event which he *knows* cannot take place for more than 1000 years is not easy to understand, and such an expectancy certainly does not fit the context in Titus ii.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word” (II Tim. iv. 1,2).

It is clear from this passage that there will be a judgment of “quick and dead” *before* the Millennium, but “the rest of the dead” will not live again until the thousand years are finished, and these stand before the great white throne. Are we to understand that the “blessed hope” before the church will find its glorious consummation at the great white throne? Assuredly not, and no reader of the Berean Expositor will wish space to be occupied in confuting such a notion.

“His appearing” is identical with “His kingdom”, and not a thousand years afterwards.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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. 7, 8).

If the believer of the earlier dispensation of the Acts knew that he would appear before the judgment seat of Christ (which, by all the teaching of Scripture, will be set up before, as the great white throne will be set up after, the Millennium), it is inconceivable that the apostle of the highest calling of all shall be made to wait a thousand years longer than they of I Corinthians or Romans, before he shall receive his crown. These passages are all in line with Col. iii. 3, 4, which speaks of the hope of the Church, and “the manifestation with Him in glory” which is the first moment and movement of what, as a whole, we speak of as “the second coming”.

There are three great spheres of blessing, each being marked off from the other by the exclusive word “adoption”. There is the earthly sphere, where Israel has the adoption (Rom. ix. 1-9). There is the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, where the seed of Abraham is formed of both Jew and Gentile who have their adoption, and where Jerusalem that is above is the city (Gal. iii. 14, iv. 5) and there is the super-heavenly sphere, where the Church of the Mystery is seated in the heavenlies far above all, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; these also have their particular calling, consequently the hope of the Church of Ephesians must be realized where that Church is already “by faith”, and that is nowhere else and nowhere lower than “in glory”.

There will doubtless occur to the reader many other points of contact that could have been taken up in the consideration of “Things Above”; we have indicated but a few that seem of outstanding importance. We trust that with these, as a start, the reader will find incentive to go more fully into a passage that lies so near the heart of all his hopes. “Things Above” associates doctrine, practice, dispensational truth, hope and prize. These at least we have seen, and, if anything of their fullness shall be appreciated as a result of our studies, may He Who is our Life be abundantly glorified now, even before His glory is manifested, as one day it will be, and we with Him.

Wisdom; Human and Divine.

Being a comparison of the groping after the truth of the ancient philosophers with the truth as it is revealed in Scripture, in order that the believer may the better appreciate the Word of God.

#13. The Sophists.

**“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”
pp. 59 - 61**

With the advent of the Sophists, a great change becomes apparent in the world of thought, and a new principle appears. According to this new point of view, which may be called the principle of subjectivity, things are as they seem to us, and universal truth does not exist. The Sophists seized upon the idea of the “flux and change” of all things which was taught by Heraclitus, to challenge and question all reality. They taught that the individual himself determined what should or should not be true, just and good, and the times in which they lived echoed their doctrine. Self-seeking and party-strife were the characteristics of public life. The axiom of Protagoras: “Man is the measure of the universe” led to a state of affairs comparable to the close of the Book of Judges.

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges xxi. 25).

When the Sophists spoke of “man” as the “measure”, they were referring to the individual man. As each individual knows only his own sensations, what “seems” good to him “is” good—a doctrine upon which Adam and Eve seem to have acted in the garden of Eden, and which will again be apparent at the close of this age, when, as the Apostle write, “man shall be lovers of their own selves lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (II Tim. iii. 2-4).

The Sophists were skeptics—an attitude partly justified by the widespread corruption among the people which was the natural outcome of the character attributed to their gods and goddesses and traditional heroes. The Greek Sophists were rather like the French illuminati of the eighteenth century, such as Rousseau and Voltaire, whose teaching led to the great Revolution. Like them, too, they were encyclopædic in range, although their special strength lay more in formal quickness and rhetoric, than in positive knowledge. Hippias boasted that he was always able to say something new on any matter under discussion, and others made it a point to hold serious discourse on the most insignificant objects imaginable. In other words, as the Apostle said of their successors, they were characterized by “a show of wisdom”, “words to no profit”, and “vain janglings”.

PROTOGORAS (B.C.490), the first of the Sophists, was an agnostic rather than an atheist. He begins his book with the words:

“As for the gods, I am unable to know whether they are, or whether they are not: for there is much that prevents us from knowing these things, as well the obscurity of the subject as the shortness of the life of man.”

Having resolved all knowledge down to that which we obtain by the senses, and having made man himself the arbiter of good and evil, the practical outcome could be nothing else than the gratification of the senses. This being granted, and coupled with it the fact that perception and sensation are with countless people countless diverse, the result was moral chaos. If “A” said a thing was blue, and “B” that it was green, both were true. According to the Sophists nothing is by nature good or bad; only laws makes them so. And we are at liberty to make as many laws as we wish, according to what will be to our advantage.

In contrast with this, let us think for a moment of the statutes and commandments, the laws and precepts given to Israel. No wonder Moses said:

“What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. iv. 8).

No wonder the Psalmist spoke of his love for the law, and how that it was more to him than fine gold. We are apt to think so much about the condemnation of the law, and the glorious liberty of the gospel, that it is difficult for us to put ourselves in the position of those who lived in the lawless atmosphere created by Sophism.

After Protagoras, the next and most celebrated of the Sophists was GORGIAS (B.C.483). His work bore the characteristic title, “Of the Non-existent, or of Nature”. He argued that (1) nothing exists, or (2) if something does exist, it cannot be known, or (3) if it can be known, it cannot be communicated. If the reader wonders what sense there can be in the statement that “nothing exists”, Gorgias would have explained in terms of origin. Whatever is assumed to exist, he would have said, must either have originated, or not originated. If it originated, this supposes non-existence previously; if it did not originate, it would not exist now. And so, with a grimace, he would have left you on the horns of a dialectic dilemma. The great omission in the scheme was a personal Creator. In the light of this revealed truth, all such speculations become absurd.

The Sophists that succeeded Gorgias became more audacious. Nothing was sacred to them. Laws, observances, customs, all were destroyed. Might was the law of nature, and unrespecting gratification of desire the natural right of the stronger. Restrictive laws were the cunning invention of the weaker.

Some of our readers will recognize the same spirit here as found expression in the teaching of Nietzsche, a German philosopher of the last century. He acclaimed Darwinism and its doctrine of the “survival of the fittest” as the gospel of eternal struggle and triumph of the strong. He attacked pity, humanitarianism and Christianity, and looked forward to the production of “super-men” who would be free from what he called “slave-morality”.

All such doctrines are but anticipations of the appalling lawlessness which will characterize the last days. What is solemn issue for the wisdom of this world. Let us not forget that the wisdom of this world, in its ignorance of the hidden wisdom of God, crucified the Lord of glory (I Cor. ii. 7, 8).

Let us hold fast to the truth revealed for all time in the words of Prov. i. 7:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

#14. Socrates, and Moral Philosophy.
A splendid building, but without sufficient foundation.
pp. 105 - 107

We have frequently reiterated in this series the fact that revealed truth differs essentially from every philosophical system, in that it presents all truth concerning both God and man in a Person. Ears have *heard*, eyes have *seen*, hands have *handled* “the Word of Life”. In the history of philosophy the “personal” comes into play for the first time in the teaching of Socrates. His system is essentially a biography. In this, so far as method is concerned, Socrates approached more nearly to the Scriptures than any other uninspired thinker. The Scriptures not only teach the *doctrine* of justification by faith, for example, but exhibit it in the life story of Abraham (Rom. iv.; James ii., etc.). It was not possible, however, for any merely human being to fill out the measure of truth; this was true of One, and One only—the Son of God.

Socrates was born in B.C.469. His manner of giving instruction was easy and conversational, and employed the things of common life as examples and illustrations. In this respect his teaching was a great contrast to the “show of wisdom” and high-flown rhetoric of the Sophists. Socrates invented the name “philosopher”, or “lover of wisdom”, in opposition to the vaunting claim of the “Sophists” to be “The Wise”.

The “Socratic method”—the method of teaching by skilful questioning—is proverbial. Socrates was uninterruptedly employed in trying to find the “what” of everything. Aristotle says that the two things which constitute the foundation of science, namely the method of induction, and logical definition, were both due to Socrates. He took up the teaching of the Sophists that each man is the judge of what is right and wrong, but showed that every thinking being has the consciousness that what he holds to be right and good, is not merely so to him, but that it is also to every rational being. This led to his great enquiry into what constitutes virtue.

“Virtue”, said Socrates, “is knowledge, and vice ignorance”. The Sophists regarded self-pleasing as an end in life. Socrates taught that rational satisfaction comes only from conduct which accords with the dictates of reason. All men, he argued, seek happiness, and therefore, since virtue is the only true means of happiness, all men would be virtuous,

if they only knew what were right. There is a mixture of truth and error in this teaching that is sad. Socrates meant so well, but, alas, he did not allow for the fact that man is fallen, and that reason itself is not necessarily obeyed. However, Socrates was more correct than some have thought when he put together ignorance and vice, and knowledge and virtue. He saw clearly the leaves, the flowers, the fruit that should grow upon the tree, but he failed, as all unaided reason must, to discover the one and only root-hold. Peter, the inspired fisherman, could have taught him that virtue and knowledge and piety are only possible after a mighty change, and the partaking of a new life and power.

“According as His DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Pet. i. 3).

How Socrates would have embraced this revelation no one but the Judge of the secrets of men knows, but on the surface it would seem to provide the “one thing needful”.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Pet. i. 4).

Here is a divine power, and a divine nature, both growing out of what the Apostle refers to in the opening verse of the epistle: “Like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. i. 1). This is indeed the root of all virtue. Having this foundation Peter can go forward with confidence, where Socrates had to limp and halt. “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith *virtue*; and to virtue knowledge” (II Pet. i. 5). Knowledge and virtue are certainly associated here, but they are “added”, and this presupposes a foundation already laid, the foundation of “faith”. Peter could say: “Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.” Socrates could only point out that virtue is knowledge, without being able to provide the one or the other.

That vice and ignorance go hand in hand is common knowledge. Speaking of the Gentiles, the Apostle writes:

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the LIFE OF GOD through the *ignorance* that is in them” (Eph. iv. 18).

What Socrates did not know was that ignorance not merely beclouds the reason but alienates from the very “life of God”. Again and again we come back to the one great difference between Philosophy and Revelation—the emphasis upon a Person. Peter speaks of “the Divine nature”; Paul speaks of “the life of God”, and “the truth in Jesus” (Eph. iv. 21).

Socrates held that no one is willingly wicked. The statement is too sweeping, but it contains an element of truth. Men have always attempted to justify their deeds. There are very few who set out to do wrong, knowing it to be wrong. In most cases an attempt is made to colour the action so that it may appear right. As a particular instance, let the reader consider the reasons given by any nation to justify the declaration of war. Is there

on record a single public statement which reads: “We know that our action is prompted by avarice, but we are strong enough to win and that is all that matters?” Nothing but true repentance brings a man to say:

“I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

Volumes have been written about Socrates, the man, his message, and his method. It would, however, be quite outside the scope of these articles to attempt to deal with our subject in detail. The details of his philosophy and all that led up to the bowl of hemlock that terminated his life we must leave for the interested reader to look up for himself.

Socrates laid the foundation of moral philosophy and died at the end for the doctrine he held. But neither his teaching nor his death could bring life. Nothing less than the death of the Founder of our faith could make a philosophy of morals anything more than an excellent system of teaching beyond the possibility of practical attainment. As Peter teaches us, we may “add to our faith virtue”, but this is not possible until we are Divinely empowered, and made partakers of the Divine nature. In other words, virtue is knowledge, but only if that knowledge is the knowledge of Christ.

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”
(II Pet. iii. 18).

#15. The successors of Socrates, and their failure. pp. 145 - 148

Socrates founded no school, but left behind the memory of a life that had in some measure exemplified his aim and teaching. As was to be expected, therefore, different men interpreted his life and teaching in various ways, according to their own temperaments and predilections. Three different systems have become historical, the school of the Cynics, the Cyrenaic school, and the Megaric school, represented respectively by Antisthenes, Aristippus, and Euclid* (* - not to be confused with the mathematician of the same name). All these schools, however, were too one-sided in their presentation of the original teaching of Socrates.

Antisthenes, and the Cynics.—The name of this school of philosophy has become a normal English word describing any one who is misanthropic and inclined to sneer at the sincerity or goodness of others. Socrates, with a healthy humanity, despised the soft, the luxurious, and the effeminate, but Antisthenes caricatured his master instead of following him, living coarsely, and dressing in rough and ragged clothing. Socrates, however, made it plain that such a manner of living was not a true interpretation of his doctrine for he said on one occasion to Antisthenes: “I see thy vanity, Antisthenes, peering through the holes of thy cloak.” This saying seems to approach the truth to be found in the Sermon on the Mount:

“When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward” (Matt. vi. 16).

The Apostle, in writing to the Colossians, speaks in a similar way of the ineffectiveness of “neglecting the body” (Col. ii. 23).

It may be asked by some of our readers how it was possible that Cynicism could have been the outcome of the teaching of Socrates. The answer is that Antisthenes, like Socrates, taught that virtue was the only thing worthy of human effort, but he misinterpreted his master by making virtue consists merely in the negation of desire—the avoidance of evil, indifference to marriage, to one’s family, to riches, to honour, and to enjoyment. It was against this vain deceitful philosophy that the Apostle warned the Colossian. He says in effect:

Beware of that specious sanctity, that is the result of mere negations, such as Touch not, Taste not, Handle not.

Cynicism will be one of the characteristics of the close of the age, as well as lawlessness and skepticism as we have already seen:

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (I Tim. iv. 3).

In I Tim. vi. we read:

“The living God, Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy” (I Tim. vi. 17).

The words “richly to enjoy” would have been like a red rag to a bull in the sight of Antisthenes, but he who “trusts in the living God” has no need to dress in rags to show his crucifixion to the world.

Cynicism as it advanced expressed a greater contempt for propriety and decency. We will not, however, deal with the unmannerly doings and sayings of Diogenes, but turn to the second school, namely, the *Cyrenaic*.

Socrates had taught that virtue *and* happiness together constituted the highest human end, but had not based this view upon any actual moral law, other than the teaching that true happiness was to be found only in the path of virtue. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school, seized upon this loosely defined happiness, and made it the criterion of what constituted virtue. Pronouncing pleasure as the ultimate good of life, and going probably to an even greater extreme because of the attitude of the Cynics to innocent pleasure, his teaching degenerated into the mere enjoyment of bodily pleasure and sensation. Accordingly all moral limitations were to be disregarded, since they limited pleasure; and nothing was wicked, shameful, or godless, if it procured it. He did advocate justice, since injustice *does not pay* and so does not lead to happiness; and he

did counsel self-control, but, failing to take into account the sinful nature of man, his teaching could lead to nothing better than irresponsible lawlessness.

The third school was founded by *Euclid*, who taught that in true Being was found the one Good, and that evil was non-existent. None of these men rightly understood the teaching of Socrates; this was reserved for Plato.

The idea of making “pleasure” a criterion of virtue goes back to the time of Adam:

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was *pleasant* to the eye” (Gen. iii. 6).

Centuries before the birth of Socrates Ecclesiastes tells us that he had experimented along these same lines:

“I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity” (Eccles. ii. 1).

He tells us that he set out on this quest “till I might see what was that good for the sons of men” (Eccles. ii. 3). Accordingly he pursued pleasure, great works, houses, gardens, possessions, “the peculiar treasure of kings”, music and art—“and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy” (Eccles. ii. 10). Yet his solemn verdict is that all is vanity. Ecclesiastes saw what none of these philosophers seems to have weighed sufficiently, that “the one event” that happens to all robs all earthly pleasure of any true value.

As we pursue the teaching of the book of Ecclesiastes, our eyes are directed onward and upward. The key to the problem lies “there”, not “here” (Eccles. iii. 17; v. 8; vii. 18; xii. 13, 14). The Cynic denied all pleasure. The Cyrenaic endorsed it strongly. Ecclesiastes does neither. He sets aside pleasure in chapter ii., but commends it in viii. 15; iii. 12; v. 18; and ix. 7-10. A patient balancing of his findings will, however, show that there is no contradiction. In most chapters “the one event” is in view, and when that is kept in mind, and the world and its ways seen in their true perspective, the innocent pleasures of life are commended.* (* - The interested reader will find a fuller exposition of these points in the series of articles on Ecclesiastes, published in Volumes X-XIII).

Socrates lived out, in measure, his own doctrine, and died a martyr’s death; but he was a sinful man and needed a Saviour. His life and death could be nothing more than an example. They could neither bring deliverance from sin, nor give the blessed assurance of victory over the grave. How far Socrates “felt after” the Lord, we cannot say. Happily all judgment has been committed into the hands of Him who knew what Tyre and Sidon, and Sodom and Gomorrha *would have done* in more favourable circumstances (Matt. xi. 20-24), and we gladly leave Socrates and all such in His hands. For ourselves, can we ever be too grateful for One Who taught the Truth, Who lived and died for the Truth, and Who by His life and death delivers us from sin, places our feet in the path of

virtue, enables us to deny ourselves without cynicism, and to look forward to pleasures at the right hand of God that are for evermore?

#16. Plato, the Idealist. **pp. 189, 190**

The zenith of human wisdom is reached in the labours of Plato. Plato's philosophy was founded upon the teaching of Socrates, and his celebrated theory of ideas may be regarded as an attempt to mediate between the two systems of Heraclitus and Parmenides. What was but dimly seen and uncertainly expressed by the master—Socrates, is unfolded and systemized by his disciple. It needed, however, two exponents to give the teaching of Socrates completeness, Plato giving us "idea", and Aristotle "form"—the former being the idealist, and the latter the realist. Plato subjected all previous philosophies to the searching Socratic method of question and answer.

To attempt an outline of Plato's teaching is entirely beyond our ability, time or purpose. In this series of articles we are simply attempting to sketch out as far as possible the history of human wisdom between the close of the O.T. and the birth of Christ, in order to quicken the reader's appreciation of the gift of God, the written and the living Word.

The principle of "right division", which governs all our study of Scripture, is not only a spiritual principle, but obtains also in things which are mental or physical. "Right division" is the rule of all study, all administration, all science; without it we have confusion instead of clarity. Plato speaks of dialectic or logic as the "science of duly conducting discourse, and *duly joining or disjoining the genera of things*". The word "genus" (plural of genera) indicates a class or kind which includes species having certain attributes in common. Thus the word "dog" represents a genus, whereas "terrier" and "spaniel" stand for particular species—which, while possessing certain characteristic differences, are nevertheless allied, and belong to one class or genus. If we were as wise as Plato, or if we simply heeded the instruction of II Tim. ii. 15, we should keep "Kingdom" and "Church" distinct. We should "rightly divide the Word of Truth", and so not only avoid confusion, but widen and deepen our understanding.

There are many features about "The Good" that it was Plato's life work to discover, that approach to the idea of "God", but his idealism would lead away to "Being" rather than to "the Living God". He did not find the "personal God", for He can only be found "in Christ".

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul which Plato taught, has displaced or modified the teaching of Scripture in the case of many believers, and in most denominations. Plato had no revealed statement concerning the nature of the soul, or the difference between soul and spirit. He knew nothing of resurrection, either as a doctrine,

or as a blessed fact of history. He did not know the One Who could say: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He knew nothing of John iii. 16. Christians, however, have had all these advantages, and are truly culpable if they follow the teaching of Plato, and despise the revelation of God.

Morality, in the teaching of Plato, is generally more a matter of the head than of the heart, but it is not merely abstract, as a study of his "Republic" will show. He would have Reason in supreme control, with the heart fortified by courage, and so enabled to choose aright, to resist evil, and if needs be to endure pain, with temperance regulating the appetite, and the whole bound and related by justice. This is a good ideal, but man by nature is under the dominion of sin, and abstract reason cannot control him, nor can he find strength to resist evil and follow good. While Plato's statements may be faultless, they are fruitless, because they are powerless. Man needs a Redeemer, and he needs newness of life, before he can serve in newness of spirit. The failure of the Jew in a more perfect state than Plato's republic, and under a more perfect law than Plato's ethics, is a warning for all time.

We make no apology for the very sparse account we offer of this great philosopher. The very fullness of his teaching renders any such account as this hopelessly inadequate. If we were to deal with one point only and explain what is meant by the "idea" in the Platonic system, it would mean several books, with explanations of terms at every point. Let it suffice that we have not left his labours unrecorded, and that we have no need to spend years of study before we can arrive at the abstract "Good", which was Plato's Ultimate. Let it suffice that we have found all our "Good", and all our "Goal", as we have found all our wisdom, courage and control, in a living Head, Jesus Christ our Lord.

#17. Aristotle, the Realist. **pp. 233 - 235**

If Plato is the idealist in the Socratic school, Aristotle is the realist. While Plato is literary, Aristotle is scientific and his knowledge encyclopædic. It is not easy to subdivide Aristotle's teaching into sections, but roughly we may say that it falls into three groups, represented by logic, physics, and ethics or morals.

In B.C.343 Aristotle was called to Macedonia by Philip to undertake the education of his son, then a boy of fourteen. This son was afterwards to be known as Alexander the Great, and is referred to by Daniel the prophet.

Aristotle's *Organon* is the basis upon which his fame as the inventor of deductive logic rests, and it was as a rival to this that Bacon wrote his *Novum Organon*, thus earning the title of the inventor of inductive logic* (* - See "The Syllogism" in the Series: "With all thy getting, get understanding", Volume XXIII, page 129). In ethics, Aristotle opposed the doctrine of the Stoics, arguing that we cannot be indifferent to external

goods, or to environment generally. He taught that the true maxim was not negation but subordination.

Aristotle differed from Plato with regard to the immortality of the soul, and approached more closely to the teaching of the Scriptures. Schwegeler's history contains the following summary:

“The soul is related to the body as form to matter; it is the animating principle. Simply for this reason the soul cannot be thought of without the body: neither can it exist by itself, and with the body it ceases to be.”

To appreciate this statement, we must know something of Aristotle's four principles or causes, and the relation of matter to form. Aristotle lays down four principles: the formal, the material, the efficient, and the final. For example, in the case of a house, the building materials are the matter, the idea of the house is the form, the efficient cause is the builder, and the actual house itself the final cause.

Moreover, Aristotle makes a distinction between the “soul” and the “spirit”. He speaks of the *nous*, the “mind”, as being essentially different from the “soul”, and unrelated to the lower faculties. “It comes, as being no result of lower processes, from elsewhere into the body, and is equally again separable from it.” With which we may compare the words of Ecclesiastes:

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it” (Eccles. xii. 7).

The *summum bonum*, or “chief good”, according to Aristotle, is happiness, but his happiness is not only a well-being but a well-doing. His definition of happiness is a “perfect activity in a perfect life”.

With this we may compare the words of the Apostle in Romans:

“The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. viii. 19-21).

Aristotle felt the burden, and shared the groan of a creation subject to vanity. He realized also that perfect happiness demands perfect liberty, but he did not know the One by Whom this groan shall one day be hushed, and Who even now gives to His believing people the “spirit of adoption” as the glorious pledge of that future “redemption of the body”, in which perfect happiness will be realized in a perfect life.

Virtue, according to Aristotle, is the result of frequently repeated moral action; it is a quality won through exercise. We may compare this with the Apostle's words in Heb. v. 14, where he speaks of those who are “of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”.

It is of course quite impossible in these pages to give any adequate idea of the breadth and wealth of Aristotle's teaching. And yet, with all his wisdom, and with all that he has contributed to the world of thought and research, he did not reach the position attained by the poor unlettered beggar who had seen the Lord and could say: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

There is one thing that is conspicuously absent from the writings of most of these wise men of the earth, and that is the sense of sin. This sense is aroused by the preaching or the reading of the Scriptures, and sends the self-confessed sinner on the quest, not for happiness merely, but for forgiveness and reconciliation, for peace with God and life. Until these things are ours, the matters that occupied the attention of these men of old are but trifles. Important though they may be in themselves, they will take no one beyond the grave, and if there is one lesson we have learnt from Ecclesiastes it is surely that of the paramount importance of the "life to come".

"Granted that there is a life beyond the grave, then though wickedness may sit in the place of judgment (Eccles. iii. 16), and though many inequalities and perplexing mysteries of providence may still baffle us (Eccles. vii. 15; viii. 14, 17), though the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but all have to reckon with time and chance, yet the conclusion of the matter sets all right. It will be our wisdom to fear God and keep His commandments, for a day of judgment is coming, and if a day of judgment, then a day when the crooked shall be made straight, the inequalities made equal, a day of LIFE from the dead, where vanity and vexation of spirit shall never more intrude, for death and Hades shall be destroyed in the second death, and God shall solve all life's mysteries in the LIFE TO COME" (Extract from Volume X, page 168).

Words of Comfort.

#3. “Manifold temptations” and “Manifold grace” (I Pet. i. 6 and iv. 10). pp. 225, 226

We have already seen in Volume XXVII, that the afflictions of the redeemed are (1) for a season, and (2) for a reason. Reading on now in I Pet. i. 6 we come to the word “manifold”.

“Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through *manifold* temptations” (I Pet. i. 6).

It might be thought that it would be impossible to extract any comfort from the fact that temptations are “manifold”; their very variety would seem to make the attack worse. There are, however, at least two reasons for regarding the word in this light.

The first is the Scriptural statement in James i. 2:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

The second is the fact that suffering associates us with Christ. The word which is translated “to be in heaviness” in I Pet. i. 6, is used by the Apostle in ii. 19, where it is translated “grief”:

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God, endure *grief*, suffering wrongfully” (I Pet. ii. 19).

The context goes on to show that this constitutes a part of our calling—“For even hereunto were ye called”—and that Christ has left us an example with regard to suffering:

“Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.”

We have, therefore, two good reasons for patient endurance:

- (1) The fact that Scripture says we are to count it all joy.
- (2) The fact that Christ has left us an example of enduring grief patiently.

These of themselves should minister comfort, but the Lord has done more than this. He has condescended to explain as well as to enjoin.

James not only tells us to “count it all joy”, but continues:

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James i. 3).

Instead, therefore, of looking upon trial as so much waste of valuable time, we are taught to realize that it accomplishes an important work and that nothing less than our perfecting.

Before we consider this important fact, let us return to I Pet. i. 6, and its “manifold” temptations. The Greek word translated “manifold” is *poikilos*, rendered “divers” in James i. 2, already quoted. The word is also found in the LXX version of Gen. xxx. 39, where our version reads “straked”, and in xxxvii. 3, where it describes the “coat of many colours” made for Joseph. It is found also in Ezek. xvi. 10 as “broidered work”. The meaning of the word *poikillo* was expanded to include not only the variegated work of “art” (the *Poecile* was the picture gallery at Athens) but also of “artfulness”; not only a design in the innocent sense, but a “design” in the evil sense. The Lexicon gives: “To variegate, diversify; to change, alter; to paint, embroider; to adorn, arrange; to feign, counterfeit, dissemble, deceived.”

Temptation and trial are as variegated as life itself. To one, temptation may come with brute force; to another with cunning craftiness. To one, Satan may come as a “roaring lion”; to another as “an angel of light”. How comforting, therefore, for the harassed saint to realize that, however, varied the trial may be, there is varied, manifold grace to meet it:

“As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the *manifold grace* of God” (I Pet. iv. 10).

No trial or temptation can ever be devised that can possibly outmatch the all-sufficiency of manifold grace. If we need strength, grace can make us strong. If we need wisdom, grace can make us wise. Whether the temptations come from the world or from the flesh, there is manifold grace to enable us to conquer. It is true, of course, that this grace is ours only because of the finished work of Christ. For the moment, however, we are not considering this fundamental aspect, but simply the glorious fact that “manifold temptations” are perfectly matched by “manifold grace”.

Our Young People's Page.

Weekly Bible Readings for January, 1938.

Subject: The Scriptures.

(The notes are for the guidance of those superintending the Young People's reading).

p. 20

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>January 2nd.</i> John v. 24-47. "SCRIPTURES TESTIFIES OF CHRIST."</p>	<p>Verse 39 can be read: "Ye search the <i>Scriptures</i> ye will not come to <i>Me</i>." The great purpose of the Scriptures is to testify of Christ (verses 46 and 47). Explain evil of Modernism in its relation to Moses.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>January 9th.</i> Psalm xii. "THE WORDS OF THE LORD."</p>	<p>Note man's words (2); their end (3). God's words (6); their end (7). "Keep them" may refer to the Word, and not to men. Read verse 6: Words of earth, yes, but purified seven times</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>January 16th.</i> Romans i. 1-17. "AS IT IS WRITTEN."</p>	<p>"Promised afore" (2); <i>see</i> Rom. iii. 21; iv. 3. One special quotation from Hab. ii. 4 is given in verse 17. Point out Paul's use of this in Gal. iii. 11 and Heb. x. 38).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>January 23rd.</i> Matthew ii. "THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED."</p>	<p>Readiness of scribes to quote scripture (5 and 6), but they did not go to see. "Fulfilled" 15, 17, 23. Verse 15 reads literally, "<i>by</i> the Lord, <i>through</i> the prophet."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>January 30th.</i> Psalm cxix. 25-32. "I HAVE STUCK UNTO THY TESTIMONIES."</p>	<p>Like the Psalmist make God's Word your choice (30); lay his judgments before you (30), and <i>stick</i> to His testimonies (31). You will not then be put to shame.</p>

Verses to memorize (one each week):

John v. 46; Psa. xii. 6; Rom. i. 16, 17; Matt. ii. 6; Psalm cxix. 30, 31.

"Search and See" Section.

Answers will be gladly received from young people of any age. Name, address and age to be written upon each paper, and sent monthly to "Win", "Shalom", Main Road, Hutton, Essex.

- John v. 24-47-- (1) What must we do—as well as search the Scriptures—to have eternal life?
(2) Why must the Jews have believed Christ if they really believed Moses?

Psalm xii.-- (1) Say in your own words what God's words are likened to in this Psalm?
(2) How do man's words contrast with God's words?
See "speak" in verses 2 and 3.

Romans i. 1-17-- (1) Give two other verses from the N.T. to show that the gospel is
"according to the Scriptures".
(2) Find a verse in Rom. x. that joins "faith" with "hearing" the word of God.

Matthew ii.-- (1) What four things spoken by the prophet are fulfilled in Matt. ii.?
(2) How did the prophets know beforehand?

Psalm cxix. 25-32.-- (1) How many different names for the word of God
can you find in these verses?
(2) "Stuck" means "Holdfast". Find a N.T. parallel.

Weekly Bible Readings for February, 1938.

Subject: Salvation.

p. 40

<p><i>February 6th.</i> I Timothy i. 1-16. "To save sinners."</p>	<p>God is "Saviour" (1); The law made for "sinners" (9), to condemn them. Christ Jesus came into the world to save "sinners". The word "chief" here means "first". Paul was the first of a new company. See verse 16: "In me as a first one."</p>
<p><i>February 13th.</i> Psalm xxiv. "The Lord heard and saved."</p>	<p>Verse 4: "Sought, heard, delivered." Verse 5: "Looked, lightened, not ashamed." Verse 6: "Cried, heard, saved." Note references to "deliver" (verses 4, 7, 17, 19) and to "save" (verses 6, 18).</p>
<p><i>February 20th.</i> Ephesians ii. 1-10. "Saved by grace."</p>	<p>Contrast "time past" of verses 2 and 3 with "Now" of verse 4. The word "that" in verse 8 must not be made to refer to faith, but to the whole plan of salvation. "Not of works" but "unto good works".</p>
<p><i>February 27th.</i> I Corinthian i. 1-24. "It pleased God to save them that believe."</p>	<p>The emphasis is upon the cross. "Was Paul crucified for you? (13). "Preach the gospel preaching of the cross foolishness of the preaching we preach Christ crucified" (17, 18, 21, 22).</p>

Verses to memorize (one each week):

I Tim. i. 15; Psa. xxxiv. 6; Eph. ii. 8; I Cor. i. 23, 24.

"Search and See" Section.

- I Tim. i. 1-16-- (1) Why did Christ come into the world?
Could not the law have done this? If not, why?
(2) Can you find any other "Faithful sayings"? If so write one out.
- Psalm xxxiv.-- (1) In verses 4, 5, 7 and 22 are other words that mean "saved":
Can you write them down?
(2) What do verses 13 and 14 teach the saved to do?
- Eph. ii. 1-10-- (1) In verses 8 and 9 we are saved "by" saved "through"
and saved "not of" Fill in the spaces.
(2) In verse 9 we read "Not of works" and in verse 10 we read "Unto good works". Can you explain these expressions?
- I Cor. i. 1-24.-- (1) In verses 18, 21 and 23 the preaching of the cross is called "Foolishness".
What does verse 25 say?
(2) Can you find a verse in the N.T. that explains why the cross was necessary or what it did, or what it stands for. You may find help under the word "tree".

Weekly Bible Readings for March, 1938.

Subject: Sin.

p. 64

<p><i>March 6th.</i> Rom. iii. 9-26. “ALL HAVE SINNED.”</p>	<p>Israel had many advantages (1, 2), but so far as <i>sin</i> is concerned they were “no better” than others. “All under sin” (9); “All the world guilty” (19); “None righteous, no not one” (10); “No difference” (22). Illustrate “come short” (23) by Judges xx. 16.</p>
<p><i>March 13th.</i> I John i. - ii. 2. “IF WE SAY NO SIN NOT SINNED.”</p>	<p>Believers though saved still need cleansing from all sin, and we lie if we say we have no sin or have not sinned. At the same time, this epistle is written “that ye sin not” (ii. 1).</p>
<p><i>March 20th.</i> Isaiah liii. “ASTRAY OWN WAY INIQUITY.”</p>	<p>Note the words used to describe sin. “Transgressions”, “iniquities” (5). “Our own way” is said to be “astray” (6). Note “He”—“our” (5). Griefs and sorrows, oppressed and afflicted, prison and grave. All speak of sin.</p>
<p><i>March 27th.</i> Luke xv. 11-32. “I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN.”</p>	<p>Note “wasted”, “want”, “not worthy”. Sin separates from God (“Far country”). Sin makes us unclean (“The swine”). Sin ends in death (“I perish”). Sin is not only against ourselves (17) and against our fellows, but against God (18).</p>

“Search and See” Section.

Rom. iii. 9-26—

- (1) “All”, “None”. How are these words used in Rom. iii. to prove that every one is a sinner?
- (2) In verse 22 we have the words “No difference”.

Find these two words in Rom. x. and show their connection.

I John i. - ii. 2-- (1) We are redeemed by the blood of Christ.

What does verse 7 say that the blood of Christ does also?

- (2) In verses 6 & 8 we read: “If we say.” What does God require in verses 7 & 9?
- (3) Can you explain how God is “Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins”?

Isaiah liii.-- (1) What is said about “Our” in verses 4 and 5?

- (2) In verses 5, 6 and 11 we read of “Iniquity”. What did the Lord do with our iniquity?
- (3) Give one N.T. reference to Isa. liii.

Luke xv. 11-32—

- (1) Write the verses which teach that sin separates from God, sin makes unclean, and sin ends in death.
- (2) Can you explain how the prodigal not only sinned against his father, but against “heaven”?

Verses to memorize (one each week):

Rom. iii. 19; I John i. 8; Isa. liii. 6; Luke xv. 18.

Weekly Bible Readings for April, 1938.

Subject: "Access."

p. 84

<p><i>April 3rd.</i> Romans v. 1-11. "ACCESS BY FAITH."</p>	<p>Note the order in verses 1 and 2: "Being we have we have." Basis of all is justification. Peace and access are two aspects of reconciliation (10) and (11, margin). Access—No shut door now.</p>
<p><i>April 10th.</i> Hebrews ix. 1-14 "THE WAY NOT MANIFEST."</p>	<p>Before Christ came, the tabernacle services only partially foreshadowed the believer's privilege. The High Priest "alone once". The way unto the holiest was not made manifest typical sacrifices never touched the conscience (8, 9).</p>
<p><i>April 17th.</i> Hebrews x. 1-24. "BOLDNESS TO ENTER."</p>	<p>Note the change from Heb. ix. Conscience is touched (2, 22); the one true sacrifice has been offered (12). The way is "new and living". It is "through the veil". Access is ours; we may "draw near".</p>
<p><i>April 24th.</i> Ephesians ii. 11-22. "ACCESS UNTO THE FATHER."</p>	<p>In Heb. x. we have removal of the veil. In Eph. ii. we have the breaking down of the middle wall. Describe the approach to the temple, and the distinction made between Jew and Gentile. For particulars see Volume X, pages 13 and 179, and large illustration, Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner, page 69.</p>

"Search and See" Section.

Rom. v. 1-11-- (1) Access follows two things mentioned in verse 1. What are they?

(2) If access means a way into the presence of God, can you find a passage of Scripture that shows that sin banishes from the presence of God?

Heb. ix. 1-14-- (1) The high priest went "alone". Find some verses in the N.T. that tell us that the believer will be "with" Christ in glory.

(2) In verse 9 a word is used to show the failure of the O.T. type. The same word is used in verse 14 to show the reality of the work of Christ. What is the word and what does it mean?

Heb. x. 1-24-- (1) What does this passage say about the "conscience"?

(2) Write out the verses which contain the words "No more".

(3) "Through the veil"—What happened at the death of Christ? See Matt. xxvii. 50, 51.

Eph. ii. 11-22-- (1) What was the middle wall of partition?

(2) To Whom have we access now?

(3) Explain what is meant by the words "but now" in verse 13.

Verses to memorize (one each week):

Rom. v. 1, 2; Heb. ix. 8; Heb. x. 19; Eph. ii. 18.

Weekly Bible Readings for May, 1938.

Subject: "Hope."

p. 104

<p><i>May 1st.</i> Colossians i. 1-23. "THE HOPE LAID UP IN HEAVEN."</p>	<p>Note association of hope with gospel in verses 5 & 23. <i>Faith</i> looks back to a finished work. <i>Love</i> covers the whole life. <i>Hope</i> looks forward to the coming glory (Col. i. 4, 5).</p>
<p><i>May 8th.</i> Titus ii. 1-15. "THAT BLESSED HOPE."</p>	<p>Note two "appearings" (11, 13). Glorious appearing is literally "The appearing of the glory". The simple sentence is: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches us that we should live looking."</p>
<p><i>May 15th.</i> Ephesians i. 15-23. "THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING."</p>	<p>The threefold revelation of Eph. i. 3-14, viz., the <i>Will</i> of the <i>Father</i>, the <i>Work</i> of the <i>Son</i>, the <i>Witness</i> of the <i>Spirit</i>, is followed by a threefold prayer. The first item is "What is the hope of His calling" (<i>see also</i> Eph. iv. 4).</p>
<p><i>May 22nd.</i> I Peter i. 1-25. "A LIVELY HOPE."</p>	<p>This epistle speaks of the hope of the remnant of Israel, but in essentials is true for all. Hope is "living", therefore those who entertain it are "begotten". Further, all is "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ", for there is no hope apart from resurrection (verses 21-23).</p>
<p><i>May 29th.</i> Psalm cxix. 49-56. "HOPE AND THE WORD."</p>	<p>Hope must be connected with the expectation that some promise will be fulfilled. Hope cannot stand by itself. Here it rests upon the "Word"</p>

"Search and See" Section.

Col. i. 1-23-- (1) Find two other passages of Scripture where "Faith, hope and love" come together (4, 5).
(2) What is the hope? (23). Where is it laid up? How do we "hear" about it (5, 23).

Titus ii. 1-15-- (1) What is "the blessed hope"? (13).
(2) He will purify (14). What does verse 12 say about the present?
(3) What should be our attitude to this hope? (12, 13).

Eph. v. 15-23-- (1) Find another reference in Eph. iv. to the hope of the calling.
(2) Can you explain why "hope" and "calling" go together?
(3) Can you say why the apostle said "one" hope of your calling? (iv. 4).

I Pet. i. 1-25-- (1) What other words beside "lively" are used in this chapter to teach that this hope is connected with a new life?
(2) Do faith, hope and love come together in this chapter? Write the verses.
(3) The hope is defined in verses 7, 11 and 13: What is it?

Psalm cxix. 49-56-- (1) Explain how "hope" is connected with "the Word".
(2) Read Rom. iv. 17, 18 and say whether Abraham's hope rested upon "the Word".

Verses to memorize (one each week):

Col. i. 4, 5; Titus ii. 13; Eph. i. 18; I Pet. i. 3; Psa. cxix. 49.

Weekly Bible Readings for June, 1938.

Subject: "Jesus."

p. 124

<p><i>June 5th.</i> Ephesians iv. 17-32. "AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS."</p>	<p>The name "Jesus" is rare in Paul's epistles. Special reason for its inclusion should be sought. Here it is the "new man" that is in question. At the end of verse 24 read: "and holiness of the truth"—the subject is "the truth".</p>
<p><i>June 12th.</i> Philippians ii. 1-24. "THE NAME OF JESUS."</p>	<p>Observe the wonderful descent (6-8) and ascent (9-11) of the Saviour. He Who is "Jesus" has been given "The name", i.e., "Lord". It is our privilege to know Him as Lord now. Teach the young believer to give the Lord His title.</p>
<p><i>June 19th.</i> I Thessalonians iv. 9-18. "THEM WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS."</p>	<p>The apostle speaks of the believer who has died as "asleep in Jesus". "Bring with Him" means "bring back from the dead".</p>
<p><i>June 26th.</i> Hebrews ii. 1-18. "WE SEE JESUS."</p>	<p>Angels once ruled, but angels are not to rule in the world to come. Adam was made a little lower than angels, but failed. "We see Jesus", the Second Man and the last Adam, triumphing.</p>

"Search and See" Section.

- Eph. iv. 17-32-- (1) What is the meaning of the name "Jesus"?
(2) What is said to be "in Jesus"?
(3) How should we act if we also are "in" Him? (22, 24).
- Phil. ii. 1-24-- (1) What title will all give to "Jesus" by and by?
(2) Should we call Him "Jesus" when we speak of him now?
(3) What are some of the titles that we should use?
- I Thess. iv. 9-18-- (1) How else are those that "sleep in Jesus" called? (16).
(2) "Jesus" is used twice: another title is used five times in verses 14-17. What is it?
- Heb. ii. 1-18-- (1) Look at Psa. viii. 6-8, and Heb. ii. 7, 8. What difference do you find?
(2) Adam was "crowned with glory and honour: (Psa. viii. 5):
In what way was Jesus crowned in this passage? (Heb. ii. 1-18).

Verses to memorize (one each week):

Eph. iv. 20, 21; Phil. ii. 10; I Thess. iv. 14; Heb. ii. 9.

Weekly Bible Readings for July, 1938.

Subject: "Believing."

p. 144

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>July 3rd.</i> John iii. 14-36. "BELIEVETH HATH."</p>	<p>Note, in 15, 16, 17, 18 and 36, we have set before us the alternatives: "Believe" and "Believe not"; "Life", "Perish"; "Not Condemned", "Condemned"; "Saved", "Wrath".</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>July 10th.</i> Romans i. 1-17. "POWER . . . BELIEVETH."</p>	<p>Remember that "faith" (5, 8, 12, 17) and "believe" (16) are two words for the same act. "Salvation believeth." "Just shall live by faith." "Power" is same word as "Miracle".</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>July 17th.</i> I Corinthians i. 10-31. "SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE."</p>	<p>The instrument of salvation (the cross) appears foolish to the wise of the world, and the emphasis upon "believing" is equally so. Believing the gospel admits of our extreme need and failure, and God's full provision.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>July 24th.</i> II Timothy i. 1-18. "I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED."</p>	<p>Note the three references to being "ashamed" in this chapter (8, 12 and 16). Paul reveals the secret of his strength in verse 12. Believing is not only essential at the first, but throughout our whole life.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>July 31st.</i></p>	<p>As the holidays have commenced, and some of our Young People will be traveling, we give no questions for this date.</p>

"Search and See" Section.

John iii. 14-36.--

- (1) Can we really "believe" John iii. 16 if we do not believe the writings of Moses? (see 14 and 15).
- (2) What is another way of saying "believe"? (see 32, 33).
- (3) What follows believing? (verses 16, 18, etc.).

Romans i. 1-17--

- (1) Write out a verse in this passage that speaks of the gospel.
- (2) What two things come by believing or faith (see 16, 17). If "power in 16 means "miracle", can any hope to be saved by "turning over a new leaf"?

I Cor. i. 10-31.--

- (1) What does this passage say about "foolishness"?
- (2) What does it say about "wisdom"?
- (3) Is there anything in verse 18 that reminds you of Rom. i. 16?

II Tim. i. 1-18--

- (1) We have seen that "believing" has to do with salvation, does this passage show that believing has to do with service and standing for Christ? (see 12).
- (2) How many times do we read the words "not ashamed" in this passage? Write out the first one in full.

Verses to memorize (one each week):

John iii. 36; Rom. i. 16; I Cor. i. 21; II Tim. i. 12.

Weekly Bible Readings for September, 1938.
Subject: The Gospel according to Matthew.
The King and The Kingdom.
p. 184

<p><i>September 4th.</i> Matthew i. THE BIRTH OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does “the book of the generations” means? 2. Luke iii. 23-28 gives another “birth certificate”. Point out any difference that you can see. 3. Explain the meaning of the two names “Jesus” and “Emmanuel”. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. i. 21.</p>
<p><i>September 11th.</i> Matthew ii. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are four fulfillments of the O.T. prophecy in this chapter. Give the number of the verses. 2. Write out the prophecy which speaks of Bethlehem. 3. What title did the wise men use when enquiring about the Lord Jesus? <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. ii. 11.</p>
<p><i>September 18th.</i> Matthew iii. THE FORERUNNER OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did John the Baptist call upon Israel to do? 2. What is the meaning of the word “repent”? 3. What does “fruit meet for repentance” mean? (8). 4. Write out the words which were spoken from heaven, after the Lord had been baptized. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. iii. 3.</p>
<p><i>September 25th.</i> Matthew iv. THE TEMPTATION OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is another word for “tempt”? 2. How many times did Satan tempt the Lord in this chapter? 3. How did the Lord Jesus meet the temptation? 4. What three words did He use each time he met the temptation? (4, 7, 10). <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. iv. 4.</p>

Read each chapter through carefully, not forgetting to ask, in prayer, that God would open the eyes to see and the heart to understand.

Weekly Bible Readings for October, 1938.
Subject: The Gospel according to Matthew.
The King and The Kingdom.
p. 204

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>October 2nd.</i> Matthew v. 1-20. THE BLESSINGS OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the meaning of “poor in spirit” and “meek”. 2. Write out one verse which commences with the word “Blessed”. 3. Explain “Ye are the salt of the earth”, and “Ye are the light of the world”. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. v. 20.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>October 9th.</i> Matthew v. 21-48. THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times do we read the words: “But I say unto you” in this passage? 2. Read carefully verses 38 and 39, and explain the difference between the law that was given through Moses, and grace that came through Christ. 3. Read verses 43, 44, 45 and explain the words: “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. v. 44.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>October 16th.</i> Matthew vi. 1-21. THE REWARD OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times does the word “reward” occur in Matt. vi.? 2. Verse 15 says: “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Is this still true for us, or can you point out what change has been made? You will find help in Eph. iv. 32. 3. What is omitted at the close of the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matt. vi. 13). Look at John xvi. 24. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. vi. 19-21.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>October 23rd.</i> Matthew vi. 22-34. THE SERVICE OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon”. 2. How many times in these verses do we read “Take no thought” or words similar? Does it mean “carelessness”? If not, explain. 3. What is the meaning of the words “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”? <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. vi. 28, 29.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>October 30th.</i> Matthew vii. 1-29. THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain, in your way, Matt. vii. 1-5. 2. What word do the initial letters of Ask, Seek and Knock spell? 3. Who is a “wise” builder, and why? (verses 24-27). <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. vii. 28, 29.</p>

Read each chapter through carefully, not forgetting to ask, in prayer, that God would open the eyes to see and the heart to understand.

Weekly Bible Readings for November, 1938.
Subject: The Gospel according to Matthew.
The King and The Kingdom.
p. 224

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 6th.</i> Matthew viii. THE BURDEN OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the account of the Cleansing of the Leper, and of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant. What great difference do you see? 2. Do you think the Leper represented Israel, and the servant the far off Gentiles? Give your reasons. 3. What did the centurion mean in verse 9? Memorize Matt. viii. 16, 17.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 13th.</i> Matthew ix. THE POWER OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did the Saviour prove that He had power to forgive sins? (1-8). 2. "If I may but touch His garment" (21); Explain this in the light of verses 28, 29. What did the touch represent? 3. Were the men of verses 30, 31 right or wrong when they "spread abroad His fame"? Memorize Matt. ix. 12, 13.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 20th.</i> Matthew x. THE PREACHING OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write out the names of the twelve apostles. 2. Explain "Go not"; "Go rather" (5, 6). 3. What lesson do you learn from "sparrows" in this chapter? Memorize Matt. x. 42.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 27th.</i> Matthew xi. THE REJECTION OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did Christ's answer satisfy John the Baptist? 2. Explain verses 16-19 in your own words. 3. "Take My yoke I am meek." Can you see the connection between vv. 28-30 and vv. 20-26? Think how Christ acted when the people of the cities rejected Him. Memorize Matt. xi. 28-30.

Read each chapter through carefully, not forgetting to ask, in prayer, that God would open the eyes to see and the heart to understand.

Weekly Bible Readings for December, 1938.
Subject: The Gospel according to Matthew.
The King and The Kingdom.
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 4th.</i> Matthew xii. THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL'S PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times did Christ say that a "greater than" something or someone was present? 2. What three titles of Christ do the Temple, Jonah and Solomon represent? 3. Show from Matt. xi. and xii. that Israel rejected Christ. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. xii. 20, 21.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 11th.</i> Matthew xiii. 1-23. THE MYSTERIES AND PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is said, "When Israel rejected their King, the Kingdom changed its character, and the Lord's teaching took on another form". Can you prove this by two words found in verses 10 and 11, that have not been used before? 2. What do the four grounds represent? 3. What portion of Isa. vi. is quoted here, and again in Acts xviii. 25-27? <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. xiii. 22.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 18th.</i> Matthew xiii. 24-58. THE MYSTERIES AND PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there seven or eight parables in Matt. xiii.? 2. Which parable were spoken outside the house, and which were spoken inside? 3. Does leaven represent good or evil? Look at Matthew xvi. 6, 12. <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. xiii. 52.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 25th.</i> Matthew xiv. THE GREATNESS OF THE KING.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did the Lord use when feeding the 5,000? What lesson does it teach you? 2. What caused Peter to sink, after he started to walk upon the water? (28-31). 3. What new title was given to Christ by those who were in the ship? <p style="text-align: center;">Memorize Matt. xiv. 27.</p>

Read each chapter through carefully, not forgetting to ask, in prayer, that God would open the eyes to see and the heart to understand.