

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,

Once again we wish to express our gratitude to our heavenly Father that we have been enabled to complete yet another volume of *The Berean Expositor*. When one considers the increasing difficulties of the times, the rise in the cost of living, the deepening apostasy and indifference all around us, which has caused more than one Christian magazine to cease production, we marvel at the goodness of our God Who has sustained us right through to the present time.

We have nothing to offer except a sincere attempt to expound faithfully the Word of God as a whole, with special emphasis on the riches of Truth that God wills to make known during this age of grace (Col. i. 24-27). There are no advertisements in *The Berean Expositor* for a source of income, nor any attempt to curry favour or please the crowd, but we offer it to those who want and value Truth at all costs.

To all who have so loyally supported us in every way, both here and abroad, we express our thanks and appreciation. As we look around us at the veritable landslide from the Truth and true values, we realize there is but one effective antidote, to “preach the Word” (II Tim. iv. 2). Will you join with us once again in practical and prayerful support so that this witness for the Word rightly divided may be maintained?

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November 1970.

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His Kindness Towards Us

p. 100

The blessings and position of the members of the Body of Christ so far transcend the ordinary experiences of life, that we might well fear being overwhelmed by it all. “Blessed with every spiritual blessing made to sit together in heavenly places builded together for an habitation of God”; these expressions which are at present beyond our ability to fully comprehend, and yet they intimately concern our future (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6, 22). Are we going to be lost in the wonder and immensity of it all? Is it going to be just a bit too much to us? Happily, Scripture assures us that such will not be so.

In Eph. ii. 7 we read of God’s intentions towards us in “the ages to come”, and they are expressed in the lovely word “kindness”. There is no thought that the extent of His grace will leave us either overwhelmed or uncomfortable. We are dealing with One described as “The Father” and associated with “every family” (Eph. iii. 14, 15 R.V); the environment is that of the home, and the atmosphere “kindness”. None will feel out of place here. Such blessing and assurance are associated with an abundance of God’s grace, and represent the third step of a progression in grace revealed in Ephesians:

- (1) His grace . . . chosen . . . predestinated . . . before the foundation of the world.
- (2) Riches of His grace . . . redemption . . . forgiveness . . . (now).
- (3) Exceeding riches of His grace . . . kindness . . . in the ages to come (Eph. i. 4-7; ii. 7).

We may not yet fully appreciate the blessings given us “in Christ Jesus”, not be able to conceive of “heavenly places”. We may hardly be able to believe the extent of God’s grace toward us, such unworthy creature, but this we can grasp. His “kindness” towards us in Christ Jesus is an assurance that, in the ages to come, we will not be overawed, but feel completely at home in His presence.

BRIAN E. SHERRING

He has Spoken Well of Us pp. 159, 160

Eph. i. 3 is a well known and much beloved verse of Scripture to the members of the Body of Christ. It calls for blessing of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One Who “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (R.V.). What is fully involved in “every spiritual blessing” may at present be far beyond our understanding, but it is very often helpful to consider the literal meaning of words, and it is worthwhile here.

Three related words are used in this verse, all of which have the root idea “to speak well of”. They are:

“Blessed (*eulogetos*) be the God and Father
Who hath blessed (*eulogeo*) us
with every spiritual blessing (*eulogia*)”

Eulogetos is used only of God in the N.T. and reminds us that praise is due to Him as Creator (Rom. i. 25), as well as because of these “spiritual blessings”, which call forth “spiritual songs” (Eph. v. 19). The greatest such song ever to be written is probably Eph. i. 3-14 itself, and in it we praise Him (as did the Psalms of old) by recalling the grace bestowed upon us in Christ. In this way the “redeemed of the Lord *say so*” (Psalm cvii. 1, 2).

Eulogeo, as used here, gives the *ground* for our praise of Him—He “spoke well of us”, whilst *eulogia* answers the question, How?—“in every spiritual eulogy”.

But can it be that God has spoken well *of us*? Dare we use such a word as ‘eulogy’ in this connection? Certainly not if the word is seen as referring to any qualities we possess, for what is there in us of which “to speak well”? But the verse has not yet been fully quoted:

“. . . . Who spoke well of us in every spiritual eulogy in the heavenly places *in Christ*.”

There is truly nothing to call forth His well speaking of us—except “in Christ”. Indeed, we cannot read far into this epistle without being constantly confronted by such phrases as “in Christ”, “in Him”, “in the Beloved”. God can only speak well of us *in Him*, and has done so according as He has bestowed upon us such abundant grace and blessing.

The verses which follow enumerate these blessings and are a “kaleidoscope of dazzling lights and shifting colours” (J. A. Robinson). We see ourselves as objects of grace, chosen, marked off for sonship, redeemed, forgiven offences, enlightened as to the secret of His will, taken as an inheritance, etc., and all “to the praise of His glory”. But as we proceed deeper into this wonderful epistle, another truth emerges which almost takes our breath away.

He spoke well of us, yes, but where? Where was the spiritual eulogy heard? Eph. i. 3 supplies the answer, “in the heavenly places”. Who then heard it?—“the principalities and powers” there surely. But with what object? The same undoubtedly as the effect of bringing to light the dispensation of the mystery (which treats of the blessings already referred to), as it was made known among men, viz.,

“to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by (means of) the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages (lit.) which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. iii. 10, 11).

The attention of mighty spiritual beings has been drawn to the church, which is being used to make known “the full sweep of the Divine wisdom” (Moffatt). The members of this church, the Body of Christ, have had made known to them, “in all wisdom and prudence”, the secret of His will “for a dispensation of the fullness of the seasons” (i. 8-10). Such a dispensation sees “all things in Christ” under His Headship (‘gather together in one’ in verse 10 is lit. ‘to head up again’), and the church which is His Body is a kind of firstfruits in this respect, insofar that Christ is *already* given to it as Head (Eph. i. 22, 23), and something of the harvest may be learned from the firstfruits!

But it is as well to remember that there is a practical side to this also. When the Lord drew the attention of Satan to Job, it was not, in that case, to the blessings of Job, but to his *response* to blessing:

“Has thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, *a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*” (Job i. 8).

So then we also ought to recognize that our *response* to such blessings as are ours, may also be under observation by spiritual beings, and if that is so, what manner of persons ought we to be? He has spoken well of us, and we are to speak well of Him; ought not that ‘speaking’ to include our manner of life?

“For we are His poem (A.V. ‘workmanship’, Greek *poiema*), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before in order that we should walk in them” (Eph. ii. 10).

BRIAN E. SHERRING

Joint-Partakers

A consideration of Eph. iii. 6.

pp. 177, 178

In our attempt to bring before the reader the peculiar character of the church of the Mystery, we have translated the words found in Eph. iii. 6 “joint-heirs”, “joint-body” and “joint-partakers”. One of our readers has questioned the accuracy both of the translation and the intentional insistence upon equality that underlies it, drawing our attention to two passages in Romans:

“For if the Gentiles have been made *partakers* of their spiritual things” (Rom. xv. 27).
“If some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and didst become *partaker* with them of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (Rom. xi. 17).

Here, before the Mystery was made known, the Gentiles are found “partakers” of the spiritual things belonging to Israel. Where then does the distinctiveness of Eph. iii. 6 come in, is the question.

We must consider this matter under several heads:

- (1) The actual words used.
- (2) The actual blessings that are symbolized.
- (3) Wherein they are the same, or wherein they differ.

First of all, the word which we have translated “joint-partaker” in Eph. iii. 6, is *summetochos*, whereas the word translated “partaker” in Rom. xv. 27 is *koinoneo*, and in Rom. xi. 17 it is *sugkoinonos*. At the outset therefore we are faced with the fact that the inspired writer was led to use different words. He uses the simple *koinoneo* in Romans xv. 27, and the more advance *sugkoinonos* in Rom. xi. 17, evidently indicating even there that some difference must be observed between the subject of the two chapters, and the fact that neither of these words are used in Eph. iii. 6, should make us pause if tempted to think of them as of one aspect of truth only. Let us become acquainted with the meaning and usage of these words.

Koinoneo comes from the word *koinos* which means “common”.

“They had all things common” (Acts xx. 44).
“The common faith” (Titus i. 4).
“The common salvation” (Jude 3).

This same word is translated “defile” (Mark vii. 2) and “unclean” (Rom. xiv. 14) in the sense meant by Peter:

“I have not eaten anything that is *common*” (Acts x. 14).

“I should call no man *common*” (Acts x. 28).

No one would dream of saying that these words uttered of Cornelius in Acts x. 28 put the Gentile upon absolute equality with the Jew, for the very idea is a contradiction of what is actually taught in the Acts and in the epistles of the period. Reconciliation, however, had brought the Gentile nigh, and so this word “common” is found in Romans xv. 27.

In Rom. xi. 17 the word is *sugkoinonos* “fellow partaker”:

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them *partakest* of the root and fatness of the olive tree.”

This in no way destroys the pre-eminence that Rom. i. 16 or Rom. ix. 3-5 grant to Israel; it must be kept within the confines of the symbol, that of a graft into a stock. Whether the graft be that of a wild olive, a true olive, a rose or an apple, graft and natural branch must jointly partake of the root and its supply, otherwise the branch would die. Where Paul uses the *figure* of the olive tree he is consistent and uses “joint-partaker”. Where he speaks in plain terms without a figure he modifies the word to “partaker”, and as Rom. xv. 27 was written *after* Rom. xi. 17, we must accept the modification as intentional and as being necessitated by the fact that the Gentiles were not strictly speaking “joint-partakers” with Israel.

Coming now to Eph. iii. 6, we find that the word translated “partakers” is *summetochos*, a word occurring nowhere else in the N.T. but in Eph. v. 7. *Metochos* is found once in Luke and five times in Hebrews, and *metoche* occurs but once, namely in II Cor. vi. 14. Paul therefore had the lesser word to use if it had suited his purpose. We are constrained therefore to recognize in Eph. iii. 6 in the threefold use of *sun*, a unique relationship among the members of the Body, and while confessing that there is much to be desired in such a clumsy translation, the limits of our vocabulary will not allow us to translate these three words into a better English equivalent than,

“Joint-heirs, a joint-body and joint-partakers.”

CHARLES H. WELCH

The Nature of Reward for Christian Service pp. 178 - 180

The need to distinguish between salvation (the free gift of God) and reward or prize has often been emphasized in our writings, and there is obviously a great difference between *living* with Christ and *reigning* with Him. All believers will “live”, but the additional “reigning” is conditional upon their faithfulness and endurance.

- A | If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
- B | If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.
- B | If we deny Him, He also will deny us.
- A | If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful,
for He cannot deny Himself (II Tim. ii. 11-13).

Terms “A” “A” deal with life *given* to those who have died with Christ (the position of all believers, identified with Him in death and resurrection—cp. Rom. vi.). It cannot be lost through the unfaithfulness of a believer, for that ‘life’ depends upon His faithfulness, not the believer’s.

Terms “B” “B” speak of something over and above (“also” verse 12) which is *earned* by faithfulness and endurance. This is “reigning”, but it will be denied to those who deny Him by an unfaithful witness.

But what of the ‘nature’ of the reward, and what does ‘reigning’ imply? It may seem at first rather fleshly for a believer to even contemplate gaining a reward for Christian service, for however much is done for Him it can never repay what He has done for us, let alone be deserving of a prize. The believer’s attitude ought surely to be:

“We are servants and deserve no credit; we have only done our duty” (Luke xvii. 10 N.E.B.).

If we yield our bodies as living sacrifices it is but our “reasonable service” (Romans xii. 1), for we can surely do Him no favours?

Yet does Paul employ the figure of a race for the Christian walk, and at the end of it stands the possibility of gaining a prize (I Cor. ix. 24-27; Phil. iii. 12-16; Heb. xii. 1, 2 and cp. Col. ii. 18). Even “Jesus” is looked upon as enduring the cross “for the joy that was set before Him” (Heb. xii. 2). Was this the “*mind* in Christ Jesus”?

Also, it seems strange that Paul could exhort believers to be concerned with the things of others in Phil. ii. and yet occupy his own attention with gaining a prize in the next

chapter. In ii. 2 he expects the Philippians to “look” (*skopeo*) on the things of others, but his own ‘look’ is according to a “mark” (*skopos*) for a prize (iii. 14). What is the answer to these apparently contradictory ideas?

The difficulty comes about when the ‘nature’ of reward for service is not appreciated. If ‘prize’ conjures up in our mind the picture of a man proudly displaying his trophies to be admired by all, “prizes” which *he* has won *for himself*, then we have not grasped the Scriptural conception. Similarly, if ‘reigning’ suggests idly sitting on a throne to be admired by underdogs, the same shallow thinking on our part is apparent. What then is the Scriptural conception?

Beginning with the Lord Himself, His ‘mind’ was set on “the joy lying before Him”. What was this joy? It was certainly connected with His exaltation to the right hand of God, and was won by His endurance of, and obedience to, the death of the cross (Hebrews xii. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 8, 9). He was faithful unto death, enduring the cross to secure the joy set before Him.

By comparing Heb. xii. 1, 2 with Psa. xvi. 11 (note that Peter quoted this Psalm of the resurrection and *exaltation* of Christ, verses 8-11; Acts ii. 25-33) note the parallels: “race” (“path”), “the right hand of God”, and “fullness of joy”. The word “fullness” (*soba*) is related to “satisfied” (*sabea*), and by observing its usage in Isa. liii., some idea of what the Lord’s “joy” included may be gained:

“He was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people *He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied*” (verses 8, 11 R.S.V.)

The Lord’s satisfaction (fullness) of joy involved *seeing the fruit* of His service; “the joy that was set before Him is not something for Himself alone, but something to be shared with those for whom He died” (F. F. Bruce on Heb. xii. 2). Compare John xvii. 24.

Similarly with Paul, his “joy” and “crown” involved others; in seeking “the things of others”, he sought the prize, the joy set before him. The Philippians, won from the human standpoint by his labour, were his “joy and crown” (Phil. iv. 1). So too the Thessalonians:

“What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are not even ye* in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His Coming? For *ye are our glory and joy*” (I Thess. ii. 19, 20).

Paul’s joy and crown lay in the fruits of service presented before the Lord in that day; this was a reward in itself.

But these thoughts do not exhaust the idea of “crown” and “reigning” in Scripture, for Paul expected (together with all who have loved His appearing) the “crown” of righteousness in “that day” (II Tim. iv. 8). He had fought a good fight and finished the course, his “endurance” surely guaranteed for him the privilege of “reigning” (II Tim. ii. 12). But what is “reigning”? It is simply higher *service* for Him.

“His servants *shall serve Him*: and they shall see His face *and they shall reign* for ever and ever” (Rev. xxii. 3-6).

It may be reflected that our Queen Elizabeth does not idly sit on a throne to be admired by her subjects, but is a *servant* to our country.

Returning to the thought of “joy”, note how this is also connected with the entry to a higher and more responsible service for the Lord.

“Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him *thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord*” (Matt. xxv. 20, 21).

Compare also Luke xix. 16-19. The receiving of a crown, the conception of “reigning”, is but the entrance to a higher and more responsible *service* for Him which will bring greater glory and honour to the only One Who is deserved of it (cp. Rev. iv. 9-11 R.V.). Our reward is in the service itself (is this not our experience in Christian ministry?), the glory and honour belong to Him. If we are “exalted in due time” (I Pet. v. 6) it is to His glory. Even Christ Jesus (in the final analysis) is “highly exalted to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. ii. 9-11).

BRIAN E. SHERRING

Be Filled by The Spirit **pp. 218 - 220**

The injunction to be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. v. 18 A.V.) has been greatly misunderstood by some believers and interpreted as though it referred to an ecstatic experience which the Lord desires His people to have. It has been thought that such an experience may be gained by convening prayer meetings and “waiting for the Spirit”, or by whipping up emotions through repetitive chorus-singing, handclapping and other rhythmic movements.

There has also been a failure to realize that the Holy Spirit is, in this verse, the Giver and not the gift; the believer here not being filled “*with* the Spirit” but “*by* the Spirit” (see *The Companion Bible* and *The Giver and His gifts* by E. W. Bullinger). When however, it is appreciated what the Holy Spirit (as Giver) is prepared to fill the believer with, then none of the views or practices mentioned above will be seen to have any relevance to the fulfillment of the injunction.

Ephesians and Colossians have, from early times, been recognized as being parallel epistles. As such, a truth expressed in one of the epistles may be seen in a clearer light by referring to a parallel passage in the other. So here, Eph. v. 18 - vi. 9 is in some respects parallel to Col. iii. 16 - iv. 1. Both passages refer to “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs giving thanks wives, husbands, children, parents, fathers, servants, masters” in much the same general order. But whereas Eph. v. 18 enjoins,

“Be filled by the Spirit”,

Col. iii. 16 (standing in the section in a parallel position) exhorts,

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”

The outcome of this is to note that *the Holy Spirit fills the believer with the word of Christ* according to the believer’s desire and response.

Such an idea is not confined to this part of Scripture however, for the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is associated with the things of Christ (John xvi. 13, 14), and the Lord claims that His own words are *spirit* and life (John vi. 63). There are also a number of passages in both the O.T. and the New where “spirit” and “word” are associated together in such a way as to suggest that they are almost synonymous in some aspects of their usage.

“The *Spirit* of God moved And God *said*” (Gen. i. 2, 3).

“By the *Word* of the Lord were the heavens made; And all the host of them by the *breath (spirit)* of His mouth” (Psa. xxxiii. 6).

“*All Scripture* is given by *inspiration* of God” (The God-breathed Word) (II Tim. iii. 16).

“The *Spirit* entered into me *when He spake unto me*” (Ezek. ii. 2).

It may also be remembered that when, on the day of Pentecost, “they were all filled with *holy spirit*” (literally), the first outcome of this was, that they “began to *speak* with other tongues” (Acts ii. 4). Also in both Eph. v. 18 and Col. iii. 16 the immediate contexts in which “filled by the Spirit” and “word of Christ” appear refer to “speaking” and “singing”.

Hence, in the light of the strong connection between ‘spirit’ and ‘word’ in some parts of Scripture, the comparison between Eph. v. 18 and Col. iii. 16 can be seen to be quite valid insofar that it suggests that, to be “filled by the Spirit” is to be filled with “the word of Christ”.

But how does this become a reality for the believer? Is it to be prayed for? Certainly prayer enters into it, but not that alone. The “word of Christ” is surely that word which the believer has before him an open Bible; it is the word that He has already given through His servants, Moses, Peter, Paul, John, etc.; it is “the word of the Lord” in both Old and New Testaments. It must surely be obvious that for it to ‘dwell’ in the believer that word must be read, and if it is to dwell in him “richly”, it must be inwardly digested, and if it is to dwell richly “in all wisdom”, then it must be wisely handled, it must be “rightly divided” (II Tim. ii. 15).

The outcome of this is that if the Word of Christ is neglected, then there can be no possibility of being “filled by the Spirit” in the present dispensation. The attitude for the believer to take with respect to the Scriptures must be that of a ‘workman’ seeking approval before God (II Tim. ii. 15), and so will the Holy Spirit fill him with that Word. (To emphasize the workmanlike attitude that the believer should take to the Word of truth, we recall that the late editor of this publication, Mr. C. H. Welch, was fond of describing his own study of the Word as, one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration”!).

It has been observed (at the beginning of this article) that some believers look for an emotional experience in connection with the injunction “be filled with the Spirit” (A.V.) and it may be thought, in the light of what has been said on this so far, that emotion must be discounted altogether, but this is not so. There is an emotion connected with the hearing of the Word of Christ which is quite Scriptural:

“Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself And they said one to another, *Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?*” (Luke xxiv. 27, 32).

Many believers would testify to a similar experience while sitting under the ministry of the Word, or in private devotion with the Word of truth. This is the real thing, and must not be confused with any emotion brought about by other means (all too common unfortunately, especially in evangelistic rallies).

Another point which bears upon the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of Christ, concerns the *presence* of the Holy Spirit in Christian assemblies. Some believers are very fond of speaking of the Lord's, or the Holy Spirit's, presence at their meetings, but can they really claim this? Also, in *what way* are they present? The passage which comes immediately to mind is Matt. xviii. 20:

“For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

What is not often recognized, however, with respect to this verse, is that it begins with the word “for”, which links it back to the previous words,

“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. FOR”

If the implications of these words are considered, together with the context in which the whole appear, it will be seen that there are dispensational aspects to be reckoned with, before ever verse 20 can be applied to the situation today. There is not the space here to consider these things, but it could be asked what is implied by “gathered together *in My Name*”.

Whatever else may be read into this phrase, it surely must include the idea that those so gathered seek to honour His Word, and in recognizing this we are on safe ground in the present dispensation. The terms of the present calling are such that believers are entirely dependent upon the Word of truth for both the proof of their salvation and the hope of their calling. “Having heard having believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13), but there is no outward evidence upon which to rely for proof of this sealing, as for example there was during the Acts period when “signs followed them that believed” (Mark xvi. 17).

It seems logical in the light of these things to suggest that the presence of the Lord (or the Holy Spirit) in an assembly of believers, can only be inferred if the Word of truth, the Scriptures, is opened and read, or at least considered, but certainly honoured. The Holy Spirit's ministry is intimately tied up with the ministry and glorifying of Christ (John xvi. 13, 14). He operates through the Word of Christ, both with respect to convicting the world, and teaching the believer.

“He will convict the world of sin” (John xvi. 8).

This conviction will come as the Word is preached, and the Holy Spirit applies it, as happened on the day of Pentecost:

“Now when they heard this *they were pricked in their heart*” (Acts ii. 37).

Others who heard Stephen's exposition of the Word are mentioned by him as “resisting the Holy Spirit” (Acts vii. 51).

There can be no substitute for the Word of truth in seeking to bring men to Christ. Likewise there can be no alternative either for the believer who desires the experience of

Eph. v. 18. The believer today is entirely dependent upon that Word for the proof of his own salvation, the reaching of others and the experience of both the Spirit's filling and the Lord's presence.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16).

BRIAN E. SHERRING

Happiness

p. 240

Whatever mankind may be occupied with, the search for true happiness is largely behind it. The quest often resolves itself into the seeking of wealth, position or popularity, although some find their joy in family and friends, or in some life's work or cause. But wherever the natural man pursues his quest, it is in the things of *this life*, and for that reason there comes the day when the happiness ceases, either through a change of circumstances, or, in the final analysis, death. *True* Scriptural happiness, because it speaks of permanence, is different.

Solomon set himself the task of examining all things “under the sun” and his verdict was, “all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccles. i. 12-14); the word “vanity” used many times by him being the Hebrew *hebel* (transitory, soon to vanish, vapour-like). Each thing is conditioned by a season (it may be “beautiful in its proper season”—iii. 11), so nothing lasts “under the sun”. (See also James iv. 14).

Paul observed the whole, groaning creation, “subject to *vanity*”, under “the bondage of *corruption*” (Rom. viii. 20-23), a fact which had been appreciated to some extent by the first human beings, in naming their second son Abel (*Hebel*, transitory).

Where then is true happiness? It is found in hope and resurrection. “*Happy* are they that have not seen (the *risen Lord* in the flesh, as Thomas did) and yet have believed (that *He rose*)”—John xx. 29. It is the resurrection of Christ, guaranteeing life for the believer, life which is not “transitory”, that gives the hope (and present experience) of *true* happiness. Because of Him we can rejoice in “the good news of the glory of the *happy God*”, and look forward to the realization of the “*happy hope*” associated with His glory (I Tim. i. 11; Titus ii. 13; Col. iii. 4).

“If *in this life only* we have hope (even) in Christ, we are of all men *most miserable*.” If there was no resurrection of Christ, if we can look to nothing beyond the grave, “let us eat and drink (Paul does not add ‘be merry’); for tomorrow we die” (I Cor. xv. 19, 32).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (20). Blessed be God, Who in Christ, has given all His people a sure and certain and lasting (*truly happy*) hope.

BRIAN E. SHERRING

The Air.

Its place in World Politics and Bible Prophecy #1 pp. 114 - 117

A brief survey of a mighty theme.

Such a passage as that of Ezek. xxviii. superficially addressed to the King of Tyre, but which uses terms like “thou art the anointed cherub”, “thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty”, make it impossible to limit such a passage to the human King of Tyre, and in like manner the language of Isa. xiv. spoken of as a “proverb against the king of Babylon”, can hardly be limited to that earthly king:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend unto heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High” (Isa. xiv. 12-14).

As these words stand they are ominous, but when the air and outer space, projected landings on the moon, or investigating at close range Mars or Venus, are topics in our daily newspapers, together with aerial missiles and the use of the air for defence, offence, and world wide communication, these call for an examination of the Scriptures that have something to say about this important sphere and its relation to the latter days.

There are many prophecies in both the Old Testament and the New, that in earlier times have been scanned by learned and godly men but not apprehended, and have been left to speak when the time foreseen by omniscience should arrive, and prominent among such foreshadowings are the references to the air found in a number of prophetic contexts, but which until quite recently have only attracted a passing attention. In 1921, in the series of articles dealing with the book of the Revelation, we wrote concerning the monster that represents the Antichristian Beast in chapter xiii. at the time of the end:

“We do not wish to be fanciful, yet we are confident that Scripture fully anticipates the end. Military experts, as well as the man in the street, know that the next war is to be a *war in the air* we know that the introduction of aerial warfare has broken down all frontiers. That nation, large or small, which has dominion of the air, will conquer the world. Satan is called ‘The Prince of the authority of the air’ (Eph. ii. 2). Satan gives his great authority to the Beast, the result being that all the world at once recognize his position and say ‘Who is able to make war with him?’.”

We make no foolish claims to the gift or prophecy; we are only pointing out that for over nineteen hundred years, the Scriptures have indicated that the air and its authority will be the arsenal of the future Kingdom of the Beast to which all nations are unwittingly making preparation for their own subjection by the great urge for political, financial, military and church unity, repeating in the large, the urge exhibited in the building of the tower of Babel. We cannot make amends for the failure of our forebears, but we can turn

to these cryptic references to the air with a desire to learn what their inspired foreshadowings have to teach us as the last days which assuredly are close upon us.

The air above is now the sphere both of offence and defence, so let us therefore give the Scriptures a hearing.

When the vials of God's wrath are poured out, we read that the fifth angel poured out his vial "upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness" (Rev. xvi. 10). The Greek word *thronos* occurs 46 times, and where we read in Rev. ii. 13; xiii. 2 and xvi. 10 of "the seat" of the Beast or of Satan, we should alter that rendering and read "throne" (Gk. *thronos*), for Satan is a 'Prince' though fallen and wicked. The same word *archon* (prince) used of Christ is used of "The Prince of the Kings of the earth" (Rev. i. 5) and of Satan (Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11; Eph. ii. 2) and we rob ourselves of valuable though terrible teaching by altering either the word 'throne' or 'prince' out of a false desire to stretch out our hand to stay the ark of God. Michael had no two thoughts as to the rank of this fallen foe, as Jude 9 reveals. We read not only that one of the vials was poured out upon the *throne* of the Beast, but also upon "the AIR" (Rev. xvi. 17).

Now without the title "the prince of the authority of the air" to guide us, we might wonder why the air we breathe should be thus visited, but knowing this fact, and in the close association with the throne of the Beast in the context (Rev. xvi. 10), we realize that Satan's domain is here seen to come under the judgment of the last days. Perhaps we shall perceive a deeper significance in I Thessalonians when we read concerning the Second Coming that some will "meet the Lord in the AIR" (I Thess. iv. 17). It should also be remembered that *ouranos* translated 'heaven' over 260 times in the N.T. is nevertheless translated "air" ten times, as in "the fowls and birds of the air".

This is also true of the Hebrew of the O.T. *shamayim*, translated nearly 400 times "heaven", is nevertheless translated "air" 21 times, as in Gen. i. 26, even as in Matt. xiii. 32. The 'fowls' that devoured the seed in the parable of Matt. xiii. 4 are explained in Matt. xiii. 19 as the agents or the work of the wicked one.

With these passages in mind, and with the present emphasis upon dominion of the air for both offence and defence, let us look a little more closely at other prophetic utterances long neglected and misunderstood. When we read the appalling consequences of the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima and then come across the terrible description of the plague spoken of in Zech xiv. 12 (and the reader would be well advised to turn to that passage and consult it once more before proceeding) and we read further of "everyone that is LEFT of the nations, which come up against Jerusalem" in verse 16, one begins to wonder whether we have here a prophetic forecast of the results of nuclear warfare, and also in the hurting of the earth, the sea, and the trees in Rev. vii. 3 which results from the censer filled with fire being cast to the earth (Rev. viii. 5).

Do we now deny that man's nuclear weapons could, and possibly will, burn up a third part of the trees, and all the green grass? Is it merely an extravagant figure of speech to

say that a “third part of the ships” were destroyed? or that the “third part of the waters” become bitter as “wormwood”? (Rev. viii. 7, 11). The very diplomats who might possibly repudiate such a book as the Apocalypse, are entertaining the possibility of these very quotations, without realizing that they have been accessible to all in the pages of the N.T. for 1,900 years. The words of Rev. xi. 18:

“Thy wrath is come and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth”,

make us ask, will man, with his inventions, bring about his own ruin? We are not prophets, but we have in our hands a sure word of prophecy, and realize that the blessed hope for which we look and wait will be realized before the advent of the Son of Man. More than this we do not intend to say or to anticipate, but there is comfort even in these dread prophecies, in that they make it abundantly clear that God knows the end from the beginning, and can never be taken by surprise, or forget to provide for the safety of His redeemed people, “as it was in the days of Noah” in more senses than one. Human life is utterly impossible apart from the functioning of the “green grass” or leaf. One field of green grass can yield excellent beef or mutton, chicken, eggs, cheese and butter, milk, bone, hides, hair, bristles and glue. Countless other essentials to normal life are all produced by the consumption and use of green grass and herb. If necessary, let the reader use an Encyclopaedia if he is not aware of the meaning of photo-synthesis; he would then the better realize the tragedy behind the statement that “*all* the green grass” will be burnt up (Rev. viii. 7).

Its place in World Politics and Bible Prophecy #2 **pp. 135 - 137**

We now quote from an article in *The Midnight Cry* issued in November 1963. One or two extracts form a supplement to the conclusions made in the body of this article, and the testimony of “two or three witnesses” is in line with the requirements of the Scriptures.

Things that Must shortly come to pass **by Hubert H. Heath.**

“True science and Bible prophecy, rightly interpreted, always run in parallel lines, and ever have. This is inevitably always the case, for both being true and it being impossible for truth to be contradictory, it is inescapable.

The Word of God tells us that all matter of every sort is composed of atoms, and atoms are composed of nothing more stable and equally invisible, as electrical energy—electrons, neutrons, protons, &c. Scientists vapourized a two thousand acre island in the Pacific not long ago, and apparently reduced it, largely, to its original elements. What has been done can be done again. These actions come with a terrific display of heat and fire. A few years ago a famous Scandinavian geophysicist was visiting Los Angeles and was asked what such heavy explosions might do to the position of the earth in space. His

reply was both interesting and instructive. He said that the ice cap on the Arctic was receding rapidly while the ice caps on the Antarctic had an overload.

That being so, he said, no person on earth could foretell what effect such explosions might have on the earth's position in space, nor what would result from it. Try throwing a ball far with a wad of gum stuck to one side of it and watch its erratic course and draw your own conclusions. Now let us turn to the Word as given to the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah, chapter 24:1. 'Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof'. Verse 3 'the land SHALL be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant'. Verse 6 'Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein, are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth ARE BURNED AND FEW MEN LEFT'. Those words certainly point to a climax and give the reason for it. Then again in verses 19 and 20 of the same chapter we read: 'The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth SHALL reel to and fro like a drunkard, and SHALL be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again'.

These are the sort of things the 'one-worlders' responsible for our undoing are saying that they can accomplish. After making a study of these writings of the great Isaiah, it is well to turn to Matthew twenty-four, and read what the Lord Jesus Christ said of these days. These things are admittedly possible. They have NOT occurred as yet. It is very definitely in the power of very wicked, very powerful men, to bring all this to pass at any moment they see fit. Greed-mad men, lusting for power over others, are the greatest menace of the ages.

These men are responsible for the great moral, spiritual and economic chaos and ruin that now covers all the earth. In their insane greed and lust for power over all others they are the supreme menace of all time. No sane man ever desired to destroy the Christian faith and Christian civilization. But that is what these are now doing in their mad grasp after total power and all wealth. THINK ON THESE THINGS, for they shall shortly come to pass."

We have no desire to emulate the 'fat boy' of Dickens who tried to make peoples' "flesh creep", but it is most certainly unwise to emulate the ostrich, which traditionally hides its head in the sand! All Scripture is profitable, not only John xiv. or Psalm xxiii. We quote experts in the scientific world who make no reference to the Scriptures, the Coming of the Lord, or give any indication that they are even aware of the prophetic utterances of the Bible, yet their testimony concerns all who are alive today. The following quotations, the original of which can be verified in the usual way. They are verbatim so far as we know, and no word has been added or subtracted or toned down.

"In fifteen years from to-day (Dean Acheson said), this world is going to be too dangerous to live in."

While the U.S.A. may have more atomic weapons than Russia, Dr. Linus Pauling, a leading scientist and professor of chemistry, said:

"A mere 4,000 such weapons (U.S.A. had 100,000 at the time) *could destroy the human race.*"

The consequences of atomic fall-out, as an aftermath of atomic war is too terrible to contemplate. (See references to Zechariah already mentioned.) It has been found that caribou bones found in the Arctic showed 102 units of radioactive strontium, yet 17 units is about the safe limit for human life, and a biologist who examined these bones said that the safe limits had been exceeded.

“It is clear that for a great area of the earth’s surface that time has now come.”

Strontium is now served up to us in milk, beef, eggs, as well as in vegetable products. Some have set aside the attitude expressed in the Bible concerning “inventions” considering this antiquated and pointing to the affluent society with its labour-saving devices and its luxuries (II Chron. xxvi. 15; Eccles vii. 29; Psa. cvi. 29, 39; Rom. i. 30). These many inventions make life easier, by camouflaging the curse that was pronounced in Gen. iii., as the descendants of Cain are said to have done in Gen. iv. 21, 22. It was the Lamech, descended from Seth, who refused this smoothing over of the curse, as seen in his attitude in Gen. v. 29, where the only acceptable deliverance was the type of atonement in the Ark built by his son Noah. Can anyone who reads with horror the results of the first atomic explosion over Hiroshima together with Zech. xiv. 12 and the reference to “every one that is left” (Zech. xiv. 16) have any doubt as to this prophecy being a true foreshadowing of nuclear warfare?

Not till all that is implied in the closing words of Zech. xiv. are fulfilled, will true peace be known in the earth, i.e. when there will be “no more Canaanite” in that kingdom of Priests, which in its turn anticipates “The End” or goal as written in I Cor. xv. 24-28.

Our purpose in writing this article is to draw attention to the signs of the times, particularly as they refer to the important place the air is predicted to occupy at the time of the end.

The Background to the New Testament.

No.1. pp. 90 - 96

This series of articles is intended to give some idea of the background against which the record of the New Testament should be considered. It is evident that by reading this record with western eyes, and by viewing the happenings of that day in the light of the present time, much is missed. What must be done is to build up a picture of N.T. days which will throw the writings of that period into focus. To do this it will be necessary to consider the various parties and institutions which flourished at the time.

This will include a look at the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herodians, the Zealots and Essenes (although they are not actually mentioned by name in the N.T.) and the Samaritans, who stood halfway between the Jews and the Gentiles. With respect to institutions, the Temple with the Sanhedrin, and the synagogue with its court of judgment must be reviewed, and to make the picture complete, consideration must be given to the political situation of the day, the influence of Greek ideas upon the Jews, and of Judaism upon the Gentiles, leading as it did to proselytism.

When considering the Jewish parties, the names which come most readily to mind are of course, the Pharisees and Sadducees. There was a third party, however, mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus together with these two, but it is apparently not referred to in the N.T. record. This was the Essene party, a monastic sect which has become better known as a result of the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Essenes.

“They were an exclusive, ascetic and isolated community, with whose discouragement of marriage and withdrawal from action the Gospels have no sympathy, and to whom our Lord never alluded, unless it be in those passages where he reprobates those who abstain from anointing themselves when they fast, and who hide their candle under a bushel”
(*The Life of Christ* by Dean Farrar).

The origin of this sect appears between Malachi and Matthew, and like that of the Pharisees and Sadducees, is buried in obscurity. Three well known writers of the first century A.D. make mention of the Essenes, viz., Pliny, Josephus and Philo.

From these it is known that the Essene community was located on the western shore of the Dead Sea, that its members were bound together more closely than the Pharisees and Sadducees, that they renounced riches, and lived on only the simplest fare, that they cultivated the earth, or concerned themselves only with the peaceful arts, and that they, or at least some of them, abstained from marriage.

The information that has come down through the centuries is not always consistent with itself, and is fragmentary in nature, which is not really surprising since the sect must only have been seen by historians from the outside, and also as time went on and other

communities of the sect appeared in the towns of Judea, it must be expected that different views would be held.

According to Josephus, although they occupied no one city, yet they settled in large numbers in every town. They seem to have preferred the smaller towns and villages, and did not engage in commerce or navigation. Their occupations included farmers, shepherds, cowherds, beekeepers, etc., and they would have nothing to do with the instruments of war. They were very much a community, and their whole day appears to have been subjected to rigid discipline. Like the early church of Acts they had “all things common”, and new members surrendered their property to the order, and in return received all their needs.

It has been this latter point, together with certain aspects of their teaching, which has caused some to identify them with the early Christians. Some suggest that John the Baptist, and even the Lord himself, were members of the sect. The obscure period in the life of the Lord between the ages of twelve and thirty, lends itself to this idea, and the silence of the Scriptures as to what He did during this period, is accounted for by assuming Him to have been within an Essene community.

But any who have really appreciated the teaching of the Lord in the Gospels, will know that it is on a very much higher plane than any of “the commandments and doctrines of men”. His words were confessedly not his own, but neither were they derived from any human source, for they were the words of his Father in Heaven (John xvii. 8). The identification of the Lord with the Essene community must be rejected by all who love the Scriptures, and recognize them as the inspired Word of God.

The Scribes and Pharisees.

The scribes and Pharisees are mentioned in association with each other above 20 times in Scripture, and they were both active in opposing the ministry of the Lord. The relationship between the two is not easy to trace, although it appears that the sympathies of the scribes were with the Pharisees, even if it be not true to say that the scribes belonged to the Pharisaic party. There is no evidence that scribes were ever Sadducees, although Matt. xxii. 34, 35 has sometimes been urged for this view.

“But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the *Sadducees* to silence, they were gathered together. Then *one of them*, which was a lawyer, asked him a question.”

The words ‘of them’ have been referred to the Sadducees, but it surely makes better sense to refer them to the Pharisees who were here taking over the word battle against the Lord, after the silencing of the Sadducees. The ‘lawyer’, it is true, was almost certainly a scribe, as will be shown later, but it is quite wrong to imagine he was a lawyer in the narrow sense of holding only the Law of Moses to be the Divine rule, thus identifying him with the Sadducees.

The scribes also appear in sympathy with the Pharisees in Acts xxiii. 9:

“And there arose a great cry, and the scribes *that were of the Pharisees’ part*, arose.”

The scribes are frequently referred to as acting alone, or mentioned in association with the chief priests, and they formed part of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court in Israel. (See Acts xxiii. 1-10, where the word “council”, verses 1 and 6, is the Greek *sunedrion*, Sanhedrin.) They must, therefore, be seen as an authoritative body, exercising great influence over the affairs of Israel from a religious standpoint. From this point of view they would appear to be a separate section of the community from the Pharisees, although they may only have been the more learned section of the Pharisaic party.

There being no reference to the Pharisaic party in the O.T., together with their appearance without explanation on the opening pages of the N.T., leads to the obvious conclusion that they originated in the Malachi-Matthew period, during which God gave no inspired record. There is therefore a certain amount of obscurity about their origin.

The word Pharisee, *Pharisaïos*, is evidently related to *aphorizo*, ‘separate’, which is twice used by the Apostle Paul of himself:

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *separated* unto the Gospel of God.”
“God, who *separated* me from my mother’s womb, and called me” (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15).

The connection between these words is even more significant when it is remembered that the Apostle was “as touching the law, a Pharisee” (Phil. iii. 5). He was a separated one, both before and after his conversion on the Damascus road.

The history of the People of Israel was likewise one of separation:

“I am the Lord your God, which have *separated you* from other people. And ye shall be *holy unto me*: for I the Lord am holy, and have *severed you* from other people, that ye should be mine” (Lev. xx. 24, 26).

Israel were given special laws by the Lord, laws which governed their everyday lives, and extended even to what they could or could not eat. They were God’s inheritance, and as such, were to be separate from other peoples. They were being prepared to fulfil their place in God’s purpose for the earth, to be a channel through which the knowledge of the Lord might reach the ends of the world. Hence they were to be holy, separate, sanctified, meet for his use.

But they failed. Consistent failure brought God’s judgment upon them, until finally, they went into the captivity of Babylon, and the separation which had been enjoined upon them, became impossible in many respects. After the captivity, many of Israel returned to their land, but it was a land which, from now on, was to be dominated by Gentile Powers. It passed in succession from Babylon to Medo-Persia, to Greece, until, at the time of the Lord’s coming, it was dominated by Rome. No people can be so ruled without losing some of their individuality, and Israel were no exception. Greek thought and culture were a powerful influence which many could not resist, and a Hellenizing spirit began to prevail. The idea of Israel as a separate nation, with separate laws, began to wane.

The origin of the Pharisaic party must, in all probability, be assigned to this time, arising as a reaction to the spirit of Grecianism, and seeking to defend the national position of Israel. Hence the Pharisees were the “separate ones”, separated from the rationalism of the day, and defending zealously the law and heritage of Israel. *The Imperial Bible Dictionary* is much to the point:

“There were two lines of important influence at work, the one tending to narrow the spirit of Judaism, the other to rationalize it. This latter influence again could only have the effect of intensifying the former, and lead all who would remain faithful to Israel’s inheritance from the past and hope of the future, to a still sterner adherence to the law. It was at this time then, that the party of the Pharisees began, in all probability, to be formed.”

The rationalizing spirit against which Pharisaism revolted, was personified during the Lord’s earthly ministry, in the Sadducees and Herodians, the priestly ruling class who had the chief share in the crucifixion.

The basic ideals of Pharisaism may be considered to have been good at the outset, defending the position of Israel from the intrusion of foreign ideas but the means resorted to actually undermined what they sought to defend. The Law was hedged about with oral traditions intended to protect it and interpret it for daily life, but these traditions had become, at the time of the Lord’s earthly ministry, as important as the Law itself. In fact in some cases, the traditions transgressed the Law, or made it of no effect.

“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matt. xv. 3, 6).

The Lord went on to show that Pharisaism (in practice) was condemned by Isaiah during his days, and it seems that it had very nearly always existed in germ throughout the long period of Israel’s history. There can always be found those who worship either the letter of the Law to the exclusion of the spirit, or add their own traditions which ostensibly protect the Law, but in practice supersede it. Such was true of the days of Isaiah and of the Lord.

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. xv. 7-9).

The origin of the Pharisaic party cannot be pinned down accurately to any date, but the spirit which has come to be recognized as associated with Pharisaism may be traced far back into the history of Israel. Whilst the voices of the prophets continued to be raised against the empty religion which this spirit produced, no party was formed which could be termed “The Pharisees”, but when the last of the O.T. prophets had ceased his words to Israel, Pharisaism with its narrow Judaistic leanings, and reacting against the intrusion of Grecianism, formed itself into a solid body and became the most important religious force in Israel. How they subsequently developed is now to be considered.

The Pharisees at the time of Christ.

During the Lord's earthly ministry the Pharisees exercised great power and influence over the mass of common people, and this in spite of the wealth, rank and connections of their bitter opponents, the Sadducees. In all religious matters the people sided with the Pharisees, so much so that even the Sadducees themselves had to give way against their real views. The Sadducees exercised worldly influence, but the Pharisees dominated the religious scene. The Lord Himself recognized their position:

“Then spake Jesus, saying, *The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:* all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matt. xxiii. 1-3).

The scribes and Pharisees sat in the position of authority, Moses' seat. They were the religious leaders of the people, the shepherd of Israel; unfortunately, many of them fitted only too well the words of the Lord, “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. xv. 14), “an hireling who careth not for the sheep” (John x. 12, 13).

It seems strange then, that the Lord should encourage the multitude to “observed and do” that which *these* Pharisees bade them, especially in the light of what he had already taught his disciples:

“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees the doctrine of the Pharisees” (Matt. xvi. 6-12).

The solution to the problem is found by recognizing, with *The Companion Bible*, that the words “observe and do” are in the indicative mood, not the imperative as translated in the A.V. (There is no way of determining whether the mood is indicative or imperative here, except by observing the context.) So that although the Lord *recognized* that the Pharisees sat in the place of authority, and that the multitude observed and did that which they taught, he did not himself bid them so to do. A revised translation would be:

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that ye observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matt. xxiii. 1-3).

It must not be imagined, however, that all of the teaching of Pharisaism or all of their practice was to be condemned. Error is a more effective leaven when mixed with an element of truth. Nor indeed must it be thought that all Pharisees were evil men. It is reasonable to suppose that there were some, apart from those mentioned in the N.T., who were good men, sincere in their convictions and seeking to serve God honestly according to their light.

But Pharisaism as a system was to be condemned. It was occupied with things infinitely small, whilst the weightier matters of the Law were neglected (Matt. xxiii. 23). Its adherents gave alms liberally, but with great ostentation (Matt. vi. 2), and their fasting and long prayers were made to the same end (Matt. vi. 5, 16; xxiii. 14). Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees were denounced by John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 7), and the Lord (Matt. xvi. 1-4), and a whole chapter (Matt. xxiii.) is devoted to an exposure and

denouncement of the position of the scribes and Pharisees, who were largely responsible for the reception afforded the Lord at his first coming. The party, which by its teaching and influence over the people could have prepared them for the advent of their Messiah, when He did come, opposed and rejected all that He stood for until they had filled up the measure of their fathers, who had persecuted and slain the prophets of old (Matt. ii. 29-36). Such was the development of this party.

Before giving consideration to the scribes, it may be helpful to observe the basic differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The following table does not pretend to be exact, but to give some idea of the parties as they stood in relation to each other and the people.

Pharisees.	Sadducees.
Religious. Ritualistic. Rabbinic. Synagogue. Associated with the common people, whom they influenced. Religious influence.	Political. Rationalistic. Priestly. Temple. Associated with the nobility, whom they were drawn. Worldly influence.

In addition to the above it may be noted that the Pharisees and Essenes were largely *positive* sects (the Pharisees essentially *practical*, the Essenes tending to *mysticism*), whilst the Sadducees' position was mainly based upon denials (*no* resurrection, *no* angels) and was thus inclined to be *negative*. These differences will be qualified and explained more fully in subsequent articles, when the position during the early part of the first century should become clearer.

No.2. The Scribes. pp. 110 - 114

The earliest occurrence in the A.V. of the word "scribe" is II Sam. viii. 17, although the Hebrew *saphar* as a participle noun occurs before this in Judges v. 14, translated "the writer". According to *The Companion Bible*, this word, which as a verb means "to count" or "to number", gives us the word *Sopherim*. *The Sopherim* were the scribes of Ezra's day, his successors in fact, for Ezra is described as:

"A ready scribe (*saphar*) in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given
 a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel
 a scribe of the law of the God of heaven" (Ezra vii. 6, 11, 12).

Closely related to *saphar* "to count", is the Hebrew *sepher* "book" or "letter". Dean Farrar states that this latter word gives the word *Sopherim*, "scribes", and that the name means "scripturalists", those who explained and copied the Law. Whichever be the correct derivation, the scribes appear to date as a distinct body from the period of Ezra, a

time of restoration and reformation when the text of the Hebrew Bible began to be set in order. (See *Companion Bible* Appendix 30.)

The revision of the text having been completed, a work which lasted over a hundred years, the *Sopherim*, scribes proper, ceased to exist as such and were succeeded by the “teachers of the Law”, *nomikoi* and *nomodidaskaloi*, the scribes of the New Testament.

“Scribe”, *grammateus*, derives from the Greek *gramma*, “letter”, and the duties of a New Testament scribe included the reading, copying, explaining and protecting of the Law. They performed their functions in schools, synagogues, the outer courts of the Temple (Luke ii. 46), and even in the streets.

Their method of teaching was in sharp contrast to that of the Lord Himself (Matt. vii. 28, 29):

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For *He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*”

Dean Farrar writes:

“Secondhandness, the slavish dependence on precedent and authority, is the most remarkable characteristic of Rabbinical teaching. It very rarely rises above the level of a commentary, at once timid and fantastic.”

Rabbi Eliezer actually made it his boast that he had *originated nothing*. The style of the scribes was, “Rabbi A says on the authority of Rabbi B”, whereas the manner of Christ’s teaching was, “*I say unto you*”; no wonder the common people were astonished at his doctrine.

The scribes prided themselves on their accuracy to the letter of the Law (Acts xxii. 3, J. N. Darby translation):

“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the *exactness* of the law of our fathers.”

Unfortunately, in their slavishness to the letter of the Law, they missed the spirit. (See Rom. ii. 17-29).

The scribes and the Pharisees loved to be called “Rabbi”, but the Lord bade His disciples not to accept the title (Matt. xxiii. 1-8). Both John the Baptist and the Lord Himself were addressed with the title “Rabbi”, and it was as Rabbis that they taught prayers to their disciples (Luke xi. 1). The Lord is never actually called a scribe in the N.T., yet it was testified of him, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned”, and, “Never man spake like this man”. Christ was undoubtedly the greatest Rabbi that ever lived.

It must not be imagined, however, that Rabbinic teaching was wholly devoid of moral significance and wisdom. There is the example of Gamaliel in Acts v. 33-40, a man much honoured by the people, whose wise counsel saved the necks of the Apostles. He is

called in verse 34, “a doctor of the law”, and was undoubtedly a scribe. His action must not, however, be misinterpreted as though he himself was sympathetic with the Apostles’ cause, for it was not so very much later that one of his pupils, Saul of Tarsus, came out from under his teaching, “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts ix. 1).

It has so far been assumed that the scribes were identical with the lawyers and doctors, or teachers of the Law mentioned in the N.T. This assumption must now be qualified. The German theologian, H. A. Meyer, says:

“The term *nomikos*, ‘lawyer’, is more specific and more strictly Greek. *Grammateus*, ‘scribe’, on the other hand, is more general and more Hebrew in its character.”

This would appear to be in accord with Scripture. A scribe was sometimes designated from his most important function, that of teaching the Law. The word “scribe” is therefore an inclusive word, embracing lawyers, doctors and teacher of the Law. In confirmation of this, compare Luke v. 17 with Luke v. 21, and compare the whole context with Matt. ix. 2-8.

Throughout the whole life of the Saviour, the scribes watched Him like hawks, ready to pounce on any action of His contrary to their teaching. They accused the Lord’s disciples of transgressing the tradition of the elders (Matt. xv. 2). They judged that when He cast out demons He did it by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons (Mark iii. 22). When the Lord said to the sick of the palsy, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”, they charged Him in their hearts with blasphemy (Mark ii. 1-12). Together with the Pharisees, they brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, “tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him” (John viii. 3, 6). In council with the chief priests “they sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine” (Mark xi. 18), and when He stood before Herod, they joined with those that accused Him (Luke xxiii. 10).

Their familiarity with the Old Testament should have caused them to realize that this Jesus was He that was to come, the Messiah, the Hope of Israel. But religion, as is often the case, blinded their eyes to the truth. They strained out gnats and swallowed camels (Matt. xxiii. 24). For all their outward sanctity, within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28). (The whole of Matt. xxiii. should be read for a complete picture of these religious leaders, “blind leaders of the blind”.)

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”

The Sadducees.

A table has already been presented showing the basic differences between this party and the Pharisees. Whereas the Pharisees were religious, the Sadducees were more political. The Pharisees were ritualistic; the Sadducees rationalistic. The Pharisees were associated with the common people and exerted a religious influence over them, whereas the Sadducees, on the other hand, were associated with the nobility, and their influence

was of a worldly nature. The sphere of activity of the Pharisees was the synagogue, that of the Sadducees, the Temple.

The origin of the Sadducean party, like that of the Essenes and Pharisees, cannot be traced with accuracy, but it is likely that they arose at the same time, and in opposition to, the Pharisaic party. As the Pharisees tended to narrow the spirit of Judaism, so the Sadducees were inclined to rationalize it. When a spirit of Grecianism began to prevail in Israel, the Sadducean party was inclined to accept it, and to compromise the economy of Israel in order to be at peace with the ruling power. This explains why most of them were drawn from the nobility, and why, at the time of the Lord, some of them were associated with the family of Herod. Indeed, it would appear that the Herodians were a branch of the Sadducees. (Cp. Matt. xvi. 6, Mark viii. 15.).

The name "Sadducee", according to Rabbinical tradition, derives from one Zadoc, thought to be the founder of this party, and who lived about the middle of the third century B.C. Another view is that the name "Sadducee" is derived from the Hebrew *tsadeq*, "righteous", but very little weight can be attached to either of these views.

It is a matter of some doubt as to whether or not they accepted the whole of the O.T., or just the Law of Moses. Matt. xxii. 23-33 has sometimes been urged in favour of the latter view, for the Lord there demonstrates the truth of the resurrection, which the Sadducees denied, from the Law proper, quoting from Exodus, rather than from passages in other parts of the O.T. which bear more clearly upon the point; for example, Dan. xii. 2. The inference drawn from this is that the Lord recognized that the Sadducees acknowledged only the Pentateuch, so that Exodus would be accepted and Daniel rejected. But it should be noted before accepting this as proof, that the Sadducees had themselves referred to the authority of Moses in verse 24, and it was fitting that they should be reproved from the same action of the O.T. which they themselves had quoted. It should be remembered also in connection with this, that the orthodox Israelite, in any case, exalted the Law above the other Scriptures, and so the Lord's reference would carry more weight with them.

An argument in favour of the Sadducees' acceptance of the whole of the O.T., is that it would appear to be unlikely that they would have been admitted to the Sanhedrin unless this was so. True, they opposed the oral traditions of the Pharisees, but not the Written Word itself.

As a party which took this position, and appear to have defended the Law against such intrusions, they could have provided a useful balancing factor in Israel, but their motives either were, or became political, to the compromise of the truth whenever necessary. They gained in wealth, rank, connections and authority, and became the party of the nobility, and as corrupted as the Pharisees themselves. Together with the Pharisees they were condemned by John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 7), and the Lord Himself (Matt. xvi. 1), and the Disciples were warned against their doctrine (Matt. xvi. 6).

Their rationalized teaching can be felt from such a passage as Acts xxiii. 8:

“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.”

The rationalist of today does not accept such things, which are reckoned to be beyond the sphere of human experience.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, says of the Sadducees that “they take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing”. He further testifies as to the conduct of this party that “the behaviour of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degree wild, and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, chapter 8). It should be remembered before accepting this too readily, that Josephus himself was a Pharisee.

It is interesting to note in line with the Sadducean denial of the resurrection, that whereas the Pharisees were more active during the Lord’s ministry, the Sadducees became so after the resurrection of the Lord.

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts iv. 1, 2).

In Acts v. 17, they were filled with indignation at the popularity of the Apostles, and again laid hands on them, putting them into the prison.

During the lifetime of Christ, they could probably afford to ignore what they considered to be the religious views of a zealot. But after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem when the multitudes cried, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”, and His action in the Temple when He cast out all them that sold and bought, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, saying, “My house shall be called the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves”, the Sadducees would be forced to recognize the political implications of these things, and in particular the claim already being made that here was the King of the Jews (Matt. xxi. 1-15).

The Sadducees appear to have had the chief share in the crucifixion, as Dean Farrar notes:

“It is most remarkable and, so far as I know, has scarcely ever been noticed that, although the Pharisees undoubtedly were actuated by a burning hatred against Jesus, and were even so eager for His death as to be willing to co-operate with the aristocratic and priestly Sadducees, from whom they were ordinarily separated by every kind of difference, political, social and religious, yet, from the moment that the plot for His arrest and condemnation had been matured, the Pharisees took so little part in it that their name is not once prominently mentioned in any event connected with the arrest, the trial, the derisions and the crucifixion. The only exception to this is John 18:3. The Pharisees as such disappear; the chief priests and elders take their place” (*The Life of Christ*).

It was only natural then, that when it was claimed of this One Whom they had put to death, that He was risen from the dead, and when the Apostles had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine (Acts v. 28), the Sadducees should again be the chief antagonists.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sadducees as such seem to have disappeared, but the Pharisees long remained to influence the teachings of the early Christian.

No.3. The Herodians. **pp. 127 - 131**

The Gospel writers have very little to say about this party. In fact, there are only three references in the N.T. to the word "Herodian" (Matt. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6; xii. 13). It is quite evident from their name that they were either attached to, or the champions of, the family of Herod. In either case, they would be concerned with promoting the interests of Herod, and be disturbed by the suggestion that this "Jesus of Nazareth" was none other than the King of the Jews. Hence, their opposition to the Lord was largely on political grounds.

In the first reference to them in Matt. xxii., they are seen acting together with the Pharisees, in order that they might entangle the Lord in His talk (verse 15). After a flattering overture, calculated to ensnare the Lord by putting Him off His guard, the question is asked, "What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" (verse 17).

Had the Lord been but an ordinary man, He would now have found Himself on the horns of a dilemma. Before Him stood the representatives of two parties; the Pharisees, who, being champions of the religion of Israel, did not take kindly to paying tribute to Caesar, and the Herodians, who would take the contrary view. If the Lord had said that tribute was not to be given to Caesar, then He would be in trouble with the authorities, and the Herodians stood before Him as witnesses. If on the other hand, He had maintain that tribute was to be given to Caesar, then the Pharisees could claim that this One was not the people's Messiah, for He bade them submit to the ruling power. The answer of the Lord was a masterpiece:

"And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (verses 20, 21).

In the second reference (Mark iii. 6), the Pharisees again take counsel with the Herodians, this time to consider "how they might destroy Him". This action is particularly significant in the light of John xviii. 31:

"Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*"

It would appear that at the time of the earthly ministry of Christ, the Jews were unable to exact death penalty, except through the medium of the Roman power. Hence the Pharisees in Mark iii. seek the favour of the Herodian party who, having strong

connections with the throne, would be in a position to bring about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These references serve to show that the Herodians, although perhaps a small party, were powerful indeed, and their attachment to the throne of Herod made them useful allies to the Pharisees, although they were normally separated the one from the other by the beliefs which they held. It is important to note how the Devil can draw opposing factions together when it suits his purpose.

It has already been suggested that the Herodians were a branch of the Sadducees. This seems probable from comparing two passages of Scripture together.

“Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the *leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*” (Matt. xvi. 6).

“And He charged them saying, Take heed, beware of the *leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod*” (mark viii. 15).

The contexts appear to be identical, but in one case speak of the leaven of the Sadducees, in another, that of Herod. Was the leaven of Herod spread through that part of the Sadducean party known as the Herodians?

Another passage which may bear upon this subject is Luke xxiii. 1-7. The scene is the trial of the Lord before Pilate, who proclaims, “I find no fault in this man” (verse 4). But this does not satisfy the chief priests and the people, and they become more insistent, saying, “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place” (verse 5). Galilee!—Was the mention of it accidental, or in the heat of the moment, or was there some cunning in drawing attention at this time to the fact that Christ was a Galilean? Note the effect upon Pilate, although he had already pronounced the Lord innocent.

“And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time” (verse 7).

If Herod could be convinced that here was one who represented a challenge to his position as Tetrarch of Galilee, then the chief priests would have won the day. But Herod took this challenge lightly, and having mockingly dressed Him as a king, sent Him back again to Pilate (verse 11). This incident, however, served to draw Pilate and Herod together as friends, for they had previously been enemies, apparently over some dispute about jurisdiction.

The desire of the Herodians to strengthen the family of Herod by keeping it on good terms with Roman imperialism, was a fact made use of on more than one occasion by the Pharisees, who sought the downfall of the Lord. That the Pharisees had any dealings at all with men whom they must have considered despicable, is a measure of the hatred which they had toward the Lord.

The Zealots.

This party is not referred to anywhere in the N.T. as such, but one of the Twelve Apostles is called Simon the Zealot (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13). This same Apostle is also called Simon the Canaanite in Matt. x. 4, although it is more strictly correct to refer to him as “the Cananaean”. This latter word appears to derive from the Hebrew *qana*, “to be hot, or zealous”. Whether Simon was so called because of his temperament, or from his association with the party of the Zealots does not appear from Scripture.

The Zealots have been identified with that party described by Josephus the historian as “the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy”, the founder of which was Judas the Galilean. This man led a revolt against Rome in 6A.D. (Acts v. 37), and his party sought to be free from the Roman yoke, even if this freedom was to be obtained by dubious means. The Zealots seem to have been more than ready to lay down their lives for this cause. Josephus says:

“They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 18 chap. 1).

H. A. Meyer, the German theologian, refers to them as, “a class of men who, like Phinehas (Numb. 25:9), were fanatical defenders of the theocracy; and who, while taking vengeance on those who wronged it, were themselves frequently guilty of great excesses”. It says much for them, however, that although they suffered a crushing defeat in 6A.D., yet they kept the spirit of the party alive for many years.

The possible connection of Simon the Apostle with this party is a point of interest in this regard, that the Lord is “no respecter of persons”. Amongst His followers He numbered one Matthew, a tax collector, a friend of the alien, and unpatriotic to Israel. On the other hand, Simon, as a Zealot, would be a tax hater, anti-Rome, and a fanatical patriot, quite the opposite of his fellow disciple, Matthew, and yet made one in Christ.

Had the Lord not trod His earthly path with extreme care, He might well have been identified with this nationalistic party called the Zealots. If it could have been proved that He had declared Himself on the side of, or even encouraged this party, He would have quickly perished like Judas of Galilee. A wrong answer to the question, “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Matt. xxii. 17), might well have identified Him with the Zealots, and hence caused His downfall. Despite His clear answer on this occasion, the subsequent charge brought against Him at His trial, and voiced by the multitude was:

“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and *forbidding to give tribute to Caesar*, saying that He Himself is Christ a king” (Luke xxiii. 2).

The Lord might well have commanded a great following from this party had His words not been so carefully chosen. The people were looking for a national deliverer, the Messiah, who would free them from the Roman yoke and restore again the Theocracy in Israel. This desire may be felt from such a passage as John vi. 15:

“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and *take Him by force, to make Him a king*, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.”

The Lord’s awareness of what was in man saved Him on this occasion from being identified as another Judas. He knew that it was His right to sit on the Throne of David, but was also aware that there is “a time to every purpose under the heaven” (Eccle. iii. 1).

It is interesting to compare the Zealots of old with the modern Zionist movement. The aims and objects of the latter are, it is true, stated in more refined terms, but the basic desire remains the same. The Zealots of old sought their ends from inside the Land (by force it is true), whereas the Zionist movement has prosecuted its cause from outside the Land. The manifesto declared by the London Zionist League in the year 1905 has the following words:

“The fundamental postulate of Zionism is that it is both inevitable and desirable that Jews should continue to maintain their separate identity. In races as in individuals there is an instinct of self preservation. Zionism seeks to justify this instinct which is ever active in the Jewish people by insisting that, if the Jew must survive, there must be something to be gained by his surviving. He must have a mission The Zionist sees clearly that it is nothing less than a mockery to speak of the Jews as capable of fulfilling any mission whatever in their present state. For a Jewish mission one must have a Jewish people, united by a common Jewish consciousness and common Jewish ideals, not a collection of atoms maintaining a meaningless pretence at separateness when everything in their minds and lives which has any value depends wholly on their non-Jewish surroundings. One wants, in a word, a Jewish nation; and a Jewish nation is only possible in a land with the claims and historic associations of Palestine. The winning of Palestine is therefore essential as a means to the great end of enabling the Jews to play a part worthy of them in the world’s history.”

Since the above words were penned great things have taken place in the land of Israel. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was proclaimed in part of the former British Mandate Territory of Palestine. They are now a Middle Eastern power to be reckoned with. But has not this movement and success been of the flesh? And in this respect, is not modern Zionism like the zealous nationalism of old, seeking to bring about the purposes of God apart from His intervention? It would seem so.

But let none fail to see that these are signs of the times. The child of the flesh must come before the child of the promise; Ishmael precedes Isaac, Esau comes before Jacob.

The Lord during His earthly ministry would not ally Himself with, nor encourage the cause of the party of the Zealots. There was a fullness of time coming when He Himself would take over the reigns of government. That time is again drawing near.

No.4. Proselytes. pp. 152 - 155

From the very earliest times provision had been made for “thy stranger within thy gates” (Exod. xx. 10). *The Imperial Dictionary* says:

“The peculiar vocation of Israel, a the chosen nation set apart to the Lord by the covenant seal of circumcision, established a clear line of demarcation between the Israelites and the surrounding nations; but it did not prevent the presence or preclude the toleration of strangers among them. The various occasions which brought them into peaceful or hostile contact with their neighbours belonging to other races necessarily led to the more or less temporary sojourn, whether voluntary or compulsory, of foreigners in Israel; and accordingly we find their existence recognized and their position defined by various precepts, positive and negative, from the time of the exodus and the establishment of a distinctive Jewish polity.”

The word ‘proselyte’ is not to be found in the A.V. of the O.T., but the Greek *proselutos* occurs frequently in the Septuagint. The equivalent Hebrew word is *ger*, generally rendered ‘stranger’ in the A.V. The first occurrence of this Hebrew word is Gen. xv. 13:

“And he said unto Abram, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a *stranger* in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.”

This experience of the People of Israel is referred to by the Lord when He commands:

“Thou shalt neither vex a *stranger*, nor oppress him: for ye were *strangers* in the land of Egypt” (Exod. xxii. 21).

These strangers within the commonwealth of Israel, were together with the Israelites themselves, forbidden to eat unleavened bread during Passover (Exod. xii. 19), to work on the Sabbath (Exod. xx. 10), to eat blood (Lev. xvii. 10), to practice idolatry (Lev. xx. 2), to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Le. xxiv. 16), etc. Their lives were therefore very closely bound up with the People of Israel.

There were however, strangers *and* strangers, even as there were *degrees* of proselytes. Accordingly, when the ordinance of the Passover was appointed, it was stated, “This is the ordinance of the Passover; there shall no *stranger* eat thereof” (Exod. xii. 43). Yet in verse 48 of the same chapter is written, “When a *stranger* shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it”. It should be observed that the Hebrew words resident in these two verses are different; verse 43 referring literally to “a son of strangeness”, *ben-nekar* and verse 48 to “a sojourner”, *ger*. The usage of the latter word in this respect seems to indicate the willingness of the stranger to be identified with the People of Israel, to make their home his home. Such a desire is reminiscent of Ruth the Moabitess, who said to Naomi:

“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” (Ruth i. 16).

Not all strangers however, would hold such strong feelings toward Judaism as this, and it must be understood that when the word “proselyte” is used in this article, it is used of all who were attracted in various degrees of intensity towards Judaism. Later, a twofold division of proselytes became apparent; those who by circumcision had obtained access to the privileges of Temple worship, and those who only professed a respect for the Mosaic religion, and attended as hearers in the synagogues (see *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson). The proselytes referred to in Acts (ii. 10; vi. 5; xiii. 43) were probably the former of these two classes, since other terms seem to be used by Luke to describe the latter (e.g. ‘devout’).

That Gentiles became proselytes during both Old and New Testament days is probably attributable to their recognition of the superiority of the religion of Israel. When, through the dispersion, Jewish communities sprang up in all parts of the then known world, Gentiles, unsatisfied with the heathenism around them, attached themselves to these communities.

Those described during Acts as “fearing God” (x. 2), “worshipping God” (xvi. 14), “devout” (xiii. 50; xvii. 4), were probably some of these. Many of them appear to have been women. Dean Farrar, writing of New Testament days, says:

“Greek proselytes were at this period common in every considerable city of the empire” (*The Life and Work of St. Paul*).

Although many Gentiles joined themselves to Judaism of their own volition, it must be remembered that the Pharisees had a certain zeal for proselytism:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matt. xxiii. 15).

Believing that the end justified the means, the Pharisees had few scruples in the means they employed to make a proselyte. Consequently, although conforming in some degree to Judaism, many proselytes still held heathen ideas, and so were hypocritical and reprobate. Hence the Lord’s words, “twofold more the child of hell”. The name ‘proselyte’ thus came into disrepute, and Rabbinical writers had the strongest contempt for them. They called them “the leprosy of Israel”, and said “that they are not to be trusted to the twenty-fourth generation”. But those who appear in the Acts of the Apostles were evidently not of this character, for many of them embraced the faith and showed that their works were not evil (John iii. 20, 21). Josephus, writing of the Jews in Syrian Antioch, says:

“They also made proselytes of a great many of the Greek perpetually, and thereby, after a sort, brought them to be a portion of their own body” (*The War of the Jews*, Book VII, chapter 3).

This quotation is particularly interesting when it be remembered what a large place Antioch had in the exercise of the Christian ministry.

Proselytes were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), and it is reasonable to suppose that they were also present in every synagogue into which the Apostles went. As the Acts period wore on, it is probable that they furnished a majority of the new converts.

The reference already made to the many women proselytes of the time is interesting in the light of certain passages in the Acts.

“But the Jews stirred up the *devout and honourable women*, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts” (xiii. 50).

It is known that the Pharisees exercised a great influence over women. By their pious professions they were able to “devour widows’ houses” (Matt. xxiii. 14), and exert pressure on female proselytes to stir up their husbands against the Apostles. II Tim. iii. 16 may also have some bearing upon this practice:

“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and *lead captive silly women* laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.”

When seen against such a background, the words of the Apostle Paul concerning women take on a new light.

The zeal of the Pharisees to proselytize was still present in those of the party which believed. When the Gentiles were added to the church, “certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed” (Acts xv. 5) misunderstood the position. They viewed the coming in of the Gentiles as a making of proselytes, and this caused trouble, especially in Antioch and the South Galatian churches. Such misunderstanding called forth the council of Acts xv. and the Galatian epistle. The demand of these Pharisaic believers with respect to the Gentile converts, “that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses” (Acts xv. 5) was negated by the Apostles, and no greater burden than four necessary things imposed upon them (Acts xv. 28, 29). Gal. ii. however, demonstrates how close the Christian world once came to giving way to this Pharisaic tendency to proselytize, when even Peter and Barnabas were carried away, compelling the Gentiles, by their own actions, to Judaize (verses 11-14). How much is owed to the Apostle Paul from a human standpoint cannot be estimated, for he appears to have been the only one at this time who stood against this intrusion of rights. He opposed the circumcision of Titus, a Greek (verse 3), and withstood Peter to the face (verse 11). This latter action on the part of the Apostle evidently influenced Peter greatly, for when the council of Acts xv. was later held, he is found saying:

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers or we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts xv. 10, 11).

(The evidence demonstrating that the letter to the Galatians was written before Acts xv., is presented in *The Apostle of the Reconciliation* by C. H. Welch, pages 84-86).

Although the position of the Gentile was clearly defined at this time, and despite the later revelation given to the Apostle Paul (Eph. iii.) so evidently completely divorced from Judaism, yet has this Pharisaic tendency remained in all ages of the professing church. There have always been those who have sought to add to “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts xv. 11) the “command to keep the Law of Moses” (Acts xv. 5). Both Catholics and Protestants have alike been guilty of this practice, apparently being unaware that it is written of “you Gentiles”:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the holiest of all, and of the household of God” (Eph. ii. 19).

The proselytes of old were limited in their approach to the Lord by type and shadow. At best, they basked in the reflected glory of Israel. The present Gentile members of the Body of Christ have, in contrast to these, been made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Holiest of all in light” (Col. i. 12). Such blessedness is almost beyond belief, especially in contrast to what the Gentile was “in time past”, and it should bring forth from every member of this blessed company thanksgiving unto the Father.

No.5. The Samaritans. **pp. 169 - 172**

A Samaritan, according to the etymological significance of the word, is an inhabitant of the land of Samaria, but in the sense in which it is found in Scripture, it has an *ethnological* aspect. It is used of that hybrid race which stood halfway between the Jews and the Gentiles. Note how these three peoples are distinguished from each other in Matt. x. 5, 6:

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the *Gentiles*, and into any city of the *Samaritans* enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*.”

Compare also Acts i. 8.

The origin of the Samaritans is to be traced to that period following the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, the ten tribes, Israel. The King of Assyria, having carried the original inhabitants of Samaria away to distant cities, re-peopled the land with strangers. See II Kings xvii. 20-24:

“And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight so was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the King of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sephar-vaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the Children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities there.”

These strangers in time mixed with the original inhabitants of the land (it is doubtful whether they were all carried away), and the resulting hybrid race formed the nucleus of the Samaritans. Later, during the Ezra-Nehemiah period, a “mixed multitude”, separated from Israel and expelled from Jerusalem, were probably also absorbed among them. Thus, shortly after the return from Babylon, the Samaritans existed as a powerful nation in the centre of Palestine. The hatred which grew up between this people and the Jews dates from the time when Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity. When the children of the captivity began to rebuilt their temple and their walls, the Samaritans offered their help:

“Now when the adversaries (Samaritans, verse 10) of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do” (Ezra iv. 1, 2).

This offer was spurned by Israel, and these adversaries then set about to frustrate their purpose (verses 3-5). Involved in this opposition was one Sanballat who, according to an Aramaic papyrus discovered in 1909, was “governor of Samaria”. The various forms which his opposition took are noted in *The Companion Bible* at Neh. ii. 10. They are all to be found in Nehemiah, and are grief (ii. 10), laughter (ii. 19), wrath and indignation (iv. 1-3), fighting (iv. 7, 8), subtlety (vi. 1, 2) and compromise (vi. 5-7).

A Sanballat is mentioned by Josephus as having built a temple on Mount Gerizim, but his testimony on this point is to be viewed with some suspicion as his chronology is evidently at fault. It is however possible, that Sanballat, after his failure to successfully oppose the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, did in fact build a rival temple for the Samaritans. (The interested reader is referred to *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, chapter 8.) Whatever be the truth of the foregoing, the fact remains that there did at one time exist on Mount Gerizim a temple, and even after its destruction by John Hyrcanus (over one hundred years before Christ) it remained a sacred site to the Samaritans.

After the death of Alexander the Great, when his kingdom had been divided amongst his four generals, a dispute concerning the true site of the Temple was brought before Ptolemy, the general to whom had been allotted Egypt and Palestine. Josephus records the event:

“Now it came to pass that the Alexandrian Jews, and those Samaritans who paid their worship to the temple that was built in the days of Alexander at Mount Gerizim, did now make a sedition one against another, and disputed about their temples before Ptolemy himself, the Jews saying that, according to the Law of Moses, the temple was to be built at Jerusalem; and the Samaritans saying that it was to be built at Gerizim. They desired therefore the king to sit with his friends and hear the debates about these matters, and punish those with death who were baffled By this speech and other arguments, Andronicus persuaded the king to determine that the temple at Jerusalem was built according to the Law of Moses, and to put Sabbeus and Theodosius to death” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIII, chapter 3).

This dispute continued till the days of the Lord, when the woman of Samaria again brought it up in His presence (John iv.).

There can be no doubt that Mount Gerizim was a hallowed site. Abraham built his first altar there (Gen. xii. 6, 7), as did also Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 18-20), and the Lord commanded that His blessing should be put there:

“And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal” (Deut. xi. 29).

Note that Sichem and Shechem, mentioned in the first two of the previous three quotations, are one and the same, and originally represented a region in which the Mounts Gerizim and Ebal stood. Compare Sychar (John iv. 5) and Sychem (Acts vii. 16). Apart from the hallowed connections of Mount Gerizim, the Samaritans justified it as a place of worship from Deut. xxvii. 4, 5:

“Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, *in Mount Ebal* And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God.”

The Samaritan Pentateuch reads, “Gerizim” for “Ebal”, and although this is thought to be a deliberate alteration, yet did the Samaritans rest their case upon it.

The relationship which existed between the Jews and the Samaritans during the Lord’s earthly ministry, is described for us in John iv. 9:

“Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, how is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For *the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*”

The Greek word translated “dealings” is *sunkraomai*, and it requires some explanation. It is evident from the narrative that the Jews did have some dealings with the Samaritans, for “His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat” (iv. 8). “The city” was Samaritan, and this implies two things: that the Jews did have dealings with them, and that the food sold must have been deemed *kosher* (or lawful). The lexicographer Parkhurst, recognizing the difficulty in the Authorized Version translation, quotes Dr. John Lightfoot on the passage:

“Lightfoot, however, I think more justly, interprets *sunkraomai* by ‘being obliged, or laying themselves under any obligation to, by accepting of favours from’.” (*Greek Lexicon*).

Hence, having no dealings with would seem to imply “having no friendly intercourse with”.

The attitude of the Jews toward the Samaritans may be further seen from such a passage as John viii. 48, where the Lord is accused, “Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon”. Note also the suggestion of the disciples in Luke ix. 54, when certain Samaritans would not receive the Lord. Yet did the Lord portray this people in a good light in contrast to Israel, when He gave the parable of The Good Samaritan (x. 30-37).

And consider also, that of the ten lepers who were cleansed by the Lord, the one who turned back in thanksgiving was a Samaritan (xvii. 11-19).

The Samaritans seem to have reacted favourably to the Gospel. This may be ascertained from the sequel to the Lord's talk with the Samaritan woman. The woman, upon the return of the disciples from the city, left her waterpot, and, speaking to the men of that city, said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John iv. 29). The reaction of the Samaritans was immediate, for "they went out of the city and came unto Him" (verse 30). The Lord, seeing them afar off, said:

"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (verse 35).

In verse 39, "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did", and, "Many more believed because of His own word" (verse 41).

When later, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them", it is recorded that, "The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake" (Acts viii. 5, 6). Luke also allies the church with Samaria (Acts ix. 31), and refers to the brethren there (Acts xv. 3). So the Samaritans, despite their origin, received the Word of God, proving again that God is no respecter of persons, a fact further emphasized by the willingness of the Lord to discuss with the woman of Samaria a subject as high and as holy as worship.

No.6. Temple and Priesthood. **pp. 188 - 192**

To build a temple for the Lord was the desire of David the King, and belonged to the period when, "the Lord had given him rest roundabout from all his enemies" (II Sam. vii. 1). But David was not allowed to fulfil this desire for he had been a man of war, and so the honour was reserved for his son Solomon. The building of this Temple represented the passing of the pilgrim stage and the establishing of the kingdom.

After the revolt of the ten tribes during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, this Temple suffered a series of misfortunes. In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took many of the Temple treasures away (I Kings xiv. 25-28). Later, during the reign of Asa King of Judah, more of its treasures were taken in order to establish a covenant with the King of Syria, so that the Northern Kingdom, ruled at this time by Baasha, might be defeated (I Kings xv. 16-21). Thus did the Temple continue to suffer, until finally, the King of Babylon removed all the vessels, burnt it down and demolished the wall. God's reasons for allowing such a thing to happen are given in II Chron. xxxvi. 14-21:

“Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers. Rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the King of the Chaldees He have them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem to fulfil the word of the Lord.”

Under Ezra and Nehemiah the Temple and walls were rebuilt at the decree of Cyrus King of Persia (Ezra i. 1-4). This second Temple, like the first, also had its trials, suffering especially at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes who set up “an abomination of desolation” upon the altar (I Macc. 1:54). Later the Maccabees cleansed the Temple from this pollution, and turned the enclosure into a fortress. By the time of Herod the Great (appointed Procurator of Judaea by Julius Caesar in B.C.47) it had fallen into decay.

Herod, in accordance with his policy of conciliating the people, and possibly also in expiation of the atrocity he committed by exterminating the Sanhedrin, put the work in order to reconstruct the Temple. But this work was done in such a way that it did not appear to be the building of a third edifice. *The Imperial Bible Dictionary* has the following comment:

“Although it was an entirely new building which Herod projected and actually accomplished, yet his very object required that he should avoid conveying the idea of its being wholly new, and that he should rather appear aiming at the proper restoration and embellishment of the existing one. On this account he seems to have taken down the latter piecemeal, and put up the other in its place, so as to preserve the continuity of the edifice, and admit of its being still called, as it certainly was, the second temple.”

Herod’s temple was begun (according to *The Companion Bible*) in B.C.20, and was still in the process of being built when the Lord walked this earth.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple (*naos*), and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple (*naos*) in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days” (John ii. 19, 20).

The Greek *naos* refers to the actual Temple building consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, and should be distinguished from *hieron* which refers to the whole of the Temple courts. The other word translated “temple”, *oikos* (Luke xi. 51), is really “house”, and is so translated in most of its occurrences. This distinction between the Greek words for ‘temple’ must be taken as qualifying the statement concerning the unfinished work. In fact, according to Dean Farrar,

“The assertion of the Jews was not strictly accurate, for *ho naos autos* (as distinguished from *to hieron*), with all its porticoes, had been finished in eight or nine years” (*The Life of Christ*).

This suggests that the Jews (John ii. 20) were referring rather to the length in which the whole project had been in hand. Work on this temple continued until 64A.D., just six years before its destruction by fire under Titus.

The Temple which stood during the Lord's earthly days was an attempt by Herod to endear himself to his Jewish subjects, an attempt which failed. And yet in spite of this origin and motive, the Lord identified Himself with it, calling it "My Father's house (*oikos*)" (John ii. 16). Note also Matt. xxi. 12, 13:

"And Jesus went into the temple (*hieron*) of God and said unto them, It is written, My house (*oikos*) shall be called The House (*oikos*) of Prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Later "My house" became "your house" (Matt. xxiii. 38). Yet even after this reversal with its associated prophecy concerning the desolation of the Temple, and even after the crucifixion of the Lord, Peter and John (perhaps the two apostles most near to the Lord) go up to this same Temple (*hieron*) at the hour of prayer. From the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles it appears that the Temple was the centre of activity of the early church. Just as the Jewish believers of this day did not disassociate themselves from the synagogues, neither did the Apostles separate themselves from the Temple. The object of the Apostles with their call to repentance was not to begin a new calling, but to make ready the people of God for the coming back of their Messiah. The hope of Israel was centred in this Messiah, and the fulfillment of Mal. iii. 1, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple".

For nineteen hundred years the People of Israel have been without a temple, and although an effort was made under the Emperor Julian to rebuild, this and all other aspirations in this direction have been frustrated. At this present time, the once sacred height is occupied by the Mosque of Omar. In order that Matt. xxiv. may be fulfilled, it would seem to be necessary that the Temple be rebuilt. Then will the prophecy of Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15) be fulfilled, and the great tribulation commence, leading, as that chapter indicates, to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The events in the Middle East are surely seen by the most casual observer to be leading up to this rebuilding.

Priesthood.

Everything connected with the priesthood was intended to be symbolical and typical, and pointed forward to the Great High Priest and his work for man. The essential idea of the priesthood as, "mediation". Dr. Edersheim writes:

"The Hebrew term for priest (*kohen*) denotes in its root meaning 'one who stands up for another, and mediates in his cause' (*The Temple, its Ministry and Services at the time of Jesus Christ*).

This meaning can be felt from such a passage as Heb. v. 1:

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

Priesthood, in its widest sense, existed from the very earliest times. Before the Mosaic priesthood was instituted, the father was the priest to his own household. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job performed this function (Gen. xii. 7, 8; xxvi. 25; xxxiii. 19, 20; Job i. 5). The priesthood of Melchizedek would seem to be the Scriptural exception to this rule, for even the patriarch Abraham recognized his greatness (Heb. vii. 4). It was 'after the order of' this man that Christ was a priest (Heb. vii. 15-17).

The People of Israel as a whole were intended to be "a kingdom of priests", but this was dependent upon the keeping of certain conditions.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 5, 6).

But within this conception, the firstborn in particular were looked upon as specially belonging to God. This was because of the deliverance effected for the firstborn when in the land of Egypt.

"All the firstborn are mine; for on the day when I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be; I am the Lord" (Numb. iii. 13).

Instead, however, of taking the firstborn, the Lord chose the tribe of Levi.

"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him *I have taken the Levites from among the Children of Israel instead of all the firstborn* that openeth the matrix among the Children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine" (Numb. iii. 6, 12).

Aaron and his sons in particular were chosen to "wait on their priests' office" (verse 10), provided they satisfied the conditions of Lev. xxi. 16-23.

The fixed duties of the priests included watching over the fire on the altar of burnt offerings that it should never go out (Lev. vi. 12, 13), offering a lamb every morning and evening and two lambs on the sabbath (Numb. xxviii. 3, 4, 9), attending to the golden lamp outside the veil (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21) and teaching and guarding the law of God (Lev. x. 11, see Mal. ii. 7). In addition they were to be always at their post, ready to do the office of a priest for any Israelite who might require them. The high priest had the additional privileged duty of appearing before God once a year on the day of atonement.

There was thus three orders of ministers, corresponding with the three sections of the Tabernacle and later, the Temple.

"*The Levites* were the appointed servants of the court, but from the holy place they were excluded on pain of death. *The priests* executed the ministry of the holy place, but were as solemnly prohibited from venturing beyond the veil which concealed the Most Holy. The priesthood culminated in *the high priest*, as mediator between God and the people" (*Imperial Bible Dictionary*).

From the time of David (although Jewish tradition places it earlier) the priesthood was arranged in 24 courses (I Chron. xxiv.). Each 'course' did duty for a week, the days of which were further subdivided among the families which constituted the course. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was "of the course of Abia" (Luke i. 5).

It is beyond the scope of these articles to consider the history of the priesthood through the O.T. Attention must therefore be turned to the state at which that priesthood had arrived in N.T. days.

No.7. The Priesthood (contd.). **pp. 208 - 212**

When the voices of the prophets ceased the way was open for the rise of Rabbinism, and as its power and influence increased, so that of the priesthood declined. At the time of Christ, the Rabbinic party, the Pharisees, were in complete control in all religious and ritual matters. Dean Farrar writes:

"The wealth, rank, connections, and offices of the Sadducees gave them much worldly influence and authority, but in all religious and ritual matters the people sided so absolutely with the doctors or Pharisees that the Sadducees, even against their real views, were often compelled to conform" (*The Life of Christ*).

Were it not that the Sadducean priestly party were hand in glove with the ruling power, they would have had no place at all in Israel. The situation at the time of the Lord is aptly put by Dr. Edersheim:

"Nor must we forget the powerful controlling influence which Rabbinism exercised. Its tendency was steadily against all privileges other than those gained by traditional learning and theological ingenuity. The Pharisee, or, rather, the man learned in the traditional law, was everything both before God and before man; 'but this people, who knoweth not the law', were 'cursed', plebeians, country people, unworthy of any regard or attention. Rabbinism applied these principles even in reference to the priesthood" (*The Temple and its Services*).

To be a priest, a man must satisfy the Sanhedrin on at least two counts: (a) genealogy, (b) physical perfection. Official records of descent were meticulously kept until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70A.D., when they were apparently lost. Priests also had to undergo a course of instruction, and before being allowed to officiate, were examined.

The distinction between the priest and Levite at the time of Christ indicated in the parable of The Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-35), is observed thus by Dr. Edersheim:

"Generally on the Levites devolved the Temple police, the guard of the gates, and the duty of keeping everything about the sanctuary clean and bright. But as at night the priests kept watch about the innermost places of the Temple, so they also opened and closed all the inner gates, while the Levites discharged this duty in reference to the

outer gates, which led unto the Temple mount (the court of the Gentiles), and to the 'Beautiful gate', which formed the principle entrance into the 'court of the women'." (*The Temple and its Ministry*).

There can be no doubt that at this time the office of high priest carried with it very considerable influence. This can be seen in Acts ix. 1, 2 where the jurisdiction of the high priest is recognized in the synagogues of Damascus, 140 air-miles to the north of Jerusalem:

"And Saul went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

The possessor of the office had a house in the Temple, in addition to his own home in Jerusalem, and was entitled to certain marks of outward respect. According to the Rabbis, he was appointed by the Sanhedrin, and the office was to be held for life and was hereditary. But the high priesthood was interfered with, especially by Herod the Great, and became associated with crime and bribery. Dean Farrar writes of Herod that, "He thrust into the high priesthood creatures of his own, of Egyptian and Babylonian origin". Herod also interfered with the Sanhedrin, to whom even the high priest was answerable, and there can be no doubt that the assembly which condemned the Lord, was of a hybrid nature.

The association of the priests with the Sadducean party, and the fact that they had the chief share in the crucifixion of Christ, has been already noted. They appear on the scene largely at the end of the Lord's ministry, after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and they were very active during the early Acts period. A glance at the occurrences of "the chief priests" (*hoi archiereis*) found in Mark xv., is very revealing of the part they had in the crucifixion:

"The chief priests held a consultation accused Him delivered Him moved the people mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (verses 1, 3, 10, 11, 31).

After the death of Christ, they, together with the Pharisees, persuaded Pilate (calling to mind the Lord's prediction that after three days He would rise from the dead) of the necessity to secure the sepulcher and to set a guard. It was to these chief priests that the same guard reported after the resurrection of Christ, when they bribed them with much money to spread abroad the tale that, "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept" (Matt. xxvii. 62-66; xxviii. 2-4, 11-15). What the real feelings of these chief priests (who were of the Sadducean persuasion, denying the resurrection of the dead) were, after the report of the guard, can only be a matter of conjecture. They were greatly distressed, however, at the later teaching of the Apostles:

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts iv. 1, 2).

Having arrested them, and charged them not to speak henceforth to any man in the name of “Jesus”, the Sanhedrin released the Apostles. But their continued activity in the Temple filled the high priest and his associates with anger:

“Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison” (Acts v. 17, 18).

The miraculous escape of the Apostles during the night, when the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, caused great perplexity to these Sadducees, and it seems that it was largely due to the wisdom of Gamaliel, a Pharisee, that the Apostles, having again been brought before the Sanhedrin, were delivered on this occasion (Acts v. 19-40). It is refreshing to read, just a few verses later, and in contrast to this, that “A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts vi. 7).

Two words in particular are used in the N.T. in connection with the priesthood. They are *heireus*, translated “high priest”, and “priest”, and *archieus*, translated “chief priest”, “high priest”, and “chief of the priests”. The one reference where the word *hiereus* is translated “high priest” (Acts v. 24) is omitted by the best texts.

According to the *Grimm-Thayer Lexicon*, *hiereus* refers to “a priest; one who offers sacrifices and in general is busied with sacred rites”. Apart from its usage in the Gospels and Acts, of the priests living at that time, it is used in Hebrews in reference to Christ, Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood of the O.T. It is used in the Book of Revelation, of believers.

Archieus, a word used many times in the Gospels, Acts and the Book of Hebrews, but never outside of those books, is explained in the *Grimm-Thayer Lexicon* thus:

“(1). He who above all others was honoured with the title priest, the chief of the priests (2). The plural *archieus* comprises, in addition to the one actually holding the high priestly office, both those who had previously discharged it and although deposed continued to have great power in the state as well as the members of the families from which high priests were created, provided they had much influence in public affairs.”

The word is used in Hebrews particularly in reference to Christ.

The situation with respect to the high priesthood at the time of Christ, has caused some consternation among Bible students. There can be no doubt that, at the time of the Lord’s trial, Caiaphas was high priest (Matt. xxvi. 57; John xviii. 13, 24), and yet, in Acts iv. 6, Annas is called the high priest, while Caiaphas is given no title. In addition to this (in Luke iii. 2, R.V.) there is mention of “the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas”, with reference to the time when “the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias”. *The Companion Bible* note on this last passage is:

“Caiaphas was the high priest as successor of Aaron; while Annas was the *Nasi*, or head of the Sanhedrin (as successor of Moses), and thus associated with Caiaphas in government.”

The note of H. A. Meyer is as follows:

“The reigning high priest at that time was Joseph, named Caiaphas who had been appointed by Valerius Gratus, the predecessor of Pontius Pilate (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVIII, chapter 2). His father-in-law Annas held the office of high priest some years before, until Valerius Gratus became procurator, when the office was taken away from him by the new governor, and conferred first on Ishmael, then on Eleazar (a son of Annas), then on Simon, and after that on Caiaphas But Annas retained withal very weighty influence (John 18:12, 13), so that not only did he, as did everyone who had been *archiereus*, continue to be called by the name, but, moreover, he also partially discharged the functions of high priest.”

Either or both of the above suggestions may be true, but it seems fairly obvious from the N.T. record, that Annas, the ex-high priest, exercised considerable power and influence. Dean Alford says of him:

“He had influence enough to procure the actual high priesthood for five of his sons, after his own deposition, (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XX, chapter 9).”

The character of Caiaphas, son-in-law to Annas, is seen clearly in his unconscious prophecy concerning the death of Christ for the people:

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all; nor consider it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (John xi. 49, 50).

The Sanhedrin had expressed their fear that, “The Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation” (verse 48) as a result of the following which the Lord would command, if allowed to continue with his miracles. Such was the attitude of these self-centred men. But Caiaphas was ahead of them, and saw in “this man” a victim, albeit innocent, by whom they could appease the suspicion of their conquerors. This attitude of Caiaphas lays open the character of the man.

To conclude this article on the priesthood, a few words from Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible* may serve to emphasize the utter degradation into which the priesthood had come, shortly before the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70A.D.

“In the scenes of the last tragedy of the Jewish history the order passes away without honour, ‘dying as a fool dieth’. The high priesthood is given to the lowest and vilest . . . other priests appear as deserting to the enemy; it is from the priest that Titus receives the lamps, and gems, and costly raiment of the sanctuary. Priests report to their conquerors the terrible utterance, ‘Let us depart’, on the last Pentecost ever celebrated in the Temple. It is a priest who fills up the degradation of his order by dwelling on the fall of his country with a cold-blooded satisfaction, and finding in Titus the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The destruction of Jerusalem deprived the order at one blow of all but an honorary distinction.”

No.8. The Sanhedrin. **pp. 229 - 232**

The word “sanhedrin” (or “sanhedrim”) does not occur in the A.V., the Greek *sunhedrion* being consistently translated “council”. In the LXX, the word is used in a general way of any session or assembly of persons deliberating or adjudicating. An example of this latter usage is found in Prov. xxii. 10:

“Cast out a pestilent person from *the council*, and strife shall go out with him; for when he sits in *the council* he dishonours all” (LXX).

In the N.T the word is used more specifically, referring to (a) the smaller tribunal or “council” which existed in every Jewish town in which a synagogue was to be found, its function being to judge less important cases, and (b) *the Sanhedrin*, the great “council” which met in the Temple at Jerusalem, and had supreme authority in Israel (but of course subject, at the time of Christ, to the Roman procurator).

The former usage is found in Matt. x. 17 and Mark xiii. 9, where the word is in the plural form:

“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to *the councils*.”

“But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to *councils*; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten.”

Most occurrences however, refer to *the Sanhedrin* at Jerusalem, sometimes designated “The Grand Sanhedrin” by authorities.

The word *sunhedrion*, from *sun* together and *hedra* a seat, means literally, “a sitting together”.

Origin of the Sanhedrin.

Jewish tradition traces the origin of the Sanhedrin to Numb. xi. 16, 17:

“The Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee.”

The Sanhedrin at the time of the Lord’s sojourn on earth was similarly constituted, being made up of seventy members (priests, Levites, scribes and notable members of high priestly families) plus the president (the High Priest). This body sat in the Temple precincts.

It is outside the scope of this article to trace the possible history of this body from Moses to Christ, but it may be observed that Ezekiel was given a vision of such a company (in connection with Israel’s idolatry), and an assembly which bestowed upon

Simon (father of John Hyrcanus) the supreme power, referred to in the Apocrypha, may well have been such a body.

“So I went in and saw the idols of the house of Israel and there stood before them *seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah with every man a censer in his hand*” (Ezek. viii. 10, 11).

“At Saramel in *the great congregation of the priests, and people, and rulers of the nation, and elders of the country*, were these things notified unto us The people therefore, seeing the acts of Simon made him their governor and chief priests” (1Macc.14:28,35).

The Sanhedrin at the time of Christ.

Mention has already been made in these articles of the interference of Herod the Great with the Sanhedrin. At one time he is said to have exterminated every member of this body except one, whose eyes he put out. Soon after this, he put into the High Priesthood men of Egyptian and Babylonian origin, who would of course preside over the Sanhedrin.

It would seem, in the light of this, that the body which condemned the Lord, was of a hybrid nature, if indeed He actually appeared before the Sanhedrin as such. Dr. Edersheim asserts in his *Jesus the Messiah*, that it was “no formal, regular meeting of the Sanhedrin”, pointing out that if it had have been, “all Jewish order and law would have been grossly infringed in almost every particular”. He quotes the Jewish historian Dr. Jost:

“A private murder, committed by burning enemies, not the sentence of a regularly constituted Sanhedrin. The most prominent men who represented the Law, such as Gamaliel, Jochanan ben Zakkai, and others were not present.”

It is alas only too sad to relate, and in opposition to this view, that even normally calm assemblies of intelligent men, when their judgment is clouded by hatred or fear, will act in the most irrational and unlawful manner. The men who opposed the Lord, even if they could be so described, were certainly burning with a hatred for Him and all He stood for, and there seems no reason to doubt, under such circumstances, that the so-called “Grand Sanhedrin” could act in a way which infringed “all Jewish order and law”. As to the absence or otherwise of the most prominent members of this body, since Scripture is silent on this, it cannot be established with any certainty one way or the other.

Authority of the Sanhedrin.

The authority of the Sanhedrin at this time, was to judge in the more important causes, to the extent of pronouncing the death sentence, but with the limitation that such sentences should be confirmed by the Roman procurator, and be put into effect by the Roman power. Hence the words of John xviii. 31; xix. 7:

“The Jews therefore said unto him (Pilate), It is not lawful for us to put any man to death We have a law, and by our law He ought to die.”

The death sentence had in effect been already passed upon the Lord by the Jews, and they now sought the confirmation of Pilate, and consequent carrying out of that sentence by the Roman power.

The death of Stephen has sometimes been quoted as demonstrating that the Sanhedrin did have the power to carry out the sentence of death at this time, but what happened with respect to this first Christian martyr was done in the heat of the moment, and is not to be quoted against the plain words of John xviii. 31 already referred to. The N.E.B. translation portrays graphically what happened to Stephen in Acts vii. 57, 58:

“At this they gave a great shout and stopped their ears. Then they made one rush at him and, flinging him out of the city, set about stoning him.”

It may be remembered that there were times during the Lord’s earthly ministry when a similar thing could have happened, although confessedly not in connection with the Sanhedrin. See for example John viii. 59 and x. 31.

The Judgment.

“Ye have heard but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council (Sanhedrin): but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (lit. the Gehenna of fire)” (Matt. v. 21, 22).

In the above passage three degrees of punishment are alluded to, pronounced by two courts. “The Judgment” would represent the local synagogue “councils” (Matt. x. 17 and Mark xiii. 9), which decided lesser cases, but could pronounce the death sentence by the honourable method of the sword, and ordain scourging (Matt. xxiii. 34) and excommunication (John ix. 34). The Sanhedrin dealt with more serious offences, and had the power to ordain death by the more ignominious stoning, and the further disgrace of the Gehenna of fire, the end of a malefactor, whose corpse was denied a proper burial, and was thrown out into the valley of Hinnom (outside Jerusalem), where it would be devoured by worms, or the fires which were kept burning there constantly to keep down pestilence. See Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 43-48.

The meaning of Matt. v. 21, 22 will be considered in a consequent article; it is enough for the moment to observe the constitution and authority of the judicial system in Israel at this time. All matters, civil, political and religious, came under the jurisdiction of these tribunals, which were intimately connected with the religion of Israel. Such a system is, on paper at least, a Theocracy, and this Israel was intended to be. How far they fell short of this in practice, to say nothing of the impossibility of running such a system whilst under the Roman yoke, is evident to any reader of the Gospel narrative.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to His own people could have re-established that Theocracy, but the prevailing attitude of the leaders of the people was, “we will not have this man to rule over us”. They rejected their King-Priest, both during the Gospel and Acts period, and “the hope of Israel” was postponed to a future date, whilst the Lord

turned His attention to another aspect of His purposes—the building up of the Body of Christ, a heavenly plan.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians.

No.1. Introduction. pp. 3 - 7

The Corinthian letters are the most personal of Paul's inspired writings. In none of them do we see Paul the man more clearly. This was probably due to the close and personal contact the Apostle had with the church at Corinth. Corinth, at this time, was the chief city of Achaia, situated on the narrow isthmus that connected the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnesus. It was on the main trade route from east to west and north to south, being the chief centre of commerce, and so had a continual stream of traffickers, and a mixed population of Roman colonists, Greeks and Jews. It was a strategic centre, and its importance must have influenced the Apostle Paul in his missionary activities.

Corinth's history was in two parts. The original city was destroyed by the Romans in B.C.146. In B.C.46 it was rebuilt by Julius Caesar and given the status of a Roman colony. The old city contained the infamous temple of Aphrodite with its prostitution and the morals of the new one were no better. The Greek word *korinthiagomai*, meaning literally "to act as a Corinthian", was synonymous with immorality. Paul reached Corinth on his second missionary journey as recorded in Acts xviii. 1-17. How unlikely, yet how encouraging it must have been to the Apostle to receive the Lord's words "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace for I have *much people in this city*" (Acts xviii. 9, 10), which only goes to show that no one is too bad or depraved to respond to the gospel of God's love and grace.

Among the first converts were Aquila and Priscilla, who were not Corinthians, but were living there. Paul resided with them and began his ministry in the synagogue, which lasted over eighteen months with the result that many believed (xviii. 8). And so the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus reached Corinth within twenty years of the Crucifixion. Some notable people responded to the gospel, including Crispus, who was no less than the "chief ruler of the synagogue" (xviii. 8). Not only did he believe, but all his house. Then there was Sosthenes (I Cor. i. 1) also described as the "chief ruler of the synagogue", possibly succeeding Crispus (Acts xviii. 7). This must have been a great blow to Judaism and at the same time an impetus to Paul's witness.

The Authorship, Date and Place of writing and the background of the epistle.

Both external and internal evidences point strongly to the Pauline authorship of the letter. Clement of Rome wrote an epistle to the church at Corinth about 95A.D. and refers I Corinthians to "the blessed Paul, the Apostle". This is the earliest instance of the quotation of a N.T. writer identified by name. Other external evidence is provided by Ignatius and Polycarp. The characteristics of style, vocabulary and content harmonize with what is known of Paul and Corinth.

The Apostle wrote the letter from Ephesus and the date many conservative scholars give is 55A.D., though C. K. Barrett suggests early 54 or the end of 53. It will be helpful to reconstruct the background to the writing of the Corinthian epistles, derived from the Acts and from the epistles themselves. Some of these points may be debated and there is no unanimity among Bible scholars here, but we believe the following will not be far from the true facts.

We have already mentioned Paul's visit to Corinth described in the Acts and referred to in I Cor. ii. 1. After this visit he wrote them a letter which has not been preserved (v. 9). We need have no concern that any part of inspired Scripture has been lost. The Apostle must have written letters which do not form part of Holy Scripture and this is one of them. Disturbing news came from believers in contact with the Corinthian assembly and also a communication from them requesting information on certain problems. In order to meet these needs Paul wrote I Corinthians. Apparently this did not solve all the difficulties, and in consequence Paul was forced to pay them a hurried painful visit (II Cor. ii. 1; xii. 14; xiii. 1, 2). Following this the Apostle wrote them a third letter of very severe character (II Cor. ii. 4). His anxiety for the church there concerning their condition and also how they would receive this severe epistle was so great that he could not wait in Troas for Titus, the bearer of the severe letter, but hurried on to Macedonia where he met him and learned with great relief that the letter had produced the needed results and all was well. From Macedonia Paul then wrote the canonical II Corinthians (II Cor. ii. 13; vii. 5-16). After this he paid his last visit to the Corinthian church (Acts xx. 1-4).

Some modern scholars hold that the "severe letter" is contained in II Corinthians and that this epistle is not a unified work. They claim that vi. 14 - vii. 1 is an interpolation, because it breaks the sequence of thought, that chapter ix. largely duplicates what is in chapter viii., and that the last section (x. 1 - xiii. 14) is so different in character from the earlier sections that it must be part or whole of the stern letter Paul sent to Corinth. Against this there is absolutely no manuscript evidence for such a truncated epistle and a close study will reveal that, far from being disjointed, it shows a remarkable unity.

It will be good to look at the background of I Corinthians a little more closely. Apollos undoubtedly worked in Corinth (I Cor. iii. 6) and it is possible that Peter visited it too. Owing to their spiritual immaturity this tended to cause the Corinthians to break down into groups and to range themselves under the name of one of these leaders (i. 11, 12) thus producing disunity. There were problems and abuses at the Lord's Supper (xi. 18-22), public litigation among members (vi. 1-8), a notorious case of immorality (v. 1-5), arguments about eating food that had been sacrificed to idols (viii. 1-13; x. 14 - xi. 1), disagreements about the need for marriage (vii. 1-40) and of morality outside marriage (vi. 12-20). Resurrection was denied by some (xv. 12) and Paul's own apostleship questioned by those who were very likely Judaists (iv. 3; ix. 1). All this was quite enough to produce an unhealthy spiritual state in the assembly and to cause great concern to Paul. Some of this bad news had been brought to Paul by the household of Chloe (i. 11). Additionally a trio, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived from the Corinthian church, probably bringing the problems which Paul was asked to answer

(xvi. 17). These may be seen in the recurring phrase “now concerning” (*peri de* vii. 1, 25; viii. 1; xii. 1; xvi. 1, 2). There were problems too about spiritual gifts. Some were placing too much emphasis upon the gift of tongues and upon these gifts in general, which appeared to be producing pride. Furthermore the gifts were not being used in an orderly or balanced manner. One can therefore readily see that guidance and warning through an epistle was absolutely necessary.

Before we go any further, it will be helpful to give the outline of the epistle as a whole:

- A | i. 1-9. Waiting for the Coming of the Lord.
- B | i. 10 - iv. 21. “IT HATH BEEN DECLARED UNTO ME.”
 - C | v. 1 - xiv. 40. The Body, physically, spiritually, ecclesiastically.
- B | xv. “I DECLARE UNTO YOU.”—the gospel and the resurrection.
 - The antidote to their errors.
- A | xvi. Maranatha. The Lord cometh.

The first section revolves around these words, *calling, confirmation, coming*. The word “call” occurs in the first two verses. In each case the A.V. supplies the words “to be” though they are lacking in the original. Whether they are supplied or not, truth is stated, for Paul was a ‘called Apostle’ by none less than the risen Christ, and so was obviously called to exercise apostolic functions. Likewise in verse 2 the Corinthians were ‘called saint’ (holy ones), through the salvation and grace of God, and certainly should have been saints in their everyday lives, though it is manifest from the epistle that many of them were anything but saintly in their walk. Here is a good example of the difference between *state* and *standing in Christ*. As God sees us in His Son, with all His holiness reckoned ours, we are indeed perfect and complete in Him. In ourselves, and in our experience and walk day by day, we come a long way behind such a glorious position, but it should be a constant concern to us to seek to balance state and standing in the strength of the risen Saviour.

Paul links Sosthenes with himself in the opening salutation. We read of a Sosthenes in Acts xviii. 17 who was a ruler of the Corinthian synagogue and was brought before Gallio’s judgment seat and beaten. The book of the Acts does not tell us that this Sosthenes became a believer, so we cannot say dogmatically that the Sosthenes of our epistle is the same person, but the probability is that he was. Not only does the Apostle refer to the Divine calling of the Corinthian believers, but he states that the epistle is “to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (2). The basic meaning of *sanctification* is *separation* in a twofold way: separated *to* and separated *from*. Basically God separates His children to and for Himself and His will. This is the first and positive aspect of sanctification. Secondly, all such are separated from everything that is opposed to His will. This is the negative aspect. We need to take care to stress the *positive* side first. Failure to do this has resulted in a man-made narrowness and finally in nunneries and monasteries. This is a false separation which can lead to barrenness and spiritual pride. Once we have realized fully what it means to be claimed by God for Himself, we shall see clearly that the old sinful nature and the spirit of the world which lies in Satan’s power, must not intrude or be allowed to mix with such a position.

Paul links the believers at Corinth with “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (2). The places he refers to were the meeting places for believers. In the early days it could have been the synagogue within the framework of which Hebrew Christians gave their witness. But more likely it was the homes of believers. In xvi. 19 we have a reference to Aquila and Priscilla and “the church that is in their house”. We must not think of buildings specially erected for Christian worship as we see around us today. These did not come into being until a much later date. The house of the believer was the home of the church, and we can therefore see why an orderly Christian home was an essential qualification of a bishop or overseer; and warm hospitality a necessary virtue (I Tim. iii. 2, 4, 5).

We next come to *confirmation*. The Apostle expresses gratitude to the Lord for the grace that had been given them and also that they were made rich in every respect by a bountiful Lord and Saviour. We are not told they were rich in faith, hope or love, but in speech and knowledge of every kind (4, 5). Speech obviously includes the gift of speaking with tongues, and doubtless prophecy and every kind of Christian discourse. A great deal of attention is given to Christian speech in chapters i. and ii. which we must consider in its place. Knowledge refers to the apprehension of Christian truth and it is important to note that these gifts were peculiar to the Acts period as a means of confirmation to each believer. In the twelfth chapter we have a long list of these special confirmatory gifts which were given by the Holy Spirit, of which knowledge, *gnosis*, is one (I Cor. xii. 8). Here *wisdom* is linked with knowledge and Paul has a great deal to teach about wisdom in the early part of this epistle. The Apostle John evidently refers to the supernatural gift of knowledge in his first letter:

“Ye have an anointing (unction) from the Holy One, and ye know all things the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye *need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things*” (I John ii. 20, 27).

This is obviously not true today, for Divine Knowledge does not come automatically as a gift of the Spirit. We all know that careful, persistent and prayerful searching of the Scripture of Truth is now necessary to arrive at an understanding of what God has written. The special gifts enumerated in I Corinthians were confirmatory miraculous gifts to prepare believers for the great event of the early coming of the Lord:

“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”
(verse 7).

In Heb. vi. the testing of the heavenly gift, and of the Word of God is linked with “miracles of the coming age”, i.e. the Millennium (powers of the world to come A.V.). These gifts were a foretaste of the kingdom age which would be set up at the Lord’s return and it is obvious from this letter and others written at this period, that this coming was then imminent (see Acts iii. 19-26; I Cor. vii. 29; x. 11; xvi. 22; I Thess. i. 9, 10; iv. 15-17; II Thess. i. 7; Heb. x. 37; I Pet. iv. 7; James v. 7-9; I John ii. 18).

No.2. Confirmation and Coming. pp. 25 - 30

Not only did the confirmatory miraculous gifts of the Acts period look forward to the Kingdom age, but they were a confirmation of the testimony of Christ which He had given to Israel. The miracles which He had wrought on earth were a Divine attestation of His Messiahship to the earthly people:

“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them” (Matt. xi. 2-5).

“But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, *the same works* that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John v. 36).

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, *a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs*, which God did by Him in the midst of you” (Acts ii. 22).

The miraculous gifts and signs of the Acts period which followed were a testimony that the twelve apostles were continuing what Christ *began* to do and teach in His ministry to the chosen people:

“. . . . so great salvation, which at the first *began* to be spoken by the Lord, and was *confirmed unto us* by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with *signs and wonders*, and with *divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost*, according to His own will?” (Heb. ii. 3, 4).

“These signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and *confirming the word with signs following*. Amen” (Mark xvi. 17-20).

There is no doubt therefore what these miraculous gifts were, and why they were given. They were a Divine confirmation of the earthly kingdom testimony and they only have relevance when kept in this Scriptural setting. To force them into the present time when the earthly kingdom people Israel are laid aside in unbelief and this aspect of kingdom held in abeyance, is an error which can only reap confusion and division.

The Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the last article we referred to no less than eleven N.T. references, chiefly from the epistles written around this time, which describe the Lord's coming as immanent. This testimony is overwhelming and cannot be ignored by the true student of Scripture. Peter had been authorized by God to declare that the second Advent of Christ only awaited the repentance and conversion of Israel and to this the nation was commanded to respond there and then (Acts iii. 19-26). No one knew whether the Jew would be obedient or not,

but all had the hope that this would be realized in their lifetime. “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord” was the standpoint of all believers at this time and was the comfort and great antidote for the sorrow resulting from the loss of those who were near and dear (I Thess. iv. 13-18). In the letter we are studying, the Corinthian believers were “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (i. 7). Here the word “coming” translates the Greek *apokalupsis*, apocalypse. This, together with the word *parousia*, also translated “coming”, but better rendered “arrival”, or “presence”, are the words which the Holy Spirit uses to describe the hope of the church during the Acts. This arrival of the Lord Jesus on the earth had been clearly described by Him in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. From the words used, it was to be a visible bodily coming, not a spiritual one, and the Book of the Revelation expands it and describes it as being a time when “every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him” (Rev. i. 7). If we note every occurrence of *apokalupsis* and *parousia* and the contexts they are used in, it will be noted that not one of them gives any clear backing to the idea of a *secret parousia*. This idea has been forced upon those who bring the later revelation of the Mystery into the Acts and fail to see in the Acts the close connection with God’s longsuffering to Israel, and His waiting for their response to the command to repent and turn back to Him (Acts iii. 19). This coming back to the earth is the hope of Israel which both the O.T. (e.g. Zech. xiv. 4, 5), and the early epistles of the N.T. deal with and is the dominant hope of all believers during the period covered by Acts.

The confirmation which Paul has referred to, would last “unto the end”, that is of this earthly life, whether terminated by death or the Coming of the Lord, so that they might be “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 8). This period seems to look forward to the realization of the Corinthians’ hope and the Divine assessment of their service. It is referred to again in the epistle to the Philippians in a similar setting. “Blameless” means “unimpeachable”, literally chargeless, and behind it all was the utter faithfulness of God, the only solid rock to rest upon (9). The pattern of verses 1-9, as C. H. Welch has shown is as follows:

- A | i. 1-3. Called. Fellowship in every place.
- B | 4-7-. Confirmation. Gifts (as in chapter xii.).
- C | -7. Coming. Waiting for the Coming.
- B | 8. Confirmation. Graces (as in chapter xiii.).
- A | i. 9. Called unto the fellowship of His Son.

A new section commences in verse 10 in which Paul reprimands the Corinthian believers for their cliques and disunity, appealing to them to put an end to this sort of thing, which denied in practice union that God has made between His children and makes spiritual growth impossible. We give C. K. Barrett’s translation of verses 10-13:

“I beg you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be all agreed in what you say, and that there may be no divisions among you; rather, that you may be restored to unity of mind and opinion. I make this appeal, my brothers, because it has been made known to me by the members of Chloe’s household that there are some contentions among you. What I mean is this: each one of you has his own watch-word— ‘I belong to Paul’, ‘I belong to Apollos’, ‘I belong to Cephas’, ‘I belong to Christ’.”

The immaturity of these believers made the devil's work of splitting them so easy. Those who ranged themselves under the name of Apollos were possibly those who admired rhetoric and the polished style of this leader. One can well understand those who rated the gift of tongues highly, being attracted by Apollos who was an "eloquent man" (Acts xviii. 24), coming from Alexandria, a centre of Jewish rhetoric. Those who followed Peter were doubtless the Judaists who followed the Jewish law and ceremonial and the link with Jerusalem. Others chose the name of Christ, and while this appears better on the surface, they were equally condemned with the other factions, including those who said "I am of Paul". It may be that the Christ followers were those who took the attitude that the words of Christ spoken when on earth were more important than those of apostles, an attitude that many adopt today, forgetting that it was the same Christ who later spoke from heaven (Heb. xii. 25) through His servants, just as He had spoken on earth. To turn away from them, was to turn away from Him. "Perfectly joined together" (*katartizo*) was a technical word for setting a broken bone. It is used in Mark i. 19 for the mending of nets, and in Gal. vi. 1 for the restoration of a brother overtaken in a fault. The Apostle insists that these divisions must end and that they should be restored to unity of mind and opinion.

Spiritual gifts do not automatically lead to a spiritual state of mind. No church in the N.T. had such an abundance of gifts as the church at Corinth, yet no other assembly equaled it for carnality and division. As a result Paul had to say:

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (iii. 1).

This condition made it impossible for them to advance in the knowledge of the truth:

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, *neither yet now are ye able*" (iii. 2).

He seeks to bring home to the Corinthians the true meaning of what was happening, by asking a series of rhetorical questions: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" He adds: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized the household of Stephanas, besides (that) I know not whether I baptized any other".

Here and in verse 17 the Apostle clearly shows the place that water baptism had in his ministry, which certainly was not in the forefront. He was glad he had only baptized a few of them and could not even remember how many! The last thing any truthful critic could say of Paul was that he was careless or unmindful of things pertaining to the truth or the special ministry with which Christ had entrusted him. If water baptism had the importance that many sects have put upon it, these words would have been impossible. Verse 17 is explicit:

"For Christ sent me *not to baptize*, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

The word ‘sent’ is the verb *apostello* and therefore nothing is clearer than that water baptism was *not* an essential part of his Christ-directed apostleship or the gospel that it contained, and makes it quite impossible that the ‘one baptism’ of Eph. iv. 5 can be that of water. As a contrast, Peter’s ministry and that of the eleven to the circumcision was definitely linked with baptism (Mark xvi. 14-18, Acts ii. 38) and this was fitting with a nation so long linked with type, shadow and symbol. While these two servants of the Lord preached the same Christ and the same Saviour, yet there were differences in their ministries which it is foolish to ignore, and only those who have an axe to grind will wish to do so.

Whatever their attitude was to him, Paul was determined to preach to the Corinthians the gospel with which he had been entrusted by the risen Saviour (Gal. i. 11, 12). But he was determined to avoid rhetorical skill (the wisdom of words) lest the cross of Christ be emptied (literally), that is, be emptied of its significance and dwindle to nothing under the weight of rhetorical argument. Paul does not represent himself as a brilliant orator, but a faithful proclaimer of the good news of God in his salvation of sinners. Eloquence by itself cannot save; it rather misleads, and the listener can be carried away by the personality and fluency of the speaker. Paul knew well the attraction that oratory had on the Greek mind and he deliberately avoided it so that nothing could detract from the power of the gospel. He now enlarges on wisdom and uses it in two ways both bad and good, the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God. The word occurs no less than 16 times in the passage comprising i. 17 - iii. 19. The section i. 18 - ii. 5 is laid out as follows:

- A | i. 18. The Power of God.
- B | i. 19-22. The wisdom of the world.
- C | i. 23. We preach Christ crucified.
- D | i. 24-31. Object—that no flesh should boast.
- C | ii. 1, 2. Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
- B | ii. 3, 4. Not with man’s wisdom.
- A | ii. 5. Your faith the power of God.

The wisdom of God is entirely beyond man’s intellect and lies behind the Divine purpose of the ages. It was only the matchless wisdom of God that could have devised such a plan and often in its outworking, the Scriptures comment on it. In Rom. xi., after dealing with the “reconciling of the world” (15) and the “secret of Israel’s blindness” (25), the Apostle concludes with praise to God, specially for His wisdom (33). In Rom. xvi. 25-27 he likewise addresses praise to the only “wise God”. In Eph. iii., after revealing the two secrets: (1) of Christ the Head and (2) the Church, His Body, Paul refers to the fact that even principalities and powers are learning through the out-calling of this church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii. 10). God not only has wisdom beyond the comprehension of man, but also the *power* to carry it out in practice. Hence the preaching of the cross and the salvation accomplished by it, is connected with the *power of God* (I Cor. i. 18) which makes it completely effectual in those who believe, in spite of the opposition and misunderstanding of unbelievers, who cannot frustrate its working, however much they oppose.

Such are perishing; they are on the road to destruction and to them the gospel of God is nothing but foolishness (i. 18). To the Greek with his culture and art the cross was abhorrent. The idea that a dead Jew hanging on a cross, could meet all their needs was utterly stupid to them as well. To the Jew with his idea of a conquering Messiah, a powerful Being who could rid them of the Roman yoke, the cross with its outward portrayal of weakness was equally repulsive; it was a “scandal”, a “stumbling block”.

The only wisdom that man knows is centred in himself and entirely leaves God out of account. The only salvation that he can understand is what he imagines he can work out for himself and for the world. The essential difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man is that the former is Christ-centred, whereas the latter is man-centred and because of his sin and poverty of ability it is doomed to utter failure. The Greek mode of thought still persists today and is behind all the man-made schemes for ‘progress’ so-called and the betterment of the world.

No.3. pp. 47 - 51

In the section of the epistle we are now considering, i. 18 - ii.5, it is surely clear that human wisdom is set in complete opposition to the wisdom of God. Sin and human limitation have so adversely affected man’s mind, that he cannot grasp the thoughts or ways of God (Isa. lv. 8, 9). Yet in his pride and blindness he deceives himself into thinking that his ideas are best, and does not hesitate to bring even the Creator to the bar of his own puny judgment. No wonder the wisdom of man at its best is looked on as foolishness by God, and the ways of God are looked on as foolishness by men (I Cor. i. 18, 20, 21). “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (21). Note that it does not say “by foolish preaching”. Alas, there is too much of that. More accurately it is “by the folly of the Christian preaching”. It is the *message preached* that appears to be folly to the unsaved, natural man. Whether it was to the Jew, who in his unbelief constantly demanded that God should back up His message by signs additional to those He had already given (Matt. xvi. 1-4), or the Gentile (Greek) who had an inflated idea of his own intellectual capacity. Christ crucified was the only truth that could meet both needs and this was the only proclamation that Paul determined he would give (22-24).

The Apostle now points to the Corinthian church as being a practical illustration of this:

“You can see what I mean, brothers, by looking at your own calling as Christians, for there are among you not many who are wise by human standards, not many who are powerful, not many who are nobly born” (verse 26 C. K. Barrett’s translation).

The Countess of Huntingdon, who did such a fine work with the Gospel in the times of the Wesleys, was reputed to have said she thanked God for the letter ‘m’. The context said “not *many* noble”, rather than “not *any* noble”, for she was a society woman who had

nevertheless been gloriously saved. From what Paul said it was clear that the gospel was spreading most rapidly among the lower classes and this was another reason why it was despised by the elite. In this gospel not only do we see the deepest needs of every man being met, whatever class or race he might belong to, but also that God was engaged in overthrowing the world's false standards:

“God chose what the world counts foolish in order to put to shame the world's wise men; and God chose what the world counts weak in order to put to shame what it counts strong, with what the world counts base and despised, even the things that did not exist God chose, that He might do away with what did exist, that no one might glory in His presence” (verses 27-29 C. K. Barrett).

God has arranged the salvation of men so that they have “no finger in the pie”! If they had, they would surely boast of it, however small it might be, and this is one thing God will not tolerate. He Himself will have all the glory and adoration as Redeemer and Lord.

Paul is not only concerned about the empty boasting of the world; he brings the truth to bear on false boasting in the church where they were “boasting in men” (iii. 21) and putting wrong valuation upon some of their own apostles and ministers (i. 12). They tended to forget that their Christian calling and standing depended not upon the merits of these men, but upon God's call and His grace:

“But of Him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption” (30).

The verse reads literally “you are from God”, that is, you had your origin in God and His redemptive work through Christ, and *He* is the source of all you need in the way of real wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and men, whether apostles or prophets, are but His servants. Of all the many titles of Christ, that of being the Wisdom of God is apt to be overlooked. In Prov. viii. 22-31 wisdom is personified as being with God at creation. In the Word of God, creation is always ascribed to Christ (see John i. 3; Col. i. 14-17). What more natural then for the Apostle to use Wisdom, not in the abstract as was so often done in Greece, but concretely, as a Person, and summed up in the Creator and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul concludes the section by saying that if anyone is to boast, let him boast in the same Lord. All of us have nothing but what we have received from Him (iv. 7), so it is only fit and right that He should receive our thanks and adoration.

Chapter ii. commences with the emphatic *kago*, which makes clear that the Apostle is continuing his argument and showing how it applied to his own ministry. If human wisdom at its best is foolishness with God and all true wisdom is embodied in Christ, then in line with this, in his ministry and the preaching of the gospel, he purposely avoided mere cleverness or eloquence and anything that could be construed as being showy or outwardly attractive, knowing that this, while it would appeal to the Greek mind, could only detract from the power of the message:

“And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God” (ii. 1 R.V.).

The reader will notice that the R.V. reads ‘mystery’ instead of ‘testimony’ (A.V.). It is not easy to decide which is the correct reading, for both have good manuscript backing. The words look somewhat similar in Greek *marturion* and *musterion* and could easily have been confused by a copyist. The balance seems to be in favour of ‘testimony’ and this would line up with “the testimony of Christ” in i. 6. The phrase “the testimony of God” could either mean “testimony about God” (objective genitive) or “the testimony borne by God” (subjective genitive). Lightfoot takes the genitive of i. 6 as objective and ii. 1 as subjective, the testimony borne by God to Christ. One thing is perfectly clear however, that in view of their carnal condition and attraction to clever oratory, Paul determined to proclaim among the Corinthians nothing more than the cross of Christ. As iii. 2 expressly declares, they could only take the beginnings of truth, the milk of the Word. Verse 2 has often been misrepresented by being taken out of its setting and made to mean that gospel preaching sums up all truth, that true ministry should consist of nothing more than proclaiming the way God’s grace can save a sinner. There are believers who will listen to nothing else than what they term a “gospel message”. This conveniently absolves them from any serious Bible study or searching after the deep things of God and apprehending what is “strong meat”. They remain in the immature state of spiritual babyhood, taking nothing but the milk of the gospel and even imagine that this is a virtue!

Such do not hesitate to criticize those who want to go on to maturity (perfection). Many of the present day churches are cluttered up with this type of spiritual infant and it is no wonder that the deep things of God, the unsearchable riches of grace and glory as unfolded in the later prison epistles, are so little known or prized among them.

While the Apostle was forced to limit his testimony to the saints at Corinth, yet he was able to go deeper to some, for in ii. 6 he states “howbeit we speak wisdom among the mature (perfect)”, but, for the most part, this was impossible, and we may be sure that it gave him no pleasure to have to restrict his message in this way. Not only this, but he confesses to personal weakness and fear, which only shows how human he was:

“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (ii. 3).

How encouraging it is for us to realize that this great man of God knew what it was to be afraid and to be conscious of being inadequate and weak in himself. This but makes his faithful ministry and witness an eloquent testimony to the all-sufficient grace and power of God.

Deliberately avoiding persuasive words of human wisdom, he relied entirely upon this power:

“And my argument and my proclamation were not enforced by persuasive words of wisdom, but by a manifestation of spirit and power” (ii. 4, C. K. Barrett).

The Divine conviction and force that accompanied his preaching conveyed a better proof of its truth than external oratory could provide. This concerned its internal effect. Externally it was confirmed, as Rom. xv. 19 declares:

“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of God.”

No wonder Paul avoided the shallow attractiveness of a golden tongue, especially as I Cor. ii. 5 states:

“In order that your faith should not depend on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.”
(C. K. Barrett).

There is only one safe place for faith to rest upon, and that is Christ, His Person and His work which are complete and changeless. To rest it anywhere else is to ask for disillusionment and misery. How often men and women have been swayed by attractive and brilliant speakers in Christian meetings, and been carried away by the messenger rather than the message! We can be certain of one thing, that any results from this are external only. They cannot and do not last, and when the effect has worn off, the listeners feel they have been “let down”.

However, the Apostle declares that, while carnality prevents spiritual growth and keeps such in a state of babyhood, he was prepared to minister deeper truth to mature believers:

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among the mature (perfect): yet a wisdom not of this age (world), nor of the rulers of this age (world), which are coming to nought; but we speak God’s wisdom in a secret (mystery), even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God fore-ordained before the ages (worlds) unto our glory; which none of the rulers of this age (world) knoweth; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (ii. 6-8 R.V.).

God’s wisdom here is practically identical with His truth and His purpose. This, for good reasons, God kept hidden. One of the reasons for the “mystery” (secret) truths of the Scriptures is to hide from Satan and his hosts valuable knowledge about God’s plans, just as in wartime, any facts that would be valuable to the enemy are suppressed. Let us never forget that ever since Satan’s fall there has been enmity and spiritual warfare between himself and God. There is a tremendous battle being fought and redemption has as much to do with its final victory as with the salvation of the individual sinner. Consequently we must be prepared to find that “the rulers of this age (world A.V.)” may mean more than human beings. Satan is described by Christ three times as the “ruler of this world” (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11) and Eph. vi. 12 speaks of “world rulers of this darkness”, “spiritual wickedness in heavenly places”. These are the evil spirit hosts under the control of Satan who are animating unbelievers to carry out their deadly work. From these, God in His wisdom, hides vital aspects of His redemptive purpose, so they shall not have the advantage.

In verse 8 we cannot exclude the earthly rulers, such as Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas the high priest; these were but the tools of evil spiritual foes who engineered the crucifixion of Christ. Neither of these human beings could be truthfully called *a ruler of this age*. Little did Satan realize that in murdering the Son of God, this very act would accomplish his overthrow and destruction, for Calvary means victory over Satan and his hosts as well as over sin and death (Col. ii. 14, 15). Had they known this, they would not

have crucified the Lord of glory. This majestic title ascribed to Christ, is an outstanding witness to His Deity. No Jew would ever address such a title to anyone but God in the fullest sense.

Needless to say, the wisdom of God in a mystery does not refer to the later mystery of Eph. iii. concerning the Body of Christ. It is not THE mystery but *en musterio* “in mystery” literally. It was the wisdom of God that had been hidden. Paul was making known God’s secret hidden wisdom which He had determined before the ages began for our glory and ultimately His.

No.4. pp. 67 - 71

Before we proceed to consider the next section, we will give its structural outline, and for this we are indebted to Charles H. Welch:

- A | ii. 6, 7. What Paul spoke. Wisdom among perfect (mature).
- B | ii. 8. Knowledge. None knew. Had they known.
- C | ii. 9, 10-. Revelation. Eye, ear, heart. But God revealed.
- D | ii. -10-13. The Spirit. |
 - a | Things of God revealed by the Spirit.
 - b | Not spirit of the world.
 - c | But of God.
 - b | Not man’s wisdom.
 - c | But Holy Spirit.
 - a | Things of the Spirit explained by spiritual means.
- C | ii. 14, 15. Discernment. Spiritually discerned.
- B | ii. 16. Knowledge. Known mind of the Lord. The mind of Christ.
- A | iii. 1, 2. Why Paul could not speak. Carnal, babes, milk.

The structure clearly shows the sharp distinction between the hidden wisdom of God which could be revealed to the mature, and the carnality of the Corinthian believers which for the most part made this impossible, keeping them in the state of spiritual infancy with the ability to receive only the ‘milk’ of the Word, the simplest possible truths. In ii. 9 the Apostle makes a Scriptural quotation:

“But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him” (R.V.).

The difficulty here is that this is not an exact quotation, but seems to be a blending of Isa. lxiv. 4 and lxv. 16. The former passage in the LXX reads: “From the beginning we did not hear nor did our eyes see any God but Thee, and Thy works, which Thou shalt do for those who wait (Thy) mercy”, and the second passage thus: “They shall forget their former affliction, and it shall not enter into their mind”. Origen believed that Paul

was quoting not from the O.T., but the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Elijah*, but this would not justify the introductory “it is written” which always refers to the Scriptures. Whatever the answer to the problem is, we may be sure that the Apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, was quoting truth, and therefore we need have no misgiving.

He now stresses what is most important to grasp, namely that *understanding* of the Word of God is something that is beyond unaided human capability, however great this may be. Such understanding only comes from the Holy Spirit Who inspired men to write the Word. The Divine Author alone can be the Explainer:

“But unto us God revealed them *through the Spirit*; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God even so *the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God*. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, *that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God*” (ii. 10-12 R.V.).

Man’s knowledge is confined to human things (verse 11). Only God can communicate the truth about Himself, His purposes and His ways. There is no other means of attaining to this Divine knowledge. Human intellectual capacity and education will not throw one ray of light of itself upon the Word of God. Why? Because it is *spiritual* and can only be *spiritually* discerned, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. A theological course may teach a lot *about* the Bible and its background, but this is no substitute for Divine enlightenment. When will men learn this? A man may come from a university with a brilliant theological degree and in the eyes of Christendom be eminently suited for preaching and teaching the Scriptures, but if he is not a humble believer depending upon God to give him “opened eyes”, he is as blind as a bat spiritually, and merely becomes a blind leader of the blind.

Not that we despise education, but we should know its limitations and keep it in its rightful place. No one knows the things of God save the Spirit of God (verse 11), and He has been given to us in order that “*we might know* the things that are freely given to us by God, which things also we speak”, says the Apostle, “not in words which man’s wisdoms teacheth, but *which the Spirit teacheth*, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (verse 13 R.V.). The spirit of the world and human wisdom and knowledge are less than useless here. The Holy Spirit Himself must be the Teacher, and He communicates His truth to us as we grow in grace and love and compare spiritual things with spiritual.

We may well ask, just what is the meaning of this last phrase? There have been a variety of translations and interpretations. It all depends on the meaning of *sugkrino* translated comparing, and the gender of the adjective *pneumatikos* spiritual. This can be either masculine or neuter. If masculine it will mean “spiritual persons”; if neuter it will be “spiritual things” or “spiritual words”. *Sugkrino* can mean “combine”, “interpret”, or “compare”. It only occurs again in II Cor. x. 12 rendered “comparing”. Darby translates I Cor. ii. 13 “communicating spiritual things by spiritual means”. Knox: “matching what is spiritual with what is spiritual”. Moffatt: “we interpret what is spiritual in spiritual language”. Coneybear: “explaining spiritual things to spiritual

men”. Goodspeed: “giving spiritual truth a spiritual form”. Revised Standard Version: “interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit”, and in the footnote: or “interpreting spiritual truths in spiritual language, or comparing spiritual things with spiritual”.

It is obvious that this verse is difficult to translate. The sense can either be comparing spiritual things, i.e. the words of Scripture, or interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual people or by means of spiritual words. The fact is that all these renderings express truth and it would be safer to take the meaning of them all. It would be useless to try and explain the truth of God to anyone who is not spiritual, that is not a saved person who is walking according to the new nature (spirit). On the other hand, if we want to correctly interpret God’s truth, we must be ready to compare with spiritual words of Scripture and let one passage throw light on or interpret another.

The Apostle makes it quite clear that the unsaved, the natural man, however clever or educated, can never receive or understand the Word of God:

“Now the *natural man receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and *he cannot know them*, because they are spiritually judged” (verse 14 R.V.).

As we have before stressed it is only by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit that saved people can come to a full knowledge of the Truth. Even then this is not mechanical. The carnal Christian will not be given light on the Word. A believer must be ‘spiritual’, with a mind and keen desire for the Spirit’s work, and he must search the Scriptures, for this is the means God chooses to use to bring him to Divine understanding. If a Christian keeps the Bible closed, he cannot expect enlightenment. Paul goes on to assert that the spiritual man judges or investigates all things, but he himself is not open to such judgment by anyone (verse 15). Does he mean by this that the spiritual man must not be exposed to testing? This cannot be, for he says in xiv. 29, “let the prophets speak two or three, and *let the other judge*”. The answer seems to be in iv. 3 where he states expressly that human judgment of praise or blame means nothing to him; his only judge is the Lord. So with the spiritual man; for him the final judgment and the only one that matters, is the Lord’s verdict. And who can know the Lord’s mind, apart from what He is willing to reveal? (verse 16). But we, says the Apostle, referring to himself and his spiritual colleagues, have such a revelation and outlook. In this sense “we have the mind of Christ”.

The Apostle now returns to the present situation at Corinth. He has to lament that their carnal condition with their splits, divisions and jealousies had made it impossible for him to give them anything but the simplest truth which he likens to ‘milk’. They were no better than Christian babies and could take nothing but the milk bottle. Solid food was impossible, though he longed to lead them on into deeper truths (iii. 1-4). He remonstrates with them for ranging themselves in splinter groups under his own name and that of Apollos and says:

“What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him” (iii. 5 R.V.).

The answer to these questions is not that Paul and Apollos are *nothing*, but they are *servants of Christ*, nothing more and nothing less. They are not to be idolized on the one hand, or ignored on the other. They were the channels Christ had chosen to reach them with the gospel, and appreciation of this would have saved the Corinthians from such party divisions.

“I planted, Apollos watered the plants. It was not we however, but God Who made them grow. It follows that neither he who plants nor he who waters counts for anything, but only He Who causes the growth—God” (iii. 6, 7 C. K. Barrett).

Paul likens the ministry of himself and Apollos to gardeners. No gardener, however diligent, can give either life or growth to the plant. This is God’s work alone. The significance is that God accepts his labour and uses it. In himself, the gardener has no independent importance. So it was with the service of Paul and Apollos, and since they were but instruments in the hand of Christ, it was foolish to play one off against the other—“He that planteth and he that watereth are one” (8). That is to say that the aim and result of their work are identical.

This naturally leads to the important question of the quality of Christian service and its final assessment by the Lord, leading either to reward or loss. This line of truth has always to be kept distinct from salvation as God’s free gift by grace apart from works or merit. Much damage has resulted from these two linked yet separate truths being confused, or one being stressed at the expense of the other. Many Bible problems can be solved by ‘rightly dividing’ these two aspects of doctrine and they are principles that run right throughout the Bible, and the importance of correctly evaluating them can hardly be over-stressed. The immediate context here relates first of all to the service of Paul and Apollos, but the argument broadens out to take in all believers:

“. . . . But each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are God’s fellow-workers; ye are God’s husbandry, God’s building” (iii. 8, 9 R.V.).

The A.V. “we are labourers together with God” is possible from the Greek, but the R.V. is to be preferred and fits the context better. It is not so much that the apostles were working together and God was working *with* them (although this was true), but rather that they were united in service and *belonged to* the Lord. They were “God’s fellow-workers”, whereas the church at Corinth was likened both to a field and a building. “Ye re God’s husbandry, God’s building.” They were likened to agricultural and architectural work done by the Lord. The Apostle now drops the horticultural metaphor and goes on to describe them as a structure and builders whom the great Architect was using. He reminds them of their responsibility as such; they could be wise builders or jerry builders using bad materials and becoming shoddy workers. At the end they would have to account to the Master, hence they should think very carefully about their present conduct and quality of service. Grace does not mean that God will overlook bad workmanship or disloyalty to His truth.

No.5. pp. 86 - 89

In the section of the epistle we are dealing with, the Apostle Paul elaborates the theme of Christian service, using the figure of a building, with its foundation and superstructure:

“According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (iii. 10, 11 R.V.).

The exceeding grace of God which had been manifested in his salvation, still continued with him and enabled him to serve faithfully. As a wise or skilled master-builder he had laid the one Foundation, Jesus Christ. This great Foundation is true and unchangeable for all time, and for the whole of God’s redemptive purpose. Paul was the original evangelist through whose ministry the first converts at Corinth had responded. He had faithfully preached Christ and this Foundation had been well and truly laid by him. But foundations are made for erections or superstructures and the Corinthians are now being told that they are all builders, but of what kind? Good builders or otherwise? “Let each man take heed *how* he buildeth thereupon.” The materials used are all-important:

“But if any man buildeth on the Foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire” (iii. 12, 13- R.V.).

The workman may use shoddy materials, and when the future Day of testing comes, there will be no possibility of concealment. Judgment by fire is not new in the Scriptures. “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. xii. 28, 29). The fire of testing will not touch the workman, but his service:

“And the fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire” (verses -13-15 R.V.).

Nothing could be clearer than the distinction here made between the believer who has been saved by grace apart from his works, and his service to the Lord which consists of his works. Because his salvation depends entirely upon the Lord’s redemptive work on the Cross, nothing can affect or alter this. Nothing can separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. viii. 39). But it can be very different with his service. There are unfaithful children of God; there are those whose service has not conformed to the pattern of His will. Wrong motives have entered in. Self aggrandizement, error and other works of the sinful old nature have got mixed up with his actions. All this is likened to “woods, hay and stubble”, which will be completely destroyed in the day of testing. The Apostle goes on to warn the Corinthian church that they constitute a temple of God, inhabited by the Spirit, and if this temple is marred by their conduct, God will destroy the offenders. The local church, a manifestation of God’s

Temple, could be removed under judgment and go out of existence. If it is insisted that Paul is referring to the individual believer rather than the assembly as a whole, then such judgment could end in physical death, as the abuses at the Lord's Table later on clearly show (I Cor. xi. 30). Direct Divine judgment for sin, a characteristic of the earthly kingdom, was still in force during the Acts period (cp. Acts v. 1-10; xiii. 6-11). There was indeed "a sin unto death" (I John v. 16).

Paul now returns to the great contrast between earthly and heavenly wisdom, the conceptions of unredeemed man in spiritual darkness, and the thoughts and ways of God so infinitely above these:

"Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you supposes that he is wise by the standards of this age, let him become foolish by the standards of this age, in order that he may become truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For in Scripture God is described as 'He who catches the wise in their own craftiness'; and again 'The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are vain'. So let no one make his boast in men, for all things are yours—Paul, Apollos or Cephas, the world, or life, or death, things present or things to come—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God" (iii. 18-23 C. K. Barrett).

Self deception is the fate of those who imagine themselves to be really wise apart from God, and this delusion is the fruit of estimation by the wrong standards. If anyone wishes to be wise in the truest sense, then he must not expect to experience this by trying to add a little of God's wisdom to his own. His own wisdom must be cast away completely and God's estimation received by a child-like trust. These two are complete opposites and can never be reconciled. This the Apostle states in the sharpest terms:

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

The conclusion then is inescapable: "So let no one make his boast in men". This is just what the Corinthians had been doing, ranging themselves under the names of various servants of God, stating in effect that they belonged to Paul, Apollos or Cephas. This inverted the truth. They really belonged to Christ, the Lord over all things, and as this was true, then the world, life, death, things present, things to come—all things belonged to them in and through Him. With such a vast heritage, how stupid it was for any of them to follow men, even if these were the Lord's servants!

The fourth chapter commences with advice as to how God's servants, including himself, should be properly regarded:

"How then should a man think of us? As Christ's servants and stewards of God's mysteries (secrets)" (iv. 1 C. K. Barrett).

If we read the first sentence as a question as C. K. Barrett does, then the answer is that Christian leaders are to be regarded as Christ's servants, no more and no less. The servant has no special significance of his own. His work is not his but his master's. He is also his master's steward or household manager (*oikonomos*). This is allied to the word *oikonomia* dispensation, and shows us that a dispensation in the N.T. is not the same as an age, a period of time merely, but a faithful handling and setting forth of some

particular aspect of truth that belongs to God, which He has entrusted to the steward to dispense. What is the chief characteristic that one looks for in such a man? Not intellectual prowess or cleverness, but just complete reliability and trustworthiness, specially when one remembers a steward is handling, not his own property, but someone else's. There can be no deviation from this, or any substitute for faithfulness. The Lord's commendation in the parable was not 'Well done, thou good and *successful* servant', but "well done, thou good and *faithful* servant" (Matt. xxv. 21), and every one of us who seeks to serve the Lord must continually keep this in the forefront of his mind, for it is of the utmost importance.

With the exception of the book of the Revelation, which deals with the future Day of the Lord described by the O.T., and the final winding up of things when the mystery of God will be finished (Rev. x. 7), the Apostle Paul is the only writer who uses the word 'mystery' or secret in his epistles. His ministry deals with a number of secret aspects of the Lord's great redemptive plan, culminating in the great Secret of Ephesians and Colossians of which he alone claimed to be the minister or channel of revelation (Eph. iii. 3-10; Col. i. 24-27). Peter faithfully gave his witness without using the word once. One must therefore take care to distinguish the fundamental truths relating to salvation that are common to *all* the apostles, and those other aspects which are peculiar to the ministry the risen Lord gave each of them and the particular sphere to which they were sent by Him.

Having stressed absolute loyalty and trustworthiness as the basic requirement of a steward of God, the question arises, by whose standards of trustworthiness is he to be judged? So the Apostle continues:

"To me it is a matter of the smallest importance that I should be examined by you, or by any human assize" (iv. 3 C. K. Barrett).

If Paul had been affected by every criticism he received, he would surely have given up his ministry in despair. His argument, which is implicit, is that no fellow-believer can fairly or righteously assess the Christian service of another. Only the Lord Himself, the righteous Judge, can do this (Rom. xiv. 4). It is fairly obvious that the criticism which appears as a full-scale attack in II Corinthians, had already begun. The last words of the above translation are literally "by man's day". If the day of Christ is the time when He will righteously judge His people's service, then man's day is the present time when man has 'all the say' and is judging, or more truthfully, mis-judging. The Apostle is quite indifferent to this, man's poor attempts to do God's work for Him. He even does not depend upon the verdict of his own conscience:

". . . . I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judges me is the Lord" (iv. 4 R.V.).

Even though my own conscience does not reprove me in any way, says the Apostle, I am not justified by this. My only real judge is the Lord Himself. As the Lord's coming during the Acts was imminent, and the Corinthian letters were written during this period, Paul insists that all judgment must be left to the soon Coming One:

“Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God” (iv. 5 R.V.).

“Now, my brothers, I have for your sake made these things seem to apply to Apollos and myself, in order that by our example you may learn the meaning of ‘Nothing beyond what stands written’, so that you may not be puffed up, each on behalf of one and against another. For what makes you different from your neighbour? And what have you that you did not receive? But if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (iv. 6, 7 C. K. Barrett).

The Apostle Paul evidently made the argument of the last few verses look as if they applied to himself and Apollos, so that the Corinthians might learn by their example what the phrase “Nothing beyond what stands written” really means. It is not easy to interpret this today as we do not know all the circumstances that made up the situation at Corinth, but it was evidently easily understood by the believers there. It would seem to be a Christian slogan that was current in the district, whether Jewish or not, we cannot be sure. But it was a good one, advocating no belief but what could be substantiated by Scripture. It would indeed be good advice for all of us. How much error would be avoided if people would refuse to accept anything that is not clearly backed up by the Word of God rightly divided!

No.6. pp. 106 - 109

The Apostle Paul continues his argument in chapter iv. dealing with the splits in the church and the boastfulness of some of its members. He reminds that what knowledge they possessed had been given them by the Lord and did not originate in their own capability, so that they really had nothing to boast about in themselves:

“. . . . that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other. For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory (boast), as if thou hadst not received it?” (iv. 6, 7 R.V.).

The Apostle now turns to irony. The Corinthians were prepared to sit in judgment on Paul and his fellow workers and put them in their place. They imagine that they enjoyed the culmination of blessing and had received *all* the gifts of the Spirit, not merely some, and were acting as though the earthly kingdom had already been consummated and they had entered into it without the help of Paul or those associated with him:

“Already are ye filled (literally reached satiety), already ye are become rich, ye have reigned without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (iv. 8 R.V.).

In one sense the Apostle could have wished this was true, for had that been so, many problems would be resolved. But the real position was very different:

“For I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (iv. 9 R.V.).

The apostles are presented by God to the world like the unfortunate beings, brought on at the close of a display in the arena, and as such condemned to death by mortal combat with one another, or with wild beasts. The word “spectacle” is *theatron*, theatre, the place where such spectacles were presented. The sense is “for we became a spectacle to the whole world, angels and men alike” (C. K. Barrett). How very different from the picture conjured up in the Corinthians’ boastful minds! Paul now goes on to contrast himself and his fellow workers with the self-satisfied believers at Corinth:

“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonour. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; beings defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things, even until now” (iv. 10-13 R.V.).

The Corinthians may have imagined that they had come into their kingdom and the problems were over. Not so the Apostle. For him there was no relief from labour, privation or suffering. Going hungry, thirsty and naked possibly resulted from the depredations of robbers in his frequent journeyings and through sheer lack of supplies. He includes ‘perils of robbers’ in his long list of sufferings for Christ (II or. Xi. 26). His language here in I Corinthians reminds one of The Sermon on the Mount, returning good for evil.

He ends this section by describing himself as the world’s scapegoat, no better than the scum of the earth. This was the price he was willing to pay in order to be a faithful servant and witness of Christ! How very different from some of the Christian leaders at Corinth! As they read this epistle, describing what Paul was undergoing, they ought to have been ashamed, though Paul insists that he did not deliberately set out to shame them, but rather to warn them as his dear children (verse 14). They might have thousands of tutors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for the relationship of father and son is much closer and intimate, and it was through his faithful preaching of the gospel when he first visited Corinth that they came to spiritual birth and a personal knowledge of Christ our Saviour. Paul had begotten them through the gospel. He does not use the word ‘regeneration’ for this is God’s work. The Apostle only uses this figure of begettal to stress the closeness of his relationship to the believers at Corinth. He can therefore ask them to be ‘imitators of me’ (16). In xi. 1 he again exhorts them to copy him, even as he imitated Christ. A man must live very closely to the Lord to be able to use such language with truth and without hypocrisy. But there was no doubt that this man’s practice squared with his preaching and therefore he could sincerely make such a tremendous statement without any idea of advertising or exalting himself. We should see to it that we are worthy representatives of the Saviour in the same way, for the unbelieving world around us knows Him not. It would indeed be a great thing if they could see some reflection of Christ in us in the way we act and speak.

Because Paul is so concerned with the Corinthians saints he is going to help them to this end, by sending Timothy:

“For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church” (iv. 17 R.V.).

Chapter xvi. 10 (“If Timothy come”) seems to be a difficulty, but we do not know all the circumstances. If we did, there would doubtless be an explanation. The possibility is that there were some reason that *might* prevent him reaching Corinth. We have already seen the dangers of traveling in those days apart from anything else, so we need have no misgivings about this.

While the Apostle Paul loved these converts at Corinth, yet his wisdom ensured that, when they needed firm handling, this was forthcoming. He now tells them that he knows some among them had taken the view that he would not bother to come to Corinth again, so that they need not be unduly concerned about the state of the church:

“Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them which are puffed up, but the power” (iv. 18, 19 R.V.).

“Puffed up” is a characteristic word of this epistle and it expresses the sad state of arrogance in the Corinthian assembly. When he came he would be able to assess and deal with these conceited critics of his. There was evidently a good deal of talking going on at Corinth, but Paul now contrasts this and the carnal power behind it with the real power of the Spirit that operates and develops the kingdom of God, “for the kingdom of God is not (i.e. does not operate) in word, but in power” (20). He then throws out a challenge:

“What would you like? Am I come to you with a rod? Or in love and a spirit of gentleness?” (iv. 21 C. K. Barrett).

There was no doubt which the Apostle preferred, but it was for the Corinthians to decide. If some did not mend their ways, then he, as the spiritual father, must punish and discipline them with his apostolic power.

A new section now develops in chapter v. in which Paul deals with immorality inside and outside the assembly. We must remember that the state of morals at Corinth was low indeed and immorality was not considered to be a very bad thing. With the rapid drifting away from Christian standards, we have a similar situation developing in our day. If this trend goes on, we shall see fornication and adultery being universally advocated as something desirable. This is clearly a manifestation of the Babylonian lie, where standards are deliberately twisted and altered. Good is represented as being bad, and bad is represented as being good, and all this is a symptom of the terrible degeneracy both spiritual and natural at the end of this age which the Word has foretold.

Paul writes and tells the Corinthians that he has heard of immorality among them, in that one member was living with his father’s wife. The Apostle does not call it adultery, from which we may conclude that either the offender’s father was not living or that he had divorced his wife. Such a relationship was even condemned by the Gentiles, and what was so distressing was not just the sin itself, but the arrogant way and the levity

with which the Corinthian church had treated it. Doubtless they regarded this as real “freedom”. They were now not under law and could do what they liked:

“And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you” (v. 2 R.V.).

But Paul had already come to a decision. Although he was not personally present at Corinth, in thought and spirit he was there and had already made up his mind regarding the one who had sinned:

“When you have been gathered together, with my spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus, we should, with the power of our Lord Jesus, hand over such a man as this to Satan, for the destruction of his flesh, in order that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (v. 4, 5 C. K. Barrett).

Paul was desirous that this severe judgment should not result from his apostolic power alone, but that it should be the judgment of the *whole church*, acting under the power of Christ as Lord. They would not only meet in the *name* of the Lord Jesus, but with the intention of acting in obedience to Him as Lord and with His power underlying them. We must remember that grace as a dispensation or administration, had not yet fully come. The definite judgments of God among believers during the Acts period (as Ananias and Sapphira) are evidence for this.

What does handing over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh mean? It does not envisage perishing eternally for the spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord. It cannot mean the flesh as the sinful old nature, for only the cross of Christ can deal with this (Rom. vi. 6) and in any case it would not be in Satan’s interest to destroy the old nature, for this is the very thing he seeks to work on and ensnare the believer. It can only mean the physical flesh, and in this case Satan would be permitted to inflict severe bodily suffering and possibly death. That Satan can attack the body of the believer with God’s permission, Job and even Paul himself are sufficient evidence (II Cor. xii. 7). Just how far he can go is certainly by the Lord.

Here Paul was concerned for the final salvation of the erring member and also with the purity of the church as a whole.

No.7. pp. 131 - 135

We have seen, in the section of the epistle we are dealing with, that the Apostle Paul was concerned not only with the sinning member of the Corinthian assembly, but also with the effect on the church as a whole. He tells them that their boasting (glorying) is not good, and that sin is like an infection—it can spread:

“Your boasting (glorying) is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened” (v. 6, 7 R.V.).

We have before noted that leaven or yeast in Scripture is always used in a bad sense, and is a picture of sin. The Apostle makes the same quotation in Gal. v. 9. Here he is about to introduce the illustration of the O.T. Passover feast, where leaven was not only prohibited in the bread, but had to be removed even from their houses (Exod. xii. 8, 15-20). In Matt. xvi. 6, 11, 12 the Lord Himself uses leaven to represent evil doctrine. In view of this, such popular phrases as the ‘leaven of the gospel’ used by some Christians must be avoided. It needs only a *small* amount of yeast to permeate a large lump of dough, and from this we can gather that the Corinthian believers were taking a light view of the sin in their midst. Just as the O.T. Israelite had to remove or purge out any yeast that had been introduced into the house before Passover, so the believers at Corinth must deal with this sin and remove the erring brother. They would then be like a fresh lump of dough without leaven and would approximate more nearly in practice to their ‘unleavened’ position in Christ. This could only be experienced because the true Passover Lamb had been sacrificed:

“For besides, our Passover lamb, Christ, has already been sacrificed. So let us celebrate the feast not with old leaven, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened loaves of sincerity and truth” (v. 7, 8 C. K. Barrett).

There is no doubt that, primarily, man cannot atone for, or deliver himself from the bondage of sin. Still less can he do it for someone else (Psa. xlix. 7). God Himself must bear the burden of His people’s guilt and He does so in the Person of Christ. All the believer in Christ can do is to give continual thanksgiving to God for this mighty act of deliverance from sin’s slavery and penalty, and must express it not only in words, but in everyday life. It is quite likely that Paul was writing at Passover time, in which case his illustration would be more pointed.

From the next verse we can see that the Apostle had already written to the Corinthian church on the subject of immorality, but some there had misunderstood him. We need have no misgiving that part of inspired Scripture has been lost. It is not necessary to assume that every letter Paul wrote in his lifetime was “God-breathed” or inspired by the Holy Spirit. But every one that had this hall-mark has certainly been preserved by God in the N.T. He had previously written to them that they should not keep company with fornicators. This, in the absolute sense, would be impossible in a place like Corinth. To

carry this out perfectly, one would have to go out of the world, which would be impossible:

“No: what I now write you is that you should not mix with anyone known as a Christian brother who is a fornicator, or rapacious man, or idolater, or abusive man, or drunkard, or robber, with such a man you ought not even to eat” (v. 11 C. K. Barrett).

It is significant that Paul gives no encouragement to the monasticism that arose in the early centuries, the idea of which is that one can escape the world and its pollution by withdrawing into solitude or religious community life. What such people do not realize is that they take their greatest enemy in with them, namely their sinful old nature! In the same way the Lord Jesus prayed:

“I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John xvii. 15).

And if all God’s children retired into monasteries, how could the testimony to His truth spread and His light shine out to a world of darkness? Paul now goes on to instruct the Corinthians that it is their duty to correctly assess and deal with the problem in their midst. This is what he means by the word ‘judge’, and this must not be done in any spirit of censoriousness or fault finding. This type of judgment is often too prevalent, alas, and must be avoided. Their concern should be towards ‘those within’ (i.e. the church, namely, believers). Those outside (unbelievers) must be left to the province of God to judge (verses 12 and 13). Meanwhile, they must exclude from their company the wicked person who was causing all this trouble (13).

Chapter vi. starts with another failure in the church at Corinth which had probably been reported to him by the household of Chloe, or through Stephanas and his friends. Believers were going to law with each other before pagan courts, and so giving a thoroughly bad witness to an unbelieving world. This should not be necessary for (1) they should be able to settle their own disputes among themselves and (2) these disputes would never arise if they were walking in love and Christ-likeness. The Apostle commences with a strong word (*tolmao*) as Rom. v. 7 and xv. 18 show:

“Does any one of you dare, when he has a suit against his fellow, to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?” (vi. 1 C. K. Barrett).

The ‘unrighteous’ and the ‘saints’ are clearly the unsaved and the saved. The N.T. writers do not use the word ‘unrighteous’ (*adikos*) for a believer in Christ. When such slip into sin, Paul describes them as ‘carnal’; they are walking according to the sinful old nature. The *sin itself* is of course unrighteous. One must not glamorize sin. The ‘unjust’ or ‘unrighteous’ (either of these translate *adikos*) are those who know nothing of righteousness imputed by God, as set forth in the epistle to the Romans. They are the unsaved; whereas the saved are righteous *in Christ*, in the sense that Romans uses the term and ‘holy’ in Him (i.e. saints) although, like the Corinthians, they may be far from holy or righteous in their walk day by day.

Paul now follows with an astounding statement:

“Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life?” (vi. 2, 3 R.V.).

Here is what is known as a *majori ad minus* argument. If at some future time God’s children are going to join with Him, not only in the tremendous task of judging the world, but angels too, then what a poor thing if they could not settle their petty differences amongst themselves here and now! These angels doubtless include those who are being reserved in everlasting chains for the future judgment of “the great day” (II Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). Not only are the sinning angels being *reserved* for this future judgment, but Peter assures us that the unrighteous (*adikoi*) are being likewise *reserved* for the day of judgment to be punished (II Pet. ii. 9), and he gives a vivid description of some of these throughout the chapter.

When the Corinthians realized that they were to take part in such future judgment as that of angels, Paul hopes that they would be ashamed of themselves in their resort to heathen courts:

“I say this to move you to shame. Is it so, that there cannot be found among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?” (vi. 5, 6 R.V.).

Such conduct was absolute failure in Christian practice (‘fault’ A.V., ‘defect’ R.V.). It would have been much better for them to suffer wrong and put up with the consequences. If it meant being defrauded, this was better than bad spectacle of believers quarreling in a public court before a pagan, unbelieving world. To do wrong is the greater evil, to suffer wrong the less. The Apostle could have referred to the Sermon on the Mount as confirmation of this (Matt. v. 39-42), but he does not do so. In any case he spoke with the Lord’s authority. They were indeed ‘doing wrong’ (8), and now he vividly reminds them in verse 9 that wrong doers such as he lists in verses 9 and 10 cannot look forward to possessing any future inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Some of them in their pre-conversion days had been in this category.

“But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (vi. 11 R.V.).

The R.V., as is often the case, is more accurate in rendering the Greek tenses, for the cleansing, sanctification and justification look back to the moment of salvation and quickening into spiritual life, resting, as it does, upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary. Paul now works back to the theme of sexual license which he left at the end of chapter v.:

“All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any” (vi. 12 R.V.).

“All things are permitted me.” It would seem that this was a phrase used at Corinth and it seems very up to date! Paul quotes it with certain definite reservations. He was the first to champion Christian freedom (Gal. v. 1) but this was always to be encircled by Christian love, and never meant that the believer was free to do just whatever he liked

and to indulge in sin. Such a phrase might well have been used as a watchword by a pre-gnostic party in the Corinthian church. We know that the developed gnosticism of the second century sometimes moved in the direction of asceticism and sometimes in that of libertinism. Its disparagement of the material led to an indifference to morality—the body was material and therefore its acts did not really matter—“all things were lawful”, and this spirit could easily have invaded the Corinthian assembly. A believer could be a glutton or immoral; it did not really matter. Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food (verse 13), but, far from this, the body as a whole is for the Lord and therefore not for fornication or for uncontrolled gratification of its desires. “I will not be overpowered by any of them” is the Apostle’s attitude, for if this is so, it nullifies redemption from bondage and brings back the old slavery. If the Lord has redeemed us, and purchased us for Himself, this includes our bodies, and we have no right to act as though they were exclusively our own possession. This the Corinthians had yet to learn.

No.8. pp. 148 - 152

Having made it quite clear that the “all things are permitted me” did not include anything sinful, the Apostle now shows that, as redemption includes our present bodies, fornication is not only a sin against the Lord but against the body itself:

“. . . . Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (vi. 18 R.V.).

Such a person certainly sins against the Lord, for the Holy Spirit indwells him (19). The human body of itself is neutral; it can either be dominated by the sinful old nature, or controlled by the Spirit of God. To whichever of these it yielded, it becomes *united*, either for evil or good:

“. . . . know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is *one body* (with her)? But he that is joined unto the Lord is *one spirit*” (vi. 16, 17).

Thus the Corinthian believers are urged to flee from fornication (18), and to learn to glorify God even in their bodies (20). It is to be noted that Paul calls things by their proper name. He does not falsify matters by calling immorality “making love” as is done today, thus putting a glamour upon sin, and turning it from black to white and making it appear respectable and desirable. One of the most insidious things around us at the present time is this deliberate falsifying of standards of conduct, making wrong appear right, and right appear wrong. This is Babylonianism coming right out into the open. No wonder individual, national and world problems are increasing apace. A society which permits this sort of thing is sowing the seeds of disintegration and destruction.

Paul now turns to behaviour within marriage, for this is one of the problems concerning which the church at Corinth had written for guidance (vii. 1). A married couple have *equal* conjugal rights (verses 3 and 4), which should not be denied, lest they should be tempted to fornication (2). Incidentally, verse 2 is a prohibition against

polygamy, which finds no place in the N.T. The Apostle goes on to refer to himself and to state:

“Yet I would that all men were even as I myself” (vii. 7 R.V.).

This does not mean that celibacy is necessarily ideal. What Paul desired was that all had the capacity for resistance to sensual allurements that he himself possessed. Yet he recognized that this was not so, and that it was “better to marry than to burn” (in desire, verse 9). However, there was a far more important reason even than this, and that was the possibility of the early return of the Lord, according to the conditions and promises of Acts iii. 19-26. There was little point in taking on the obligations of marriage if the Lord might come at any time. If one was unmarried, it was far better to remain so providing continency was maintained. On the other hand, marriage was not a sin:

“Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned” (vii. 27, 28 R.V.).

But as the end of the age was near with its tribulation, such would have ‘trouble in the flesh’ (28). If the problem of separation arose, owing to one of the partners being an unbeliever (one being saved after marriage), providing the unbeliever was willing, such separation should be avoided (verses 12-14). Divorce between believers must be avoided at all costs. Paul uses two words in this context, *chorizo* separate, and *aphiemi* divorce. In Judaism only the husband had the right to divorce, but here the Apostle uses the word for both sexes, “. . . . and that the husband *divorces* not his wife” (11), “. . . . and the woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not *divorce* her husband” (13). A word must be said concerning the difficulty of verses 14 and 15:

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (R.V.).

It is surely obvious that Paul was not teaching that an unbelieving partner in marriage was automatically saved by being so linked with a believer, nor that children of such a marriage were likewise automatically saved, for this would be entirely contrary to all his teaching regarding salvation by grace and faith in Christ and the tenor of the N.T. generally.

The uncleanness here is the ceremonial uncleanness of the O.T. The reader should note the argument on such uncleanness in Hag. ii. 11-13. The linking in marriage with a foreigner in O.T. days would have resulted in uncleanness and being cut off from the covenant relationship. The Apostle is now saying that the O.T. principle of the communication of uncleanness does not hold in this case. And there was also the possibility that the believing partner might be the means of leading the unsaved one to a saving knowledge of Christ (16).

In any case, the general principle, youching every sphere of life, is to abide in one’s calling, providing this was straightforward and acceptable to God (18-24). Even slaves

were advised to be willing to stay as they were (21, 22). This was the wisest way of being prepared and ready for the imminent coming of the Lord, which was the overriding consideration.

A new section now commences. The *peri de* indicates that an answer follows to another of the church's problems, concerning which they had written him. Three groups are now dealt with (1) the unmarried young (25-35); (2) the parents or engaged couples (36-38); and (3) widows (39, 40). With the Lord's coming in mind, celibacy was desirable but not enforced. The single man was wiser if he did not marry. Conversely a married man should not seek release from marriage (27, 28). In giving his advice, Paul had only one thing in mind, sparing them trouble and anxiety (28). If wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes, pestilence and famine, were at hand, as the Lord Himself predicted before His second coming (Mark xiii. 7, 8, 17), then to take on the obligations of marriage was a foolish act tending to multiply difficulties.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened” (vii. 29).

The end of the age was near. In chapter x. 11 the Apostle asserts that the ‘conclusion of the ages’ had arrived. The Apostle John in his first epistle stated that it was the “last hour” (literally ii. 18), and Peter, that “the end of all things is at hand” (I Pet. iv. 7). There can be no doubt that the age was drawing to a close, and the end, which would be terminated by the Lord's coming, was imminent. It behooved every believer to be on the alert, waiting for the Son from heaven (I Thess. i. 10), and to see to it that they were as loose as possible to all earthly relationships and cares that would distract them from their final witness and service for the Lord, so that they might “attend upon the Lord without distraction” (35). In the married state the tendency is for the married man to be anxious (careful R.V.) as to how he may please his wife, and likewise the wife her husband (32-34), whereas the unmarried can more easily be taken up with the things of the Lord and how to please Him first and foremost.

Verses 36-38 creates a problem. What does the word ‘virgin’ mean in this context? At least three ideas have been put forward (1) a father and his unmarried daughter is in view. (2) A spiritual marriage in which people went through a form of marriage, and yet lived together as brother and sister. We know that such relationships existed later in the history of the church, though it is very doubtful if it took place as early as this, and also it is difficult to conceive that such a union would have received Paul's approval. (3) An engaged couple who are in doubt as to whether they should marry or not under the circumstances. As for (1) the father had control of his daughter's marriage and this interpretation is possible, though “his virgin” is a peculiar way of referring to his daughter. The second interpretation (2) can be discounted. Taking everything into consideration, the fewest difficulties seem to be raised by the third view (3). If such a couple found the unmarried state too much of a strain, then marriage was desirable and not a sin. On the other hand, were they able to exercise self-control, to stay as they were would be better, for the reasons given before.

The Apostle now deals with the problem of widows. Marriage is a life-long tie (39), but if a woman loses her husband by death, she is perfectly free to marry again, though

the then exceptional times made it better if she did not do so (40). It is very important to note that Paul limits her marriage and choice of a husband to being “only in the Lord”. This means that she can only marry *a believer* and further than that, *a believer who was the Lord’s will* as far as she was concerned. In his second letter marriage with unbelievers is expressly forbidden:

“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?” (II Cor. vi. 14, 15 R.V.).

We need to remember that God’s prohibitions are not with the object of denying us pleasures, or anything of value. They are to save us trouble, anxiety, and misery; and to keep us in the best conditions to serve Him fully and faithfully. Never was this Divine rule for the marriage of believers needed to be stressed more than now. We have seen so many cases of tragedy, life-long unhappiness and spiritual fruitlessness in young people result from its disobedience, and to everyone who is contemplating marriage with an unbeliever, we would say *don’t*. The unsaved one may be very attractive in many ways and the believer may delude himself into thinking that after marriage “it will all come right” and such a one will be saved, *but this is just wishful thinking and nothing more*. Marriage must never be looked at as a kind of god to which everything must be sacrificed. How can the Lord bless a union which He has forbidden? And how can there be any lasting happiness for a believer in a life-long relationship without His blessing? For it needs to be stressed that God’s children cannot take the lax view of marriage and divorce that the unbelieving world does. If every detail of our lives is a concern to the Lord (and it surely is), then we can say with absolute certainty that such an important and lasting step as marriage must be controlled by Him and He will certainly indicate His will in this matter, if we will only have patience and wisdom *to await His leading and providing*. Failure to do this not only means unhappiness and frustration, but spiritual decline and backsliding, and a life of no real testimony for the Lord Who has redeemed us.

This may sound harsh and unsympathetic, but it is not really so. As with Paul of old, we wish to save believers from “trouble in the flesh”. Is not the Lord worth trusting in this matter, and for everything else in this life?

No.9. pp. 165 - 169

In chapter viii. Paul deals with another theme which apparently had been raised in the Corinthians' letter to him, concerning food which had been sacrificed to idols; and he returns to it again in chapter x. 14-33. This was a problem confined to apostolic times, but nevertheless a pressing one for believers. Much of the food offered for sale had passed through the rites of heathen temples. Being associated with idolatry, it was offensive to the Jewish mind, but would not be a particular problem to a Gentile. What was the answer to this difficulty in a close community consisting of Jews and Gentiles? First of all, the Apostle deals with knowledge as a whole, possibly with special regard to a 'gnostic' section in the Corinthian church, which held a conceited idea of their intellectual attainments. Knowledge without divine love is valueless. It merely "puffs up" the old sinful nature, and therefore can be dangerous:

"Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; but if any man loveth God, the same is known of Him" (I Cor. viii. 1-3 R.V.).

Love builds up, and is the antidote to a barren knowledge which merely puffs up. Moreover, it is the sign that God has taken the initiative. It is His love that comes first, just as John wrote in his first epistle, "We love Him: because He first loved us" (I John iv. 19). But returning to the theme of idolatrous food and idols themselves, Paul writes "we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one" (verse 4 R.V.). This does not mean that idolatry was not a reality, but it was the *conception* of the idolater that was wrong. There was not an idol in the sense such a person regarded it, for the gods they thought the idols represented were nothing more than demons. The word *god* was in common use in the ancient world, which was thickly populated with so-called divine beings who, though their natural home was thought to be in heaven, from time to time appeared on earth. But these 'many gods' and 'many lords' had no real existence, and were in direct conflict with the stern monotheism of the Scripture (viii. 4, 5). This thought the Apostle now expands:

"Yet to us there is *one* God, the Father, of (*ek*) Whom are all things (*ta panta*), and we unto (*eis*) Him; and *one* Lord, Jesus Christ, through (*dia*) Whom are all things (*ta panta*), and we through (*dia*) Him" (viii. 6 R.V.).

From the prepositions used, the Father is brought before us as the *source*, and the Lord Jesus as the *mediator* of creation and redemption. We must be very careful to avoid the idea that the mediatorial position of Christ gives Him a lower place as regards the Godhead than the Father. In a similar passage in Col. i. 16 we read "all things (*ta panta*) were created by (*dia*) Him (Christ), and FOR or UNTO (*eis*) Him (as the goal)". In Rev. iv. 8-11 the (R.V.) ascription of praise is to "*The Lord God, the Almighty*, which was and which is and which is to come (Christ, i. 8) for Thou didst create all things (*ta panta*), and *because of Thy will* they were, and were created". It should be noted too that in neither of these contexts do we find the plain *panta*, all things. This

could include evil. The more defined expression, *ta panta*, excludes this, and either refers to creation in its perfected form, or is limited to whatever the context is dealing with, and then means *all (these) things*.

Now, wrote the Apostle, all men have not this knowledge (7), and some who are in this category are weak in the faith and they must be considered by those who are stronger and more advanced. This is real love—love and consideration for others *in practice*. The weak ones, when eating food which had been consecrated and sacrificed to an idol, would have a distressed and defiled conscience. Others who are stronger and with more knowledge could eat such food without any objection, realizing that such a thing as food in itself will not bring us under condemnation with God. They would be neither better nor worse before God as regards what they ate (verses 7 and 8). However, there was one thing that the stronger ones must consider, which should influence their actions, and that is *the effect of their conduct on the weaker brother*. Take care, said the Apostle, lest this authority (liberty A.V.) of yours becomes a stumbling-block to those who are weak (9). The word *exousia*, authority, obviously means the authority to eat *any* kind of food. Paul now gives a concrete illustration:

“For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, sitting at table in an idol-shrine, will not his conscience be fortified to eat things sacrificed to idols? For the weak man perishes by your knowledge, your brother, for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against your brothers, and wounding their conscience, weak as it is, you sin against Christ” (viii. 10-12, C. K. Barrett).

Nothing is clearer from this than the fact that our conduct affects other people. We may stress our liberty and stress it wrongly, for liberty must always be regulated by love. If the Lord loved the weaker brethren enough to die for them, then the strong ought to love them well enough to be willing to forego some of their rights. They should be ready to do this, not because the weak demand it, but rather, that this is the way of self-effacing love as the Lord has loved. The word ‘perish’ is strong and may refer to the ‘sin unto death’. If the weak brother continually offended his conscience, he would be persistently sinning, for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. xiv. 23, and the whole of this chapter should be read as it deals with a similar context). Paul brings his argument to a climax by saying:

“And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, *ye sin against Christ*. Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble” (viii. 12, 13 R.V.).

Let us face the fact that by pushing our liberty too far, *we can sin* not only against fellow-believers, *but against the Lord*. We are not bothered today with the problem of food sacrificed to idols, *but the principle of all this is still true*. The mature Christian’s attitude to Sunday and various pleasures for instance, needs to be constantly examined in the light of this, and we should always remember the practical example of the Apostle, who was even willing to curtail his rights rather than cause someone weaker in the faith to stumble.

Chapter ix., on the surface, seems to change the theme, but if we carefully consider what underlies these verses, we shall see this is not so. Paul now makes it clear that even an apostle should be ready to renounce his rights for the sake of the truth of the gospel and those to whom he ministers. He could say:

“Nevertheless we did not use this right that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel to the Jews I became as a Jew to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (ix. 12, 18, 20, 22 R.V.).

This is a summary of the section now before us. How different Paul’s ministry and witness would have been if he had continually insisted on his rights as an apostle and leader! But as always, he was willing to put self into the background with a view to the blessing and building up of others. Doubtless at Corinth there would be some who would not be pleased with his teaching concerning the restriction of Christian liberty, specially those whose watchword was freedom at all costs, irrespective of the effect on other people. Such would question Paul’s own authority and say that, if he were a true apostle, he would not allow himself to be restricted in this way. It is certain that the Apostle would hardly have spent so long on the subject of apostolic rights, if this had not been queried at Corinth. He deals with this situation by a series of challenging questions, as though in debate:

“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?” (ix. 1 R.V.).

Do you think (you Corinthians) that because I limit my freedom out of love, my freedom does not exist? Is not my apostleship real? An apostle must have *personal* dealings with the risen Christ to be a true witness. I have actually seen Jesus Christ our Lord and been commissioned by Him! And as a practical result of my apostleship, you Corinthians are the product of my labours! Even if others do not recognize my apostleship, yet at least to you I should be a real apostle, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord!

So Paul reasons with them in a way that was unanswerable to those who were willing to face facts. He deals now directly with his critics:

“My defense against those who would like to cross-examine me is this”
(ix. 3 C. K. Barrett).

Again, he throws at them a series of rhetorical questions:

“Have we no right to eat and to drink? Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas (Peter). Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? What soldier serveth at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” (ix. 4-7 R.V.).

What he says in effect is this. As true apostles, Barnabas and I have the right to (1) have our food provided by the Christian community. (2) We could bring wives with

us as other apostles do and claim that they should also be supported by the community. (3) We need not work for our living, but have a right to maintenance from the churches. As soldier on service expects to be maintained. Why not an apostle? The owner of a vineyard expects nourishment from the ground on which he bestows his labour. Why not an apostle? A herdsman who looks after cattle expects some of the milk the flock yields. Why not an apostle? These human analogies are right to the point. But there is something even stronger, namely, the teaching of Scripture:

“Saith not the law also the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake” (ix. 8-10 R.V.).

It was only natural that an animal when threshing should take what mouthfuls of food it wanted while it was working. God had this in mind in the law, but also something more. Is He not speaking simply on our account, asks the Apostle? If the farm worker expects practical results from his labours, should not an apostle, who has sown spiritual things, expect the necessary material things? If others share in authority over you Corinthians, should not I the more? (who was the means used for the founding of the church at Corinth?). *“Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things (i.e. endure hardship, etc.), that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ”* (verse 12 R.V.).

At last Paul comes to his main point. If he did not claim the full rights of an apostle, it was no reflection on his true apostleship. He refrained in the interests of the Gospel itself. Others might appear to make a good thing out of their missionary work at Corinth and so give a bad impression to the outsider. The Apostle took great care that this kind of conduct could never truthfully be leveled at him. He would rather work night and day with his own hands at tent-making and so be independent, rather than the enemies of truth should make capital out of the exercise of his apostolic rights.

How wise was this man! True wisdom is what we all need in abundance if our Christian witness is not to be spoiled by human failing or short-sightedness.

No.10. pp. 184 - 188

The Apostle Paul sums up the section of the epistle we have been dealing with, relative to the believer's rights and his voluntary limitation of these for the sake of weaker brethren, by saying:

“. . . I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (ix. 22 R.V.).

His utter unselfishness and consideration for others made such an attitude a constant experience with him. As long as there was no compromise with truth, he was willing to go as far as possible with both Jew and Gentile in spite of their totally opposite backgrounds, with one object, that some of them would be won for Christ (20, 21). We notice that Paul gives no hint of universal salvation. He knew only too well that in spite of his faithful proclamation of the gospel of Christ, only some would respond; nevertheless he did everything for the sake of the gospel, that in it we might be a joint-partaker (23 R.V.). It was a privilege indeed to have any share in its witness, and this led on to the thought of service and its outcome. The Corinthians seemed to believe that as long as they were saved, this was all that mattered. The Christian life and service afterwards counted little with them, otherwise they would never have tolerated the condition that existed in their midst. Now the Apostle has to remind them that, although salvation is by grace, quite apart from works, the practical response after salvation would be taken account of by the Lord and all would be finally answerable to Him for this. So once again he introduces the teaching concerning reward for faithful service, as he had already done in chapter iii. (iii. 10-15), and for this uses the illustration of the games which would be universally understood in the Greek world. Paul is fond of using the “race course” as a concrete example of what faithful Christian witness should be like. He does so in Hebrews (xii. 1, 2), Galatians (ii. 2; v. 7), Philippians (iii. 13, 14) and II Timothy (ii. 5; iv. 7, 8), and to these we might add Acts xx. 24.

The believers at Corinth evidently thought that there was an automatic connection between running and winning; in other words, to be saved meant automatically being rewarded by the Lord, and there are not wanting today Christians who think likewise. Some even reject the possibility of reward entirely and so stress grace that reward is impossible. Such should carefully ponder the Apostle's argument here:

“Do you not know that all the competitors in the stadium run, but only one of them receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Everyone who takes part in the contests disciplines himself in every way. They do it to receive a perishable crown, we to receive an imperishable one” (ix. 24, 25 C. K. Barrett).

The entry into any race does not in itself guarantee a prize either in athletics or in Christianity. But we must not deduce from Paul's illustration that only *one* believer can win God's prize, or one out of each group. The point at issue is that the believer must not only *start* correctly. He must *continue* correctly, press on, and reach the goal. No runner can afford to drop out of the race for any reason if he desires to breast the tape and win. Likewise for the believer, the *whole* of human life is like a racecourse. Service for the

Lord is not for a part of our lives on earth, it must absorb the all of it, from salvation to either death or the realization of our hope in glory.

As we are not machines or puppets, but moral creatures who have the inestimable benefit of being freed from the dominion of sin by redemption, we are thereby accountable to the Lord for our practical response to Him day-to-day. If this were not so, the command to ‘walk worthy’ would be empty indeed. The Word of God makes it quite clear that, while all of His children are His servants, some are good servants and others are bad ones. Some are faithful, while others are unfaithful. It matters not whether we are dealing with the O.T., the Gospels or Epistles, this is most clearly taught. Now a God of righteousness and justice will surely take account of this, and if such justice must be seen to be done (and this certainly will be so), then there must be a reckoning day for all the Lord’s servants (II Cor. v. 9, 10; Rom. xiv. 10-12).

Paul reminds the Corinthians that every athlete disciplines himself in every way in rigorous training. This was not a hardship to any keen runner. He regarded it as the greatest of privileges to do so, and possibly to obtain the wreath of pine with all the honour attached to it as a symbol of victory. The Corinthians therefore must take stock of themselves and realize that (1) God’s prizes are worth having, and (2) that they are not obtained cheaply.

The Apostle now transfers the figure to himself and not only alludes to the controlled effort needed in a race, but the purposeful energy used in a boxing match:

“So, for my part, that is how I run—not as if I did not know where I was going; that is how I box, not as though I were beating the air. But I buffet my body, and bring it into slavery, lest, when I have preached to others, I should myself prove to be rejected” (ix. 26, 27 C. K. Barrett).

The successful runner does not wander aimlessly. He keeps his eye on the course and the tape at the end, and presses straight towards it with all speed. Likewise, the believer cannot afford to be negligent with regard to his service and witness for the Lord. There can be no holidays from this, or periods when he can afford to slack. It is useless being a spasmodic runner. It is only consistent effort that finally wins. Or take a boxer. He does not waste his strength in dealing ineffectual blows, for this would be just beating the air and would achieve nothing. *Every blow must tell.* And the one whom Paul is fighting is not another person, *but himself.* He buffets or disciplines his body, so that it becomes his slave. He is in complete control of himself as he takes God’s grace and strength so to be. Too many of us are ruled by our bodies. They can be the most demanding of masters, and unless we are careful, their whims can turn us this way and that, and so affect our running in the heavenly race.

To some, verse 27 is a problem, for, on the surface, it seems as though Paul feared lest he could lose his salvation at the end. The A.V. ‘castaway’ is too strong. “Rejected” or “disapproved” is better. The word *adokimos* is the negative of *dokimos*, approved, occurring in II Tim. ii. 15, “Study to show thyself *approved* unto God, a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth”. Here again the context is

dealing with a *good workman*; in other words it speaks of *service*. When the Lord finally tests “every man’s work of what sort it is” (I Cor. iii. 13), all will be in two categories: faithful, with the Lord’s approval, or unfaithful, with His disapproval. The former will receive the Lord’s eternal reward, symbolized by a *prize* or *crown*, the latter will be denied it (II Tim. ii. 11-13). This doctrine then is to be distinguished from salvation by grace, apart from works. It is additional to salvation and must never be confused with it. Failure to do this has resulted in the teaching of being saved today and possibly lost tomorrow. Such an idea undermines the whole redemptive purpose of God and would make this dependent on the creature, rather than on the almighty power and wisdom of the Creator and Saviour of men.

On the surface, it looks as though the subject changes at the beginning of chapter x., but a careful examination shows that this is not so. Having clearly taught that a believer can be securely saved, yet lose the Divine prize through slackness or unfaithfulness, the Apostle now illustrates this by appealing to Israel’s past history in the wilderness:

“For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all 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; for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness” (I Cor. x. 1-5 R.V.).

Nothing was more certain than that *all* Israel were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and typically redeemed. Yet it is equally clear that *only two* out of the great multitude who were rescued from Egypt attained the promised land, i.e. Caleb and Joshua. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us why. They could not enter because of their unbelief (Heb. iii. 16-19). And unbelief means more than not believing; it includes active disobedience. Entering the promised land was equivalent to “going on to maturity” of Heb. vi. 1, and represents the prize element which they lost.

In these verses one should note the stress on *all*, and then contrast it with *most of them* in verse 5. *All* the Israelites enjoyed the privileges of redemption, i.e. freedom from bondage and the provision of all their pilgrim needs in respect to food, drink, clothing and protection. *All* of them ate the manna, so wondrously provided every day by the Lord. This was *spiritual* food, as likewise the water from the smitten rock was *spiritual* drink, and the rock itself was spiritual (verses 3 and 4). This is an interesting and instructive usage in the Scriptures of the word “spiritual”. So many seem to think that this word always designates something shadowy and unreal, but the manna and the water were definitely literal and material. They were ‘spiritual’ as well, which shows that they had a further significance in addition to their material function as food and drink. In other words they were *typical*; they represented spiritual truth as the Lord’s great discourse in John vi. 30-42 clearly shows.

The O.T. record sets forth the ten times Israel provoked the Lord by reason of which they lost their prize—entry into the promised land. The Corinthian believers were therefore to take warning. They need not think that they would escape such a penalty if they provoked God in a similar manner. Their fathers lusted after evil things. They

became idolaters and fell into vice (verses 6-8). They tempted the Lord and perished through the snake bites (9). They tried to see how far they could go into sin without the Lord intervening. They continually grumbled about the Lord's leading and dealings with them. We may think that grumbling is not nearly so bad as idolatry, but the Lord took a different and solemn view of this. They wearied Him with their constant complaints and dissatisfaction. It is no wonder that we, as members of the Body of Christ are warned against this sin, and we should note that it is in the epistle concerning the prize, namely Phil. ii. 14, that we are told: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings".

The Apostle sums up by saying:

"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (x. 11 R.V.).

Some of the Corinthians apparently thought that, because they were saved, they could get away with idolatry and sin, so that this was of little account in their estimation. Paul is at pains to show the falsity and danger of such a conception.

No.11. pp. 204 - 208

In x. 11 Paul uses the striking expression, "the end of the ages". The whole verse translated literally would read, "Now these things happened to them by way of example; and they were written for our warning, upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived". Such a drastic expression can only be understood in the light of the early Second Coming of the Lord as a possibility during the Acts period (Acts iii. 19-26). Nothing less than this would warrant such an expression, which would otherwise be a gross exaggeration. The Apostle had already stated that the "time was short" (vii. 29), and he instructed believers to wait daily for the return of the Saviour. We have seen that this was the united testimony of all the early epistles and it is difficult to understand how this has been ignored by expositors and believers generally over the centuries.

It is true to say that the early epistles cannot be understood properly without a recognition of this tremendous fact and its implications at the time of writing. The Apostle has been stressing the responsibility to the Lord that Truth brings, and the need for its practical outworking, in terms of a heavenly race. This was to counter the complacency of some of the Corinthian believers. However, to balance things up, lest this responsibility should appear too great, he now brings forward a Divine promise of great encouragement:

"No testing has fallen upon you but what is the common lot of men: But God can be trusted not to allow you to be tested beyond your power; on the contrary, along with the trial He will provide also the way out, so that you may be able to endure" (x. 13 C. K. Barrett).

God knows even better than the believer just how much testing he can endure, and never will He allow the burden to become too great. Sometimes we may feel that we

have come to the limit of our capability of endurance, but if this promise is true, this is not really so, otherwise the Lord would have lightened the burden. He indeed can “suit the burden to the back”, and if we can see behind it all our need for His loving discipline, we shall not fail Him by becoming impatient or bitter. The second part of the promise is given a wrong slant in the A.V. If a “way to escape” is made for us, then we are not bearing the trial. *Ekbasis*, literally way out, can mean the end, issue or outcome, and the word only occurs twice in the N.T. (here and Heb. xiii. 7). The promise means that He Who has led us *into* the trial has all of it, and its *outcome*, securely under His control. It will not continue one moment longer than is necessary, and we can be brought out of it “more than conquerors” by His grace and strength. This gives great assurance even though there may be details of the trial we cannot understand.

Paul now sums this section up: “Wherefore (or the conclusion of this) my beloved (is), flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise (or sensible) men; judge ye what I say” (verses 14 and 15 R.V.). Idolatry must be avoided at all costs and therefore there should be no direct contact with it if it could be avoided. “Run away from it”, said the Apostle. In direct contrast to this was the New Covenant feast, the Lord’s Supper.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion (sharing) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion (sharing) of the body of Christ?” (x. 16 R.V.)

The cup of blessing was one of the cups of wine which were drunk at the Passover meal. As many may not be familiar with the procedure which prevailed at the time of Christ we give a summary:

- (1) Those celebrating the feast gathered together with the head of the house blessing the cup of wine which all partook.
- (2) The followed washing of the hands accompanied with a benediction.
- (3) The table was set with the Passover lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs and sauce.
- (4) The head of the house, and then the others, dipped a portion of bitter herbs into the sauce and ate them.
- (5) The dishes were then removed and a cup of wine brought, followed by an interval for asking questions concerning the feast, and then the wine was drunk (see Exod. xii. 26, 27).
- (6) The table was again set, the head repeating the commemorative words which opened what was strictly the paschal supper, and Psalms ciii. and civ. were sung (the first part of the Hallel).
- (7) The second washing of the hands followed with a short blessing, breaking one of the two cakes of unleavened bread, with thanks. The bread was partaken, after dipping it, with the bitter herbs, into the sauce.
- (8) The flesh was then eaten with the bread and another blessing, together with a third cup of wine, known as “the cup of blessing”.
- (9) Then came the fourth cup, with a recital or singing of Psalms cxv.-cxviii., from which this cup was known as “the cup of the Hallel”, or of the Song.
- (10) There might be, in conclusion, a fifth cup, provided that the great Hallel was sung over it (possibly Psalms cxx.-cxxxviii.).

In connection with all this, the student should read Exod. xii. 1-27 which gives the original instructions concerning the Passover.

When we compare the above ritual with the institution of the New Covenant feast by the Lord, we find it throws a certain amount of light on the procedure, although we cannot be certain of every detail. To (1), (5) or (8) we may refer the first words and the first distribution of the cup (Luke xxii. 17, 18); to (4) or (7) the dipping of the sop (John xiii. 26); to (7) or an interval during or after (8), the distribution of the broken bread (Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; I Cor. xi. 23, 24); to (9) or (10) “after supper” (Luke xxii. 20); then the thanksgiving and distribution of the cup, and the hymn with which the whole was ended.

There have been differences of opinion as to whether the meal which the Lord instituted was actually the Passover or an anticipation of it. But it seems quite clear from the Gospel narrative, that it was the actual Passover (Matt. xxvi. 2, 17, 18, 19; Mark xiv. 1, 12, 14, 16; Luke xxii. 7, 8, 11, 13, 15); and that the Lord was giving it an added significance with a view to His impending death and sacrifice of Himself, and connecting it with the New Covenant of Jer. xxxi. 31-37 made with Israel and Judah. It should be noted that the Passover was celebrated once a year only, and the Lord gave no direct indication of the frequency of the new feast (“Do this as oft as ye drink it”, I Cor. xi. 25). Even if it could be proved that it was definitely kept once a week by the early disciples, there was certainly no Divine command so to keep it.

Another factor which must be recognized and without which a correct assessment cannot be made of this meal, is its early connection with the *agape* or love-feast. One great feature of the original Pentecost of Acts ii. was that the disciples learned to share everything, their possessions and even their food (see also Acts iv. 32). This was indeed a Divine communism with Christ in the centre. What we see today called “communism” is the Devil’s counterfeit without Christ. The newly saved gathering of Acts ii. expressed their brotherly love in this practical way:

“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and *had all things in common* (i.e. *shared*); and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, *did eat their meat (food) with gladness and singleness of heart*” (Acts ii. 43-46).

The ‘breaking of bread’ was a common Jewish idiom for simply partaking of a meal. It is quite a mistake to limit it, as some do, to the Lord’s Supper. The flat, round Jewish loaves were always broken and not cut, hence the origin of the phrase (see Matt. xv. 36; Mark vi. 41; Luke ix. 16). In Acts ii. 46 “breaking bread from house to house” is explained by the next phrase “did eat their food with gladness”, and shows this was a communal meal and came to be known as an *agape*, a love-feast. There were other practical expressions of brotherly love, such as almsgiving, and the kiss of greeting of man to man, and woman to woman (I Pet. v. 14; Rom. xvi. 16; I Cor. xvi. 20; II Cor. xiii.12; I Thess. v. 26). By the time of Acts vi. 1 the growth of the Jerusalem assembly led to the appointment of the seven to serve tables, which apparently included the responsibility for arranging the common meals. Early the practice arose of ending the communal meal with the Lord’s Supper, though again this was done without any Divine command recorded in the N.T. Soon this began to be abused. There was over-eating and

gluttony and this necessitated the sharp rebuke of the Apostle in I Cor. xi. Jude 12 likewise warns of these excesses (“There are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts” R.V.), and possibly II Pet. ii. 13, where there is a variant reading of *agapais*, love-feasts, for *apatais*, deceivings. The church Fathers refer to these feasts, among them Ignatius, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Chrysostom.

The love-feast later on became separated from the Lord’s Supper. Such edicts as that of Trajan against secret societies, led to this. The *agape* was adjudged by the Emperor to pertain to secret clubs. By the fourth century the *agape* came into disfavour through various reasons such as disorders and the increasing emphasis placed upon the Eucharist — which finally degenerated into the Roman Mass. The Council of Laodicea (363), the third council of Carthage (393), and the second council of Orleans (541) led to finally prohibiting feasting in churches, though the rite still persisted in the Eastern Church. John Wesley introduced the practice within Methodism, but it has not survived. The practice of the Sovereign distributing Maundy money is a relic of the *agape*.

It is important to note that the Lord Jesus, either substituted or added the ‘washing of the feet’ to the Passover ritual. He may have substituted this for one of the hand washings of this Service. Now we are often told that “all the commands of Jesus” are binding on the church today and that, in instituting the Supper, He was giving an example for all time to believers. If we notice carefully what He said in connection with that wondrous and lowly act of washing the disciples’ feet, we shall indeed wonder why those who talk like this have turned a blind eye to this important part of the Supper:

“He riseth from Supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded He said unto them, know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well: for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*” (John xiii. 4-17).

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the Lord’s words. He was expressly giving an example for the disciples to follow. Why has not the professing church been keen to put this into practice then? Can it be that washing people’s feet is too lowly an act and is not nearly so thrilling as sipping wine and engaging in all the ritual that has accumulated through the centuries and obliterated the real meaning of this simple feast?

Coming back to I Corinthians, we shall not find it easy to distinguish between the love feast and the Lord’s Supper, but it is essential to have this background of knowledge if we are to understand properly the situation at Corinth with which Paul was dealing. There is no doubt that, because of human failing and infirmity, all ritual can become dangerous and finally gain an importance that it was never meant to have. The senses are entertained by it, and finally feeling is substituted for faith. We should be grateful that we belong to a heavenly calling where all shadows have vanished and we have all the fullness and spiritual reality in Christ.

No.12. pp. 225 - 229

Having glanced at the connection of the *agape*, the love-feast or communal meal, with the Lord's Supper, we return to the Apostle Paul's argument in I Cor. x. 16:

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion (sharing) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion (sharing) of the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread” (x. 16, 17 R.V.).

In the last study we pointed out that the cup of blessing was a technical Jewish term for the cup of wine drunk at the end of the meal with an appropriate grace: “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Who givest us the fruit of the vine”. In the Passover meal, this was the third of the four cups that had to be drunk. The Apostle is now going to argue that the symbols of the wine and broken bread set forth the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus, the redemptive benefits of which they all shared together by faith in Him; this fact binding them into one body or company of believers. This was set forth pictorially, by their drinking the cup and eating the broken bread. In this sense they had a common participation in the body and blood of Christ. The phrase ‘one body’ used here is explained: “Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, form one body, for we all partake” (verse 17 C. K. Barrett). The common participation bound them into one company, and so, as Rom. xii. 5 later expressed it, they were “one body IN Christ, and every one members one of another”. Note, Paul does not say they were the Body OF Christ. *In Christ* is positional, such as we have it used in II Cor. v. 17. The joint-Body (*sussoma*) of Ephesians was a later revelation: the latter word is not used in the Acts epistles, and we need to be very accurate in our reading of the context we are studying. Let us not forget that the discussion concerning the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper arose from the warning to flee from idolatry (x. 14), and to avoid as far as possible food offered to idols. Any participation in these things after sharing in the tremendous benefits that flowed from the Lord's death, symbolized by the broken bread and the wine, would be treachery indeed.

Paul now points to an analogy to re-inforce his argument:

“Behold Israel after the flesh; have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?” (x. 18 R.V.).

In some of the O.T. sacrifices, the priests and the offerer shared together in the eating of the sacrifice. They were “partners at the altar” and equally partook of the benefits. But no such idea of blessing could be read into idolatry:

“Well: what do I mean by this? That food sacrificed to an idol is anything? Or that an idol is anything?” (x. 19 C. K. Barrett).

Idolatry was dangerous from many aspects, but chiefly because behind all idolatry was demonism and Satan worship: “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons (devils), and not to God; and I would not that ye should have communion

(fellowship) with demons (devils, verse 20)". Let us not forget that there is only one Devil or slanderer, but there are multitudes of demons, evil spirits, under his control. All idolatry, whether ancient or modern, is only another form of the worship of Satan, and is the very thing that he covets most of all. The very thought of sharing in the redemptive blessings that flow from Calvary and sharing in Satan worship was abhorrent in the extreme:

"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. Or are we to provoke the Lord? Are we stronger than He?" (x. 21, 22 C. K. Barrett).

We must remember that many of the Corinthian church were formerly pagans who had enjoyed the heathen sacrificial worship in their temples. Possibly this still had a fascination for them. But, said the Apostle, there must be a clean break. Eating food which had been sold in the market, after previously being used at an idolatrous feast, was one thing; but direct participation in such feasts was quite another. Furthermore, they had the warning of the provocation of the Lord of Israel of old, and the punishment that followed. Did they think they could provoke the Lord and get away with it?

In the section that follows, the Apostle sums up his teaching concerning food offered to idols which was one of the problems the Corinthian church had written to him about. There was a situation in which it might be harmless to eat food which had previously been offered to an idol. On the other hand it might be wrong so to do. The circumstances in each case must be taken into account, with the over-riding consideration of "his neighbour's good" (24).

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles (market), eat, asking no question for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, this hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: conscience, I say, not thine own, but the others" (x. 25-29 R.V.).

The sense of these verse is clear. Meat sold at the markets would almost surely contain a proportion which had been sacrificed in heathen worship. The Christian was not under any obligation to make a searching enquiry as to the origin of such food. In the final sense it was the Lord's, Who is the Creator and to Whom all things of the earth belong. In these circumstances there was nothing wrong in buying and eating it. But if anyone pointed out that a particular portion of meat or food of any kind had definitely been used in idol worship, then a believer must abstain for the sake of the informant, whoever he was. It was really a case of practical Christian witness and self-limitation so as not to cause anyone else to stumble, which conduct has been previously emphasized by the Apostle. In passing, we should note that the words in verse 27 "to a feast" are supplied and are not in the original. It is better to limit the word to "invite", that is, to give an invitation to a meal in another person's home.

Verses 30 and 31 are difficult in their connection with what has gone before. It may be they are an interjection by someone with a strong conscience, asking why his liberty must be regulated by someone else's attitude of mind, and why should his action be

misinterpreted? The answer is of course practical love, which ever considers the effects of one's actions on other people, and is willing to forego rights for the sake of others. The summing up is:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved” (x. 31-33 R.V.).

How near this man must have been walking with the Lord to be able to say without self-advertisement: “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (xi. 1)! This verse belongs more naturally with the end of chapter x. and should be kept with it. Paul gives a similar injunction in Phil. iii. 17; I Thess. i. 6, and II Thess. iii. 7, 9. Would that all of us who profess to know Christ could do likewise.

In chapter xi. the Apostle deals with the public worship in the assembly, either touching problems concerning which they had written him, or what he realized they needed, judging from the reports he had received of their actions and spiritual condition. We have seen that when he can praise and encourage, he always does so. He is glad to know that they were holding fast the tradition of truth which he himself had delivered to them, that is, his oral teaching; and this method occupied a very important place in passing on the truth before the written Word was completed. This is tradition in a good sense, and is used similarly in II Thess. ii. 15; iii. 6. It is only when *extra*-Scriptural things are taught as being truth, that tradition becomes so dangerous and blinding to those who receive such ideas. Modern Christendom is rife with this sort of thing, and the progressive Christian continually has to disentangle the Truth of the Scriptures from it.

Before he deals with some aspects of their behaviour in their assembly, Paul defines the God-given relationship between man and God, and man and woman:

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

How are we to understand the word “head” here? It can represent metaphorically the outstanding part of a whole, or in the Greek usage, the *origin* of things. The Lord Jesus Christ, as Creator and last Adam, is the “head” of the human race. Man is the “head” of the woman. Paul does not teach that man is woman's *lord*, or that there is inequality in the sexes mentally or morally; but man is the origin of the woman, as Gen. ii. 18-23 shows. He is the explanation of her being. The position of the Messiah in the Godhead is explained by “the head of Christ is God”. Thus a chain of relationships is set up—God, Christ, man, woman. This is the foundation for the regulations he is going to give respecting public prayer and prophecy. If a man prays (publicly) with his head covered, he dishonours or disgraces his head (4). Does the second occurrence of “head” refer to his head physically, or metaphorically to Christ (the Head)? If it is the former, then the meaning is that his uncovered head is a mark of his relationship to God as his Head, and it would be wrong for this to be concealed with a covering. If the latter, then the sense is that the man who is a believer, with his unveiled head, reflects the glory of Christ. If he covered it (like Moses was compelled to do) he would hide this glory. It is difficult to

decide which is correct. It is possible that there is a combination of both meanings. What is clear is that men must be bareheaded in public worship. What of the women?

“But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoureth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man” (xi. 4-7 R.V.).

This passage is without meaning unless women from time to time took part in the worship of the assembly, and this in spite of xiv. 34, 35 which will be considered in its place. If it had been wrong for women so to do, the Apostle would certainly have forbidden the practice. He reminds the Corinthians that man came originally from God and displays typically the authority and glory of God on earth. Woman came originally from man, with the express purpose of being a helper for him, and she finds her fulfillment in this. As such she is “the glory of the man” (verses 7-9). From this the Apostle goes on to deduce:

“For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels” (xi. 10 R.V.).

This verse is indeed difficult to interpret. What does Paul mean, and how does this fit in as a reason from what has gone before? There are at least two differing explanations of the reference to angels. (1) They are the wicked “sons of God” of Gen. vi. (2) They are good angels who are the guardians of God’s people (Heb. i. 13, 14) and they would be offended by any improper behaviour in worship. We will consider this in our next article and seek the true meaning in relationship to the passage.

The Early Centuries and the Truth

No.7. The early leaders of the Brethren Movement and their understanding of the Mystery.

pp. 7 - 12

In 1870 Richard Holden, a leader in the Brethren movement, wrote a work entitled *The Mystery, the Special Mission of the Apostle Paul. The Key to the Present Dispensation*. In it we find the following:

“To make all see what is the dispensation, or in other words, to be divinely appointed instructor in the character and order of the present time, as Moses was in the dispensation of law, is that special feature in the commission of Paul in which it was distinct from that of the other Apostles If then it shall appear that, far from seeing ‘what is the dispensation of the Mystery’ (Eph. 3:9 R.V.) the mass of Christians *have entirely missed it*, and, as the natural consequence, have almost completely misunderstood Christianity, importing into it the things proper to another dispensation, and so confounding Judaism and Christianity in an inexpressible jumble; surely it is a matter for deep humiliation before God, and for earnest prayerful effort to retrieve, with God’s help, this important and neglected teaching.”

This writer evidently saw clearly the distinction between Israel and the great Secret made known by God through the prison letters of the Apostle Paul concerning the Body of Christ. Would that the present day followers in this movement could see things so clearly and give such a testimony!

Perhaps the most striking of all of the original founders of the Brethren is the witness of C. H. Mackintosh. In the last chapter of volume five of his *Miscellaneous Writings* (this has been republished by Loiseaux Bros. Of New York and is obtainable now in this country and we quote from this edition), he gives a remarkable testimony to the dispensational character of the Acts of the Apostles, and the revelation given through Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for us Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1) as follows:

“Every system of doctrine or discipline which would connect the Church with the world, either in her present condition or her future prospects, must be wrong and must exert an unhallowed influence the doctrine of the Church’s heavenly character was developed in all its power and beauty by the Holy Ghost in the Apostle Paul. Up to his time and even during the early stages of his ministry, the divine purpose was to deal with Israel the thought of a church composed of Jew and Gentile, ‘seated together in the heavenlies’, lay far beyond the range of prophetic testimony John the Baptist told the people what they were to do in that transition state, into which his ministry was designed to conduct them, and pointed to Him that was to come. Have we anything of the *Church* in all this? Not a syllable. The *Kingdom* was still the very highest thought.”

Coming to the ministry of Peter to Israel in Acts iii., he quotes the exceedingly important speech recorded in verses 19-26 and then writes:

“Have we here the development of the Church? No, the time had not yet arrived for this The Church as seen in the opening of the Acts exhibits but a sample of lovely grace and order but not anything beyond what man could take cognizance of and value. In a word it was still the Kingdom, and not the great mystery of the Church. Those who think that the opening chapters of Acts present the Church in its essential aspect, have by no means reached the divine thought on the subject.”

Coming to Peter’s vision recorded in Acts x. he comments:

“Here we are taught that the Gentiles, as such, are to have a place with the Jews in the Kingdom. But did the council at Jerusalem apprehend the truth of the Church, of Jews and Gentiles so truly formed in the one Body that they are no more Jew and Gentile? I believe not Peter never received a commission to unfold the mystery of the Church. Even in his epistles we find nothing of it it was reserved for the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to bring out, in the energy and power of the Holy Ghost, the mystery of which we speak.”

Commenting on Acts xxviii. and Paul’s gathering together the chief of the Jews at Rome, and giving them a last opportunity to respond, he writes:

“He (Paul) found himself in the midst of the wide Gentile world—a prisoner at Rome and rejected of Israel he must therefore set himself to bring out that holy and heavenly mystery which had been hid in God from ages and generations—the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ united to its living Head by the Holy Ghost Thus closes the Acts of the Apostles which, like the Gospels, is more or less connected with the testimony to Israel. So long as Israel could be regarded as the object of testimony, so long the testimony continued; but when they were shut up to judicial blindness the testimony ceased.”

He goes on:

“Let us see what this ‘Mystery’ this ‘gospel’ really was, and wherein its peculiarity consisted. To understand this is of the utmost importance, what therefore, was Paul’s gospel? Was it a different method of justifying a sinner from that preached by the other Apostles? No, by no means the peculiarity of the gospel preached by Paul had not so much reference to God’s way of dealing with *the sinner* as with *the saint*; it was not so much how God justified a sinner as what He did with him when justified. Yes, it was the place into which Paul’s gospel conducted the saint that marked its peculiarity Paul’s gospel went far beyond them all (i.e. other servants of God). It was not the Kingdom offered to Israel on the ground of repentance, as by John the Baptist and our Lord; nor was it the Kingdom opened to Jew and Gentile by Peter in Acts three and ten; *but it was the heavenly calling of the Church of God composed of Jew and Gentile, in one Body, united to a glorified Christ by the presence of the Holy Ghost.*”

“The Epistle to the Ephesians fully develops the mystery of the will of God concerning this. There we find ample instruction as to our heavenly standing, heavenly hopes and heavenly conflict ‘He hath raised us up together and made us *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus’. It is not that He *will* do this, but ‘He hath’ done it. When Christ was raised from the dead, all the members of His Body were raised also; when He ascended into heaven, they ascended also; when He sat down, they sat down also; that is, in the counsel of God, and to be actualized in the process of time by the

Holy Ghost sent down from heaven Believers did not know this at the first; it was not unfolded by the ministry of the twelve, as seen in the Acts of the Apostles, because the testimony to Israel was still going on, and so long as earth was the manifested scene of divine operation, and so long as there was any ground of hope in connection with Israel, the heavenly mystery was held back; but when earth had been abandoned and Israel set aside, the Apostle of the Gentiles from his prison at Rome, writes to the Church and opens out all the glorious privileges connected with its place in the heavens with Christ.”

C. H. Mackintosh goes on to comment on the fact that so few believers have had “eyes to see” and ability to grasp such exalted and wonderful teaching. The blinding power of tradition and the pull earthwards of the senses all combine to prevent this:

“We have seen how long it was ere man could take hold of it and we have only to glance at the history of the Church for the last eighteen centuries to see how feebly it was held and how speedily it was let go. The heart naturally clings to earth and the thoughts of an earthly corporation is attractive to it. Hence we may expect that the truth of the Church’s heavenly character will only be apprehended and carried out by a very small and feeble minority to understand all this requires a larger measure of spirituality than is to be found with many Christians.”

“. . . . Those who will maintain Paul’s gospel find themselves, like him, deserted and despised amid the pomp and glitter of the world. The clashing of ecclesiastical systems, the jarring of sects, and the din of religious controversy will surely drown the feeble voice of those who would speak of the heavenly calling and rapture of the Church I am deeply conscious of how feebly and incoherently I have developed what I have in my mind concerning the doctrine of the Church, but I have no doubt of its real importance and feel assured that, as the time draws near, much light will be communicated to believers about it. At present, it is to be feared, few really enter into it.”

We make no apology for these lengthy quotations from this remarkable chapter. They are so true, and in some respects prophetic. The writer sees clearly the dispensational character of the Acts, with the people of Israel coming first right up to the last chapter. He realizes that the truth of the great secret (Mystery) revealed through Paul the prisoner for the Gentiles was not known or commenced at Acts ii. Neither is the ministry of Peter or The Twelve connected with it. Rather the first unfolding of this Divine secret is after Israel’s rejection at Acts xxviii., and made known in the first epistles written after that event, namely those to the Ephesians and Colossians. It is all the more remarkable when one remembers that this was written and taught a hundred years ago. How comes it then that this teaching is dubbed as “ultra-dispensational” by many of the present day followers of the movement to which C.H.M. was attached, and looked upon as a concoction of Dr. C. I. Schofield, Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Charles H. Welch? If any belonging to this same movement happen to be reading these words, we earnestly ask them to consider these things afresh, earnestly and prayerfully. Either one of their much loved and revered leaders was hopelessly wrong and teaching error, or he was ministering supreme truth; there can be no half-way position. For ourselves we have no doubt as to the answer.

Knowing something of the activity and devices of the evil One, who, as the god of this age, blinds the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the good news of the *glory of Christ* should shine unto them (II Cor. iv. 4), we are not surprised at what followed after such a clear-cut testimony to the riches of this heavenly Secret. He came in as the divider of the brethren, split the movement, and thereby prevented any united testimony to the highest and most favoured of all callings of the redeemed.

We are sometimes asked the question “If what you teach is truth, why is it not generally known amongst Christians?”. We hope our short survey of the early centuries and afterwards has made this quite clear. The answer is perfectly simple; it was largely lost before the one channel through whom it was made known, died, namely the Apostle Paul, and it has never been recovered in anything like its fullness till comparatively recently, though doubtless individuals responded to it from time to time, but of this we have no record. Even now we do not profess to have the last word on it, but enough of its glories and spiritual riches are seen to make us feel humbled and utterly thankful, and at the same time to feel the responsibility to make it known to others. The great Apostle’s aim was to “enlighten all” as to what is this dispensation of the Secret (Mystery R.V. Eph. iii. 9), and Col. i. 27 informs us in addition that *God wishes to make it known*, with its riches of glory relating to Christ among us Gentiles, who once were outcasts, aliens from Israel’s commonwealth and strangers from the covenants of promise, now so exalted in Christ Jesus, that God sees us as seated together in Him in the heavenly places where He is enthroned in the glory. Who feels that this is a challenge and wants to explore and apprehend something of this spiritual wealth? A hundred years ago, C.H.M. lamented that only few responded to such teaching, and those who held to it faithfully and sought to make it known would be despised and deserted. He was to a great extent right in his forecast. What amazes us is that so many of God’s people are content with so little, when all these riches are waiting in His Word of Truth to be explored and appropriated by faith. History informs us that generally speaking, it has always been so. In O.T. days only two out of the thousands of God’s earthly people, namely Caleb and Joshua, were ready to believe *all* that God had revealed of the riches of Canaan and were willing to go up, explore, and possess the promised land. The rest not only refused to believe their testimony, but were prepared to stone and murder them.

What of us who profess to have had the necessary enlightenment of the Holy Spirit regarding this heavenly and holy calling? We need to be delivered from any complacency and any tendency to be secret disciples, which is largely due to the fear of man that bringeth a snare. We need to manifest the same missionary spirit to testify to this truth as the Apostle Paul did in his day. We need believers, specially the young, who have been given a glimpse of this heavenly ‘promised land’, and who are prepared to fully dedicate themselves to the Lord, the gospel and to this ‘good deposit’ of truth. They must be ready to take time and effort to get grounded in it; to be alert to every opportunity for witness; to have wisdom and patience in presenting it to others and to back it up behind the scenes with persistent labouring in prayer and intercession for all, such as Epaphras did (Col. i. 24-29; iv. 12). Only in this way can we discharge our responsibilities to the Lord Who has showered upon us such riches of grace and glory.

The days darken as the age gets nearer its close. The challenge and the need is great.
WHO ARE READY AND WILLING TO RESPOND?

The Goal of God.

(I Cor. xv. 28).

No.14. Conformed to the Image of His Son.

pp. 1 - 3

We have seen that the heavenly image is to take the place of the earthly, the legacy of the first man with its corruption and weakness giving place to the glorious gift of incorruption and power at the resurrection. We have further seen that this change is anticipated in the transition from law to grace, and now we turn to the third of these references concerning 'change' which is found in the epistle to the Romans.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30).

"LIBERTY", "SPIRIT" and "SONSHIP",

which are important features of II Cor. iii. and iv., are key words of Rom. viii.

We found it useful to discover the structure of I Cor. xv., and we shall help ourselves toward an understanding of Rom. viii. 29, 30 by seeing where it comes in the general outline.

Romans viii. 1 - 39.

- A | 1-5-. No condemnation. God sent *His Own Son*.
- B | -5-15-. Led by Spirit. *Sons now*.
- C | -15-17-. Spirit itself. *Sonship* (adoption).
- D | -17-21. Suffering and Glory. *Sons manifested*.
- C | 22-28. Spirit itself. *Sonship* (adoption).
- B | 29, 30. Conformed to image of His Son, future.
- A | 31-39. Who condemns? God spare not *His Own Son*.

Wonderful and glorious as this chapter is, we must resist the temptation to explore and must concentrate our attention on the reference to the image. Flesh and Spirit alternate in the member denominated "B | -5-15-.", which is the experience of the believer *now*, and this balances the member "B | 29, 30.", the blessed experience awaiting the believer in the *future*, when "the quickening of the mortal body" (Rom. viii. 11) which is the anticipatory experience of the believer now, will be fully realized when the earthly image is laid aside and the redeemed at last stand satisfied in the likeness of the Lord.

The analysis of the passage is as follows:

- A | Predestination. *Steps leading to Conformity.*
- B | Purpose. Christ. Firstborn among many brethren.
- A | Predestination. *Steps leading to Glory.*

Predestination is the link that goes back into the timeless past. Glory is the link that reaches on to the ages of the ages. Calling and Justification are the links that unite past and future and belong to the present time. Conformity to the image of Christ must include justification, for righteousness is a fundamental necessity; it is the value behind all values, without it even Divine Omnipotence would be unable to attain the goal of the ages. The Greek word *summorphos* 'conform' is found only in Rom. viii. 29 and Phil. iii. 21.

“*Conformed to the image of His Son.*”
“*Fashioned like unto His glorious body.*”

In these references, the work is the Lord's, and lest this should escape us, Phil. iii. 21 ends with the words:

“According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

The word *morphe* 'form' gives us 'conform' and 'be conformed', and *schema* 'fashion' found in Phil. ii. 6-8, gives us *metaschematizo* 'change' in Phil. iii. 21. This reference to His work is not thrown in just to round the passage off. It is a special aspect of His work that is in view, namely that which “subdues all things”. Paul uses the same word here, *hupotasso* that he uses six times over in I Cor. xv, 27, 28 translated “put under”, “subdue”, and “subject”. Transfiguration is an integral part of the process that has the goal of the ages in view.

Here therefore we have 'purpose', for it is written that He makes all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose, and whoever is “predestinated”, of them it can be said:

“Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His Own will” (Eph. i. 11).

The practical approximation of the truth is suggested by the use of the verb *summorphoomai* in Phil. iii.:

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, *being made conformable unto His death*” (Phil. iii. 10).

Here the Apostle looked back to the cross, whereas in Phil. iii. 21 and Rom. viii. 29 he looked forward to the glory. The doctrine of 'the cross' is so vast that it is necessary to take the matter further. The particular aspect of the subject is found in Phil. ii. 6-8:

“Who being in the form (*morphe*) of God taking the form (*morphe*) of a servant made in the likeness of man found in fashion (*schema*) as a man, He humbled Himself even the death of the cross Wherefore God also hath

highly exalted Him Wherefore, my beloved work out your own salvation”
(Phil. ii. 6-12).

In other words the picture includes the ‘mind’ of Christ *now* (Phil. ii.); the ‘body’ like unto His *then* (Phil. iii.). Christ is to be the firstborn among many brethren, and this ‘likeness’ must be ‘deeper than the skin’. In the day of glory He will stand as the “Firstborn” among many brethren (Rom. viii. 29); the “Firstborn” from the dead (Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5), even as He became for us men and for our salvation, the “Firstborn” of the Virgin (Matt. i. 25), Who Himself was before time,

“The Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature” (Col. i. 15).

He must have the pre-eminence, the first place, even as He must be the Firstborn among many brethren.

The Inspiration and Canon of the Scriptures.

No.1. pp. 216, 217

The philosopher and the sceptic say “What is Truth?” The believer who has tasted that the Lord is gracious replies: “God’s Word is truth”. Even the sceptic may agree to this proposition but would ask “Has God spoken?” and if so, where is it to be found? When deal with what is called “natural religion” we shall discover that “day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge” (Psa. xix. 2); but our quest is for something higher—a revelation of God Himself to man concerning Himself, His purpose and man’s failure; His grace and man’s response. This the Christian has discovered in that collection of writings called “The Scriptures”, or “The Bible”, and it is with a view to establishing their inspiration and consequent truth and authority that we devote this series of studies.

As these studies are intended to help the believer, we will not spend time attempting to prove that which has already been accepted. We trust that those who read these article are already resting for eternal peace on the finished work of Christ.

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master” (Matt. x. 24, 25).

What therefore is viewed as “Scripture” by Christ, will be “Scripture” to His disciples. Here is His challenging statement:

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John v. 46, 47).

To adopt the attitude of the Higher Critic is to reject Christ. But there is something more.

“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth Him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself: but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John xii. 48, 49).

It is evident therefore that to set aside the testimony of Christ, is to set aside the testimony of Him that sent Him, and to do so is to overthrow the faith, leaving all men without hope and without God in the world.

We now take our investigation a stage further. We consider in detail just how far the testimony of Christ extends.

- (1) *The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms* (Luke xxiv. 44).
The O.T. as a whole. This is the ancient threefold division of the O.T. (Proofs and details come later under the heading: “The Canon of the O.T.”.)
- (2) *Individual writers and prophets.*

The Saviour has definitely named and cited “Moses” (John v. 46, 47); “Isaiah” (Luke iv. 17-21); “Daniel” (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16); “Jonah” (Matt. xii. 39-41); “David” (Luke xx. 42). He has also cited as of God, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Kings, Jonah, Daniel, Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah and the Psalms.

(3) *The Lord’s continual reference to the Scriptures.*

In the hour of temptation He relied upon it (Matt. iv.—“It is written”). At the opening of His public ministry He drew attention to its fulfillment (Luke iv. 16-21). In the hour of death, He was careful that the Scriptures should be fulfilled (John xix. 28). His birth, His birthplace, His public ministry, His betrayal, the manner and accompaniments of His death, His resurrection, are all referred to Scripture as prophetic and as fulfilled.

While no man can be justified by his own works of law, the Lord made it clear that He honoured the Law and that it should be fulfilled (Matt. v. 17, 18). The ‘jot’ is the Hebrew “yod”, and equivalent to the Greek “iota”, and the English letter “i”. It is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Some Bibles print it over the section of Psa. cxix. that commences with verse 173. The ‘tittle’ is a small decoration added to certain letters, possibly as aids to memory.

“As by faith we gaze at that Cross, as we see indissolubly linked together the finished work of Calvary and the finished Word of God, there we take our stand, and with heart and life declare that our Saviour’s Bible is our Bible, that His deep reverence for the written Scriptures shall be our example, and that we shall look upon all adverse criticism or denial in the light of that cross, and see behind the pen of the critic the hand of the wicked one.” (*The Berean Expositor*, Volume XX, page 96).

No.2. pp. 232 - 235

“All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God” (II Tim. iii. 16). The testimony of Christ settles for every believer the question of the Truth and Authority of the O.T. Scriptures. We now ask two questions and discover the answers to them:

- (1) How were the Scriptures given?
- (2) How did the Scriptures come?

The answer to these two questions appear in the writings of two men of God who knew that they were about to die for the sake of Christ and His Truth (II Tim. iv. 6, 7; II Pet. i. 14). Here, if ever, we shall have unbiased and unflinching testimony.

Paul. How was Scripture given? “By inspiration of God” (II Tim. iii. 16).
Peter. How did Scripture come? “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Pet. i. 21).

Paul’s Testimony:

“From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All *Scripture* is given by inspiration

of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. iii. 15-17).

Two titles are given to the Scriptures:

- (1) “Holy Scriptures” *Hiera Grammata* or “sacred letters”.
- (2) “Scripture” *Graphe* or “writing”.

Grammata indicates a letter of the alphabet (Gal. vi. 11); or a letter (Acts xxviii. 21), and particularly the books known as the Holy Scriptures.

“How knoweth this man letters (*grammata*), having never learned?” (John vii. 15).

Grammata looks to the component parts of writing; *Graphe* to the Scripture as a whole.

Graphe is familiar to the English ear. *Photography*, *geography*, refer to some form of writing. *Gegraptai* “It is written”, refers in the Scriptures, not to any writings, but to THE writings *par excellence* “The Scriptures”.

The O.T. abounds in references to writing and to books. The foundation of our faith is *a written testimony*.

Inspiration. The words “given by Inspiration of God” are expressed by the one Greek word *theopneustos*. *Theos*—God. *Pneo*—to breathe. *Pneuma*—spirit. The association of the word translated “inspiration” with “breathing” will be seen in such English words as *pneumatic* or *pneumonia*, as also the words “inspire”, “respire” and “perspire”.

Paul’s testimony therefore is that “all scripture”, namely that which was *written*, “is given by inspiration of God” or *God-breathed*. If that which was “written” was “breathed” by God, there could be no interval for the writer to give a vision of his own heart.

While the personality of the writer is stamped upon every page of Scripture, Moses differing from Isaiah, Peter from Paul, Matthew from John, yet each and all were instruments in the hand of their God.

“God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. i. 1).

Peter’s testimony:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise” (II Pet. i. 19).

Peter had had a sublime unique experience. He had stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration. He had heard the voice from heaven. Yet he declares that we have

something “more sure” than the sublimest experience. We have the “Word of prophecy”. The human element and agency is subservient; all is of God.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. i. 20, 21).

“Private Interpretation”, Private is *idios* “own”. “Interpretation” is *epilusis* and occurs nowhere else in Scripture. The word means “letting loose”, “breaking open”, “unfolding”. “Is” is here *ginomai* “to come into being”. Peter does not here speak of systems of interpretation, but of the trustworthiness of Scripture itself. “No prophecy of the Scriptures came into being of its own unfolding.” He then goes on to explain. “For prophecy was not brought (*phero*) at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake being borne along (*phero*) by the Holy Ghost.”

In Acts xxvii. 15 and 17 we may see the force of this word *phero*. “We let her drive”, “strake sail and so were driven”. Just as the sailors were helpless in the grip of the storm, so the prophets had no control in the *matter* and *moment* of inspiration, although this did not blot out their personal style. The subject matter of the Scriptures demands revelation. The wisest are baffled in their attempt to solve the riddle of the universe, the nature and being of God, the plan of the ages. The R.V. translates II Tim. iii. 16 thus:

“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable.”

Did Paul intend Timothy to understand that “Some Scriptures are not inspired?” When translating I Tim. iv. 4, another text by the same author, the R.V. keeps to the accepted rules of grammar, and so rule their peculiar translation of II Tim. iii. 16 out of court.

“Every creature of God IS good, and nothing IS to be rejected”, etc.

Here, as in II Tim. iii. 16 there is no verb “IS” in the original, it has to be supplied to make good English. Why did they not render I Tim. iv. 4.

“Every creature of God, if it is good, is *also* nothing to be rejected.

Why? Simply because it is foolish, false and a violation of Greek syntax.

The Greek writers Chrysostom, Origen, Basil, Athanasius, who knew their own tongues, render II Tim. iii. 16 as the A.V.

“And God spake all these words”

While Paul teaches us that all Scripture is “God-breathed” and Peter teaches us that “Holy men of God spake as they were borne along by the Holy Ghost”, there is no formal statement in Scripture as to the precise mode of inspiration. It does not follow moreover, that because all Scripture is “God-breathed”, that every writer was inspired in the same

manner. Heb. i. 1 assures us that “God spake” by the prophets, however “diverse” the “manner” of their inspiration may have been.

Leaving therefore the question of “how” unanswered, let us acquaint ourselves with the claims that the Scriptures themselves make to their Divine Authorship. “God spake” to Noah (Gen. viii. 15) and to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 9). A recurring phrase is “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”, or “Hear the Word of the Lord”. Again we read many times “The word of the Lord came” to one or another of the prophets. Further, there are specific statements to the effect that God put His words into the “mouths” of His prophets. Peter refers to this in Acts three times, once speaking of the “mouth” of “David”, and twice of “All His prophets”.

“It is very evident from this testimony that, whoever the individual speaker may have been, the mighty Moses, or the lowly Amos, the Royal Seer, or the runaway Jonah, the ungodly Balaam, or the wicked Caiaphas, it was God Who spoke, and it is His word that we hear” (*True from the Beginning*, page 37).

The Prophets were *channels* not *originators*.

“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken BY (*hupo*) the Lord THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. i. 22; ii. 15).

“For thus it hath been written THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet” (Matt. ii. 5).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophets” (Matt. ii. 23; xiii. 35; xxi. 4).

In these references, the names of the prophets are not given, they are Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, A Psalm of Asaph, and Zechariah. These men lived at different times and were possessed of individual character, yet the same formula is used of them all.

In the following references the same preposition *dia* is used but the name of the prophets “Isaiah” and “Jeremiah” is given (Matt. iv. 14; viii. 17; xii. 17; xxvii. 9).

The Apostle writing to the Corinthians said:

“Which things we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (I Cor. ii. 13).

To the Thessalonians he wrote:

“When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (I Thess. ii. 13).

To the Ephesians he said:

“After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. i. 13).

To the Romans he wrote:

“The gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” (Rom. i. 1, 2).

The Lord's Day and the Day of the Lord.

Does "the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10) refer to the prophetic "Day of the Lord", or to the "First day of the week"?

pp. 61 - 64

This query concerns the interpretation that Wetstein, Dr. Bullinger, Dr. Maitland, Dr. Todd and others have put upon Rev. i. 10, making "the Lord's Day" the prophetic "Day of the Lord", and containing no reference to "the first day of the week". It is admitted by all, that there is no Scripture which says "The Lord's day is the first day of the week", or that teaches:

"Seeing that the Jewish Sabbath has no place in Christian worship, the first day of the week has taken its place and this day is called The Lord's Day."

The only authority for calling the first day of the week "The Lord's day" is that of the early Fathers, but there is much in the Fathers that is evidently tradition, and if not unscriptural, is extra or non-scriptural; much that those who believe that the Lord's day means Sunday, cannot possibly accept as truth, and so we are forced to consider Rev. i. 10 on its own merits.

First of all let us examine the phrase "The Lord's day", and see whether there is any difference between that expression and "the day of the Lord". In English, there is no essential difference. If "a wooden house" be assessed for value at a certain figure, it would be a waste of time lodging an appeal because one chose to describe it as "a house of wood". The term "Lord's day" and "Day of the Lord" are interchangeable.

In I Cor. x. and xi. we read "The cup *of the* Lord", "the *Lord's* table", "the *Lord's* death" and "the body and blood *of the* Lord". These all translate one and the same Greek grammatical construction, and as we have said, no one would dream of maintaining that there could be any difference. The R.V. alters "The Lord's table" to "the table of the Lord", but retains "the Lord's death", showing that no essential difference can be held to be intended in the two phrases.

This however is not a full statement of the matter. In the ordinary way, the expression "The day of the Lord" would be in the Greek *He hemera kuriou*, but in Rev. i. 10 the original reads *Te kuriake hemera* "The day pertaining to the Lord". *Kuriake* occurs in but one other passage, namely, "The Lord's supper" (I Cor. xi. 20). No one would disassociate the supper that pertains to the Lord, from the table of the Lord, the death of the Lord, or the cup of the Lord, and yet in the original the phrases vary as indicated above. It is admitted by all, that there can be no essential difference in the two English phrases "The Lord's day" and "The day of the Lord". In English it would be but a matter of emphasizing in the former phrase "The Lord" and in the latter "the day", whereas, strangely enough, the emphasis would be entirely reversed in the original, "Lord's" being an adjective throws the emphasis forward on to the word "day".

In I Cor. xi. 20, however, we meet a new construction; “the Lord’s supper” is in the Greek *kuriakon deipnon* instead of the more usual *to deipnon tou kuriou*, “the supper of the Lord”. Now it is this unusual form that meets us in Rev. i. 10. In I Thess. v. 2 the original reads *He hemera kuriou*, whereas in Rev. i. 10 it reads *Te kuriake hemera*, “the Lord’s day” instead of “the day of the Lord”. *Kurios* is a noun, *kuriakon* is an adjective, and instead of putting the emphasis upon “Lord’s” as would be normal in English, the emphasis is upon the word “day” in Rev. i. 10.

Is there a scriptural reason for this peculiar mode? Are we to assume that John did it for the sake of variety? Must we fall back upon the traditional Sunday? No, there is waiting for us a complete parallel and perfect reason for this change. To illustrate and explain this, we must ask the reader to turn aside to what may appear at first sight, an irrelevant subject.

The word generally translated “man” in the N.T. is *anthropos* and when Paul wished to speak of “the wisdom of men” (I Cor. ii. 5) or “the heart of man” (I Cor. ii. 9) or even “every man’s conscience” (II Cor. iv. 2), or when Luke wished to speak of one of “the days of the Son of Man” (Luke xvii. 22), they adopted the same mode as in the phrase “The day of the Lord”. We find however that whereas in I Cor. ii. 5, Paul speaks of “the wisdom of men”, in I Cor. ii. 4, he speaks of “man’s wisdom”. Is there any one who would seriously advocate the interpretation that Paul referred to two distinct things in these adjacent verses? Nevertheless, in I Cor. ii. 4 he does not use the word *anthropos*, but the word *anthropinos*, exactly equivalent with *kuriakos* in Rev. i. 10. When we come however to I Cor. iv. 3 we arrive at the true reason for the change in Rev. i. 10:

“With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment
. . . . judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come” (I Cor. iv. 3-5).

It is obvious that “man’s judgment” is set over against “The Lord’s judgment”. Now, the margin reveals that the original has no word in I Cor. iv. 3 for “judgment” but reads “day” and refers the reader back to I Cor. iii. 13 “For the day shall declare it”. “Day” therefore is used interchangeably with “judgment”. Further, the Greek reads *anthropines hemeras*, exactly like the construction of Rev. i. 10. Consequently, if the language of I Cor. iv. 3 cannot be made to refer to any ordinary “day” but refers to “man’s day of judging”, which is now, then in perfect correspondence, and as a complete answer to this, Rev. i. 10, together with I Cor. iv. 5 and I Cor. iii. 13, must refer to “The Lord’s day of judging” which is yet future. If Rev. i. 10 refers to the first day of the week, will any reader tell us which of the “week days” I Cor. iv. 3 refers to?

This, however, is not all. There is further proof in the book of the Revelation that Rev. i. 10 refers to a future prophetic day. John said:

“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day.”

We might as well be accurate and remove all additions to the original that warp our judgment. There is no “the” before “spirit”, and “on” is the Greek *en* and should be translated “in”.

Who would tolerate “on the evil day” in Eph. vi. 13, or “on the days of Noah” (I Pet. iii. 20)? and why change the translation of *en* “in” to “on”. “I was *in* the spirit *on* the Lord’s day”? This looks as though the translators were unconsciously biased toward the interpretation of Rev. i. 10 as of the first day of the week, and so they did not realize that they were, however so slightly, “adding” to the word of the prophecy of this book. “I came to be in spirit in the Lord’s day” is a literal rendering, which acknowledges every feature while neither adding nor omitting anything. This expression *egenomen en pneumati* “I came to be in spirit” occurs again in Rev. iv. 2. In this passage we are not left in doubt as to the “time” in which this vision is set.

“I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (Rev. iv. 1),

and in order to see these future things, John “came to be in spirit”. This being so, we should read Rev. i. 10 in the same way:

“I came to be in spirit in the (yet future) Lord’s day.”

In two other passages, the words “in spirit” are associated with the verb “to bear” or “to carry”.

“I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore so he carried me away *in spirit* into the wilderness” (Rev. xvii. 1, 3).

Whatever interpretation the reader may entertain of this symbol, all must agree that it was future to John. In Rev. xxi. 9, 10 we have the same expression, and we are all agreed that what John then saw was future, for the Lamb’s wife has not yet descended from heaven. In all this, we have not yet alluded to the prophecies of the O.T. which are in process of fulfillment in the Apocalypse, and which cluster round “the day of the Lord”. To collect and ponder the teaching of these prophecies alone, is to be practically convinced that Rev. i. 10 cannot refer to Sunday or the first day of the week, but to the great prophetic day of the Lord. When we assemble, as we have done, the proofs from grammatical usage, and see the perfect balance of “Man’s day” with the “Lord’s day”, and supplement that with the four references to “in spirit” that occur in the book of the Revelation, we feel that no one, unless under the influence of the most fettering bias, can possibly think that in the majestic introduction of this mighty prophecy, John suddenly leaves the throne of God, the kingdom of Priests, the prophecy of the coming of the Lord in clouds and the waiting of all the tribes of the land, the glorious titles of Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, the One Who was and is to come, to tell his reader that he was:

“In a spiritual frame or ecstasy on the first day of the week.”

PHILEMON

No.3. pp. 12 - 16

Before a verse by verse exposition of this epistle can be undertaken, there are some points of interest which demand attention.

Was Philemon written from Rome?

The answer to this question may not at first sight seem to be of any importance, but when it be considered that the letter was probably composed at the same time as Colossians and Ephesians, and that some commentators have alleged it to have been written from *Caesarea*, then it takes on a different light. Paul's Caesarean imprisonment was pre-Acts xxviii., before the postponement of the hope of Israel and the words. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles" (Acts xxviii. 28). If Colossians and Ephesians were written during the period alleged, then their message must be included within the limitation set by Acts xxvi. 22, "None other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come", and the "dispensation of the mystery", which was "hid in God" (Eph. iii. 9 R.V.), is also to be found in the O.T. The seriousness of this question will then be appreciated by all who are acquainted with the implications of the above points.

First let it be demonstrated that there is evidence to indicate that the three epistles, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, as regards time and place of writing, cannot be separated. Ephesians and Colossians are connected by their similarity of contents and their common bearer Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7-9); Colossians and Philemon by the salutation which both have in common:

"Aristarchus Marcus Epaphras Luke and Demas greet you"
(Col. iv. 10-14).

"There salute thee Epaphras . . . Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas" (Philem. 23, 24).

Also the mission of Onesimus, whose name appears in Col. iv. 9 and is the subject in Philemon, is evidence that Colossians and Philemon were sent jointly.

All three epistles were written during a time of imprisonment (Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20; Col. iv. 3, 10, 18 and Philem. 1, 9, 10, 13, 23), the question being which imprisonment. Philemon is valuable in that it provides evidence in deciding whether or not Ephesians and Colossians were written from Rome, by reason of its links with those epistles. The eminent theologian Dr. H. A. Meyer, following some of the earlier German scholars, decided in favour of the captivity at Caesarea as the place and time of composition. His arguments are briefly summarized thus:

- (1) It is more natural and probable that Onesimus fled from Colosse to Caesarea, than that he undertook a long sea voyage to Rome.

- (2) If Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians were sent from Rome, why is there no mention of the name of Onesimus in the Ephesian epistle, commending him to the assembly there, for Tychicus and Onesimus traveling from Rome to Colosse would have arrived at Ephesus first.
- (3) The presence of *kai*, 'also', in Eph. vi. 21, suggests that when Tychicus should come to Ephesus he would already have made known Paul's affairs to others—hence Ephesus would be his last stop, favouring a journey from Caesarea rather than Rome.
- (4) In Philem. 22 the Apostle begs Philemon to prepare him a lodging, apparently for 'speedy' use, and this fact presumes that his imprisonment was much nearer to Colosse than distant Rome. Also Paul was planning, on his release from Rome, to journey to Macedonia (Phil. ii. 24), not Colosse.

(If the above points are obscure, the reader is advised to consult a map showing the relative positions of the places under review.). Taking the points in order it is noted:

- (1) Onesimus had taken money or goods (Philem. 18) and so would have no trouble in boarding a ship in order to take refuge in the great metropolis of Rome. And surely this would be more likely to place him beyond the search of the "fugitivarii", whose sphere of activity would not be likely to extend in strict organization over the whole empire. (The "fugitivarii" were those who sought runaway slaves.)
- (2) Onesimus would probably not have been known to the Ephesians anyway, and Paul was certainly not one to broach the subject of his defection unnecessarily. His presence with Tychicus was commendation enough.
- (3) Much depends on the rendering of *kai*. It may, as Dean Alford suggests indicate, "As I have been going at length into the matters concerning you, so if you also on your part, wish to know my matter Tychicus shall inform you".
- (4) Alford's words are much to the point—"There is nothing inconsistent in the two expressions of Phil. ii. 24 and Philem. 22, with the idea of the Apostle projecting a land journey through Greece to Asia Minor; or at all events a general visitation which should embrace both Philippi and Colosse". The idea of the lodging at Colosse being for 'speedy' use takes no cognizance of the fact of its being a comparative term. Philemon would be aware how long it would take Paul to journey to him and 'prepare' accordingly, so this does not constitute an argument either way.

On the other hand, point in favour of Paul being in captivity in Rome are:

- (1) Paul was not expecting to be released from Caesarea. Felix knew that he had traveled to Jerusalem with money and hoped that Paul might pay him for his release (Acts xxiv. 17, 25, 26). Felix also sought the favour of the Jews (Acts xxiv. 27 R.V.), a fact which Paul must have noticed, and which would not suggest to him the possibility of release. Later, before Festus (who also sought the favour of the Jews, Acts xxv. 9 R.V.), Paul appealed to Caesar and so must go to Rome—hence he would not be expecting release at this time either.
- (2) When in Caesarea, Paul's acquaintances were allowed to minister to him, but in the light of attempts already made on his life, it is to be wondered if Onesimus, a

stranger, would have been allowed access to him (Acts xxiii. 12-15; xxiv. 23). In Rome, Onesimus would certainly have freedom of access (Acts xxviii. 30).

- (3) Eph. vi. 19, 20 suggests that Paul had a certain amount of freedom in making known the gospel; a fact more consistent with Rome, when he received all, than Caesarea, when only his acquaintances (who were surely already believers) came to him (Acts xxiv. 23 with xxviii. 30).

It seems from the above that (a) Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon were 'companion' epistles and (b) that they were written from Rome during Paul's "two years" of captivity there (Acts xxviii. 30).

Philemon compared with the letter of Pliny.

The younger Pliny, died 113A.D., wrote letter to his friend Sabinianus to intercede for an offending freedman, and this letter has often been compared with that of Paul to Philemon. It may be of interest to the reader to note certain points of difference which only go to emphasize the change that the grace of God can make in men's lives. The following is a translation from the Latin as given by Dean Farrar:

"C. Plinius to his Sabinianus, greeting:

Your freedman, with whom, as you had told me, you were vexed, came to me, and, flinging himself at my feet, clung to them as though they had been yours. He wept much, entreated much, yet at the same time left much unsaid, and, in short, convinced me that he was sincerely sorry. I believe that he is really reformed, because he is conscious of his delinquency. You are angry, I know; justly angry, that too I know; but gentleness is most praiseworthy exactly where anger is most justifiable. You loved the poor fellow, and I hope will love him again; meanwhile, it is enough to yield to intercession. Should he ever deserve it you may be angry again, and all the more excusably by yielding now. Make some allowance for his youth, for his tears, for your own kindly disposition. Do not torture him, lest you torture yourself as well, for it is a torture to you when one of your kindly nature is angry. I fear you will think that I am not asking but forcing you if I join my prayers to his: I will, however, do so, and all the more fully and unreservedly in proportion to the sharpness and severity with which I took him to task, sternly threatening that I would never say a word for him again. *That* I said to him because he needed to be well frightened; but I do not say it to you, for perhaps I shall say a word for him again, and again gain my point; provided only my request be such as it becomes me to ask and you to grant. Farewell!"

This letter of Pliny has its grace and touching moments, but "it stands for beauty and value far below the letter to Philemon" (Farrar). "If purity of diction be expected, there will hardly be any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian Apostle" (Bishop Lightfoot).

The first obvious difference between the two epistles is that Paul's is on behalf of a runaway slave, but that of Pliny for a *freedman*. And yet in spite of the more subservient position of Onesimus, Paul's confidence in Philemon's reception of him, is far greater

than that exhibited by Pliny in Sabinianus. Pliny is also in some doubt about the future behaviour of the freedman, whereas Paul is sure of Onesimus, that, having been touched by the grace of God, he will now be 'profitable' to his master. Paul does not find it necessary to plead that Philemon should not punish his slave, but Pliny fears, and begs against, the young freedman being tortured. Sabinianus, described as 'justly angry', is asked to make allowance for his freedman's "youth" and "tears", but Paul's whole letter is written around the principle of, "Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. iv. 32 R.V.).

Pliny had threatened the young freedman of Sabinianus that he "would never say a word for him again", a threat which he did not intend to keep (he would break his word if necessary), but Philemon is devoid to all such inferences. There is a fine touch in Pliny's letter where he writes, "Gentleness is most praiseworthy exactly where anger is most justifiable", but at best the letter is that of an excellent Pagan, and falls very far short of the masterpiece from the hand of Paul, which became part of Holy Scriptures.

The structure of the epistle.

The following arrangement may help to throw the main points of the epistle into prominence:

- A | 1-3. Opening salutation.
- B | 4-7. Bowels of the saints refreshed—thy love and faith.
- C | a | 8-10. I might order—I exhort for love's sake.
 - b | 11. Onesimus, once unprofitable, now profitable.
 - c | 12. Receive him that is my bowels.
 - d | 13. I would have retained (him).
- a | 14. Not of necessity, but willingly.
 - d | 15, 16. Thou receive him for ever.
 - c | 17. Receive him as myself.
- b | 18, 19. Onesimus—If he wronged thee,
or oweth thee ought—I pay.
- B | 20-22. Refresh my bowels—thy obedience.
- A | 23-25. Closing salutation.

Apart from the opening and closing salutations, the epistle falls into three main divisions: B |, C |, B |. The first of these concerns Philemon, and Paul's thankfulness for his life and witness; the third expresses Paul's desires that the refreshment extended by Philemon "toward all (the) saints" should be further extended toward himself (verses 5, 7, 20). The middle section is taken up with the proper object of the epistle, Paul's intercession on behalf of Onesimus. The attitude of Paul "the Apostle" is of particular note in this central portion, for instead of leaning upon his apostolic authority, "I might enjoin (order)" (8), he appeals to love and beseeches. In the balancing member again, he prefers willingness to necessity (14). The reader might also note the following other characteristics:

- (1) The use of the word ‘bowels’ *splankna* three times (verses 7, 12, 20)—only eleven occurrences total in the N.T.—related to *splanknizomai* (“moved with compassion” Matt. ix. 36, etc.).
- (2) The “refreshment” provided by Philemon (*anapauo* “rest” Matt. xi. 28; xxvi. 45, etc.), used in connection with the preceding word and deriving from Philemon’s “love faith acknowledging of every good thing obedience” (5, 6, 21).
- (3) The double reference to the “possession” of Onesimus—“I (Paul) would have retained (*katecho*) with me thou (Philemon) shouldest receive (*apecho*) him for ever” (13, 15).
- (4) The possible play on the word *onemi* (verse 20 “joy” better “profit”) from which *Onesimus* is derived. Compare also verse 11.
- (5) Paul’s confidence in the effectiveness of prayer to “change things”, not simply psychologically but in reality, verse 22—“I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you”.
- (6) The letter was also an I.O.U. from Paul on Onesimus’ behalf (18, 19).

Other points will come to light during the exposition of the epistle.

No.4. pp. 30 - 34

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ (R.V. Christ Jesus)” (1). This expression, which also occurs in verse 9 (R.V.), is very similar to Eph. iii. 1, and demonstrates the attitude of Paul towards his confinement. Not a prisoner of man, but “of Christ Jesus”. No other epistle of Paul actually begins with the words, *desmios Christou Iesou*, and all with the exception of Philippians (which has “servants [*douloi*] of Christ Jesus”) and I & II Thess. (which have no title), begin with ‘apostle’. The reason for this is evidently to be found in the contents of the epistle, for Paul is not writing from the standpoint of an apostle, but “for love’s sake” (9); he looks not to ‘necessity’ but for ‘willingness’ (14).

“and Timothy our (lit. the) brother” (1).

Timothy is associated with Paul in II Corinthians, I & II Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians and here in Philemon, in the opening addresses to these epistles. In Philippians he is immediately forgotten and Paul continues, “I thank *my* God in every prayer of *mine*” (i. 3), but in Colossians the plural is maintained, “We give thanks since *we* heard, etc.” (i. 3, 4), until verse 23 is reached. Philemon follows the pattern of Philippians in immediately dropping the plural “I thank *my* God in *my* prayers etc.” (4). Nevertheless, the inclusion of Timothy must be seen as indicating his ‘amen’ to its contents and request.

“unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer” (1).

“Philemon” is evidently related to *philema*, kiss, used of the form of greeting practiced among believers, “Greet one another with an holy kiss” (II Cor. xiii. 12). That he was a Colossian appears from Col. iv. 9, insofar as his slave is mentioned as belonging to that

place. He became a believer under the ministry of the Apostle (Philem. 19) although under what circumstances is not known, for Paul, at this time, was apparently unknown by face in Colosse (Col. ii. 1), and there is no record of his having visited the place. The long sojourn at Ephesus has been suggested as the period during which the event occurred and this seems most likely.

The appellations predicated of Philemon, “our dearly beloved” (literally “the beloved”), and “fellow-labourer” are probably to be read together as Moffatt and others, “our beloved fellow-worker”. The word fellow-labourer, *sunergos* is almost exclusive to Paul, occurring only in III John 8 outside of his writings, although the verbal form is used once each by Mark and James. In Mark xvi. 20 it is used of the Lord Himself Who was ‘working with’ the disciples, and in I Cor. iii. 9 of Paul and Apollos “labourers together with” God. The circumstances which occasioned its use of Philemon are not known, unless it be the period already referred to at Ephesus. It is certainly possible that Paul could be using the word to imply “labourers in a common cause”, even though the parties might be in reality miles apart.

“And to our beloved (texts ‘sister’) Apphia” (2).

“Apphia the sister” (R.V. margin) would appear to have been the wife of Philemon, who being the mistress of the house would naturally be involved in the reception of a runaway slave. Indeed Bishop Lightfoot writes:

“The letter introduces us to an ordinary household in a small town in Phrygia. Four members of it are mentioned by name, the father, the mother, the son, and the slave” (*Introduction to Philemon*).

He evidently refers to Philemon as the father, Apphia as the mother, Archippus as the son and Onesimus as the slave, which is certainly a possibility. Whether Archippus (2) was the son or no, he would certainly seem to have been a member or friend of the family circle.

“and Archippus our fellowsoldier” (2).

This man has one other mention in Scripture, in Col. v. 17:

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.”

The word translated “take heed”, *blepo* is rendered ‘beware’ in the same epistle (ii. 8) and is evidently intended as a warning. What the ‘ministry’ was, and why the church was to be responsible for relating Paul’s words rather than the apostle himself, can only be a matter of conjecture. The words, “the ministry that thou fulfil it” are reminiscent of Acts xii. 25:

“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, *when they had fulfilled their ministry.*”

Here the ministry is known, for it concerned the sending of “relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea” (Acts xi. 29), a special mission, rather than a continuous service.

On the other hand consider the exhortation of Paul to Timothy:

“Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of (fully carry out) thy ministry”
(II Tim. iv. 5),

which seems to imply a *continuous* ministry. Whether the ministry given to Archippus was continuous or a special service only, it is possible that the duty of the Colossian church was to “keep him up to it”, hence Paul’s word to Archippus *via them*. Does not this duty divulge upon all the members of the body of Christ, to lovingly see that those who minister to them, “take heed that they fulfil their ministry”?

Archippus is called, in Philemon, “our fellowsoldier” *sustratiotes*, a word used in one other place only of Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), who for the work of Christ was “nigh unto death”. It is evident that Paul did not use the word lightly, for the contexts of its cognate words speak of “enduring hardness” and non-commitment in the world, of “overthrowing strongholds” and “leading every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ” (II Tim. ii. 1-4; II Cor. x. 3-5). Whatever “the ministry” of Archippus was it deserved the association of warfare, into which only those of “full age”, and whose “house is in order”, may enter. Compare the O.T. qualifications for a soldier, which set forth in principle what is stated in II Tim. ii. 4, and implied in Eph. vi. (*after* the instructions concerning the home).

“From twenty years old and upward (mature), *all that are able to go forth to war*”
(Numb. i. 3).

“What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it
planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it betrothed a wife, and hath not
taken her that is fearful and fainthearted? *Let him go and return unto his house*”
(Deut. xx. 5-8).

Every soldier needs encouragement and support, and Archippus, Paul’s and Timothy’s “fellowsoldier”, was no exception; the church at Colosse was to remind him to “take heed to the ministry”, for it had been received “in the Lord”.

“and to the church in thy house” (2).

The church in the house is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 5; I Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15. Acts xii. 12 also has some bearing upon these references, where in the house of John Mark’s mother, Mary, “many were gathered together praying”.

During the Acts period, whilst the “hope of Israel” prevailed, believers continued to worship in the temple (iii. 1) and to enter the synagogues (xiii. 14, 15; xv. 21), for the intention was not to overthrow these institutions, but, by the preaching of the truth, to reform them from within, so preparing the congregations for the return of the Messiah. The early epistle of James actually assumes the existence in a synagogue of believers in a position to say to others, “Stand thou there, or sit here” (James ii. 1-3 where the word ‘assembly’ is actually ‘synagogue’). Believers during this period were looked upon as a Jewish sect. But there were towns where no synagogue existed (Philippi seems to have been one such, Acts xvi. 12, 13), and even where they did, the synagogue service could

hardly have given much satisfaction to those in possession of the key to the O.T. Also the newly-formed 'sect' came to be "everywhere spoken against" (Acts xxviii. 22).

These facts would naturally lead to the meeting of believers in houses, thrown open for this purpose by the wealthier brethren. They would not supersede the synagogue services, but supplement them, for the reason already given above.

With the passing of Israel's hope at Acts xxviii. 25-28 and the coming in of a different hope, and especially with the passing of the "first place" of the Jew, emphasized previously by his position in temple and synagogue, the connections with these institutions would gradually cease. True they might at first be used, if opportunity arose, to announce the new calling, but it can hardly be expected that many, if any, would be kindly disposed towards the idea of Israel's having become *Lo-Ammi*, "not My people". Since no buildings existed at this time for Christian worship (Bishop Lightfoot says, "There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for Christian worship within the limits of the Roman Empire before the third century") then it was natural that apartments in private houses would be devoted to this purpose. Hence "the church in the house" would come into prominence.

The letter to Philemon is addressed then, "to the church in thy house", and as such suggests how it could be said of Philemon, "the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (7). Also, those who met together "in thy house" would be involved in fulfilling Paul's desire for Onesimus, that he might be *received* as "a brother beloved" (16).

"Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (3).

Dr. John Eadie writes, "*Eirene*—Peace, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shalom* It was the formula of ordinary courtesy at meeting and parting it is the result of the previous *charis* (grace) As the West embodied its wishes in *charis*, and the East in *shalom—eirene*,—so the apostle, in catholic fullness, uses both terms in their profoundest Christian significance: no ordinary greeting, or 'as the world giveth', but a prayer for all combined and fitting spiritual blessings" (from his commentaries on *Galatians* and *Ephesians*).

There has been some disagreement amongst expositors as to the true disposition of the next verses and consequently the meaning of the apostle. The A.V. reads:

"I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (4-7).

The view held by Bengel, H. A. Meyer and others is that verse 6 attaches itself directly to verse 5, "specifying *the tendency* of" the love and faith of Philemon. So that the words, "that the communication of thy faith", are not *the subject* of Paul's prayer but *the tendency* of Philemon's "love and faith". This conception is roughly expressed thus:

“I am always thankful to God when I mention you in prayer, because I hear of your love and faith towards the Lord Jesus and the saints, in the exercising of which you have in view the goal of fellowship—to make every good thing in us effective for Christ Jesus by acknowledgment, for I have great joy”

The alternative view, followed by many commentators and suggested by a number of translations (e.g. R.S.V., Moffatt, Weymouth, N.E.B., etc.), requires the supplying of the ellipsis “praying” at the beginning of verse 6, making the following words *the subject* of Paul’s prayer, thus:

“I thank my God, making mention of thee in my prayers *praying that* the communication of thy faith may become effectual”

The latter disposition appears the most natural and is supported by the weight of opinion; it is however possible to admit either view.

Thanksgiving and prayers are characteristic of the opening sections of Paul’s epistles and Philemon is no exception:

“I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers” (4).

Paul was a great man of prayer and his prayer-list, involving as it did “the care of all the churches” (II Cor. xi. 28), would probably have put most believers to shame. But then the apostle had a confidence that prayer changes things, as he later expressed in the same letter:

“I trust that *through your prayers* I shall be given unto you” (22).

Prayer does not simply change things in the mind of the supplicator, it can affect outward circumstances, it can move mountains (Matt. xvii. 20). “Right division” is of course as necessary with respect to prayer as with any other subject of Scripture, but the *power* of prayer remains unchanged, as is evident from Paul’s continuing confidence in its practice. (See Rom. xv. 30; II Cor. i. 11; Phil. i. 19 and note the efforts of Epaphras in Col. iv. 12.). Those who ‘strove’ or ‘laboured fervently’ in prayers evidently expected mighty things to be wrought, and it would appear that they were not disappointed. Here is a lesson worthy of the attention of all believers of all ages.

No.5. pp. 52 - 56

The previous article ended with a comment on the confidence of the apostle Paul and others in prayer. Paul's thanksgiving (an essential part of all prayer) was based upon the reports he had received of Philemon's love and faith:

"Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints" (5).

If the figure *chiasm* is here employed then the disposition of this verse is:

"the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and love toward all the saints."

Faith may also rather refer to faithfulness, although a due recognition of the change of prepositions in the verse does not make this necessary. "Toward the Lord" is *pros ton kurion* whilst "toward all saints" is *eis pantas tous hagiou*s, and the change from *pros* to *eis* is surely significant. *The Companion Bible* note on these prepositions is:

"*pros* with a view to anything—as an end (with the accusative)."
"*eis* denotes motion *to* or *unto* an object, with the purpose of reaching or touching it" (Appendix 104).

Faith which is exercised "with a view to" the Lord Jesus finds its complement in a love which "reaches out unto" all the saints. "Faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6).

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you (text 'us') in Christ Jesus" (6).

Three words demand attention before the meaning of this verse may be considered: "communication", "effectual" and "acknowledging".

"Communication", *koinonia* is the word normally translated 'fellowship' or 'communion'. Paul uses a cognate word *koinonos* in verse 17, 'partner'. It is quite wrong to imagine that the word is limited in meaning to fellowship in spiritual things, as Acts ii. 42-45 makes clear:

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (*koinonia*) . . . And all that believed were together, and had all things common (*koinos*); And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Consider also Rom. xv. 26, 27:

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution (*koinonia*) for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers (*koinoneo*) of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

Philemon's fellowship was of this nature; his love reached out and he had refreshed the bowels of the saints (7), which would involve him in carnal (fleshly) things. In days

when the church was “in the house” such hospitality was a necessity (I Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7, 8) and was commended by the Apostle.

“Effectual”, *energes* suggests activity, work, vigour. Here is the word which expresses the action of faith when it manifests itself in love—“faith worketh (*energeo*) by love” (Gal. v. 6). Faith is not passive but active; “faith apart from works (*ton ergon*) is barren” (James ii. 20 texts).

The third word under consideration must be reviewed at some length and so deserves of a separate heading.

Epignosis.

This word, translated in the A.V. “knowledge”, “acknowledgment” and “acknowledging”, is difficult to define and distinguish from *gnosis*, “knowledge”. How is the prefix *epi* to be understood; as “upon”, “after” or as intensifying knowledge to “full knowledge”? Dr. Bullinger, in his *Critical Lexicon*, defines *epignosis* as,

“A knowledge that lays claim to personal sympathy, and exerts an influence upon the person.”

Culverwell in *Spiritual Optics* has the following note quoted by Trench in his *Synonyms of the New Testament*:

“*Epignosis* bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off.”

He evidently has in mind I Cor. xiii. 12 where both *gnosis* and *epignosis* occur in their verbal forms and therefore provide a useful comparison.

“Now I know (*ginosko*) in part; but then shall I know (*epiginosko*) even as also I am known (*epiginosko*).”

The Apostle is contrasting (in the context) the present experience, which he likens to “seeing through a mirror enigmatically”, with the “face to face” of the future (xiii. 12). The A.V. “glass” gives a false impression, as the reference is undoubtedly to “the imperfectly reflecting metal mirrors of the ancients” (H. A. Meyer), and the presence of the Greek *ainigma* (Prov. i. 6 LXX ‘dark saying’) tends to confirm the idea of obscurity. The present knowledge is “in part” and is connected with “prophecies” which shall be done away and “tongues” which shall cease, when “that which is perfect is come” (xiii. 8-10). (It should be remembered that “the present” refers *here* to the Acts Period.). The partial knowledge—“now I know (*ginosko*) in part” is contrasted with what “I shall know (*epiginosko*)”, when “that which is perfect (*teleios*, complete) is come”. This suggests a *goal*, a thought present also in the usage of this word in Eph. iv. 13:

“*Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (epignosis) of the Son of God*” (R.V.).

Compare also II Tim. iii. 7 where although some are “ever learning”, they are “never able to come to the knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth”. It ought also to be noted that the knowledge (*epignosis*), to which Paul refers in I Cor. xiii., is in harmony with the Lord’s knowledge of the believer:

“Then I shall know *according as also* I have been known” (verse 12 lit.).

Consider now other references to the verb *epiginosko*:

“Ye shall *know* them by their fruits” (Matt. vii. 16, 20).

“Elias is come and they *knew* him not” (Matt. xvii. 12).

“When she (Rhoda) *knew* Peter’s voice” (Acts xii. 14).

“When they (the Ephesians) *knew* that he was a Jew” (Acts xix. 34).

The idea of recognition is resident in the above usage—Rhoda could not see Peter but she *recognized* his voice; false prophets may come in sheep’s clothing but they may be *recognized* as wolves by their fruits. In the first of these examples the evidence for knowledge is *hearing*; in the second, hearing might well lead the believer astray (they are false prophets) and *doing* is appealed to (the evidence of *sight*).

What conclusion may then be drawn from this usage of *epiginosko*? Two thoughts must influence any attempted definition of the word: (1) the idea of a goal and (2) the evident meaning of “recognition”. The writer was encouraged to find that these two thoughts had been brought together in the definition of J. Armitage Robinson, D.D. (in his *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*), in the following manner:

“So far then as we are to distinguish between *gnosis* and *epignosis*, we may say that *gnosis* is the wider word and expresses ‘knowledge’ in the fullest sense: *epignosis* is knowledge directed towards a particular object, perceiving, discerning, recognizing: but it is not knowledge in the abstract: that is *gnosis*”

“Knowledge directed towards a particular object” appears to represent the nearest definition of *epignosis*, with the added thought that it is more personal and exact than *gnosis*, involving “recognition” and its natural outcome, “acknowledgment”. This meaning must now be applied to the passage in question:

“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging (*epignosis*) of every good thing which is in us in Christ Jesus” (6).

In the light of what has been learnt about “communication” (fellowship), “effectual” (suggesting activity) and “acknowledging” (personal, exact and directive knowledge), the following seems to express the Apostle’s meaning.

By a due recognition, and exact personal knowledge and acknowledgment of the good in us (which is in us for, or towards [*eis*] Christ Jesus) the sharing of faith becomes effective towards the saints. Consider Eph. ii. 10—“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for (*epi*) good works, which God prepared before in order that we should walk in them” (lit. rendering).

The sharing of faith, in Philemon’s case, involved (verse 7)—hospitality:

For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.”

“Comfort”, *paraklesis* allied to *parakletos*, “Comforter” (the Holy Spirit, John xiv. 26) is rendered “encouragement” in Moffatt’s version, which seems nearer to the truth expressed by the word. Comfort is more than consolation, it should strengthen—Latin *cum* “together”, *fortis* “strong”. Paul was both strengthened and given great joy in Philemon’s love to the saints, and resting upon this confidence now reaches the point of his epistle—“Wherefore”.

“Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin (order) thee that which is convenient (becoming), yet for love’s sake I rather beseech thee” (8, 9).

Paul does not appeal to Philemon from the authority of an apostle, but for love’s sake, and remembering that he is now “such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus” (R.V.). The greatness of this man is nowhere more evident than here, and especially if the suggestion of Lightfoot is correct that, “in the common dialect *presbutes* (here rendered ‘aged’) may have been written indifferently for *presbeutes* (an ambassador) in St. Paul’s time”. Rather than remember his authority as an apostle, he chooses to look behind the office and remember that he too is under orders—he represents another as “an ambassador”.

“Paul an ambassador, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus” (9).

An ambassador (II Cor. v. 20; Eph. vi. 20) and a prisoner (Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; II Tim. i. 8, etc.), of Christ Jesus.

The bonds and afflictions of the Apostle only served to emphasize the grace extended toward him.

“Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance (surpassingness) of the revelations, there was given to me *a thorn in the flesh* *My grace* is sufficient for thee” (II Cor. xii. 7-9).

“The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that *bonds and afflictions* abide me. But none of these things move me so that I might finish my course to testify the gospel of the *grace of God*” (Acts xx. 23, 24).

“Paul, *the prisoner* if ye have heard of the dispensation of the *grace of God* which is given me” (Eph. iii. 1, 2).

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

“Remember *my bonds*. *Grace* be with you” (Col. iv. 18).

It is one thing to *represent* a country (or in this case a person) as an ambassador, but much more to *suffer for* that country as a prisoner.

“We are therefore ambassadors *for Christ (huper Christou)* we beseech *for Christ (huper Christou)*” (II Cor. v. 20 lit.).

“To you it was granted (*charizomai; charis = grace*) *for Christ (huper Christou)*, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer *for Him (huper autou)*” (Phil. i. 29 lit.).

Paul's position as a prisoner reminded him of the grace given to him, and so he beseeches for love's sake, laying authority aside.

"I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, Who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me" (10, 11 R.V.).

Onesimus is called (12) "him, that is, mine own bowels". A connection between 'begetting' and 'bowels' is observed in Gen. xv. 4:

"He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

The Apostle looks upon himself as both a father (I Cor. iv. 14, 15) and a mother (Gal. iv. 19) of those whom he considers his own children, begotten by means of the Gospel. Onesimus, in particular, "was doubly dear to the Apostle, as being the child of his sorrows" (Lightfoot), because begotten "in his bonds". The Apostle completely identified himself with Onesimus:

"Receive him as myself" (17).

"If he oweth thee ought, put that on mine account I will repay" (18, 19).

Paul also had a great confidence in "his child". In time past Onesimus had not lived up to his name (Onesimus means profitable); now the grace of God had changed that—"profitable to thee and to me". This confidence is exhibited in action:

"Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person" (12 R.V.).

Onesimus appears to have been accompanied in this journey by Tychicus (Col.iv.7-9) but had he so desired, would no doubt have had opportunity to escape during the journey. The preservation of this letter is evidence in favour of his having not done so, and also of his acceptance by his master. Paul was confident in both matters (12, 21). The grace of God can turn even a despised Phrygian slave into "a brother beloved" (16).

No.6. pp. 72 - 76

The apostle Paul, demonstrating his confidence in the grace of God as having touched Onesimus, “his child”, begotten in his bonds, sent him back from Rome to Colosse accompanied by Tychicus (Col. iv. 7-9; Philem. 12). In doing this he waived his authority as an apostle, and subordinated his own desire to retain Onesimus, to “the mind” of Philemon:

“Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing: that thy benefit (thy good) should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly” (12-14).

The Apostle assumes that Philemon himself would perform this ministry to him, had he been present, and was of a mind to keep Onesimus on his behalf, but again the greatness of the man showed itself—not “of necessity, but willingly”. Paul was concerned that ministry should come from the heart, a lesson for all believers of all times.

The more that is read of this wonderful epistle, the more it is realized that it was written with a pen “dipped in grace”. There is never compulsion, and the only debt is “to love one another” (Rom. xiii. 8); yet when this has been said, it only serves to emphasize the truth of I John iii. 16:

“Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (R.V.).

Paul could quote examples of those who possessed this spirit:

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks” (Rom. xvi. 3, 4).

“Epaphroditus for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me” (Phil. ii. 30).

“Onesiphorus (no doubt at great personal risk remembering that Paul was in the ‘death cell’ at this time) sought me out very diligently and in how many things he ministered unto me in Ephesus, thou knowest very well” (II Tim. i. 16-18).

The obligation of such ‘love’ is perhaps never more felt than in this most personal of Paul’s epistles. The comfort such ministry must have brought to the Apostle cannot be gauged at this distance in time, but the value he put upon it, is some indication. He gave up this comfort when he sent Onesimus back to Philemon. Here is true greatness, for Philemon was in debt to Paul (19) and the Apostle might well have considered it his right to retain this minister to offset such a debt. The ‘good’ (*agathos*) of verse 6 is recognized; the ‘benefit’ (*agathos*) of verse 14 is to be exercised ‘willingly’.

The Apostle now indicates his belief that behind the whole affair may be observed the work of God.

“For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever” (15 R.V.).

This conviction strengthens the determination of Paul to send back Onesimus, and it is interesting to conjecture whether or not the Apostle had in mind Deut. xv. 16, 17:

“And it shall be, if he (the now free servant, verse 12) say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee . . . then . . . *he shall be thy servant for ever.*”

The parting (note—“he was parted from thee”) and the service lost, at the most a few short months, could not compare with the lasting fellowship now assured through the change wrought in Onesimus. (“For ever” is the translation of *aionios*, a word used only three times in the Prison Epistles—other occurrences: II Tim. i. 9 “world”; ii. 10 “eternal”). The attitude of the Apostle to the parting is reminiscent of Joseph’s attitude to his brethren. Although they had sold him into captivity yet he said:

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for *God did send me* before you to preserve life” (Gen. xlv. 5).

There was a recognition by both Joseph and Paul that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. viii. 28). “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Gen. i. 20).

But the reception of Onesimus was now to be on a different ground:

“No longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (16 R.V.).

The Apostle gives no hint of manumission—not once in the epistle is there the slightest suggestion that Philemon is under an obligation to give Onesimus his freedom—but rather does he remind him of his obligation as one believer to another. The external relationship of master-slave remains the same (and Paul would expect compliance with his words in the accompanying epistle, Col. iii. 1 - iv. 1) but the ethical relationship has become a higher one, “both in the flesh, and in the Lord”. Two spheres are affected by the change in Onesimus; that pertaining to the material needs of man, and that associated with fellowship “in the Lord”—both are important. The words referred to above, which appear in the Colossian epistle, would be a corrective to any false notions by either party.

Philemon is to receive Onesimus as he would have done Paul himself (17):

“If thou count me therefore a partner (one with whom thou canst have fellowship—*koinonos*), receive him as myself.”

How closely Paul identifies himself with the runaway slave, so much so, that for Philemon not to receive Onesimus becomes equivalent to a break down in fellowship with the Apostle himself. Philemon is reminded of their “common” ground, the basis of fellowship. But this does not mean that Paul is not mindful of the possible harm suffered by the defect of Onesimus.

“But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay” (18, 19 R.V.).

The fault of Onesimus consisted of more than merely running away, with its consequent neglect of service, it would appear also to have involved theft. The slave would have need money to get as far as Rome, and Paul's words indicate that such a debt had been incurred. Onesimus would now hardly be in a position to pay back what was owing (it could be made up later of course in loving service) and so Paul again identifies himself with the slave and his need—"I will repay". The suggestion would be almost laughable were it not for the evident grace behind the words. How could the Apostle, himself in great need in a Roman prison, make up the debt? Nevertheless to demonstrate his sincerity he takes up the pen (Paul dictated his letters normally, Rom. xvi. 22) and signs the I.O.U. The words "I Paul" should not be lightly glossed over but recognized as weighty, as in other contexts (II Cor. x. 1; Gal. v. 2; Eph. iii. 1; Col. i. 23; I Thess. ii. 18).

Here again the Apostle reveals his greatness. Strictly he could have appealed to the lasting debt owed him by the recipient of this letter a debt which money could never repay, but he will not impose upon any man.

"Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (19).
"I say nothing of the fact that you owe me even your own self" (Weymouth).

This debt had been incurred through the ministry of Paul which had brought salvation to Philemon. Could such a debt, "even thine own self", ever be repayed? Compare Luke ix. 25:

"What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, *and lose himself*?"

It must be remembered that Paul looked upon himself as the spiritual father of both Onesimus (10) and Philemon (19). Only with such a conception could any man be looked upon as owing him his own self. This is no denial of I Cor. vi. 19, 20:

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

Note also, in the context of masters and slaves, I Cor. vii. 22, 23, where there can be no doubt as to whom the debt is owed.

The next verse contains a play on the name Onesimus:

"Yea, brother, may I have profit (*onemi*) of thee in the Lord" (20 lit.).

Paul is in effect saying, "I am sending back to thee Onesimus (*profitable*), therefore let me have *profit* of thee". This profit is looked upon by him as the reception and refreshment of Onesimus:

"Refresh my bowels in Christ" (20 texts).

Onesimus is called "my bowels" in verse 12, and Paul's profit is that such should be received and refreshed, for in doing so, he himself (being so closely identified with 'his child') would benefit. The cause of Onesimus is the cause of Paul, and the Apostle has great confidence in the outcome:

“Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say” (21 R.V.).

“Beyond what I say”—the details are left for Philemon to fill in. Would manumission be included? Possibly, but the master is under no compulsion, either here or in any other part of the epistle, to set his slave free. Rather does the next verse suggest hospitality, “as a brother beloved”, than freedom.

“But withal prepare me *also* a lodging” (22).

“Also”, as well as Onesimus. Had Philemon during the absence of his slave obtained another to meet his need? If so then the ‘also’ takes on a stronger meaning—“prepare him a lodging—me also”.

The Apostle’s confidence of release is based upon “your prayers”; not perhaps simply Philemon’s, but of the whole of the Colossian assembly. This confidence in prayer has been already touched upon in a previous article, and may be seen more clearly by emphasizing the preposition in verse 22:

“I trust that *by means of* your prayers I shall be given unto you.”

Paul apparently planned upon his release to lodge at Colosse, having visited Philippi in Macedonia (Phil. i. 24-26) and probably a number of other churches, who would ‘bring him on his way’. His earlier plans to travel west to Spain (Rom. xv. 23, 24) had been, for the time being, put on one side. That he did however during this period of freedom visit Spain at least, is attested strongly by tradition (see Lightfoot’s *Biblical Essays*). This change of plan no doubt accorded with the revelation received after his letter to the Romans (Eph. iii.), when his first concern would be to establish the existing churches in the new stewardship, rather than break the virgin ground of the extreme west. This change of plan may also largely have been influenced by the Colossian heresy (Col. ii.) which was at this time giving the Apostle some concern. He would wish, at the first opportunity, to visit Colosse and establish the church there. Hence his journey eastwards.

The letter closes with salutations:

“There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow labourers” (23, 24).

All five persons are also mentioned at the close of the Colossian letter and “Jesus, which is called Justus” is added (Col. iv. 11). Of this latter nothing is known, except that together with Aristarchus and Marcus (iv. 10) he was “of the circumcision”. The distinction would seem to imply that Epaphras, Demas and Luke were not of the circumcision.

“Epaphras”, his full name would be Epaphroditus, is probably not to be confused with one of the same name, a messenger to the church at Philippi (Phil. ii. 25), for the name was a common one. He has two mentions in the Colossian epistle (i. 7; iv. 12) which suggest he was a teacher and a great man of prayer. When Philemon was written he shared Paul’s imprisonment (Philem. 23).

“Marcus”, undoubtedly John Mark, whose association with Paul in his missionary efforts led to such serious consequences. He was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10) and cause of the contention between him and Paul (Acts xv. 36-40). His bad start however was more than amended for later, and he is seen again here with Paul, and is later highly commended by the Apostle (II Tim. iv. 11). His connection with Rome is interesting, especially since his Gospel views the Saviour from the point of view of a servant (a viewpoint well understood by the Romans with their system of slavery) and accords with an early tradition that it was written to the Romans.

“Aristarchus” has three mentions in Acts (xix. 29; xx. 4; xxvii. 2). He was a “Macedonian of Thessalonica” and fellow traveler with Paul. On one occasion he appears to have narrowly escaped death in the theatre at Ephesus.

“Demas”, mentioned three times altogether (Col. iv. 14; II Tim. iv. 10; Philem. 24), a “fellow labourer” at the time of Paul’s first imprisonment, was possibly also a Thessalonian. He forsook the Apostle at his hour of greatest need “having loved the present age”.

“Lucas”—“Luke, the beloved physician”, writer of the Gospel bearing his name and the Acts, and in contrast to Demas, remaining faithful to the Apostle right up to the end (II Tim. iv. 11). As a doctor his association with Paul must have been of great comfort to him and may be the reason for this being described as “the beloved (one)” (Col. iv. 14). Paul’s motive in referring to him as a physician may not be to distinguish him from others of the same name, but rather as a reminder of his own obligations to him. Was he behind the exhortation of I Tim. v. 23?

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

Did he have any part in the recovery of Epaphroditus, used by God as the earthly channel (Phil. ii. 25-28)? The answers must remain a matter of conjecture. It ought to be noted however that his activities were not confined to medical work—he is called “my fellow-labourer” (Philem. 24) and as such undoubtedly had a share in the gospel.

The usual salutation (II Thess. iii. 17) finally closes the epistle:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” (25).

The Plan of God.

*(Being a series of studies in the Scriptures, made for broadcasting in America.
They have the beginner and even the unbeliever in mind,
and are an attempt to present the Truth of the Scriptures in the simplest possible way.)*

No.25. The Epistle to the Ephesians (5). pp. 16 - 20

Having stressed the inestimable privilege of uninterrupted access to the Father, for both Jewish and Gentile believers in this Body, Paul now informs the latter that they are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens *of* the saints (literally) and of the household of God (ii. 19). “Fellow-citizens of the saints” is a strange expression, but when we realize that the word translated “saints”, can mean holy things as well as holy people, and that in Heb. ix. 8 it is rendered “holiest of all”, we can see that the Apostle is stating something more wonderful than that the Gentile is now being blessed with the Jew, for this had been clearly revealed as God’s purpose through Abraham and was always true of Gentile proselytes. He is now revealing the supreme truth that Gentiles, once so far off and distant from God and from blessing, are now so near that they belong to the very holiest of all, the most holy place in heaven where the ascended Christ has now entered (Heb. vi. 19, 20). What an overwhelming change God’s abounding grace had made! It sounds too good to be true!

The Apostle continues “having been built (literally) upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”. Does this mean the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, or are they themselves the foundation? In chapter iv., verses 8-11 make clear that at His Ascension the Lord Jesus gave a new order of apostles and prophets which must not be confused with the calling of the twelve apostles in His earthly lifetime. The ministry given through the new apostles, of which Paul was chief, was a foundation ministry, built of course upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ (I Cor. iii. 11), and He is the chief cornerstone upon Whom the whole Temple building rests, the Greek term being derived from the Septuagint of Isa. xxviii. 16. It is important to note that the emphasis here is not on this Temple’s magnificence, like Solomon’s, but upon the fact that it is a *home*. The words “household”, “built”, “building”, “builded together”, and “habitation” all contain the Greek word for “home”. This means that the great purpose of God which lies behind the preparation and erection of this edifice, is *to provide a permanent home for Himself*. Up to this point God has had temporary homes. The material heavens He spread out as a tent to dwell in (Isa. xl. 22) and later on, when His earthly people were journeying from Egypt to Canaan, He dwelt in another tent, in the holy of holies of the Tabernacle. But as the figure suggests, these were only temporary homes. It is not too much to say that God desires a permanent home, and this home will be provided by this church, now described as the Body of Christ. When this calling is taken to the highest heavens, completed, and the figure changes from Body to a Temple, a dwelling place for God, and each believer, Jew or Gentile, is likened to a living stone, “fitly framed together” by the great Architect and Builder. Chapter ii. 5, 6 is going to tell us that God

sees this edifice completed in Christ and seated together in the heavenly places where He is now exalted (i. 20, 21).

We need to pause here, meditate and ask for the ability to grasp as far as it is possible this stupendous goal, for *it is the high water mark in Scripture for the redeemed*. God has nothing higher or more wonderful, for who can get higher than God Himself, or any nearer to Him than this church? We can be sure this was not lost on Paul, for he immediately ceases to give further revelation, but falls on his knees and prays (iii. 1, 14) not only for himself, but for the Ephesian believers that this very ability to understand this great truth may be given them through the Holy Spirit's working. It would be a good thing for all of us if we were to do the same thing and not rush on to read the rest of the epistle, for if we miss what God has for us here, *we shall have missed God's best*.

The third chapter commences with the Apostle describing himself as Christ's prisoner on behalf of the Gentiles. As we have seen in our past studies, the nation of Israel dominates the scene from Abraham to the end of the Acts, and the far-off Gentile only comes into the picture when they are blessed in and through Israel. After the Acts, Israel is laid aside in unbelief and now we have a special ministry and revelation of truth which is directed to the Gentiles, quite apart from the Jewish nation. Paul's prison ministry, concerning which Ephesians is the first letter, is not addressed to the covenant nation with all their Divine privileges (Rom. ix. 3-5), although individual Jews who were believers could respond by faith to the riches Paul was the channel in revealing. This new ministry was primarily and mainly *Gentile*, a complete reversal of what had been the normal up to this time. With what interest then should all of us, who are Gentiles, give attention to God's messenger and God's message!

Verse 2 with its "if so be that" does not imply that the Ephesian saints had possibly not heard of the dispensation or stewardship of grace that God had given to Paul for them. It is only a rhetorical way of reminding them what they already knew. The wonders that the Apostle was going to commit to writing had as their basis nothing but grace, which occurs no less than 25 times in Paul's prison letters. The gospel which saved them originated with *riches of grace* (i. 7) and the new heavenly calling looks forward to nothing less than *exceeding riches of grace* in the ages to come (ii. 6, 7). Grace is the favour of God shown to the undeserving, and this is how God is dealing with every member of the Body of Christ all the time.

The Apostle continues "how that by revelation He made known unto me the Secret (mystery)". We have seen that 'mystery' is not a good translation of the Greek word, for the English word suggests something that is puzzling and difficult to understand, whereas 'secret' comes much nearer to the meaning of the original, that is something that is hidden and cannot be known until it is told or revealed. Paul was a steward of the secrets of God (I Cor. iv. 1) and Peter, James, John and Jude could write their epistles and give the truth that God willed they should do, *without using this word once*.

It is true that the last book in the Bible uses it, but this is not an epistle, but looks forward to the end of the age when the mystery or secret of iniquity is rife and

worldwide. In His wisdom God purposely keeps some aspects of His purpose hidden, so that the great enemy Satan shall not have the advantage. In the realm of human affairs, during periods of war and times of stress a similar thing happens. Knowledge that would be valuable to the enemy is kept secret.

There is another reason too, namely that there is a *right time or season* for the revelation of a particular phase of truth. Before this time or after it, would be wrong or out of keeping with such truth, and we may be sure that God makes no mistakes in His time-table. Satan must have thought that he had rendered a deadly blow to the purpose of God, when, through his hardening and blinding power, Israel became unusable at Acts xxviii. But God then saw fit to reveal His brightest jewel, related to part of His age-long plan that He had kept hidden in Himself up to this point, namely, the calling out of a *heavenly* people that were to form an everlasting habitation for Himself. This secret He first imparted to the Apostle Paul and then commissioned Him to make it known from his prison, and it is these prison letters that disclose this previously hidden truth which completes the Word of God and fills out the gap between the laying aside of Israel in unbelief at Acts xxviii. and their being taken up by God at the end of the age at Christ's Second Coming (Rom. xi. 25-29).

We note that Paul in Eph. iii. 3 writes about "the secret" without any qualification. Previously he had dealt with other Divine secrets, such as the secret (mystery) of iniquity (II Thess. ii. 7), the secret of Israel's blindness (Rom. xi. 25), the secret of the instantaneous change of the living believer at the Lord's Coming (I Cor. xv. 51, 52). But here in Ephesians it is THE SECRET par excellence which contains the greatest and most profound truth that God seeks to make known to saved sinners (Col. i. 26, 27).

When the Apostle states "as I wrote afore in few words", he is not looking back to his epistles written during the Acts, and we shall search these in vain for such teaching, but the reader is being referred back to what has already been stated in the Ephesian letter. "Whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the secret (mystery) of Christ" (iii. 4). Some have assumed that the mystery of Christ of verse 4 is the same as the mystery of verse 3, but this cannot be because the latter was known in some degree in past ages, but not to the extent that was being divulged through this prison letter (5), whereas the mystery or secret itself "hath been hid in God from the beginning of the world (lit. from all ages)" and was therefore not known by anybody (9). In other words, we have two secrets here, one concerning Christ the Head, and another concerning the church, His Body, and once this is seen, there is no contradiction and one statement supplements the other.

The secret concerning Christ starts in Eden with the promise of the Seed that would bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15) and gradually through the unfolding of type and shadow, and the ministry of prophet, priest and king, the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the centre and circumference of the divine plan of the ages touching earth and heaven, grew like a great river and came to its climax in the captivity epistles of Paul which portray Him as seated far above all heavens, as Head over all things to the church,

and to principalities and powers, the One Who has the first place (pre-eminence) in all things whether in heaven or earth (Col. i. 15-18).

The Secret relating to the church which is Christ's Body and Fullness was never made known in O.T. times or at any time before God gave it to the channel through whom He willed it to be revealed, namely, Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus. It was indeed completely hidden in God, not even hidden in the Scriptures. It is quite surprising how many expositors have never gripped this fact, for they explain the Mystery as being the blessing of the gospel going out to the Gentiles and the Gentiles then being blessed with the Jew. *But this was never a Secret.* As early as Gen. xii., God revealed to Abraham that through his seed *all families of the earth would be blessed.* Although Israel was so favoured and for centuries took the first place in God's dealings, yet this was only to prepare them to be the channel for world-wide blessing (Acts xiii. 47). Those who think this is the Mystery take a view which contradicts Scripture and shows that they have never understood what this special Secret is about.

However, Eph. iii. 6 gives some of its peculiar characteristics, "that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, a joint-body, and joint-sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the work of His power" (6, 7). As the A.V. fails to bring out the meaning of the Greek, we offer an alternate translation. Three times in connection with the words "heirs", "body" and "partakers (sharers)" the Holy Spirit uses a preposition that means "on an equality with". In this new calling the Jewish believer ceases to have priority. It is no longer "to the Jew first". The status of a Jew in special covenant relationship with God ceases, and if he comes into this calling by grace, he does so as an ordinary saved sinner like the Gentile believer. The Gentile Christian also loses his status as an outsider, far off, as described in chapter ii., and out of these two companies God creates something entirely new, a NEW MAN, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile—Col. iii. 10, 11), each member being on a perfect equality for the first time. This is one of the unique characteristics of this great Mystery or Secret now so fully revealed. Other details are given in this glorious epistle and also that to the Colossians. Paul states his great aim in Eph. iii. 9 "to make all see what is the dispensation (stewardship) of the Mystery (see R.V.) which from all ages has been hid in God", hidden for so long, but now made known. Was Paul's aim achieved? How many responded in his lifetime and how many have responded since? We ask the reader to look round on modern Christendom and estimate how much this great secret is proclaimed from the pulpits and elsewhere today and how many are rejoicing in its exceeding riches? We fear they will get a shock. What has gone wrong?

No.26. The Epistle to the Ephesians (6).
pp. 37 - 40

Having unfolded in iii.6 some of the characteristics of the great secret (mystery A.V.) which God had revealed to him as its human channel, the Apostle Paul links it with the “gospel whereof I was made a minister” (verses 6 and 7). It is a profound mistake, made by many, that the word ‘gospel’ always means the same thing wherever it is used in the N.T. and denotes no more than the good news of God’s salvation of the sinner by faith in Christ as Saviour. True it is that this is always the *beginning* of God’s dealings with man, but to restrict it to this would wipe out much of the deeper riches of truth that God wants to make known to His saints and is therefore ‘good news’ indeed (Col. i. 27). Here Paul is not referring to the gospel of salvation, but to this stewardship of the mystery which is the subject of the context. This should be good news to every believer! The past phrase of verse 6 must not be divorced from verse 7. This aspect of God’s good news was peculiarly linked with his ministry and no one else’s. It is futile to try and find such revelation in the ministry of Peter, James, John (Gospel and epistles) or Jude and it is significant that these servants of the Lord could faithfully discharge their service to Him without featuring the word mystery or secret. (The book of the Revelation looks in fulfillment to the future Way of the Lord.)

This special ministry of Paul’s had its basis in the limitless grace of God. The grace that had saved him, was the same grace that enabled him to be a faithful witness and servant of the Lord. This and the mighty resurrection power of Christ was all-sufficient, and the more he thought about it, the more he marveled; that he of all people should have been chosen as the chief steward of such spiritual riches, was beyond his fathoming. In I Cor. xv. 9 he described himself as “the least of the apostles not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God”. In Eph. iii. he takes even a lower place in real humility, and describes himself as “less than the least of all saints” (verse 8). Perhaps he thought how rightly he had been named Paul (from the Latin Paullus, ‘little’), and through him God was pouring out undreamed riches to the despised far-off Gentile, who was a believer in Christ.

He now states his great aim: “to make all (men) see (literally, to enlighten all) what is the dispensation of the Mystery (secret) which from all ages hath been hid in God Who created all things” (R.V.). This divine stewardship of the great secret, unfolded in the creation of the New Man, the joint-Body with its untold spiritual wealth, the Apostle earnestly longed to pass on to others, to all those who had been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (i. 4). For this he knew the necessity for “opened eyes” or enlightenment (i. 17, 18) for without such Divine enlightenment, the human mind would be totally unable to grasp the unsearchable riches connected with this secret.

We may say that Paul had at least two great object to achieve: (1) to preach the gospel of God’s gracious way of salvation to the sinner, Jew or Gentile, which had been given to him by direct revelation of the Lord Jesus (Gal. i. 11, 12), concerning which he said

“woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Cor. ix. 16). This is the good news of God to the sinner, and (2) the making known of the great secret we are now considering. This is God’s good news to the saved. In the mercy of God, we still hear (1), but what about (2)? In the evangelical world we are glad to say there are still those who faithfully preach the gospel of God’s grace. But where in the same evangelical world do we ever hear the proclamation of this secret with all its wonders which eclipse all other truth? We have before pointed out the fact that it is God’s will and His wish that this should be done (Col. i. 25-27) so there is no holding back on His part. The more one considers this, the more astounding and tragic it becomes, and one seeks to discover the reason or reasons for such a situation. There are undoubtedly a number of them, of which we can state:

- (1) The almost total lack of knowledge among leading preachers and teachers, due to blinded eyes and the ecclesiastical set-up of modern Christendom into which the Mystery and its out-working could not possibly fit.
- (2) The immature condition of most believers which, like the church at Corinth, limits truth to the ABC, the milk of the Word (I Cor. iii. 1, 2) and makes further revelation impossible.
- (3) The confusion between the Hebrew church, formed on the Day of Pentecost which was a fulfilling of O.T. prophecy (Acts ii. 16-21) and was therefore not a secret and the New Man, the Joint-Body of Ephesians which *was* a secret, which we are now considering.
- (4) The fear of man that bringeth a snare. We are convinced that some Christian Leaders who do know the truth of this great Secret, keep quiet because they are afraid of offending their congregations and other leading teachers. Their standing in evangelical circles must be kept at all costs and they realize that if they gave a full and faithful witness to this truth, they would be dubbed as being in error and then dropped from well-known platform. Their reputation would be gone. This is too big a price to pay and so they kept silent.

This is tragic enough from the human standpoint, but what about the future judgment seat of Christ, when all actions will be made known and assess by the righteous Judge, and the possibility of disapproval by Him? (I Cor. ix. 27). Such a condition of things makes the unfettered witness of this little magazine and that of its individual supporters all the more necessary, and by God’s grace we seek, as Paul did, to declare *all* the counsel of God, to keep back *nothing* (Acts xx. 20, 27), and to deviate neither to the right hand or to the left.

The Apostle, in Eph. iii. 10 R.V., give us another reason for his desire to “enlighten all”, He states “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God”. In other words, there are heavenly scholars as well as earthly ones. How vastly important this part of God’s great plan must be when we realize that the very aristocracy of heaven is learning by the out-calling and building up of this company of the redeemed! They are watching and noting every detail of this masterpiece of God’s manifold wisdom. Paul uses a rare word in “manifold”. It literally means “many-coloured” or diversified. Nothing less than this could have conceived such a Creation, and all of it is “according to

the eternal purpose (the purpose of the ages, R.V. margin) which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (11). God not only brought into being the physical creation; He also made the great platform of time, subdivided into ages, upon which He is working out this vast redemptive plan which embraces the highest heaven as well as the earth, and the Word of God is the written record of this plan which is centred in Christ Jesus. It is when one realizes this and has some insight into it, that the Bible is transformed as far as we are concerned. Without such knowledge it is just a haphazard collection of books in one volume and alas this is how it is seen by many professing Christians. God has an eternal plan to which He is working, with a goal of perfection and glory that finally nothing can frustrate. What an unspeakable privilege to have any part in it, and yet this can be true of all the redeemed, whether the earthly or the heavenly people of God.

Not only is this so, but the Body of Christ has the tremendous boon of unrestricted access to God at all times: “In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (12). What a contrast to Israel who, in spite of their unique position as a nation, never enjoyed such a favour! In contrast, this church can come into the holy presence of God at all times through Christ Jesus the Mediator, the one go-between or Way back to God. This means that all other intermediaries, whether religious or otherwise, are dispensed with, and away goes all Romish pretensions of human priesthood and glorified saints on the one hand or the false mediation of Gnosticism, whether in ancient or modern dress.

Verse 12 not only assures us of continual access through Christ, but tells us that in coming unto this most holy Presence we do not have to fear or cringe, but have ‘boldness’ and ‘confidence’. This does not mean we can swagger into the presence of God. There must always be deep reverence and consciousness of what we are doing, and this will be easier to preserve if we constantly remember that it is all “through the faith of Him”, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and without Him, such an approach would be unthinkable and impossible. We believe it is a mistake to translate the phrase “by the faith *of* Him” as “by our faith *in* Him” for this would shift the basis of access away from the Lord to ourselves and our puny faith. And what happens to access if our faith should fail or turn to unbelief? No, the truth of our access to the Divine Presence rests on *Christ’s faithfulness* (the thought behind the word ‘faith’) not on anything we are or can do.

The Apostle has now finished his great digression in which he explains what lay behind his prison ministry for the Gentiles (iii. 1) and he now picks up the thread in verse 14 from verse 1, “for this cause”, that is, the greatness and wonder of God building in this church a dwelling for Himself (ii. 20-22). This leads immediately to his second great prayer, just as the revelation of the Father’s choice and will, the Son’s redemptive work, and the Spirit’s present witness led to the first prayer in chapter i. (16-23). We compared these two prayers in an earlier study and noted that the direction of the first prayer is *upward* and largely concerns the ascended Christ in the heavenly places. The second prayer has a *downward* direction, bringing before the Ephesian saints and all who follow, what this highly exalted Christ can be to each member of His Body; the fact that He can dwell in their hearts by faith and fill them up to the brim with His fullness.

Before the second prayer commences, Paul expresses a desire: “Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory” (iii. 13 R.V.). The extraordinary point here is that the Apostle is not contemplating the possibility of *his* fainting under the pressure of his prison tribulations, but rather the Ephesian believers doing so. He himself knew only too well the exalted Saviour and Head who had called, equipped and sent him as His mouthpiece to the Gentile world, and the great resurrection power which worked in him mightily, causing him to triumph over every trial and difficulty. He was however concerned that the Ephesians should not be discouraged or misunderstand his imprisonment as being something contrary to God’s will. They could then learn to glory in his sufferings as he himself did. When he wrote to the Colossian church Paul asserted that these tribulations, were “the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body’s sake, which is the church, whereof I am made a minister” (Col. i. 24, 25). They were a necessary part in the outworkings of the Divine Plan for the Body and so the Apostle was ready to experience them to the full. That they were the Lord’s sufferings as well as his, he had learned on the Damascus road when the Saviour, identifying Himself with His tested people, said “Why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts ix. 4). A man who can regard suffering and privation like this, is one who has learned to triumph over all circumstances, and while we are never likely to suffer as he did, the same great discovery can be ours, that the Lord is our sufficiency for every experience or trial that can come our way and never will He allow us to be tested above what we are able to bear (I Cor. x. 13).

No.27. The Epistle to the Ephesians (7).

pp. 56 - 60

Having seen the link between the second prayer of Ephesians in chapter iii. with the great climax of chapter ii., we are now in a position to consider this prayer’s great features. “For this cause”, says the Apostle, “I bow my knees unto the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (iii. 14, 15 R.V.). “Every family” is better than “the whole family” A.V., which would require the definite articles in the Greek. The R.V. margin points out that the word family is more literally “fatherhood” which better shows the link in the original of the two words “Father” and “fatherhood”. All fatherhood is derived in character from the Fatherhood of God, although the human version is often so far off from the Divine original. God’s great family here has its earthly and heavenly sections, neither of which gives the complete picture by itself and we need to take care that we do not narrow down the Plan of the ages to either earth or heaven, as so many theological schemes do.

Verse 16 continues: “that He would grant (give) you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man”. Again Paul begins to pile up words which emphasize the greatness of the experience he desires the Ephesian believers to share. They would need Divine strengthening for what

follows. Human strength and ability would be less than useless here. This empowering would be measured by no less than the overwhelming riches of God's glory, which measure defies description and explanation. The "inward man" is a phrase describing the new nature given to the believer, "the new man" as opposed to the old nature or the flesh. This great preparation by God is with a view to Christ dwelling in our hearts by or through faith (17). To dwell means to take up one's abode, and here is an anticipation of the permanent dwelling of Christ, the holy Temple which He is now building and will occupy when it is complete. Each individual member of that Temple need not wait for that future day; every one of us who are members by grace of the Body of Christ, can be miniature temples into which He is graciously pleased to enter and make His home.

Let us not pass over this lightly. It is all very well to teach young people who are unsaved to sing "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee". But such a tremendous experience is not for the unsaved, or even the immature believer, but for those children of God who are growing up spiritually and have had this necessary preparation of Divine strengthening, for without this who would be adequate to receive such an exalted Guest? We do well too to remember the practical consequences of this indwelling. We may be sure that the Lord Jesus Christ will not take up His abode within us in any other place than *the first*. In other words He is coming in to take His rightful place as Lord, and as such must take control of us completely. Are we willing to accord Him this pre-eminence, the first place in our lives? (Col. i. 18).

One might think that the indwelling Lord would be the climax, but there is a further purpose in view: "to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" (17, 18 R.V.).

In ii. 21 we have the two figures of building and growing and similarly here the Apostle uses "rooted" as of a plant, and "founded" (better than grounded) as of a building. Col. ii. 7 is a parallel passage. In Eph. iii. 17 the rooting and the grounding is in and upon love, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Here is no sentimental thing. The great characteristic of Divine Love is that it continually gives and spends itself for others and this is shown best of all in the greatest of all gifts, the unspeakable gift of God's beloved Son (John iii. 16; II Cor. ix. 5). It is upon such love as this that the believer is founded and rooted and it is only in this way that he can come to a personal experience of this great prayer, and get to know "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (19) with its breadth, length, depth and height. Here is veritable limitless ocean which no one can fully plumb. It "exceeds (passeth) knowledge". Yet the Apostle prays that the saints at Ephesus may know it for themselves. Here is a seeming paradox, yet it is clear what Paul is seeking to convey. While it is impossible to fully grasp what is infinite, yet each one of us can be filled up *to our capacity* in understanding, whatever sized vessel we are. This is expressed in the last phrase of this prayer: "that (in order that) ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (19 R.V.).

Here the R.V. is much to be preferred to the A.V., "filled *with* all the fullness of God". How can any puny sinner contain *all* the fullness of God which is limitless? Not even

principalities and powers could experience this or any other created being. We are filled *unto* or *with a view to* all the fullness of God, and nothing less than this is God's will for us individually, for this shows forth in miniature the great goal of the ages when the fullness of God shall fill the whole of the new heaven and earth. In Col. ii. 10 the Apostle states: "ye are filled full (complete) in Him". In the ascended Head, each member of the Body has been filled to the full by the Lord Himself. Here in Ephesians the desire is that each one may increasingly realize this in their experience. This is the high water mark of Christian realization beyond which no one can go in this life. Professor F. F. Bruce well sums it up in these words: "Filled unto all the fullness of God—nothing can exceed this; here every other blessing is comprehended and crowned". No wonder Paul closes the doctrinal section of the epistle with a glorious doxology: "Now unto Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations for ever and ever (literally unto all the generations of the age of the ages). Amen."

The Apostle has not finished with his superlatives. If anyone feels that all this language is far above them and beyond their comprehension, he reminds them that they are dealing with One Who is able to do *superabundantly* and transcend all our asking and thinking. God is able and willing to do infinitely more than all our imagination and He does it by the mighty resurrection power revealed in i. 19-23, the power that now energizes (works in) us. It is therefore only fitting and right that the last thought should be of *His glory*, both in the church and in Christ Jesus unto the coming age—the age of the ages. Well may Paul write "Amen"—"Truth". This goal is the Truth, and shall surely be attained in spite of Satan and the powers of darkness, man's sin and the dominion of death and everything that opposes the will of God!

With chapter iii. 21 we reach the climax of Divine revelation. Instruction must now give place to practice. If God's truth is anything at all, it is *balance*; not all doctrine and little or no practice; or all practice and little or no doctrine. Both, by themselves would be lop-sided. God first of all instructed us in His truth. This is doctrine. Then He expects a practical response from what we have learned. This is Christian practice. The rest of the Ephesian epistle is largely concerned with the practical response that should result from the teaching of chapters i. to iii. This being so, we are not surprised that chapter iv. starts with the word "therefore"—"because of all that has gone before", a worthy walk should most surely result. Paul describes himself as the *Lord's* prisoner, a title of Christ relating to practical issues—(compare iii. 1) the One Who is and should be our Controller. He beseeches, not commands, the Ephesian saints to exhibit a worthy walk, one that balances the Divine calling. This is indeed a "holy calling" (II Tim. i. 9) and demands a daily walk in correspondence with it. This worthy walk is exhibited by four Christian graces, humility, meekness, patience and forbearance. Real humility is foreign to the thinking of the world. It is the very opposite of pride and self-assertion—the parent sins which God hates (Prov. xvi. 5; James iv. 6), being the cause of Satan's downfall, and they have wrought so much havoc ever since. As far back as O.T. days God revealed that He sought the humble (Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2) and this quality was most fully seen in His beloved Son, the One, Who though so great, was essentially meek

(Matt. xi. 28-30; xxi. 5; II Cor. x. 1). The unbelieving world, not understanding, confuses meekness with weakness! Patience and forbearance with others is best realized when we continually remember how patient God has been with us! He is indeed the God of patience (Rom. xv. 5) not only with us, but with the world at large (I Pet. iii. 20; II Pet. iii. 8, 9). We shall certainly need patience in our daily walk and witness, and in our dealing with others. The impatient person will get little or no result in Christian service. How much witness for the Lord has been ruined by impatience! Like the gardener and the farmer, we may have to wait a long time for results, after sowing the seed of Truth and it is patient endurance that we shall need to prevent us from being discouraged and perhaps giving up in despair.

“Giving diligence to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (iv. 3 R.V.). “Giving diligence” is the same word as “study” in II Tim. ii. 15, and has no primary reference to study with books, but is rather “showing keenness”. As believers we may be keen in all sorts of ways, but here is a “must”. If we desire to walk worthily of our high calling, we *must be keen to jealousy guard the seven-fold unity of the Spirit* which has been created by God and entrusted to us (iv. 3-6). This seven-fold unity is held together by the “bond of peace” and this is not just any kind of peace, but is that specifically mentioned in ii. 14, 17. Love is the other great bond (Col. iii. 14) that ties all the members of the Body together, and should therefore be exhibited constantly towards each other. If this is not realized, discord will result which only gives Satan an excellent opportunity to do his deadly work of upsetting and dividing the people of God and their united witness to the Truth. The seven-fold Unity of the Spirit has a disposition well known in Hebrew parallelism, namely of introversion:

- A | One Body.
- B | One Spirit.
- C | One Hope of the calling.
- D | One Lord.
- C | One Faith.
- B | One Baptism.
- A | One God and Father.

It is significant that right in the middle stands the One Lord Who alone makes the other items real and possible so far as we are concerned. Firstly, there is One Body. This is the creation in the mind and purpose of the Father before the foundation of the world as i. 3-6 makes clear. It is the newly created New Man as ii. 14, 15. This is evidently why the One Body balances the One God and Father in the above structure. The phrase “one Body” had been used before by the Apostle in the Acts (Rom. xii. 5), but, as we have seen, the church connected with the Secret and made known by Paul the prisoner in Ephesians, was uniquely “a joint-Body”, where every member is equal doctrinally and dispensationally, which was not true of the church in the Acts, otherwise Rom. xi. with the symbolism of the olive tree and the wild olive grafted in (Gentile believers who stand by faith), grafted in to the olive tree of Israel, could never have been given. All man-made bodies and groups pale into insignificance beside this Divinely created company. This is the first aspect of the Spirit’s unity to guard.

There is *one Spirit*, Who gives us the earnest of our heavenly inheritance and seals us to God and through Him (the Spirit) we have access to the Father (i. 13, 14; ii. 18). *The One Body* of Christ identified with Him as the Head, is seen to be seated in the heavenly places in Him (ii. 6). *The one hope*, sure and certain, will be the realization, in experience, of this position they now hold by faith. This will be by resurrection if death has intervened, or by change if alive. The manifestation of Christ's glory in the heavenlies will be shared by His Body. For this blessed hope they ardently wait (Titus ii. 12, 13). *The One Lord*, as we have noted before, stands in the middle and holds the seven-fold unity together by reason of His redemptive work on the cross and His resurrection and ascension to the highest glory at the Father's right hand. He is the one Lord of the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, He is the Lord of Lords (I Tim. i. 17; vi. 15; Rev. xix. 16), and one day, in the future, every knee shall bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess Him as LORD and at last, although once despised and rejected of men, He will come into His own and the whole creation will manifestly give Him His rightful place.

No.28. The Epistle to the Ephesians (8). **pp. 77 - 80**

In further consideration of the seven-fold Unity of the Spirit the Lord charges us to guard, we come to *one faith*. Sometimes in the N.T. the word *faith* is equivalent to *truth*: “. . . . and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts vi. 7, and see also xvi. 5, Gal. i. 23 and Jude 3). The one faith in Ephesians is the “good deposit” of truth passed on to Paul from the risen Christ. It is this body of truth that Timothy is exhorted to guard (II Tim. i. 14). The same deposit occurs in II Tim. i. 12, and note the R.V. margin, Greek “my deposit”. It is, as Paul describes it, “the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me” (II Tim. i. 13), and never once does Paul refer Timothy to the truth given through Peter, James, John or Jude. This is most significant. We can never understand the Apostle's constant reference to himself, unless we see that he is not thrusting himself forward, but pointing specially to the unique and exalted truth of the Lord given through him as the channel. Note the “I” and “me” in II Tim. i. 5, 11, 13, 15; ii. 2, 8, 9, 10; iii. 10; iv. 17. This faith or body of truth has special features, not to be found in the ministry of any other N.T. servant of the Lord. As we have seen, it is directed to us far-off Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1), and this is why the careful study of Paul's ministry is so essential if we who are saved Gentiles are to understand, live and witness for its marvelous content. Faith and truth go together like a coin; they are two sides of the same thing. The “one faith” then that the Lord exhorts us to guard is the whole content of truth relating to the Body of Christ of which Paul was divinely chosen to be the minister (Col. i. 24-27; Eph. iii. 4-7).

The next item is the *one Baptism*. We do not intend to deal with this exhaustively, for we have already dealt with the subject in the pamphlet *Baptism*. The fact remains that in

the ministry of John the Baptizer, there was *one* baptism, that of water, the baptism of the Spirit being yet future. During the Acts there were *two*, water and Spirit. Afterwards we come to Ephesians and there is but *one* again. Which is it to be? The type or the reality? The shadow or the substance? We cannot juggle with the word “one” and make it two, for then by the same process we could have in the context two Lords or two Heavenly Fathers. The only person who can consistently maintain that the one baptism of Ephesians is that of water, is the person who believes in *baptismal regeneration*, a doctrine rightly rejected by sound evangelicals. We have before pointed out that water baptism did not form part of Paul’s apostolic commission. This is on his own testimony:

“For Christ sent me *not to baptize*, but to preach the gospel” (I Cor. i. 17),

and this was during the Acts when water baptism obtained! If this was true for Paul’s earlier ministry at this time, how does it happen that water baptism becomes part of his prison commission after the Acts, in a dispensation which is pre-eminently spiritual and where all shadows have vanished in exchange for the substance? And this without a word of explanation on his part! Those who wish to introduce water baptism in Col. ii., must be hard put to it in a context that speaks of the burial in baptism being carried out *by God* and not man (the working [operation] of God, Col. ii. 12) and the doing away of all shadows (food, drink, holydays, sabbath day) because now we can enjoy the *reality* that the shadow stood for (“the body is of Christ”, ii. 16, 17). Water baptism at its best is only a *type*, a picture of *identification* with Christ in death, burial and resurrection as Rom. vi. clearly teaches. To insert a type or a shadow here in a passage that speaks of each member of Christ’s Body “being filled full in Him” or “complete in Him”, is to insert an intruder. What can a shadow add to this Divine completeness? There cannot be degrees in completeness. We are either, in this calling, complete in Christ spiritually or we are not. If the type of water baptism must be added to make this completeness real then this context is to say the least most misleading for it says nothing about such an addition. The circumcision mentioned in the passage is *not* the type, but the spiritual reality (verse 11). So is everything else that is brought forward, *otherwise the argument of verses 16 and 17 would be completely nullified*.

Part of the misunderstanding that has arisen over the place of water baptism is due to the shifting away from the Scriptural explanation of identification with Christ, to that of a *witness to the world of unbelievers*. We cannot find one passage in the N.T. dealing with water baptism that clearly teaches it to be a witness to unbelievers. What the world is watching is our words, our actions, *our lives*. *This* is the most effective witness, not ritual, which the world cares little or nothing about.

Coming back to the *One baptism* of Eph. iv., we unhesitatingly believe that it cannot be two, otherwise words have no meaning, and as it is *one*, it *must be the reality which is absolutely essential*, and not the picture or shadow that set it forth previously. We do not judge other believers who seek to justify water baptism, but they cannot do it legitimately from this chapter or Col. ii. They must go elsewhere to other Scriptures dealing with another dispensation or stewardship. We repeat that on Paul’s own testimony water baptism did *not* form part of his apostolic commission by the risen Christ (I Cor. i. 17), and though he baptized occasionally during the Acts period, the context here shows he

did not deem it to be important; in other words, it was not a *necessary* part of the ministry the Lord had given him. For ourselves we are content to leave the matter here. Let no one judge us for this, any more than we judge them (Col. ii. 16).

The seventh item is “one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in all” (Eph. iv. 6 R.V.). We have to be very careful with the word “all” in Scripture. Too many false doctrines have been erected on the presumption that “all” is equivalent to “universal”, whereas it is always limited to the context. One could easily use verse 6 to teach the popular idea of the universal Fatherhood of God, but this doctrine is not only foreign to this verse, but to the whole of the Bible. “But as many as receive Him (Christ), to them gave He the *right to become children of God*” (John i. 12 R.V.). Only those who have received Christ by faith as Saviour have the privilege of becoming members of God’s family and being able to call Him Father. The “all” of Eph. iv. is obviously limited to the members of the Body. It is the Lord Jesus Who makes the Fatherhood of God possible and known to us (John xiv. 9, 11).

While we do not find the *word* “Trinity” in the Scriptures, the *fact* is there in many passages, and none clearer than this one—One Spirit, One Lord, One God and Father. Sometimes the concordance can be misused and become a menace. We have frequently come across arguments based on the non-occurrence of a word in the Bible, as demonstrated by the concordance, the person putting forth such arguments, either deliberately ignoring, or being blind to the *fact* being there even if the word is not and this is a case in point with the Trinity. If we refuse to use the word “Trinity” because of its non-occurrence in Scripture, we have to invent something else to take its place to represent the three-fold expression of the Godhead in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and what is it going to be?

Paul now leaves the Body as a whole, and comes to each individual member:

“But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (iv. 7 R.V.).

In the body physical, the various members are not alike either in size or importance, but all are necessary for its proper and healthful functioning. Likewise with this church; every redeemed member has been placed in it according to God’s will and all have a part to play in its outworking. Whether they are small, medium or large vessels is not their responsibility. What they should seek to know is exactly what work the Lord has called them to do and then to remember that all-needed grace is available for the task and therefore they can fulfil it and are responsible to Him to carry it out loyally. There must be no mistakes here. In our physical bodies it would be disastrous if one member ceased to do its own work and attempted the function of another. Fortunately, in health, this is impossible, but alas it is possible in the Christian realm. Some attempt to do Christian work for which they are not fitted, and not realizing their limitations, they only cause trouble and difficulty. One thing is certain and that is, if the Lord calls a person for a certain kind of work, He equips that person for the task. If He needs a teacher, a speaker or a writer, He will choose some one who has an aptitude for these things—“apt to teach” (II Tim. ii. 24). However, there are plenty of other ways of serving the Lord and what we

all need is not wishful thinking, or trying to be like someone else, but to honestly say, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts ix. 6).

Before the Apostle deals any further with the question of gifts for service, *the time element* of His special gifts to the Body of Christ is stressed. This is related, not to the earthly life of the Saviour, but to His ascension:

“Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave” (iv. 9-11 R.V.).

There should be no difficulty with the phrase “the lower parts of the earth”. This could either mean (1) the sepulcher into which the Lord’s body was placed, (2) Hades, the *state* of being in the grave, grave-dom, if one could invent such a word, or (3) the earth, being looked upon as the lower parts from the standpoint of heaven. (1) and (2) are permissible, but the third view seems more natural in thinking of the Lord leaving the heaven that was His in order to descend to the earth for our redemption. The ascension means exaltation to the place for highest supremacy, as i. 19-23 has already stressed. Note the phrase “all heavens”. Sometimes in Scripture “heaven” is used in the singular, but we must not deduce from this that heaven is just *one* place. It is complex. “All heavens” must embrace at least three, and shows us that we are not dealing with heaven and heavenly things. The object of the Ascension is likewise profound: “in order that He might fill the all things” (literally). We have seen that “filling” and “fullness” in relation to Christ, are characteristic of the completion of the purpose of the ages, which purpose is now being preshadowed in the Body (i. 23). The Lord Jesus, at the goal of the ages, will fill the whole universe in a way we are unable to fully grasp at the present time. He will have the supreme place that He now occupies, *manifestly* recognized by every being in heaven and earth (Phil. ii. 9-11), for it is the Divine will that He should have the first place in everything (Col. i. 18). The expressed purpose then of Eph. iv. 10 is stupendous and should not be passed over without careful reflection.

It is clear that the gifts of the ascended Christ are not *things* but *persons*:

“And He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers” (iv. 11 R.V.).

Also it should be obvious that these apostles cannot be the same as the Twelve that He appointed when on earth (Matt. x. 2-4) who are so closely linked with the people of Israel. The apostles and prophets of Eph. iv. are the same as those referred to in the second chapter.

They had a foundation ministry which was unique while the N.T. was in process of being written, and in some respects took the place of the canonical scriptures. Now we have a completed Bible, we do not need such apostles and prophets. All Scriptural service is now being covered by the succeeding three: evangelists, pastors and teachers.

No.29. The Epistle to the Ephesians (9). **pp. 96 - 100**

Having seen that apostles and prophets, as gifts of the ascended Christ, are foundational and therefore not repeated, we pass on to evangelists, pastors and teachers. The evangelist in early Christian times was a pioneer, often going into new territory, sometimes with great hazards, and so this type of witness had to have a toughness about it. Pastors are really shepherds, and shepherds pre-suppose sheep. Those who believe that the figure of 'sheep' denotes the people of God of all times without distinction, will lean to the view that shepherds and teachers represent one class of ministry. But many years study of the Scriptures has made it clear to us that the Holy Spirit uses figures and symbols with exactness and does not mix His metaphors as men often do. For the most part 'sheep' are a description of the people of Israel (Psa. lxxviii. 52; lxxix. 13; xcv. 7; c. 3; Jer. l. 17). Matt. xxv. 32 is an exception, and there are 'other sheep' whom the Lord will gather and finally unite with restored Israel to form "one flock" (John x. 16). This is a wide ministry, as John's Gospel shows, and we see no reason to believe that the calling out of the Joint-Body of Ephesians is the only thing God is doing in this present age; rather the reverse, when one looks around on the present Christian scene the world over and also contemplates it in its past history. There is need therefore for a shepherd ministry, and the Lord has been raising up such all down this age.

Teachers play an important part in the building up and development of those already saved. There is sometimes a false emphasis put upon evangelists and they are then considered to be much more important than teachers. This idea is usually held by those who think that all Christian witness is summed up by preaching the Gospel to sinners and "getting them saved". Whether such go on to grow up spiritually to maturity seems to be of little concern or importance. The result is that not only do we see around us many churches that are spiritually dead, but also others that are filled with spiritual infants. These become a liability rather than an asset, for they do not go on to become full grown believers who are really pulling their weight in Christian warfare and witness. It is significant that a bishop or overseer in the N.T. had to possess the qualification of being "*apt to teach*" (I Tim. iii. 2), and Paul enjoins Timothy to pass on the sacred deposit of Truth to "faithful men, who shall be able to *teach* others also" (II Tim. ii. 2). Some have the erroneous idea that people are not saved under a teaching ministry, but this is quite contrary to the true facts. The faithful teacher constantly points away to Christ as Saviour as well as Lord and Head, and many are truly saved who have never had a Gospel invitation put to them.

The goal of all ministry, whether that of the evangelist or teacher is stated in Eph. iv. 12, 13 R.V.:

"For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering unto the building up of the Body of Christ:

Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The 'perfecting' here does not mean to go on to maturity as it usually does. A different word is used which means adjustment, mending or equipment. The people of God, after Israel's setting aside in unbelief at Acts xxviii., certainly needed adjusting to the new revelation of the Mystery and they needed equipping for the making known of this climax truth, or, as the verse states, "unto the work of ministering (or serving)" which would include every member of the New Man, the joint-Body of Christ, and not to be confined to a special number, "those in the ministry", as the word is used today. This service has in view the "building up (edification) of the Body of Christ", a constructive work which is of the first importance. The word here has in its make up a word meaning "house", and this enters into at least eight important Greek words used in the N.T., to say nothing of seven compounds with prepositions. To keep this series as simple as possible we refrain from quoting Greek or Hebrew words, but we mention these facts in order to show the reader how important is this building up into the Truth.

It is so easy to be destructive, and this can often be done quite easily and quickly, but 'edification' is very different. It takes effort, time and patience in coming before the Word of God and getting it firmly established in our minds, which are so often cluttered up with other things. The only *lasting* ministry is that which builds up with the aim:

"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (iv. 13 R.V.).

The goal is reached by a three-fold "unto", just as the context gives us three measures (iv. 7, 13, 16). We find here a seven-fold unity of the faith. We have before seen that faith is sometimes used as the equivalent of a body of truth (see Acts vi. 7; xiv. 22; I Tim. iv. 1; II Tim. iv. 7) and here we have a further revelation of what constitutes the "good deposit" of truth committed by Christ to the Apostle Paul to make known to us Gentiles and all who have ears to hear. Just as the seven-fold unity of the Spirit has the one Lord (Christ Jesus) in the centre, likewise the unity of the faith. "Till we all attain and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (13). Here "knowledge" would be better rendered "acknowledgment", as it is several times by the A.V. (I Cor. xiv. 37; xvi. 18, etc.). We should remember that the early English of the Authorized Version uses knowledge and acknowledge interchangeably. To really know the Truth, and the One Who is the truth, is not just filling the mind with facts about Him and the Bible. Anyone can do that. In the Word of God there can be no true knowledge without acknowledgment. Only as we acknowledge a truth can we be said to know it, and we need to bear this in mind continually. It is by practically acknowledging the Son of God, the One Lord, with all His claims upon us, that we grow spiritually and this is confirmed by Col. i. 10 where a more accurate translation is: "growing by the acknowledgment of God". The goal of natural and spiritual life is adulthood, maturity in body and mind. Anything less than this is tragic, and while it is obvious in the physical world, it is not quite so obvious in the realm of Christian values, yet it is equally true here.

So few today are prepared to obey the Divine rules that ensure spiritual growth, and no wonder we see around us in Christendom spiritual infants who cannot receive the

highest and best God has to reveal, and even antagonize and misunderstand those who seek to press on to maturity (Heb. vi. 1).

The word 'man' is really 'male' and rendered "husbands" in v. 25. As "husbands" it is used of Christ in II Cor. xi. 2: "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ". It would indeed be mixing metaphors to say that the church which is the Bride, at the same time has its goal to be the perfect Husband. Yet those who confuse and amalgamate the Body and the Bride do this very thing, but are unable to see any inconsistency in it! During the Acts period, the Bride was in formation. With the revelation of the *New Man* from Paul's prison after Acts xxviii., we have the figure suitably changed to a "full grown male". Spiritually we are part of the Bridegroom, He the Head and this church His Body, and His members.

"Stature" can mean age as well as height as John ix. 21, 23; Heb. xi. 11 show. It is another word that indicates full growth. Classical Greek used it of the prime of life. "Fullness" is one of the great words of Ephesians and Colossians as we have already shown. In the purpose of God, the Body is already the fullness of Christ (i. 23). Here it goes on to attain this fullness by its spiritual life and growth in answer to the prayer of iii. 19: "that ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God".

The Apostle now in absolute contrast gives the opposite which must be avoided at all costs:

"That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error" (iv. 14 R.V.).

These are strong words of warning to believers. If such an one will not grow spiritually, but remains in infancy, then he is an easy prey for Satan and his great system designated in Scripture as THE LIE. Having no stability in the truth, he eagerly runs after the latest religious fads. These "winds of doctrine" do not blow by chance. They are directed by the father of lies and so attractively presented by his dupes that the spiritual baby clutches at them readily and is completely deceived. There seems to be no middle or neutral position between truth for the growing believer and the Devil's deception for the stunted. This is what makes spiritual growth so important and lack of it so dangerous for the Christian. Verse 15 (R.V.) continues:

"but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things unto Him, which is the Head, even Christ."

"Speaking the truth" does not adequately represent the word Paul uses here. The R.V. margin has "dealing truly", which seeks to show that this verb means more than talking about the truth. It is rather *living* and *acting in truth* that the Apostle has in mind. This is the antidote to the spiritual duplicity of the previous verse. There should be works as well as words, but both must be "in love". It is possible to put the truth over in a hard way, to be very correct in doctrine, but to show a complete lack of love in presenting it. This nullifies its power and spoils its witness. This however will not happen if each

member of the Body keeps in close union to the Head—“holding the Head” as Col. ii. 19 expresses it.

In Eph. iv. 16 Paul puts it in this way:

“From Whom all the Body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part maketh the increase of the Body unto the building up of itself in love” (iv. 16 R.V.).

“Fitly framed together” is the same word as is used in ii. 21 of the spiritual Temple. This close union with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is absolutely necessary for spiritual life, light, nourishment and adequate functioning of each member of the Body. For any member not to realize this, but in practice to seek to function on their own, is to court failure and fruitlessness. The same important truth was given by the Lord to the Twelve under the figure of a Vine and the branches (John xv. 1-6). Strictly speaking “which every joint supplieth” is rather misleading, for literally it is “every joint of the supply”. The ‘joints’ supply nothing of themselves. This alone comes from the Head, but each member can be a channel through which the Divine supply can flow to another member.

This stresses the importance of practical unity and shows that unnecessary isolation is out of the Lord’s will. We should seek to grow together, each one like the individual organs of the body, all contributing something to the growth of the Body as a whole. “Till we *all* attain”, and apprehending “with *all* the saints” (iii. 18) stresses this. The three unities of Eph. iv. are God’s creation and not man-made, but we who embrace them by faith must see to it that we do nothing to cause a practical breakage, for this only plays into the hands of the Enemy who loves to try to divide and disrupt what God has united and so upset His people and hinder His work.

No.30. The Epistle to the Ephesians (10). pp. 117 - 120

The Apostle now approaches the worthy walk of members of the Body of Christ from a negative standpoint. In iv. 1 he tells us how to walk positively; in the 17th verse he shows us how *not* to walk:

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart” (iv. 17, 18 R.V.).

In Rom. i. 21 Paul had already shown the terrible darkness that the pagan world sank into because, in rejecting God as Creator, they became “vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”. This is what invariably happens when man turns his back on God. Left to himself he sinks into utter darkness and deception, yet at the same

time imagining himself to be wise and capable of arriving at the heights and depths of truth through his own intellectual capacity. Having rejected the true light, how great must be that darkness! And this is not a whit less true today than in century one. We see all around us a world that for the most part has rejected Christ and the Truth, and a Christendom that is largely impotent, having merely a form of godliness without its essential power (II Tim. iii. 5), an evil age that is hastening to its tragic end as foretold in the Scriptures. The Apostle tells us that the darkened Gentiles are “alienated from the life of God”. This shows very clearly that, apart from Christ, man has nothing immortal; he is a stranger to God’s endless life, and furthermore his ignorance leads to hardness of heart or mind and so initiates his thinking.

Ignorance can be of two kinds, blameworthy or excusable, and the remoter context of Romans makes it clear that this ignorance is the former, for “they refused to have God in their knowledge” (Rom. i. 28 R.V.) and the result, a callousness and utter indifference to the things of God. Such is the sure result of persistent rejection of God’s claims. Verse 19 further describes their condition as being “past feeling”. The word literally means “to have lost the sense of pain”. When men deliberately choose darkness rather than light, God’s judgment allows them to go the way they prefer, with its awful consequences. We read three times that “God gave them up” in Rom. i. 24, 26, 28, as a consequence of their deliberate giving up God.

This was the state that redemption had rescued some of the Ephesian believers from, and now Paul reminds them that their daily Christian walk must be free from such an outlook and practice. He wrote:

“But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard Him and were taught in (or by) Him, even as truth is in Jesus” (iv. 20, 21 R.V.).

We note that the Apostle did not say “you did not so learn the truth, or learn the gospel”, but “you did not so learn *Christ*”, for He alone is the embodiment of truth and every good thing that the human heart needs. Moreover, Paul does not bring himself or the other apostles forward as the teachers of the Ephesian saints, *but Christ Himself*—“if so be that ye heard *Him* and were taught in (or by) *Him*”. It was most improbable that anyone living at Ephesus at that time had ever actually heard Christ in His earthly ministry, yet the Apostle asserts that the Lord Himself had been their Teacher! This only goes to show that Paul was only the means that the Lord Jesus was using to instruct His people. How foolish then to separate the teaching of Christ from the teaching of Paul as some do, and to imagine that the record of the Gospels is more important than the epistles!

The Apostle goes on to use a phrase which is often misquoted as though it reads: “the truth as it is in Jesus”. This suggests there can be truth apart from Christ, but Paul never suggests such a thing, for it would be completely untrue. “Even as truth is in Jesus” is what he wrote, and this but confirms John xiv. 6: “I am the Way, *the Truth* and the Life”. The use of the name Jesus by itself is unusual in Paul’s epistles. Practically always, the N.T. apostle give Him a title of respect. For them He is not just “Jesus”, an outstanding man which is the way most professing Christians of today regard Him and

name Him. To them, the apostles, He is Lord and God, and they do not forget it when they talk or write about Him. He Himself said “Ye call Me Master and Lord, and *ye say well; for so I am*” (John xiii. 13). Would that all who profess to own Him as Saviour and Lord would remember this! Jesus was His earthly name (Matt. i. 21) of His humbling and also as the perfect Man, and it is significant that in the context we are considering in Ephesians the emphasis is on the *new man*, the perfect new nature which God gives to each of His redeemed children:

“. . . . that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and *put on the new man*, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Eph. iv. 22-24 R.V.).

The “old man” is the sinful old nature we all inherit from fallen Adam. Fundamentally God dealt with this at the Cross, for then our old man was crucified with Him (Rom. vi. 6). Now each member of the Body is exhorted to count on this by faith and so make it experimental day by day. The old nature can never improve, or be reformed or changed. God gives it over to death and implants into His children the perfect thing he requires. This now can renew and control the mind with its thinking and planning through the Spirit’s work. It is a new beginning, a transformation of the mind as Rom. xii. 2 declare, it is called “the new man” and manifests in practice the mind of Christ, and the actions that spring from it are the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23). This is the new man “put on” (Eph. iv. 24), the mind of Christ in action and it is this way of thinking and living that must now characterize each member of Christ’s Body.

Paul now shows how this work specifically:

“Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour” (iv. 25 R.V.).

The word “putting away” is the same as used in verse 22. Falsehood is one of the main characteristics of the old nature and comes directly from the father of lies (John viii. 44). As we are members one of another, in the close relationship that grace has placed us, falsehood and deceit must have no place. For if it does, it is bound to break in practice this divine relationship to each other. It is difficult, if not well nigh impossible, to have dealings with deceitful people.

The Apostle now passes from deceit to anger, and we ask the question; can a believer indulge in righteous anger? That there is such a thing, the Scriptures testify, for the wrath of God is a solemn fact that the book of Revelation stresses (vi. 16, 17; xi. 18; xiv. 8, 10, 19; v. 17; xvi. 1, 19; xviii. 3; xix. 15). God is righteous and there is no question but that His anger is just. But can we who are sinners indulge in it without sinning ourselves? In view of verse 31, “let ALL bitterness, and wrath, and *anger* be put away from you”, it is surely better to avoid anger under any condition, and read verse 26 as a question “Are ye angry and do ye not sin?” In any case, anger should never be prolonged, for this is dangerous; “let not the sun go down upon your wrath” Paul insists, and many quarrels and differences between believers could have been avoided had this wise injunction been carried into effect.

Those who nurse their grievances do not realize that they are “giving place to the devil” (verse 27). They are giving him room to operate in their lives, which he will not be slow to use with deadly effect.

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need” (iv. 28 R.V.).

Stealing was not regarded as being a particularly bad sin in N.T. times, but however lightly the Ephesians had regarded this in their pre-conversion days, such sin could no longer hold now they were believers. Rather were they to work and earn an honest living, not only to maintain their own homes and families, but to have a surplus to pass on to any who were in real need. Paul himself worked at his trade, so that he was not a burden to his converts (Acts xx. 33, 34; I Thess. ii. 9), so he, as always, was practicing what he preached to others.

“Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear” (iv. 29 R.V.).

In Col. iv. 6 the Apostle wrote that the speech of believers should be always “seasoned with salt”. Salt is a preservative against putrefaction, and Christian speech should always partake of this quality. This does not mean that the language of believers must be dry or dull. There is a proper place for wholesome humour, but anything that tends to corruption must be avoided at all costs. In these manifestations of the sinful old nature, Paul has stressed the bad effect that indulgence will have on the relationship between believers. Now he reminds us that such actions will affect our relationship with God:

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption” (iv. 30 R.V.).

This is one of the verses that clearly teaches the personality of the Holy Spirit. Some who deny this, teach that the Holy Spirit is but a manifestation of God’s power. *But one cannot grieve a force.* One can only grieve *a person*, and indulgence in the works of the flesh grieves God and spoils the consciousness of our close relationship to Him.

The Holy Spirit has put His divine seal upon our redemption (i. 13), showing that Calvary’s work is indeed finished and we belong now to the Lord for eternity. How careful then we should be not to bring grief upon the One Who has made all this possible at such tremendous cost! Indeed, as verse 31 states, *all* manifestations of the old nature must be renounced, and in their place must be the Christian graces of kindness, tenderheartedness, and full forgiveness, remembering constantly how great is the debt that the Lord has forgiven us. We do not now forgive in order to be forgiven (Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15; xviii. 35). Rather we freely forgive *because we have been forgiven* (Eph. iv. 32) and the word ‘forgive’ means “to graciously forgive”, not the ordinary word for remission. Let us constantly keep this before our minds in our dealings with each other, and so glorify the Lord.

**No.31. The Epistle to the Ephesians (11).
pp. 137 - 140**

The Divine injunctions regarding a “worthy walk”, a daily practical manifestation of the superlative Truth revealed in Ephesians i.-iii., is continued by the Apostle Paul in chapter v.:

“Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell” (v. 1, 2 R.V.).

As the R.V. margin points out, many ancient authorities read “us” instead of “you” at the end of iv. 32, as they do in v. 2. These include the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrii which did not become known until 1931. The pronunciation and spelling of *hemeis* (we) and *humeis* (you) was practically identical in the first century, so one can easily understand that a copyist could easily put one for the other. “Us”, which would include the Apostle, is most probably the correct reading.

It should hardly need to be stressed that only a believer in Christ can “imitate God”. A false gospel of works may urge the unbeliever to try to be like Jesus, but this is fatal as a means of salvation, and quite impossible to achieve. Only the truly saved who are quickened can spiritually walk in the Saviour’s footsteps (I Pet. ii. 21), and when we realize what this entails, it will be a lifetime’s endeavour which will surely keep us fully occupied. To “walk in love” might mean almost anything to the human mind, but we are not left in doubt here, as it is explained practically as the way *Christ loved and gave Himself up for us*. Here is a life of absolute unselfishness and self-renunciation, and this, said the Apostle, should characterize the daily Christian walk. Anything less than this is not “worthy” of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This offering of Christ, the giving up of Himself for us, is described in the Levitical terms of the sweet savour offerings, for the two Greek words here (“offering” and “sacrifice”) are used in the Greek O.T. for the meal or cereal offering and the peace offering. These were offerings which had a fragrant smell and represented not so much sin and short coming, as a whole-hearted response in service to God which was fragrant and well pleasing to Him. We might stop to ask ourselves, “are our lives fragrant to the Lord? Does He get pleasure as He regards our thoughts and actions day by day?” This is what is behind the context in Ephesians, and we may all find it very challenging. The Philippian believers showed their practical love for the Lord and for Paul by sending him a gift which rejoiced his heart in his Roman prison. This, he said, was “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (Phil. iv. 18). Would to God that all our lives and actions were as fragrant and attractive as this.

Completely contrary to us and to be shunned is a threefold uncleanness in action and word:

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks” (v. 3, 4 R.V.).

A light view of impurity was often taken in pagan circles. Those who had been saved and brought by grace into the Body of Christ must remember that they had been translated into an entirely different sphere, the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. i. 13 R.V.) where such conduct was completely foreign. We would hardly link covetousness with fornication, but God’s ideas of sin are very different to ours. One great antidote is a thankful heart directed to the Lord. Minds which are so engaged will not lend themselves to thoughts and actions which dishonour Him. God’s wrath is directed against such conduct in the sons of disobedience, and believers who do not realize this and become “partakers with them”, will lose any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ (verses 5, 6).

Paul now describes this, as John sometimes does, in terms of light and darkness. Believers are “rescued from the authority of darkness” (Col. i. 13) and brought into close contact with Him Who is the “Light of the world” (John viii. 12). Once they were not merely *in* darkness but *were darkness*. Now they have *become light* in Him and they must walk “as children of light” (8). Practical Christian walk is likened to fruit “for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (9 R.V.). The A.V. reads “the fruit of the Spirit”, but the weight of textual evidence and that of the context is in favour of the R.V. reading. “Goodness, righteousness and truth” are the concrete expressions of what ‘light’ means, and this is in direct opposition to the darkness of paganism. The lesson is also written in nature, fruit is impossible apart from light. Only when we are walking in the light are we able to produce spiritual fruit and prove “what is well-pleasing unto the Lord” (10 R.V.), and to please Him should be the chief goal of the believer. This will mean having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and again Paul looks back to the sordid depths of pagan ways. God’s light shows these up for what they are (verse 13).

“Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee” (v. 14 R.V.).

The impersonal “it is said” of the R.S.V. is perhaps better here. The Apostle is not quoting a definite O.T. passage, but giving the sense of a number of them, such as Isa. lx. 1 and Mal. iv. 2, and applying them to the individual believer rather than to Israel as a whole, as many of the O.T. contexts do.

“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (verses 15, 16 R.V.).

The Apostle urges a careful walk because of the many dangers around where a careless attitude could lead to stumbling, affecting not only oneself but others. Here, He tells us, we need Divine wisdom, and if we look back to his prayer in chapter i., we shall remind ourselves that the first thing he requests for the Ephesian believers is “the spirit of

wisdom” (i. 17). Walking in a world of spiritual darkness that knows not the Saviour nor the Truth, how wise we need to be! Some Christian’s walk may not be actually sinful, but it can be very unwise, and what problems this can cause! “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without” Paul urges in Col. iv. 5.

Not only this, but we should “redeem the time” or more understandably “buy up the opportunity” for Christian witness, because the days are evil and this is the only adequate antidote. This means we have to be wide awake and on the alert all the while not to miss opportunities that present themselves. How sad it is when we only recognize an opportunity for witness by its back! The times cry out for those who are bold enough to show Whose they are and Whom they serve. If we do this then we shall certainly be among those whom verse 17 describes as “understanding what the will of the Lord is”.

The Apostle continues:

“And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (v. 18, 19 R.V.).

Over indulgence in wine which leads to drunkenness is to be shunned. Rather than being filled with what would intoxicate, let the filling be by the Spirit of God. The last phrase has often been misunderstood and interpreted as though this is Pentecost repeated with all its miraculous evidential gifts. The parallel passage in Colossians makes it quite clear with what the believer is filled. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. iii. 16). The Lord Jesus had said concerning the Holy Spirit: “He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you” (John xvi. 14). There can be no doubt that when the believer is filled with all that pertains to the ascended Christ, this is accomplished through the work of the Filler, the Holy Spirit, and it should be a continuous experience, as the present tense is used. The original does not say “Become full of the Spirit” as some think. Rotherham renders it literally “But be getting filled in Spirit”, which does not describe a mighty upheaval in the senses, but an uplifting of Christ as Saviour, Lord and Head in the renewed mind of the believer through the operation of the Spirit of God, leading to the praise described in verse 19, “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”. Psalms almost certainly point to the O.T. Psalter, but the difficulty for a number of the Lord’s people is finding an acceptable and easy way of singing the prose of the Authorized or Revised Versions. The Anglican chant, used properly, comes the nearest to this. The metrical versions, as used in Scotland, often gets too far away from the original to be used as a translation, and is but a paraphrase of the Hebrew. It is not so easy to identify “hymns and spiritual songs”. There is evidence from the early centuries that Christians praised God in singing, but we have no exact knowledge of the forms this took. We have a record of Paul himself singing hymns and that in the most unlikely circumstances, after he had been cruelly beaten and thrown into the Philippian gaol (Acts xvi. 23-25).

A praising heart will be the more easy when we constantly remember how much we owe to the Lord for His vast redeeming love and providential goodness:

“Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father” (v. 20 R.V.).

“Always for all things” covers all time and all experience for the believer which is covered by the will of the Lord. Sometimes we may not know how to pray, but we can always praise and this never wearies the Lord! Not only this, but it will have a preserving effect on us, for we cannot truly praise and backslide at the same time.

“Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (v. 21 R.V.).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” the O.T. asserts (Prov. i. 7), and this reverential attitude is brought over to this dispensation in the verse before us. This leads us to give Him His rightful place as Lord and Controller of all we have and are, and to give, too, the rightful place to other believers. This we shall do as we seek to serve them in whatever way we can, always bearing in mind the example of the greatest Servant of all, our Saviour, Who took a towel and girded Himself so that He, though Lord of all, could perform the lowliest of service for each of His disciples (John xiii. 4, 5).

Verse 21 closes this section and now the Apostle turns to daily life in the home. Here is where truth in practice starts and this is what so many believers forget. It is sometimes easier to shine for Christ in the world than in the home, but it is *here* that the fragrance of Christ should first be experienced.

No.32. The Epistle to the Ephesians (12). pp. 155 - 159

The Apostle Paul now turns from Christian practice in general to the home, for it is here that the ‘worthy walk’ should begin. We should remember that in century one there were no special buildings for Christian worship. God’s children met in the home, hence the importance of the practical out-working of the truth here. It is for this reason that leaders (bishops or overseers) had to have special domestic qualifications (I Tim. iii. 1-5), for it is quite obvious that an unruly home, or one that was un-Christian in any way, would have been a most unsuitable meeting place for believers.

The Apostle first deals with Christian husbands and wives, urging the wives to take their relationship to their husbands that Christ has ordained. The word ‘subjection’ does not carry with it any abject idea of slavery. In v. 21 Paul had shown that it was the Lord’s will that *all* should be “subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (R.V.). The basic idea is to take the place assigned by God. There is a divinely ordained position of men and women to each other in creation; but this does not mean that there is inferiority, either naturally or spiritually, of women to men. In I Cor. xi. 3 Paul had written:

“The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

Thus we have a divinely relationship ascending from woman through man, and through Christ to God. If the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of the Church is Christ, then there is an analogy between a wife’s relationship to her husband and the Church’s relation to Christ. Once this is seen, the conception that men are better than women, or that women are expected to render them slavish obedience, vanishes. The husband has a tremendous responsibility, for he prefigures Christ as the Body’s Head and Saviour, and is enjoined to love his wife “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it” (25 R.V.). This goes much deeper than attraction or affection, and involves his unceasing and self-sacrificing concern for her well-being, thus safeguarding her dignity and welfare. And when wives constantly receive this sort of consideration, are they going to experience any difficulty in being in subjection to such a man? Surely this deference will be the natural outcome of such a high relationship.

But the Apostle now leaves the husband-wife relationship behind, for he goes on to state that, not only did the Lord give Himself up for His body, but He did this in order that “He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word” (26 R.V.). We have a double figure here for cleansing—water and the Word of God. One is immediately reminded of Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27 when, at the future re-gathering of Israel, God says:

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”

Obviously here the water is not literal. The cleansing is not that of the body, but that of the *mind*. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you” (xxxvi. 26). Later on, in the N.T., we find the Lord saying, “Now ye are clean *through the word* which I have spoken unto you” (John xv. 3). Ritualists must be hard put to it to try and make Eph. v. 26 refer to water baptism. Had Paul meant to teach this, the phrase “by the Word” would have been omitted. In any case, as we have already seen, the ONE baptism of iv. 5 precludes that of the type and shadow—literal water—and must refer to the abiding spiritual reality, the work of the Holy Spirit Himself. The only other occurrence of the word rendered “washing” is Titus iii. 5, where we have the “washing of regeneration”, once again clearly not alluding to literal water, and this guides us in interpreting Eph. v. 26.

This divine cleansing is in order that:

“He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (v. 27 R.V.).

This great presentation day is often forgotten by believers. The future glory for the Body must not be looked at exclusively as the realization of the hope of each member. Let us not forget what that day will mean for the Lord as well—the receiving to Himself of His complete and perfected Body. This is what the Father had in mind when He chose this company in Christ before the foundation of the world “that it should be *holy* and

without blame (blemish) before Him in love” (i. 4) and it is only through the redemptive work of the Son, providing this holiness, that this great goal can be realized.

Paul now returns to the married relationship “Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies” (28 R.V.). From the standpoint of the Word, a believer’s wife is an extension of himself and “no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (29 R.V.), and this is an illustration of the relationship between Christ and the Church, His Body (30). How strange that with the argument so clearly expressed, some will persist in teaching from this passage that this Church is the Bride! The Apostle goes back to Eden to stress the *oneness* of Adam and Eve, where Adam greets Eve, not so much as his bride, but “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. ii. 23), “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and the twain shall become one flesh” (31 R.V.). The teaching of these verses is perfectly plain. Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies, as Christ loved the Church, His Body. Here is perfect balance in argument which is upset if one introduces the *bridal* Church, and Paul is careful to do no such thing. Symbols and figures are used with precision and accuracy by the Holy Spirit, and He certainly does not “mix His metaphors”, as many make Him do, by confusing these two callings.

Paul’s thought now travels back to the great revealed Secret (Mystery) of chapter iii. That there is underlying truth in the marriage relationship is perfectly true. “But (note the disjunctive: Paul is not now referring to husband and wife) I speak in regard of Christ and of the church” (32). This is the great Secret which he was privileged to receive from the Lord by revelation and commissioned to make known from his prison (Eph. iii. and Col. i.). “Nevertheless (he concludes) do ye also severally love each one his own wife *even as himself*” (33), and the thought is still that the man is to love his wife, not because she is his bride, but because she is, as it were, *part of himself*, as the church, the Body, is to the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. “And let the wife see that she fear (reverence or respect) her husband.”

The Apostle now passes to the duties of children and parents and he still has the Christian home in view. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” Disobedience, the refusal to be controlled or to exercise self-control, is typical of past degeneracy (Rom. i. 30) and the terrible darkness of the perilous times of the last days of this age (II Tim. iii. 2). One great characteristic of these times, which we now see all around us, is *lawlessness* or rebellion. The Lord marked this out as a sign of the end of the age. “Lawlessness (iniquity) shall abound”, He said (Matt. xxiv. 32) and this characteristic is not confined to any one country, but is world-wide at the present moment. All this is but a prelude to the revelation of the final Satanic world dictator, the man of lawlessness (II Thess. ii. 3, 4) who will sum up in himself this terrible characteristic. Christian parents who allow disobedience to enter their homes are only contributing to this terrible state of affairs, and if a child never learns the meaning of obedience, how is he ever going to learn to obey the Lord?

Paul now quotes the fifth commandment, the importance of which is emphasized because it not only is the *first* commandment with a promise attached, but the only one in

the Decalogue to have a promise at all. The Apostle quoted the *whole* of Exod. xx. 12 which includes the promise which obtained at that particular time, “that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”. Not that this promise is necessarily brought over into this dispensation, for we are not Israelites, nor in the land of Canaan which the Lord gave to Abraham and his descendants; but its importance in God’s sight is stressed by this added promise when the law was given to Israel.

Eph. vi. 1 states that such obedience and honouring of parents is *right*, and Col. iii. 20 that it is “well-pleasing to the Lord”. The Word of God, however, is not one-sided. Parents have their Christian duty and responsibility to their children. They are warned not to provoke their children to wrath (4) and Col. iii. 21 adds “lest they be discouraged”. Many a child has failed to respond to the Truth by unreasonableness and unwise and unsympathetic handling on the part of the parents. Such parents do not deserve their children’s obedience. Christian parents will need all the wisdom, patience and tact that it is possible to have, so that in these dark and perilous days their family may be brought up in the discipline (chastening) and instruction (admonition) of the Lord. The absolute need for such discipline is made clear in Heb. xii. 5-11. This, though sometimes unpleasant, is a mark of *love* not displeasure (Heb. xii. 6). The wise parent will not hesitate to administer such chastening (not to be confused with the word “chastisement”), realizing full well that if this is not done the child is being prepared to be ensnared by the delinquency of these and the darkening future days.

Lastly, Paul deals with slave and masters; and slaves were exhorted to obey their masters, even though they were not believers. Such a situation would be difficult indeed, but such slaves or servants of any kind, were given special Divine encouragement. They were asked to do their work as though the Lord had requested them to do it, which would put quite a different light on the situation (5). They, like the Apostle himself, were bond-slaves of Christ, hence they were not to be clock-watchers and put on a show of working hard just when the earthly master was watching. This would be ‘eye-service’ and would bring the truth into disrepute. They were to serve with Christ in view as the final arbiter and rewarder of their work (8). Equally masters were to do the same things to their servants without threatening or bullying, remembering that they themselves were but servants, and their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom they would finally have to give account.

If only such wise relationships were possible today in the commercial world! Very few problems, if any, would arise, and the turmoil and strikes that we see all around us would be non-existent. But we know that unregenerate man will not learn these lessons in this age. This awaits the coming age with its peace and righteousness.

No.33. The Epistle to the Ephesians (13). pp. 173 - 177

Paul now comes to the final section of the epistle, which gives a revelation of the unseen and unfelt spiritual warfare that is constantly going on behind the scenes between God and the spiritual forces for good, and Satan and the powers of darkness that antagonize the Divine plan every inch of the way. But for the complete protection that the Lord has provided, the believer would have good cause to be afraid. The panoply of God, however, is all-sufficient for such a dangerous situation:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. vi. 10, 11 R.V.).

Every member of the Body of Christ is reminded here where his true strength lies for this tremendous conflict. It is not in self, or on the human plane in any way. Mere human power would be less than useless against such spiritual enemies. Nothing less than the mighty resurrection power of Christ mentioned in chapter i. 19-23 is sufficient, plus the protective armour that He provides, which covers the believer from head to foot.

The Apostle had used a similar figure in I Thess. v. 8 “. . . . putting on the *breastplate* of faith and love; and for a *helmet*, the hope of salvation”. There is the possibility that Paul goes into greater detail here, because he had an object lesson constantly with him in the person of the Roman soldier to whom he was chained and who guarded him day and night. He reminds us that our warfare is not with our fellow human beings:

“For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (vi. 12 R.V.).

Principalities and powers are the highest rank of heavenly being's, the very aristocracy of heaven. Angels are apparently heaven's servants. They are “serving spirit” (Heb. i. 14). Some of these principalities acknowledge the lordship of Christ, and come under His Headship (Col. ii. 10). Others have rebelled, possibly at the fall of Satan and the triumph of Calvary not only dealt with human sin and death, but procured victory over these spiritual foes:

“Having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. ii. 15 R.V.).

The word translated “world-rulers” is important. Occasionally the Word of God draws aside the curtain, as it were, and lets us see things that are going on in the spiritual world around us, which are unperceived by our senses. In the tenth chapter of Daniel, for instance, we are introduced to two angel princes who impede the one who was being sent to Daniel to assist him and he was hindered for three weeks (Dan. x. 13, 20). Later on, Michael, the archangel, is introduced, who has the responsibility of the interests of the

people of Israel (xii. 1). From this and other places, including Eph. vi., we can see something of the great battle that is being fought between God and Satan and the powers of darkness. It would appear that Satan has his emissaries over every nation, affecting their policies and actions, and so has the Lord. Three times the Lord Jesus referred to Satan as the “ruler (prince) of this world” (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11) and Paul calls him “the god of this age” (II Cor. iv. 4). There is no doubt that the present world system is being run by him, for “the whole world lieth in the evil one” (I John v. 19 R.V.). As the instructed Christian looks at world affairs all this throws light on what he sees going on around him.

Now it is with this flood of evil spiritual rulers that Eph. vi. tells us that our wrestling engages, not with our fellow man. Satan appears to have malignity against the Body of Christ, for he sees in the heavenly destiny of this church a rival to his high ambitions in the heavenlies. The more we appreciate the whole of this situation, the more we can see the danger we are in “of ourselves”, and how utterly hopeless it would be for us to try and meet it in our own puny strength. However, we need not fear if we avail ourselves of the armour which God has provided for our complete protection; and with this and Calvary’s work in mind, our final victory, through Him Who loved us is assured (Rom. viii. 37-39).

As we study this spiritual armour in detail, we note it consists of five pieces for defence and one for offence. We might have expected seven, but we must remember we are in a very imperfect age, and not until God’s perfect kingdom is realized will the spiritual meaning of “seven” be realized. The Apostle goes on to describe each piece of the armour and its uses. It is significant that the first is *truth* and without this all the rest is ineffective. This constant seeking for truth, the understanding of the rightly-divided Word of God, must be the continued quest of the believer, if he wants to count in this great struggle. Satan is the liar and the father of lies, some of which have permeated Christendom today and the wise Christian will constantly check all he hears and reads by the great Divine standard of the Word. There is no other way that he can be proof against the deception of the evil one, and Christian witness and activity is fruitless divorced from the truth of God. Of what can we be witnesses, if it is not God’s truth?

Righteousness is to be the believer’s breastplate. In Isa. lix. 17 God Himself is represented as putting on “righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head”, so Paul probably had these symbols in mind when he was writing this part of the Ephesian letter. Righteousness *in action*, as well as imputed righteousness, is meant here. These items of the spiritual armour are really the *fruits* of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23), and unless these are manifested in our lives, we are in a dangerous position indeed, for we are right open to the enemy’s attack with his “fiery darts”.

The feet, which speak of our walk, are shod with the “preparation of the gospel of peace” (vi. 15), not only that good news of peace with God which comes from being justified by faith in Christ (Rom. v. 1), but that God-given peace between each member of the Body (Eph. ii. 15) which should constantly be manifested. In addition to these (not above all these [A.V.], as though faith was more important than the foregoing graces) the shield of faith, like the large body-shield that the Romans used, must be constantly used

as a protection against all the fiery darts of the enemy. There can be no shield if any element of unbelief enters our minds, and it is Satan's constant aim to try to get us to doubt God's Word, just as he did in Eden when he whispered to Eve "hath God said?" (Gen. iii. 1). Israel lost the promised land through unbelief (Heb. iii. 19) and the only effective antidote to this dangerous thing is complete trust in all God has said and revealed, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). "And take the helmet of salvation" continued the Apostle, using the same figure as he did to the Thessalonian church (I Thess. v. 8).

Lastly, we come to the only offensive weapon that the believer is allowed, which is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). Heb. iv. 12 R.V. reminds us that the "Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword" and this weapon is the only thing Satan fears. We remember how effectively the Lord Jesus used it against the onslaught of Satan in the wilderness temptation. His one reply to each of Satan's attacks was "It is written" (Matt. iv. 1-11). He could have demolished the evil one's craftiness by His divine power, but how glad we are that he did not do so, but instead gave us all a practical exhibition of the "Sword of the Spirit" which caused Satan to retire defeated.

Now it is useless having a weapon if we do not practice with it, so that we are expert in its use. Imagine anyone needing to use a revolver in a state of emergency, who had never handled one! To use any weapon effectively, constant practice is essential, and we must have "the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16), this wisdom guiding our use of the divine Sword, which can accomplish all God's purpose and rout the hosts of darkness, which continually seek to thwart His plan.

We need to remember that the modernist who refuses to acknowledge the full inspiration of the holy Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, leaving a book that is inspired only in parts, has only a broken sword which Satan does not fear and is useless in this spiritual warfare. Outstanding witnesses for Christ in this age have been men of the Word, and later on, when writing his last thoughts to Timothy, Paul declares that the God-breathed Scriptures are the complete equipment of the believer (II Tim. iii. 16, 17), sufficient for all the needs of the Christian pathway.

Having described the panoply of God under which His children are perfectly safe, though going through a time of danger with the unseen spiritual warfare ever raging around them, Paul now stresses prayer and supplication. These are not part of the armour, and it is not Spiritual to speak of "prayer warfare". As we have seen before, we have not been commanded to attack, but to stand and withstand all the enemy's onslaughts and not yield an inch (vi. 13). However, prayer and intercession are of the utmost importance if we are to accomplish anything worthwhile for Christ. There must be constant intercession, guided by the Word of Truth and a personal knowledge of the Lord's will and *this must be continual*. "Men ought *always* to pray and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1), and the non-ceasing intercession of the Apostle is an example to us all. The prayer-less Christian is an ineffectual and defeated one. Let us also *watch*, for the

Lord not only said “pray”, but “*watch* and pray” (Mark xiv. 38). We must be alert to see the Lord’s hand working in our sphere of witness and service.

Last of all, Paul asks prayer for himself for “utterance” and “boldness, as I ought to speak”. The message was the “mystery of the gospel” (Eph. vi. 19, 20), not just how God can save a sinner, though that is wonderful. What a lot believers and expositors miss who put this one meaning on the word ‘gospel’ wherever it occurs in the N.T. The Lord has good news for His redeemed children as well as for sinners. The tremendous revelation given to the Apostle and made known in Eph. iii. and Col. i. goes far beyond salvation, although it rests upon it. So wonderful was it that Paul’s one aim was to “enlighten all” (iii. 8, 9) as to its content and riches, and in the Colossian letter we are told that God wishes this to be made manifest to His saints (Col. i. 26, 27). It was this ‘good news’ hitherto kept secret (a mystery) that Paul asked for prayer that he might boldly proclaim and make known, and it was for this truth he was “an ambassador in chains” (20). Instead of looking at himself as the prisoner of Nero, he preferred to see the situation from the Divine standpoint, and regard himself as God’s representative at the imperial court of Rome.

He now assured the recipients of this epistle that Tychicus would visit them and give all the up-to-date news concerning his circumstances. This is almost identical with Col. iv. 7 and shows that Tychicus was evidently the bearer of the Colossian epistle as well as this one. He was a native of the province of Asia according to Acts xx. 4, and here he is Paul’s special envoy to the churches of this region. The Apostle closes the epistle with peace, love, faith and grace; wondrous spiritual gifts upon which it is indeed profitable to reflect and to experience. His last words are “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness” (24 R.V.). He finishes as he began with grace, and leaves as his last thought, that of resurrection, for “uncorruptness” is practically synonymous with “immortality”, and is put on at resurrection (I Cor. xv. 53, 54). It is in resurrection when the exceeding riches of this epistle will be enjoyed by those who are graciously favoured to be members of the Body of Christ. The height, depth, length and breadth of revelation in this epistle are not eclipsed by any other part of Scripture, and nothing less than this is what God wants His child to embrace by faith, rejoice in, and live out in practice day by day, according to His rules laid down in chapters iv. to vi. This is a challenge indeed, which believers can only ignore to their eternal loss. Are we willing to honestly face up to it day by day?

No.34. The Epistle to the Philippians (1). **pp. 192 - 197**

The ministry of the Apostle Paul at Philippi marks the entrance of the gospel into Europe and is described in Acts xvi. 12-40. The city, which was a Roman colony, first received its name from Philip of Macedon who took it from the Thasians around B.C.360. In B.C.168 it became part of the Roman empire. Luke describes it as “a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony” (Acts xvi. 12 R.V.). There was a dignity in this title, for this permitted the use of the Roman law in local affairs, and sometimes exemption from tribute and taxation. Even more than this the *Ius Italicum* gave them the privilege by which ownership, transfer of land, payment of taxes, local administration, and law, became the same as if they were on Italian soil.

Luke, in the Acts, makes it clear that a Jewish community existed there before the Apostle’s visit, and it is interesting to note the high status of women in Macedonia. W. Tarn and G. T. Griffith in *Hellenistic Civilization*, pp. 98, 99 state “if Macedonia produced perhaps the most competent group of men the world had yet seen, the women were in all respects the men’s counterparts; they played a large part in affairs, received envoys and obtained concessions for them from their husbands, built temples, founded cities, engaged mercenaries, commanded armies, held fortresses, and acted on occasion as regents or even co-rulers”. Jewish women, we know, met for prayer at Philippi, of which Lydia, a proselyte of Judaism was one.

Date and Place of Composition.

The traditional dating of the epistle is associated with Paul’s imprisonment at Rome. This view was current in the second century, and was virtually unchallenged until the end of the eighteenth century. From this time onwards two other places have been advanced as the origin of this letter. They are Caesarea and Ephesus. Oeder of Leipzig in 1731 first propounded the Caesarea origin, though today it has been practically abandoned. We will, however, consider it. Later, Ephesus was put forward as the place where the epistle was written by Adolf Deissman in 1897 and is sponsored by some modern scholars like Dr. G. S. Duncan. The reader may ask if this is of vital importance, and the answer is “yes”, for a Caesarean or Ephesian origin for the Philippian epistle would remove it from the prison epistles written after Acts xxviii. relating to the Mystery and put it into the Acts period, where Israel and Israel’s hope are still dominating.

Those who uphold the Caesarean origin make much of the word *praetorian*, translated ‘palace’ in the A.V. of Phil. i. 13, and point out that this word describes Herod’s official residence at Caesarea. But the same word is used of Pilate’s residence as Roman procurator at Jerusalem, and it is also used of the Emperor’s palace on the Palatine hill in Rome (as A.V.), and it could equally refer to the residence of the proconsul of Asia in Ephesus, or any governor of a province. This argument therefore cancels out, and no secure foundation can be based on it.

There is another side to this, however. *Praetorian* can also be used of the *praetorian guard*, and ‘all other’ need not mean ‘places’ which is added in the A.V. It can refer to a personal reference, “among the rest” of a group of people, and so the R.V. renders it “throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest”. To this J. B. Lightfoot and other scholars concur and link it with Rome. Professor F. W. Beare states “it scarcely needs to be said that the nine cohorts of the Praetorian Guard were usually concentrated at Rome, after Liberius built them a great barracks; and any detachments found in a provincial capital would be nothing more than a guard of honour for the proconsul” (*The Epistle to the Philippians*, p.22).

We should note too that the “saints of Caesar’s household” (iv. 22) would not refer to the family of the Emperor or members of the court circle, but rather of the servants and slaves of the Emperor’s household which were in the nature of civil servants and with whom Paul had had some contact, and in the case of the praetorian guard this would certainly be true in the course of their supervisory duties, and “all the rest” (i. 13 R.V.) describes the wider circle who came to hear of Paul’s imprisonment.

We know for certain that Paul was imprisoned at Rome for at least two years and in conditions that admitted of his receiving visitors and of preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all freedom, without hindrance. It is not known that he was ever imprisoned at Ephesus. On this Luke is silent, and this weighs heavily against the Ephesian hypothesis. It is by no means certain that at Caesarea he enjoyed the same liberty of action as at Rome. At Caesarea he was detained in Herod’s praetorium; in Rome he was allowed to live in his own rented dwelling. At Caesarea, moreover, he was in no danger of death. Felix would have released him at any time on the payment of a bribe. It was very unlikely that the issue of life and death described in the Philippian epistle referred to the enmity of the Jews, for Paul had faced this from the *commencement* of his ministry and in II Corinthians he had stated that he was “in death oft” (II Cor. xi. 23). Moreover the Lord had definitely promised that *he should go to Rome and reach there unharmed* (Acts xxiii. 10, 11), so the Apostle would have no fear of his countrymen in this respect at Caesarea.

Regarding the Ephesian or Caesarean theory of the place of writing Professor Beare writes: “It must also be shown that the conditions of the imprisonment were such as to allow the Apostle to receive friends, to direct the movements of his associates, and to receive and write letters. Let us remember that the writing of letters involves the admission of a scribe to the prison, and the provision of papyrus at the prisoner’s expense. It was not every prisoner who would be free to turn his cell into an executive office for the propagation of a religion of doubtful legality! It must be emphasized again that it is only for Rome that we have documentary evidence for a prolonged imprisonment which allowed Paul such freedom for his apostolic activities” (op.cit.p.23).

He further states that it was hard to believe that at Caesarea he would be so completely abandoned by the Jerusalem church, to which he had just brought generous gifts from

Macedonia and Achaia, that he would require aid from the Philippian church 1,200 miles away.

One of the difficulties that we have in connection with Rome as the place where Philippians was written is the long distance of Rome from Philippi and the number of journeys mentioned in the epistle which must be fitted in. This also militates against Caesarea, for such a journey would involve a trip of 1,200 miles overland, taking even longer than the journey to Rome, for communications through Asia Minor were not equal under the best conditions to those between Rome and Philippi, and for several months of the year the roads were impassable over the Taurus mountains. The journey by sea would take several weeks, judging by the fact that Paul, leaving Philippi immediately after Easter, feels that he cannot take time to stop over in Ephesus if he is to be in Jerusalem for Whitsuntide (Acts xx. 16).

The number of journeys mentioned in Philippians are as follows: four trips are presupposed between Rome and Philippi:

- (1) A message is sent from Rome to Philippi, telling that Paul is in prison.
- (2) Epaphroditus comes from Philippi to Rome bringing gifts.
- (3) Word is sent from Rome to Philippi that Epaphroditus has fallen ill.
- (4) Message comes back from Philippi, telling of the Philippians' distress at the news.

The return of Epaphroditus with the epistle would make a fifth journey and it is to be followed by the sending of Timothy. Paul himself hopes to visit Philippi some time afterwards. The distance between Rome and Philippi was nearly 800 miles, following the Appian way for 360 miles to Brindisium (Brindisi), and then by boat across the Adriatic to Dyrrhachium (Durazzo), a two-day trip, provided the weather was favourable. From Dyrrhachium the Egnatian Way would be followed for 370 miles to Philippi. Sir William Ramsey has calculated that the average distance of a day's travel overland, on foot, would not be above 15 miles [HDB, v, art. *Roads and Travel (N.T.)*, p.386]. Reckoning like this, the one-way journey would take over seven weeks, and allowing for rests between trips and delays on the way, we should have to allow about five months for the return trip or ten months for the four journeys.

This period could be cut in half if the Philippians heard of Paul's appeal to Caesar soon after it was made, and sent their messenger to meet him with supplies on his arrival. We should still have to allow four or five months for exchanges of correspondence before the dispatch of the epistle. Since Paul was under house arrest at Rome *for two years*, there was clearly time for all these journeys, so Rome cannot be turned down because of its distance from Philippi.

Certainly, the journey from Ephesus to Philippi would be much shorter, taking 10-12 days in each direction, but there are many problems which this supposition produces which cannot be overcome. No less an authority than Professor C. H. Dodd has critically examined the Caesarean and Ephesian hypotheses and rejected them in favour of the Roman origin of Philippians (*N.T. Studies*). Professor F. W. Beare concludes his survey by writing, "Taking everything into account, the ancient hypothesis that Philippians was

written from Rome must be allowed to hold the field. A precise date cannot be established. We must be content to place it between 60A.D. and 64, probably toward the later date. The Philippians are Macedonians. These, having received the word, stood firm in the faith, and did not receive false apostles. The Apostle praises them, writing to them from Rome, from prison, by Epaphroditus' (*The [Latin] Marcionite prologue to the epistle*, dating from the second century)". See *The Epistle to the Philippians* by Professor F. W. Beare, p.24.

Professor C. H. Dodd points out that Paul, as a Roman citizen, was not in danger of suffering the extreme penalty as the result of any sentence of a provincial court such as Ephesus, since he could always play his trump card, an appeal to Caesar. Rome alone was the place that imprisonment could end immediately in death. Prof. A. T. Robertson, one of the foremost N.T. Greek scholars, writes "the argument (of the Ephesian origin propounded by Dr. G. S. Duncan) is more ingenious than convincing. It is not possible here to review the arguments *pro* and *con* that convince me that Paul was in Rome when he wrote this letter to Philippi" (*Word Pictures of the N.T.*, p.433). Donald Guthrie sums up the situation thus: "If the Roman hypothesis were proved untenable, the Ephesian would probably be unchallenged as an alternative theory. But the grounds for disputing the Roman theory are far from conclusive, and in view of this uncertainty and the fact that the Acts' silence about an Ephesian imprisonment must be a certain embarrassment to the Ephesian theory, it seems better to give the preference to Rome as the place of dispatch" (*N.T. Introduction, The Pauline Epistles*, p.153). No less an authority than J. B. Lightfoot firmly supported the Roman origin, and others could be named, so at least we are in good company from a scholastic standpoint in adhering to Rome as the place where the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians, and we should remember that this subject is largely one of scholarship and research.

But there are two more important points which must be considered, namely, the make-up of the N.T.; and the dispensational viewpoint. (1) If Philippians was written from Rome after Acts xxviii., then we get a perfect arrangement of the N.T. epistles in groups of sevens. *Seven of Paul's epistles during the Acts*: Galatians, Hebrews, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Corinthians and Romans (we have given our reasons elsewhere for maintaining the Pauline authorship of Hebrews despite its unpopularity today). *Seven of Paul's epistles after the Acts*: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, I Timothy, Titus and II Timothy. *Seven general epistles or epistles of the circumcision*: James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John and Jude. This is so obviously of Divine origin that we should need very strong positive evidence indeed to take any other position. If we put Philippians into the Acts, this perfect balance is upset, and not only this, but the inter-relationship of the Prison epistles themselves; Ephesians and Colossians making known the Mystery and Philippians and II Timothy the prize and crown attached to it. (2) Nothing is surer than the miraculous gift of healing is prominent all through the Acts as one of the sign gifts of the earthly kingdom related to Israel. It is as prominent in Acts xxviii. as at the beginning. How comes it then that Paul laments in Philippians that he cannot heal his beloved friend Epaphroditus who practically lost his life through serious illness (if he wrote this at Ephesus or Caesarea), yet later at

Acts xxviii. his gift of miraculous healing is quite unimpaired (Acts xxviii. 8, 9)? This certainly must be faced *from Scripture*, and we should like to know the answer.

It has been asserted that because the word “mystery” does not occur in Philippians, the epistle cannot be written after Acts xxviii. By the same argument II Timothy, Paul’s last letter, would have nothing to do with the Mystery, for likewise the word does not occur there! The word ‘sanctification’ does not occur in Philippians. Are we to conclude then, that this church was not sanctified? Let us face the fact that *an argument from silence is exceedingly weak unless accompanied by strong positive evidence*. If Paul had to mention every basic or important truth in every letter he wrote, he would have been compelled to have written long volumes concerned with doctrine rather than letters. Those with dispensational leanings who place Philippians in the Acts should weigh over very carefully what they are losing in precious truth belonging to the Body of Christ as against anything they think they are going to gain by so doing.

We have said nothing about the question of “bishops and deacons” (Phil. i. 1) as this is no problem as related to the Mystery when viewed Scripturally: but we hope we have made it clear that we have good ground for placing the epistle to the Philippians after Acts xxviii. and written from Paul’s house-imprisonment in Rome.

No.35. The Epistle to the Philippians (2). pp. 212 - 216

Having given our reasons for believing that this epistle was written from Paul’s imprisonment at Rome, and therefore circulated after the Acts, we note that it is a letter pre-eminently of *unselfish service*, in connection with the gospel and the fullness of Truth made known after Israel’s defection. This letter does not go over the ground again of Ephesians. There was no need to do this. Philippians deals with the responsibility that comes from receiving the riches of grace and glory that are revealed in Ephesians and Colossians, the *working out* of our salvation with a prize or Divine *reward* in view, and thus it balances II Timothy with its similar emphasis on a *crown* (II Tim. iv. 8 and cp. ii. 12).

We are not surprised therefore to find service stressed in the first verse:

“Paul and Timothy, *servants* of Christ Jesus, to all the saints at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (R.V.),

and it is the only epistle of Paul’s to begin in this way. The word ‘servant’ is literally ‘slave’, and on the surface it seems extraordinary that the champion of liberty (Gal. v. 1) should so describe himself. But ever since his conversion, the Apostle’s conception of redemption was that he had been *purchased* by the Lord and thus he was entirely the Lord’s property, as his very first question showed (Acts ix. 6). Only those who have this experience and realize its implications to the full know what real freedom is. Before we

go any further we will set out the structure of the epistle, and for this we are indebted to Mr. C. H. Welch:

- A | i. 1, 2. Salutation. Saints in Christ Jesus.
- B | i. 3-26. Fellowship in gospel from the first day.
- C | i. 27 - ii. 5. Conversation here. Stand fast. Mind of Christ. Now.
- D | ii. 6-11. Sevenfold humiliation of Christ. Example.
- E | ii. 12-17. Exhortation. Work out.
- F | ii. 17-30. Example of Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus.
- E | iii. 1-3. Exhortation. Beware.
- D | iii. 4-19. Sevenfold loss of Paul. Example.
- C | iii. 20 - iv. 10. Conversation there. Stand fast. Body of glory. Then.
- B | iv. 11-20. Fellowship in beginning of the Gospel.
- A | iv. 21-23. Salutation. Saints of Cæsar's Household.

The structure is an introversion and is self-explanatory. There are many parallels with the epistle to the Hebrews. In each case a race is envisaged, and maturity as the goal (Phil. iii. 12-15; Heb. vi. 1; xii. 1, 2), and we should not be surprised at this when we realize that Hebrews is the 'prize' epistle of the Acts period, as Philipians is to the church of the Mystery revealed after the Acts.

Some find the mention of 'bishops and deacons' in verse 1 a problem, but, rightly regarded, this is not so. We feel this may have come about through the idea that organized assemblies only existed during the Acts period; and afterwards, when the great secret of Ephesians and Colossians was revealed, such united witness finished and churches somehow were dissolved and thus ceased to be. When one tries to examine the basis for such an idea, one searches in vain for any solid reason. Even later on, when so many deserted the Apostle (II Tim. i. 15 R.V.), this did not stamp out the various churches, unless one assumes that all these people became atheists! There was still plenty of Christian witness left, even though it was largely devoid of the truth of the sacred 'deposit' given to Paul by the ascended Christ. In the sub-apostolic period we know for certain that the churches at Corinth and Philippi were still in existence because Clement wrote to the former and Polycarp to the latter and we have their letters today. (See *The Early Centuries and the Truth*).

Now it is God's will that things be done "decently and in order". The Apostle Paul was constantly concerned that this should characterize the various groups of believers. A pagan world was watching and only too ready to pounce on any irregularity among the Christian churches. We can thus understand that the provision of leaders was a necessity in all circumstances, and the lowly but valuable office of bishops (overseers) and deacons (servants of the church) were a gift from the Lord to this end. We must cast out from our minds any modern conception of a bishop. In Paul's day these were just humble and faithful believers, whose homes were examples of what Christian homes should be, and therefore a fit place for believers to meet with one another in study, praise and worship (I Tim. iii. 1-13).

If this was true during the Acts, then the need certainly did not cease afterwards when the Mystery was revealed with its new calling and walk. The need and importance of such leadership would be even greater, and the fellowship in the house-church even more necessary than before so that the new Truth could be studied together and the Body grow as a whole (Eph. iv. 13, 15, 16). The very fact that instruction concerning bishops and deacons was given after Acts xxviii., when Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy proves this.

Some have tried to give an earlier date for I Timothy and place it in the Acts period, but this is impossible, and even if it were so, there is still the same problem with the epistle to Titus. A. M. Stibbs in *The New Bible Commentary* writes (p.1063) “It is generally agreed that it is impossible to fit these epistles (the Pastorals) within the limits of Paul’s life as we know it from the Acts of the Apostles. For their explanation they demand the recognition, indeed they themselves provide the most decisive evidence, that Paul was released from the imprisonment of which we read at the end of Acts (Phil. ii. 24; Philemon 22)”

The duties of an overseer (bishop) are clearly set out in Acts xx. 28:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops), to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

These believers are also called “elders” in verse 17, showing that these two titles referred to the same office. The need for nourishing the people of God (who were enlightened to the new calling of Ephesians) certainly did not cease at Acts xxviii. Deacons (*diakonoi*) appeared to be responsible for certain welfare duties connected with the assembly. The house of Stephanas had appointed themselves for service (*diakonian*) to the saints (I Cor. xvi. 15), and was linked with others who helped and laboured together (17). There is no exalted ecclesiastical office in either of these titles. This was what they degenerated into as organized Christianity got further and further away from the original truth. It is worthy of note that there are *bishops* (plural) at the beginning, not *one* bishop ruling and superintending, which again was a declension from original truth, by the time of Ignatius.

From the standpoint of the Philippian letter, we see the church still organized in absolute simplicity, with the minimum of ‘offices’ to assure the orderly running of the new witness. Because Paul addressed his last letter to Timothy, again some have assumed that, in view of this, organized groups of Christians had ceased to exist. Most certainly this was not so, but we can well understand that the Apostle’s last thoughts before his martyrdom would be for the young fellow, his dearly loved son in the faith, who was soon to take up the great responsibility of standing for all that made up “the good deposit” of truth which he (Paul) had received from the ascended Christ, and thus his last letter was a personal one for his correction and encouragement.

At the commencement of Philippians the Apostle gives his thanksgiving for the believers at Philippi. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” he said.

Isolated in his Roman imprisonment, we can well imagine that Paul's thoughts would continually travel to the various groups of God's children his faithful ministry had been the means of founding. At least the Roman Praetorian guard could not chain his thoughts, nor the Word of God! (II Tim. ii. 8, 9). Neither could they stop his Christian witness, as the rest of the chapter clearly testifies, for there was still abundant fruit, even though he was chained to a Roman soldier night and day. Every time he thought of the Philippian church he felt extremely grateful to God for them, not only because in their practical love for him they had sent him a gift, but also because they had shared in the work and witness of the gospel from the first day of the founding of their assembly by the Apostle. Thus they were constantly in his prayers with joy in his heart.

Although this is an epistle of suffering, testing, and sacrifice (i. 29, 30; ii. 17; iii. 7, 8), yet paradoxically it is the epistle of joy and rejoicing (i. 4, 18; ii. 16, 17, 18, 28; iii. 1; iv. 4, 10). This only goes to show that the believer need not be unduly affected by his environment. Trying though it may be, by the grace and strength of God he can rise above it and become "more than conqueror" (Rom. viii. 37). Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), and this is not something that fluctuates from day to day as it does not depend upon anything external, but is an abiding possession given by the Spirit of God and centres around all the spiritual wealth that exists in Christ. Later on in this epistle Paul is going to reveal how he could be independent of all circumstances (Philippians iv. 11-13). A careful consideration of the occurrences of the word 'joy' will throw a flood of light upon this most attractive grace which advertises the Christian faith so well. Long-faced Christianity does not win new adherents! On the other hand, it is not the empty flippancy of the unbelieving world, which is so often mistaken for it.

The Philippian believers had shown the genuineness of their faith by their obedience to the truth and their constant labour to make the gospel known, which was a good deal more than the empty profession of words only. Paul was assured that this was an *abiding* work:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which *began* a good work in you, will *perfect* it until the day of Jesus Christ" (i. 6 R.V.).

Whatever God begins He finishes or perfects, and this is the final answer to those who say one can be saved today and lost tomorrow. Moreover we must remember that there are three tenses in salvation and redemption. We *have been saved* from the **penalty** of sin. We are *now being saved* from its **power**. In resurrection, when our hope is realized and we have the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23-25), we *shall be saved* from its *very presence*, for we shall be presented "holy and blameless (Eph. v. 27).

This very fact shows that God will complete the work of salvation which He began. If this is not so, then Christ has died in vain. The two verbs 'begin' and 'finish' come together again in Gal. iii. 3, "Are ye so foolish? having *begun* (*enarchomai*) in the Spirit, are ye now *made perfect* (*epiteleo*) by the flesh?" Can the old sinful nature complete what the Holy Spirit, in the new nature given to the believer, has commenced? To ask the question is to answer it. In Philippians the completion will be realized in "the day of Jesus Christ", or "the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16). In his last letter he just

calls it “that day” (II Tim. i. 18; iv. 8). Previously, to the church at Corinth, he had declared that this future ‘day’ will be the resting time for our service (I Cor. iii. 13), and he placed it over against “man’s day” of the present time (I Cor. iv. 3 margin). This period is one of the great prophetic “days” of Scripture which cannot be limited to twenty-four hours, and it is in harmony with the theme of Philippians, namely the practical working out of the truth (ii. 12), a goal to be reached, and the running of the race for a prize to be awarded at the end by the Lord (iii. 12-16).

In the section now before us (i. 3-26) we have three references to fellowship and furtherance (verses 5, 12, 25) and in between a three-fold confidence (*pepoitha*, verses 6, 14, 25). This can be set out as follows:

- A1 | 3-5. Thanksgiving. Fellowship and defence of the Gospel.
- B1 | 6-8. Confidence.
- A2 | 9-11. Paul’s prayer. Furtherance of the Gospel.
- B2 | 12-18. Confidence.
- A3 | 19-21. The Philippians’ prayer.
- B3 | 22-26. Confidence.

No.36. The Epistle to the Philippians (3). **pp. 236 - 240**

After asserting his confidence in the fullness and completeness of the Lord’s gracious work on behalf of the Philippian believers (and all of the God’s children for that matter), Paul states that it is only “right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart” (i. 7 R.V.). *Phronein*, ‘minded’ is of frequent occurrence in this epistle. It occurs in ii. 2 (twice), 5, iii. 15 (twice), 16 (Received Text), 19, iv. 2, and 10 (twice), “care” and “careful”. It is obviously one of the key-words. In fact the whole of the epistle revolves around the “mind of Christ” and its practical outworking in the believer. The word means much more than mental acknowledgment. Sympathetic concern is nearer the mark, the thought that touches the heart and the action in connection with others. This the Apostle had in abundant measure towards all his converts, making a close bond that distance could not affect or sever. “I have you in my heart”, he says, and this is surely one of the warmest expressions he ever used. This bond also came about because he and the Philippians shared together in the “defence and confirmation of the gospel”, and in the grace of God which imparted the necessary strength for this defence and confirmation (verse 7).

Just what does Paul mean by these latter words? He could mean faithfully proclaiming and defending the gospel in his oral and written ministry. Or he could be referring to his prison experience, for the two terms *apologia* and *bebaisios* are legal terms which could be connected with his trial before the imperial court. Moulton and Milligan, on the evidence of the papyri, state that “*bebaisios* must always be read with

the technical sense in mind". In this case he would mean that whether he is in prison or brought before his judges for the gospel's sake, the Philippians all shared in the grace which was given to both, for they were suffering too (i. 29). Not only this, but he had an intense longing for them, doubtless sharpened by his imprisonment and separation. This was a reflection of the "tender mercies" (bowels, verse 8 A.V.) of Christ; that compassionate regard which the Lord showed to men in His earthly ministry and which He still bears today. If Paul cannot see the saints at Philippi, then he will pray for them, and the prayer that follows is outstanding in that every word should be carefully weighed if the fullness of the prayer is to be appreciated. Paul was concerned that their love should develop into "knowledge" or "acknowledgment" and "judgment", with the result that they might be able to "approve the things that are excellent"; leading on to being 'sincere' and 'void of offence' and 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness'. It will be seen that each stage leads to another and fuller development; "that" in each case being *hina*, "in order that", and the preposition *eis* expressing a goal ("that", "till" and "unto").

Love, to be practical and of any use, must issue in *act* or *performance*. Here its practical outworking leads to a daily *acknowledgment* and this in turn will lead to *discernment*. There can be no spiritual growth without a real response. Mental grasp of truth by itself is barren and lifeless. Eph. i. 17 tells us that by practical acknowledgment we receive illumination. Col. i. 10 instructs us that by such acknowledgment we grow. Phil. i. 9 assures us by the same acknowledgment we have the important ability to discern and weigh over things *so that we can obtain the best*. The word 'judgment' is not to be linked with a law-court or with legal terms. It is *aisthesis*, perception or discrimination, by which one has the ability to weigh things up as regards *quality*, thus separating between good and bad, or the better and the best. A cognate word *aistheterion* is used in Heb. v. 14, "having the *senses* exercised to discern both good and evil", which has the same thought in view. Now this is very necessary in the affairs of everyday life. No one deliberately chooses what is poor in quality. He naturally desires the best that life offers, and this ability comes with mental development and experience. It is no less necessary in the Christian life if one wishes to lay hold of the best that God has to give. The A.V. margin has the alternative reading "that ye may try the things that differ" which, on the surface, does not seem to have much connection with "approving the things that are excellent", till one realizes that the latter phrase can only be true when the previous one has been put into operation. Things usually differ in *quality*, and it is only by perception and careful weighing over that what is better can be appreciated and received. *Diapheronta* (excellent) has this meaning in Matt. vi. 26 and x. 31 ("better than", "of more value than"), and I Cor. xv. 41 ("one star *differeth from* another star in glory").

Now this perception and ability to weigh things over in order to get what is "excellent" or the best, is just what is lacking in so many believers. There is no difference in truth so far as they are concerned. All is one and the same. They are the very opposite of Abraham whose eye of faith embraced the "better country" and heavenly city (Heb. xi. 10, 16). Abraham and his posterity had already been given an earthly country, a good land (Gen. xv. 18) which afterwards was described as "flowing with milk and honey". Yet he looked for something better! God had most evidently given him a

glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem, that, centuries later, the Apostle John was also to see and describe in all its glory and beauty (Rev. xxi.). Abraham was able to “weigh up” and “discriminate” and “to prove the things that are excellent” and, by faith, to embrace God’s best for him. It is this ability and keenness that is so lacking today in Christian circles. Why should we “rightly divide the Word of truth”? they say. Why bother about three spheres of blessing in the Bible? Is it necessary to know this? We are saved and that is all that matters!

The example of Abraham and the worthies of Heb. xi. condemns this attitude. Overcoming faith wants the best that God has revealed. This is not presumption; it is honouring and valuing what God has been pleased to make known for the obedience of faith. The other is just spiritual laziness and unbelief, which can only result in loss for the believer who indulges in it. We are often amazed at how little of the fullness of God’s revealed truth the average believer desires to receive.

Presently Paul is going to introduce the figure of a race, and here, therefore, the mind or thinking is all-important. Those who wish to be victorious in the race, must be “thus minded” with the Apostle (iii. 15). This quality then of spiritual perception is a mark of one who is pressing on in the race for the heavenly prize. All wrong attitudes of mind will only clog and slow up the runner and they must be rigorously discarded. This leads to the next clause in the prayer, “in order that ye might be sincere and without offence with a view to the Day of Christ” (literally, verse 10). The word sincere is *eilikrines*, which also occurs in II Pet. iii. 1. The noun *eilikrineia* occurs three times (I Cor. v. 8; II Cor. i. 12; ii. 17). The derivation of these words is doubtful, and neither of them are common in the papyri. There are two possible sources. (1) A derivation from *eilein*, to shake to and fro in a sieve, till all the foreign matter is extracted and only the pure substance left. This would describe the mind which has been purified and cleansed by the Word of God (John xv. 3; Psa. xix. 9). (2) Or they could be derived from two words, *heile*, sunlight, and *krinein*, to judge, and would describe something that could stand the test of sunlight and show no flaws. Both are searching ideas and would fit into the context. The successful runner in God’s race is one who has been purified, has laid aside every weight and sin that so easily besets us (Heb. xii. 1, 2), and is running this race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the Beginner and the Finisher. Or he can stand the test of God, Who is light, and penetrates the innermost thoughts and motives of the mind and finds nothing there that is out of His will. Such a person is “pure” or “transparent” as Moffatt so aptly renders it.

He is also “without offence”, that is, not causing offence or stumbling in other people; and so would be filled with the *fruit* of righteousness (note the R.V. margin, “fruit” is singular). This is practical righteousness in action, as the figure of fruit always indicates (Gal. v. 22) and this comes only “through Jesus Christ” (i. 11 R.V.). The athlete does not run a race by *theorizing* or merely *thinking*, but by intense action and effort, and the final goal is “unto the glory and praise of God”. This is the acid test, not the glorification of man, or even of the believer, but the ultimate glory of God Himself. Every prize winner in the Day of Christ will contribute to this glory. For it is only by the grace and resurrection power of Christ that any saved sinner can press on to the goal, breast the

tape, and receive the crown and the “well done” of the righteous Umpire (II Tim. iv. 8). Such a prayer was not only necessary for the Philippian saints. As members of the Body of Christ, each one of us needs it experimentally day by day and we need to continually ponder its every statement and its outworking in our lives.

A new section now starts in which Paul informs his Philippian friends that, in spite of his imprisonment and the hostility of enemies inside and outside the church, rather than all this hindering the truth, it was actually helping it! Christ was being proclaimed more and more, and this was producing real response from those who heard.

While therefore, on the human plane, he could have felt depressed, defeated and frustrated, he rather rejoiced, as he saw the wonderful way the Lord was working, “making all things work together for good” and for His glory.

“Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear” (i. 12-14 R.V.).

It may be that the Philippians had sent a message by Epaphroditus expressing their concern about his welfare. If so, then these verses give them up-to-date news of himself and his affairs. How glad he must have been to be able to tell them that the good news was advancing (*prokope* furtherance) in spite of all difficulties! Not only this, but his Christian witness in his imprisonment was having a stimulating effect upon believers in the locality. They were losing their fear, and giving a bolder testimony to God’s Word. If fear is contagious, and it often is, so is its opposite, boldness! Paul’s uncompromising testimony in word and action stirred up others around him and thus the truth was being proclaimed more and more, so much so that all the praetorian guard were getting to hear of it. This was another fact that gave him great joy.

However, some were preaching Christ with a very wrong motive. They seemed to have an animosity towards the Apostle, and even hoped to aggravate the irksomeness of his captivity. Perhaps they thought they could make him jealous by their success in preaching. There was a background of envy and strife, squabbling and rivalry. The meanness of such an attitude of mind seems hardly possible in a Christian, but there is no knowing what can happen when a believer comes under the domination of the old sinful nature, and the enemy working through it. If they hoped to overwhelm the Apostle, they were sadly mistaken. The glorious “What the?” of verse 18 rings out almost in defiance. What of it? he says, or as we might colloquially say, “so what?” Whatever is happening, *Christ is being proclaimed*, he said, *and this is the chief thing*. I therefore am rejoicing and will continue to rejoice in spite of all such opposition.

What can daunt a person who can surmount his adverse circumstances so magnificently? What an example to all of us! It takes so little to get some of us down, that we should feel ashamed as we contemplate the triumphant witness that this great servant of Christ gave in the most difficult of circumstances. Another thing that must have contributed to Paul’s joy was the fact that he could count on two things: (1) The

Philippians' prayers on his behalf. (2) The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (verse 19). While in one sense the Apostle was independent, yet he valued so much the prayer support of his fellow-believers (Rom. xv. 30; II Cor. i. 11; Eph. vi. 18, 19; Col. iv. 3). He knew only too well what his continual prayers had accomplished for them, and he realized that he could be upheld in the same way. Let us never forget this all-important ministry of intercession. On the surface it may not appear to be doing much. There is no outward bustle or activity to impress, but it can "move the Hand that moves the world"!

Purpose, Promise and Performance.

No.1. pp. 221 - 225

The present Study arose out of an attempt to help a Bible Class leader to show how rational was the principle of "Right Division", by asking at the outset of any Bible study the questions Which? Who? When? and Where? but found that when the question "Why?" was put, a different category involving the question of Purpose was introduced. This is a matter for the most careful research, much exploration and illumination, and it is not at all unlikely that when we reach that last page we shall not have arrived at a complete answer. However, the Scriptures have been written as a revelation of all that may be known or should be known of the Divine Purpose. Providing we realize our limitations and avoid the attitude against which the Apostle warned the Colossians of "intruding into those things which he hath not seen", we cannot but be pleasing to our gracious God if we manifest a desire to understand something of His wonderful purposes, even though we limit our investigations to that phase which belongs to the dispensation of the Mystery.

Let us open our study with a salutary reminder or two. Zophar, one of Job's three friends, said:

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job xi. 7).

We quote next the A.V. and Moffatt's translation of Eccles. iii. 11, because of its ambiguity in most English versions:

"He hath made everything beautiful in His time: also He hath set the world (Heb. *olam* 'age') in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Eccles. iii. 11).

"He assigned each to its proper time, but for the mind of man He has appointed mystery (*olam* Heb. a period of undefined limits, an age), that man may never fathom God's own purpose from beginning to the end" (Eccles. iii. 11 Moffatt).

The Scriptures themselves lead us to expect to be baffled, especially regarding the beginning and the end of God's purpose, but we remind ourselves with much comfort and assurance that Christ Himself is "the Beginning and the Ending", and to know Him will provide keys to unlock the hidden purpose of God. The Apostle also warned the Corinthian saying:

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. ii. 11).

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

Or as Moffatt renders the passage:

"At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror, but then it will be face to face" (I Cor. iii. 9-12).

The writer of this article has no fuller revelation given to him than to others, of the purpose of God which is being wrought out through the ages; he stands exactly where the reader himself stands. He has opened the Bible, and the opportunity to “search the Scriptures” must ever remind us of the limitation which those self-same Scriptures set upon our search.

Purpose in Old Testament.

The A.V. uses the English word “purpose” to translate eight Hebrew words, and two Greek words. The verb “to purpose” is translated by seven Hebrew and six Greek words. These original words mean a word, device, delight, thought, work, counsel, desire, foundation and *intention*. Whether we can hope to solve the problems that are associated with the outworking of this purpose or not, it is a comfort to realize that the Scriptures give us every assurance that, however inexplicable certain happenings and developments may appear to us, all are known, all are under control, and when the time is ripe we “shall know, even as we are known”. With this limiting proviso in mind, we can now freely meditate on all that is written, and refrain from intruding where no explanation has been given.

First let Ecclesiastes speak:

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”
(Eccles. iii. 1).

This is salutary. To know or to reveal any part of God’s purpose before the appointed time could be disastrous and play into the hands of the great Enemy. This explains the evasive answer to the Apostle’s question, recorded in Acts i. 6. It may be well to remind ourselves that the Serpent did not tempt Adam and Eve to commit some brutal or degrading sin, but to “be as God, knowing good and evil”, which though forbidden while man was in his infancy, is the very mark of those who are “perfect” or “full grown” (Heb. v. 14). Moses desired to see the glory of God, but was told that he could only look upon His “back parts”; the time had not then come for the fuller revelations of God’s purpose that are found in the N.T. Even there we are not given a complete revelation “from the beginning to the end”, but are pointed on to a future day of complete revelation.

The word translated “season” in Ecclesiastes means an appointed and appropriate time, and is expanded in the words of Habakkuk, and although it is not the same Hebrew word that is there translated, it is an inspired commentary and a word to guide and assure when we feel baffled. We subdivide the passage so that each portion may speak clearly.

- (1) The vision is yet for an appointed time,
- (2) but at the end it shall speak, and not lie:
- (3) though it tarry, wait for it:
- (4) because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. ii. 3).

There can be no altering or hurrying the fulfillment of God's purposes; our attitude is to rest assured that any appearance of delay is only because of our own ignorance and limitation. The attitude of heart that God looks for in the perplexed believer is that:

“(5) The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. ii. 4),

which is an exceedingly practical as well as a basic truth. Ecclesiastes speaks twice more about the purpose of God and its relation to time:

“I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work” (Eccles. iii. 17).

“Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him” (Eccles. viii. 6).

The context of these passages needs examining, but for the moment we are listing the different references to the Purpose of God in order that all that is said may be before us as we go into details. Another thing to remember is that the purposes of God are the results of “counsel”. They are not the arbitrary dictates of a despot.

“Without counsel purposes are disappointed” (Prov. xv. 22).

“Every purpose is established by counsel” (Prov. xx. 18).

Here the essential feature is “counsel”.

A specific purpose occupies Jeremiah's prophecy, that which deals with the overthrow of Babylon.

“Therefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord, that He hath taken against Babylon, and his purposes, that He hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved” (Jer. l. 45, 46).

“Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon” (Jer. li. 29).

Here judgment of evil and the certainty of its performance are stressed. This is true also of the Assyrian oppressor:

“The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed so shall it stand.”

“This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back” (Isa. xiv. 24-27).

Quite apart from what is purposed, we see from these verses that there can be no disannulling of the purposes of God, whether for judgment or for blessing, as Jeremiah and Isaiah declare.

“Every purpose shall be performed” (Jer. li. 29).

“Declaring the end from the beginning saying My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isa. xlvi. 10).

Purpose of the New Testament.

- (1) *Prothesis*, something “set before” the mind, a resolution.
- (2) *Tithemi*, the verb to purpose, to set or to place.
- (3) *Bouleuomai*, to wish, to take counsel.
- (4) *Poieo*. To make or to do.
- (5) *Proaireomai*. To choose, to take one before another.

Let us acquaint ourselves with the context and usage of these words in the N.T., and become more acquainted with their inner meaning.

Prothesis. Four times it is used in connection with *shewbread* (Matt. xii. 41; Mark ii. 26; Luke vi. 4 and Heb. ix. 2) literally “The bread of setting before”. It is used of Paul’s own purpose and of others, but we are concerned with the purpose of God, so we read “the called according to His purpose” (Rom. viii. 28), which is followed by such terms as predestination. There is the danger of missing the sovereign will of God that lies behind His purpose, for we read in Rom. ix. 11, 12:

“For the children, being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.”

The Prison Epistles use this term three times, and their meaning and place in the overall scheme is too implicit to deal with at this stage. We will give these references, but wait for a fuller exposition, after we have considered the remaining terms that are set out before us:

“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His Own will” (Eph. i. 11).

“According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. iii. 11).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. i. 9).

We leave the correction of one or two of these words in the A.V. until later.

Tithemi, which gives us the word Thesis in *prothesis* just examined, is variously translated appoint, set forth, lay down, ordain, to lay as a foundation, to put, as all enemies under His feet, all of which have a bearing on the question of purpose, to be considered presently.

Poieo. In one passage, namely in Eph. iii. 11, the clause “which He purposed” employs the word usually translated “to make or to do”, which at first reads somewhat strangely when we read of the “eternal purpose which He MADE in Christ Jesus”, but the word has wide significance. Dr. Bullinger’s comment in his Lexicon is:

“To make, i.e. to form, produce, to bring about, cause, spoken of any external act as manifested in the production of something tangible and obvious to the senses, and referring to completed action.”

If *that* is what is purposed in Christ Jesus, how great is our joy and confidence.

It is not our intention to attempt to examine the whole purpose of God as it is unfolded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, but we do feel some attempt is justified in considering under the three heads the references to Purpose, Promise and Performance that run through the Prison Epistles, and belong so intimately with our high calling and hope. Purpose is written large across Eph. i. 3-14, and is implied in such words as “chosen”, “predestinate”, “good pleasure of His will”, “His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself”, “Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will”. Arising out of this tremendous emphasis on “purpose” in these opening verses of Ephesians, comes the ‘seal’, ‘promise’, ‘earnest’, ‘hope’ and ‘inheritance’ (Eph. i. 13-18) concluding with that most wonderful characteristic and title of the Church which is His Body, namely:

“The fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 22, 23).

Will there be recognition in heaven?

pp. 34 - 37

When one has received a fair number of problems and questions, it becomes possible to sort them out into groups, and while such grouping may be far from scientific in its accuracy, it gives a rough and ready gauge whereby to work. Some problems will be purely dispensational, and the most vital help will be to lead the troubled believer to face the application of "right division". Other problems will arise out of unscriptural or inadequate conceptions of the finished work of Christ. Yet others will result from confusing things that differ, like the dangerous misconception that uses the running for the prize of Phil. iii. to urge believers to run and to win a place in the church of the One Body. Many problems arise from ambiguous or inaccurate translation; some can be solved by exhibiting the structure of the passage which contains the problem. None of these categories however seem to cover the question at present before us. This one seems to be the problem of certain temperaments, associated generally with a loose idea as to what actually is involved in recognition. Let us try to help any who are perplexed over this matter.

First let us face that matter squarely in the light we have of the character of God. It would be conceivable if our God were the cold, abstract, remote God of the philosopher, that He would arrange a heaven made up of perfect strangers, but our God is "Love", and not only so, His love has been manifested both in the gift of His Son to be the Redeemer, and by the revelation of Himself as Father. Now the redeemed are called by very homely titles; they are called "the Family" (Eph. iii. 15); they constitute a "Household" (Eph. ii. 19); the anticipation of glory is expressed by the prayer, that Christ may "dwell" (or "be at home") in our hearts by faith (Eph. iii. 17). Resurrection glory is expressed by the word "*endemeo*", translated in II Cor. v. 6, 8 "at home" and "to be present", a word that means literally "among one's people". Here in this most blessed cluster of homely terms, we may surely discover an answer to our question. A family that did not recognize one another, would cease to be a family. A Father whose family were utter strangers to one another would cease to be a father except in name. Further, it was the office of the Son to make the Father known, and He has assured us that He did nothing but what He saw the Father do. He is therefore in Himself and in His teaching a faithful Representative of the Father. The parable of the Prodigal Son was not given with the object of answering the question "Will there be recognition in heaven?", but if the Lord knew that there would be no recognitions in heaven, has He not given us too happy a picture of the prodigal's reception? The elder brother evidently "recognized" the prodigal, even if it were only to complain about him.

It is very probable that those who are troubled about this question of 'recognition' do not really understand all that 'recognition' involves. Shall we put the matter this way: Can I "recognize" others without "recognizing" myself? The answer obviously is "No". Now put it the other way round. Will anyone "recognize" themselves in resurrection glory? Lazarus died, Lazarus was buried, Lazarus was raised again, and there is not the slightest hint that Lazarus did not recognize Mary and Martha and the rest of his friends.

Many of the saints who were dead, arose at the time of the crucifixion, and these risen saints “went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Matt. xxvii. 53). Are we to believe that these risen ones had not the slightest recollection of the holy city, that they just wandered about like lost souls, and that they were utter strangers both to themselves, to one another and to the living at Jerusalem? Is not Christ Himself “the firstfruits” of them that have fallen asleep? We read that if the firstfruits be holy, the lump is also holy (Rom. xi. 16) and by analogy we can say that if Christ recognized His Own followers after He was raised from the dead, so also will they recognize one another when they too are risen from the dead. The Lord knew and spoke to Mary, Thomas and Peter by name, and they knew and recognized Him.

We may go back to the earliest statement in the Scriptures concerning resurrection, and find that recognition is most surely implied:

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job xix. 25-27).

Could Job have uttered such confident words, if recognition in glory were impossible? We find too that the redeemed sing praises to the Lord, giving thanks for the deliverance and the grace that brings them safely home. If they *know* that they were redeemed while in this life, then they must *remember*, and it is impossible for any one of us to remember the affairs of our own lives without remembering all those other fellow sinners and fellow saints whose paths crossed and recrossed our own. If I do not remember the past, I shall not feel grateful for redemption. The redeemed child of God, is to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and there “every one shall give an account of himself to God” (Rom. xiv. 12). Not only shall the believer give an account, but:

“Every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. v. 10).

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. iii. 24, 25).

It is impossible to judge or award either reward or punishment to any one who is suffering from a total lapse of memory. With some, the problem of recognition in glory is an offshoot of another problem. They feel that it is simply to recognize loved ones while still here in flesh and blood, but a spiritual body, seems to them so intangible, so unreal, so much like a passing vapour, that their heaven is but cobweb and mist. We must attempt to deal with that problem in another article in this series.

Let us, for the moment, sum up our argument in favour of recognition in glory. The redeemed are and will be a “family”, with God Himself as their Father. God is love, and it is the love that exists, however slightly in the heart of the child of God, that yearns to be assured of this recognition. If therefore our puny love cannot feel satisfied with heaven where there will be no recognition, how much more would the God of love be unsatisfied? The Lord Jesus Christ, in resurrection, recognized His Own and was recognized in turn by them. Further He called a number of them by their private names.

We shall, therefore, all be recognized by Him in glory, and should there be any lack of recognition on our part, will that not instantly be rectified in His presence? Recognition of others, is vitally connected with our own personal identity. If I shall be the same person in glory, that sinned and believed on earth, then I shall remember it and know it, otherwise my identity will be a myth. Without memory, identity is impossible. But I cannot remember my past life without remembering others, and if this be so, my own identity being preserved in glory, guarantees the recognition of other identities too. So, we say to all to whom this matter has been a problem:

“Let not your heart be troubled in My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you” (John xiv. 1, 2).

We can surely expand this comforting note to cover other things “If it were not so”, if there be no recognition in heaven, He Who knows our hearts and our legitimate longings, He “would have told” us.

The Resurrection of Christ and of the dead

No.1. The Witness of the Old Testament.

pp. 21 - 25

The Book of Job.

What has been called “the oldest question in the world” is found in the book of Job:

“If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job xiv. 14).

This “consummation devoutly to be wished”, is denied or explained in all the philosophies of the Ancient, and in the religious beliefs of those outside the pale of Christianity. Only within the pages of Scripture has it been found possible to include in the list of Divine titles, that which is ascribed to Abraham’s faith:

“Even God, Who quickeneth the dead” (Rom. iv. 17).

In Athens, the home of philosophy (Acts xvii. 18), the attitude of many of the Apostles’ testimony to the resurrection was that they “mocked”:

“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked” (Acts xvii. 32).

To Agrippa Paul said:

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts xxvi. 8).

And when the Apostle reached the words:

“He should be the first that should rise from the dead.”

Festus, the Roman Governor cried:

“Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad” (Acts xxvi. 23, 24).

Neither Greek ‘wisdom’ nor Roman ‘power’ can contemplate the possibility of resurrection. Nevertheless, the mind of man was still haunted with the age-old question “If a man die, shall he live again?” and entertained ideas that involved the immortality of the soul, reincarnation, the denial of the fact of death, saying with the poet “There is no death, what seems so is transition”. To all such fancies begotten of fear and ignorance, the Scripture replies with certainty and finality, “Death is an enemy” that cannot be circumvented.

We return therefore to Job xiv. and consider his search and his findings. First let us remember Job had no Bible. His three friends manifest a wisdom and knowledge that still holds the best of us in thrall, yet not one made the remotest approach to the answer of Job’s question “If a man die shall he live again?” Although Job had no written revelation

from God, this book abounds with references to the phenomena of nature, sun, moon, stars, animal and vegetable life, storm, snow, wind, rain, are all explored and employed. So we find Job in chapter xiv. turning to his "Bible". "There is hope of a tree" (xiv. 7). Job uses the word "hope" of a tree once again in Job xix. 10 "Mine hope hath he removed like a tree", but, as in Job xiv., so here Job moves on to the great confession of verses 25, 26 where personal, literal resurrection is again acknowledged and believed:

"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again" (Job xiv. 7).

This figure "to be cut down" is used of a flower also:

"He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job xiv. 2).

The two words are not the same in the original. Moffatt preserves the distinction, saying of the flower "it fades", and of the tree "it is felled", but the end is the same. Job apparently pondered the fact that a tree though thus cut down and its root should wax old, and the stock thereof die in the ground, will live again, but from the story of the tree, he turns to the tragedy of man and asks:

"But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job xiv. 10).

The complete process of thought that passed through the mind of Job is not recorded, but he seems to have suddenly changed his attitude, as though he said "If there is hope for a tree, will not God also think of His greater creature, man?"

"So man lieth down, and riseth not." That at first seems final. But Job continues:

"Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep" (Job xiv. 12).

Here, however, we pause. "Awake", "sleep" are words to call a halt.

Let us go back to chapter iii., where Job cursed the day in which he had been born. Had he but died at birth, Job says:

"I should have slept" (Job iii. 13).

Later, when thinking of his terrible sufferings, and imagining that he was being punished for his sins, he said:

"I have sinned Why dost Thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust: and Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be" (Job vii. 20, 21).

This is as far as Job got in the extremity of his misery. He would "sleep in the dust" and even God, though he sought him in the morning, would not find him, for said Job, "I shall not be". Annihilation however is the philosophy of despair. The same man, Job is now moving on, his own words have struck a spark:

“Till the heavens be no more.” “Thou shalt seek me in the morning.”

Is it possible that He, God, “will seek”? If so, surely that means a deeper interest in the fate of man than Job had hitherto entertained. “Till”—while it visualizes a great stretch of time, does have a limit. What will take place when the “heavens are no more”? Job turns his cogitations into prayer:

“Oh that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me” (xiv. 13).

The operative words here are not “the grave” or “wrath” but “hide me”, “keep me secret”, “appoint me”, “remember me”. Job got no farther than “the grave”—it took the coming of Christ and the revelation of the mystery through the apostle Paul to speak of one’s “life” being “hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3); but Job could ask the Lord “to hide” him. Job uses the word ‘hide’ which is used later of the preserving, sheltering care of the mother of Moses (Exod. ii. 2, 3), and of the shelter given by Rahab to the spies (Josh. ii. 4), and the language of Job here, is given fuller meaning in Psa. xxvii. 5:

“For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me”;

and in Psa. xxxi. 20:

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”

“The set time” which Job envisaged is the same word in the original as “the decree” of Psa. ii., the Psalm of Resurrection:

“I will declare the decree this day have I begotten Thee” (Psa. ii. 7).

It seems to have slipped the notice of many scholars, that in all this Job has still in memory “The hope of tree, if it be cut down”, for the word “sprout again” (Job xiv. 7) and “change” (Job xiv. 14) are the same in the original! If God will cause the dead stock of a tree to “sprout again”, then He may cause Job to “change”, that is to live again too. This reasoning is intensified by the following verse, namely:

“Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands” (Job xiv. 15).

The word “desire” is rich in its implications. In its noun form it is the word translated “silver” in Job iii. 15. The Hebrew translation ‘silver’ is derived from a word meaning to become “pale”, even as the Greek word for silver, namely *argurion* is derived from the word *argos* meaning ‘white’. The word is then used to speak of the emotions, in which one “turns pale” with the intensity of feeling:

“My soul *longeth*, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord” (Psa. lxxxiv. 2).

We may make as great a discount as we please, and remind ourselves that these figures of speech which ascribe human emotions to God are to be used with great discretion. We are sure, that Job, in his perplexity and fear that God had forsaken him or was antagonistic to him, would heave a sigh of relief if God's "desire" unto the work of His hands was so intense, that it could justly figure that He "turned pale" with its intensity; for then the whole aspect would be changed. He could wait, and wait with joy until his change comes.

We move now with Job to chapter xix., a chapter that contains those well known and wondrous words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth".

We say "well known", but we have been surprised to find how few, comparatively, are aware of the wealth of teaching that this word "Redeemer" contains, for it is really "A Kinsman-Redeemer", an office with several features of vast import. To appreciate the wealth of Job's acknowledgment here, in chapter xix., we must turn back to his earlier sense of need. One of the complaints of Job in his deep distress, was the infinite distance that must necessarily intervene between a man of flesh and blood, and the Almighty:

"If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand" (Job ix. 3).

He moves mountains; He shakes the earth; He commands the sun; He doeth great things past finding out (Job ix. 4-10);

"How much less shall I answer Him, and choose out my words to reason with Him?
If I had called, and He had answered me; yet would I not believe that He had
hearkened unto my voice" (Job ix. 14, 16),

and so Job goes on bemoaning the distance that was necessarily between the finite creature and the Almighty Creator. He brings his complaint to a conclusion, which contain in its questioning, the answer of the ages—The Kinsman-Redeemer.

"For HE IS NOT A MAN, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should COME
TOGETHER in judgment" (Job ix. 32).

One of the translations of the Hebrew word for 'together' is "alike"; it is also translated "be joined" and "unite" as in the well known passage:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"
(Psa. cxxxiii. 1).

Job would have no problem about brethren dwelling together in unity, his problem was how can MAN and GOD come together? The coming of Christ and His glorious Gospel has answered this once for all for the believer, and modern teaching has taken from "the man in the street" the wholesome fear of the Almighty that is expressed in Job. Job continued:

"Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both"
(Job ix. 33).

Moffatt renders this verse:

“Oh for some umpire over both of us, who might decide our case.”

The ‘Daysman’ would have been understood at the time the A.V. was being translated. He was a lawyer who attended court, and was at the disposal of any litigant who needed advice or arbitration. The Hebrew word *yakach* translated “Daysman” is found in Job 17 times. It is used in Isa. i. 18 “Come now, and let us reason together”. Later in Job, after he had realized that he had a Kinsman-Redeemer, he said, using this same word:

“Will He plead against me with His great power? No: but He would put strength in me (there is no word for ‘strength’ in the original, Moffatt renders it, ‘No, He would listen to me’). There the righteous might *dispute* with Him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge” (Job xxiii. 6, 7).

No.2. The Witness of the Old Testament. **pp. 41 - 47**

We have gone to some length in the endeavour to impress upon the reader the extreme need felt by Job for a Mediator Who could represent both God and man. Later in the book Elihu steps forward and says to Job:

“If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish IN GOD’S STEAD: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid” (Job xxxiii. 5-7).

While Elihu was only a type or foreshadowing of the one Mediator between God and man, *the Man* Christ Jesus, he does lead Job on into fuller light, as we shall see when examining Job xxxiii. 23-25, but we must return to the nineteenth chapter, and see how what we have learned bears upon the title ‘Redeemer’ there introduced. In a simpler society than our own, where the police were unknown and tribal law was ascendant; a man in trouble could call upon his next of kin for succour, and that is what Job had in mind when he said “I know that my Redeemer liveth”.

First let me tabulate the principle duties of the Kinsman-Redeemer.

- (1) To recover property alienated or forfeited, by sale or mortgage (Lev. xxv. 25).
- (2) To deliver a kinsman taken into captivity, or sold into bondage (Gen. xiv. 4-16).
- (3) To avenge the death of a murdered kinsman (Numb. xxxv. 12).
- (4) To marry the widow of a deceased brother who was childless (Deut. xxv. 5-10 and Ruth).

In Job xix. 7 Job says “I cry out of wrong” but the margin says “violence”. Indeed, Job was calling out for his kinsman in view of possible murder, and Moffatt has seen this, rendering the verse:

“I cry out ‘murder’!—there is no reply;
I call for help, and get no justice
My clansmen have abandoned me,
My friends are all estranged,
My kinsmen will not own me, and my guests ignore me
Still, I know One to champion me at last
My heart is pining as I yearn to see him on my side,
see Him ESTRANGED no longer” (Job xix. 7, 13, 14, 25, 27).

Job warns his failing friends, “Be ye afraid of the sword” (Job xix. 29), for the Kinsman-Redeemer was also The Avenger of blood.

In chapter xiv. we traveled with Job on his quest, and read:

“If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands” (Job xiv. 14, 15).

The need for the Kinsman-Redeemer Who should act as the Mediator is hinted at in the four occurrences of the word that means “to estrange”.

“Mine acquaintances are verily *estranged* from me
They that dwell in my house count me for a *stranger*
My breath is *strange* to my wife
Mine eyes shall behold and NOT A STRANGER’ (Job xix. 13, 15, 17, 27).

The words “and not another”, margin Heb. “a stranger”, carry the thought on from the failing kinsman to the Lord Himself.

We have made a big detour from our theme, Resurrection. The reader may wonder how the text should be read in verse 26 “and though after my skin”, and in the margin, “After I shall awake”. The R.V. ignores this alternative, and so do nearly all commentators.

We believe nevertheless that the margin in the A.V. contains the true record of the words of Job, and although it may seem a little like presumption on our part to express a very definite opinion, in view of the silence of so many scholars since the A.V. was first presented, we believe we have discovered a way of demonstrating its truth that will appeal to all readers. The words “my skin” are treated in the A.V. margin as though they were a part of the verb “to awake” and both of these words are expressed by the same letters in the Hebrew, *ayin*, *vav* and *resh*, written in English *ur*. Unaided reason fails to provide a solution, but a conviction that all Scripture is inspired, led us to collect every occurrence of the verb “to awake” in Job. The first occurrence of this verb is Job iii. 8, where we read:

“Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.”

The margin of the A.V. and the text of the R.V. read instead of “their mourning” the word “leviathan”. Barnes believes that here is a reference to necromancy and the calling up for fierce monsters “from the vast deep”. It is not our present concern to explore this

problem, but only to register the joy of having made a definite start for the *last* reference to “awake” competes the correspondence, where again “leviathan” appears:

“None dare stir him (leviathan) up” (xli. 10).

The complete arrangement of the occurrences in Job of *ur* “to awake” or “to raise” are here presented. It will be seen that the passage in xiv. 12-14 *demand*s its corresponding member, which is none other than the disputed passage in Job xix.:

The Hebrew *ur*, to raise, in Job.

A | iii. 8. Raise up leviathan.

B | viii. 6. Bildad’s challenge.

C | xiv. 12-14.

“So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.”

D | xvii. 8. The innocent raised up against the hypocrite.

C | xix. 26, 27.

“After I shall AWAKE, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God.”

B | xxxi. 29. Job’s answer.

A | xli. 10. None dare raise him (*leviathan*) up.

Job’s question “If a man die shall he live again?” is now vitally linked with the fact that he, the great Kinsman-Redeemer liveth, and will stand upon the earth at the latter day. Job advances no theories as to identity or persistence of being; he simply affirms his belief in this Redeemer to be such, that he can say “Whom I shall see for myself”. And further, just as Job rejoiced to believe that God had a yearning desire toward the work of His hands, so he links his own desire:

“Though my reins be consumed within me”,

or as Moffatt renders these words:

“My heart is pining as I yearn to see Him on my side”,

or as Dr. Bullinger puts it in his metrical version:

“Mine eyes shall see Him—Stranger, now, no more: (For this) my inmost soul with longing waits.”

We move on from this most blessed testimony to examine the message given to Job by Elihu, which it may be remembered we before introduced, but now, in the light of chapter xix. we approach with anticipation.

In chapter xxxiii., Elihu speaks to Job of one whose soul draweth near unto the grave, and gives this heartening testimony:

“If there be a messenger with Him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job xxxiii. 23, 24).

The Messenger (Heb. *malak*). This word is translated “ambassador”, “angel” and “messenger” in the A.V. In the book of Job itself *malak* occurs three times. Once it is translated “angel” (iv. 18) and twice “messenger” (i. 14; xxxiii. 23). There seems no reason to think that Elihu is speaking particularly of angelic ministry, but rather of the ministry of a “messenger” like Elihu himself, “made of the same clay”. God uses means, and has actually raised the question “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. x. 14), which indicates the usual method of dealing with men by the Most High. This messenger is further called “an interpreter” (Heb. *luts*). The word *luts*, in the Arabic, means “to turn, twist; also to speak in obscure sentences”. In the Hebrew it means “to scorn, to mock, to hold in derision”, as an exclusive Hebrew would hold all “foreign speech”. Accordingly it meant an ambassador from a foreign country (II Chron. xxxii. 31); and hence a “teacher” (Isa. xliii. 27), as well as an “interpreter”. “They knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter” (Gen. xlii. 23).

Luts becomes in the Hebrew *melitsah* where it can mean “a mocking song” or a “taunting proverb”, retaining its original meaning of treating a foreigner as a barbarian (Hab. ii. 6), or it can mean “interpretation” in the second sense, as in Prov. i. 6. Such a messenger, such an interpreter, mediator or daysman, Elihu describes as “one among a thousand”. Job was acquainted with this figure, having used it himself, for he had complained:

“If He will contend with him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand” (ix. 3).

Dr. Samuel Lee cites an Arabic proverb which reads:

“But as for me, a thousand of them are as one, and one as a thousand, if matter distresses.”

Such a faithful messenger and mediator is looked upon as rare and all the more to be prized and heeded. Now what will be the “message” of this messenger?

“To show unto man his uprightness” (xxxiii. 23).

How are we to understand this passage? Shall we say “His” uprightness, meaning God’s, or “his” meaning man’s? When first we considered this phrase in the light of the epistle to the Romans we wrote “The pronoun ‘his’ refers not to Job, but to ‘Him’ of Whom the message speaks”. Ultimately this is true, but there is something more to be learned, which will be profitable to include. Supposing we leave the passage to teach that the Gospel preacher shows unto man “his own uprightness”, surely, if this is seen in the searchlight of the throne of God, all self boasting must vanish.

Now this is exactly what happens, as recorded in this book of Job. The book opens with the description of Job “perfect and upright”, and one would at first think that such

a character was indeed righteous. Throughout the book Job maintained his integrity. Job ii. 3 was attested by God Himself, and Job himself said:

“Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go” (Job xxvii. 5, 6).

Reviewing his life, Job said “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” (Job xxix. 14), and in chapter xxxi. he gives such a record of integrity that few since his day could hope to equal, and calls down judgment upon his own head if he had transgressed in his walk in life saying:

“Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended” (Job xxxi. 40).

Upon this, his three friends ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes (Job xxxii. 1), and if one analyses the argument put forward by these three, we can understand Job’s vehement repudiation of underhanded licentiousness or dishonesty. He repudiated the suggestion of hypocrisy (Job xiii. 16), and said “I know that I shall be justified” (Job xiii. 18). There is one man who could have stood with Job in this claim of righteousness, and that is Paul, who wrote of himself:

“Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. iii. 6).

Yet when Paul was ‘shown’ what his ‘righteousness’ looked like in the presence of the living God, he gladly discarded all such claim, and stood in the righteousness provided by grace, through faith in Christ, and Job eventually comes to the same place:

“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job xlii. 5, 6).

Returning for a moment to Job xxxiii. 23, 24, we now see the consequence of the message which revealed a Ransom, and consisted of the need of a righteousness greater than any obedience of fallen man could ever achieve. Here is the consequence:

“Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. *His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s; he shall return to the days of his youth*” (Job. xxxiii. 24, 25).

Where we inserted the “H” in verse 23, reading “His uprightness” we can blessedly do so in verse 26:

“And he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man His righteousness.”

We have spent some time on these passages in Job, and have seen that Resurrection is the answer that covers all man’s need and all God’s requirements, for it assumes the provision of a Ransom, and the acceptance of the believer, and focuses attention on the Kinsman-Redeemer, Who, said Job, “After I shall awake, though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”.

The Psalms.

We pass from the testimony of Job to the Psalms, for although no explicit statement concerning Resurrection may be discovered by a superficial reading, there is evidence awaiting us that the Psalms like Job, ask and answer this basic question:

“If a man die, shall he live again?”

Psa. i. compares and contrasts two kinds of men “the righteous” and “the ungodly”, and concludes saying:

“For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psa. i. 6).

The expression “The Lord knoweth” means something more than mere knowledge of an event, for surely “the Lord knoweth” the way of the ungodly also. To know here, means to know with approval:

“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and He knoweth them that trust in Him” (Nah. i. 7).

When the foolish virgins were told “I know you not” (Matt. xxv. 12), or as in Matt. vii. 23, “Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you”, disapproval, not lack of information, is implied.

We can often interpret a word, by observing its opposite. The two words ‘knoweth’ and ‘perish’ compel us to see in the Divine approval a hope of resurrection, even though it be but implied and not stated.

Turning to Psa. ii., we find that the words “This day have I begotten Thee” (verse 7) are referred to resurrection by the N.T. Thus the Apostle Paul testified:

“But God raised Him from the dead:
He was seen
We declare
God hath fulfilled
In that He hath raised up Jesus again,
As it is also written in the second Psalm,
Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee” (Acts xiii. 30-33).

This reference to Psa. ii. is followed, in Acts xiii. 34-37, by quoting from Isa. lv. 3, “The sure mercies of David”, which the Apostle couples with Psa. xvi. 10:

“I have set the Lord always before me:
Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall rest in hope.
For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell;
Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.
Thou wilt show Me the path of life:
In Thy presence is fullness of joy;
At Thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more” (Psa. xvi. 8-11).

The Companion Bible gives a structure of this passage which is useful:

- A | Jehovah at My right hand (Life).
- B | Rest in hope. Positive (Death).
- B | Not left in Sheol. Negative (Resurrection).
- A | I at His right hand (Ascension).

In the Psalm that follows, namely the seventeenth, there is a vivid contrast between the men of this world, and the believer, in relation to this question of the hope of resurrection. David speaks of:

“. . . . men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure. They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes” (Psa. xvii. 14),

in contrast with those whose hope goes beyond to the day of resurrection. The word “world” here is the Hebrew word *heled* which speaks of transitoriness, as in Ps. xxxix. 5 and lxxxix. 47:

“Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine *age* is as nothing before Thee.”
“Remember how *short* my *time* is.”

This second reference is followed by the question:

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?
Shall He deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”

showing that resurrection is in view once more.

The argument of David may be exhibited somewhat as follows:

- A | Portion in this life. Transitory.
- B | Belly filled. Their treasure.
- B | With children. Satisfied.
- A | Portion in this life. Left to babes.

The reader will doubtless acknowledge that the meaning of this section of the Psalm is not too obvious, but light comes when we discover that the word “full” is the Hebrew *saba* and the word “satisfied” in verse 15 is the Hebrew *sabea* which is but another form of the same word. Thus we can now take our exhibition of the argument a stage further:

- (1) Men of the world—*Satisfied* with position, *here*.
- (2) As for me—*Satisfied* with Thy likeness, *there*.

From earliest times, and among pagan, philosopher and believer, the desire for immortality is embedded in the nature of man. If he is an unbeliever, he will be attracted by the specious doctrines that are propounded as substitutes for the gift of immortality at

Resurrection. One pathetic attempt to attain some form of immortality is here before us, an immortality by proxy, a frantic desire to have an heir “to perpetuate the name”.

No.3. The Witness of the Old Testament. **pp. 64 - 67**

What is the answer of God to this cold and impersonal conception of immortality?

“This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.”
(Psalm xlix. 13).

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psa. xvii. 15).

The word translated “behold” is the Hebrew *chazah* and is used by Job when he says:

“Yet in my flesh shall I *see* God
Whom I shall *see* for myself” (Job xix. 26, 27),

in connection with the Lord as the Kinsman-Redeemer. To awake in the likeness of the Saviour, sums up the hope of all callings. Those thus raised may find their inheritance in the earth, the New Jerusalem, or “far above all”, but He will be “The Firstborn among many brethren”, and they are predestinated to be conformed to His image (Rom. viii. 29). The great resurrection chapter, I Cor. xv. says:

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

This will take place when this mortal shall put on immortality and death will be swallowed up of life.

The Prophets.

We have entered, by faith, into the joy of the Psalmist, who said “I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness”. Let us now turn to Isa. liii. 10, 11, and by the self same faith, enter the joy of our Lord.

“When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed,
He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be SATISFIED” (Isa. liii. 10, 11).

Isa. liii. leaves us in no doubt but that the wounds, the bruises and the stripes whereby we are healed, were sufferings that ended in death.

“He was cut off of the land of the living.
He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death” (verses 8, 9).

His soul, which was made an offering for sin, was “poured out unto death”. Yet the same passage says:

“He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days”,

which can only be possible in resurrection. In the Psalm of the King (Psa. xxi.) we read:

“He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever” (Psa. xxi. 4),

which can only be realized in resurrection.

“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.”

Though we assemble all the words used in Holy Writ to describe the sufferings and the death of the Son of God we can never, at least in this life, apprehend their depth. Yet He Who bore our sins and suffered the just for the unjust, will actually “see of the travail of His soul and be SATISFIED”! Let it be observed, that He is not said to see the travail of His soul, but to see “of” the travail, to see the fruits of His sufferings, in other words “To see His seed and be satisfied”.

At the close of Daniel’s prophecy, we learn of a resurrection in which Daniel himself is assured that he will “stand at the end of the days”:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end” (Dan. xii. 1-4).

Here is confessedly a passage of extreme difficulty, and the only way to feel assured of our interpretation is to see it squarely in its setting. These words quoted from Dan. xii., are the closing words of the heavenly visitor who appears in chapter x., before whose presence, Daniel fell on his face toward the ground. Let us see whether we can find some outstanding words or term that will link this great passage, including Dan. xii., together as a whole. As one reads through the insistent repetition of the word “stand” variously translated “stood”, “stand up”, “remained”, “confirm”, “continue”, “establish”, “set forth” and “withstand” which translate the Hebrew word *amad*, and which occurs 28 times in these chapters, one realizes that, as Daniel is told in the last verse of the book:

“But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and *stand* in thy lot at the end of the days” (Dan. xii. 13).

This word obviously cannot be ignored.

Michael, and conflicting kings, a raiser of taxes and a vile person “stand up”, and the conflict ends with a time of trouble such as never has been known nor ever shall be again. Four separate attempts are revealed in which the evil One attempts to seize the opportunity to put his own man in office:

“But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate.” “He shall not be found.”

“Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes.” “He shall be destroyed.”

“And in his estate shall stand up a vile person.”

“But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces (or munitions). Yet he shall come to his end” (Dan. xi. 7, 19, 20, 21, 38, 45).

Over against this repeated abortive effort Daniel and his fellows are placed. During these terrible antichristian times, some will forsake the holy covenant, but they that understand among the people shall instruct many; some will be tried and purged “to make them white” (Dan. xi. 30-35). It is to this tried and tested company that Dan. xii. 3 refers:

“And they that be wise (or are teachers, cf. ‘instruct many’ [Dan. xi. 33]) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

The references to “the book” and “the words” in Dan. xii. 1, 4 and 9 do not speak so much of the book of Daniel as a whole, but the book of life in which the overcomer’s name has been written (Rev. iii. 5; xx. 15), and is probably the “Book of remembrance” spoken of in Mal. iii. 16 in a similar day of trial. No interpretation of Dan. xii. can be acceptable that ignores the context of the preceding chapter, and the peculiar character of the times in which these events occur prevent any extension, except in a very wide sense, to the subject of “the blessed hope” of the believer. As we cannot occupy space enough in this article to present the book of Daniel as a whole, we must perforce leave the matter with the hope that enough has been exhibited to point the way for any fuller and more intimate research. Let us bring our examination of the testimony of the O.T. to a close with the wondrous words of Hosea xiii. 14, words which were lifted out and placed in the conclusion of I Cor. xv., a chapter that must necessarily be laid under tribute when we come to the testimony of the N.T.:

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave:

I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes” (Hosea xiii. 14).

Redemption or Ransom in Gospel preaching is often limited to the forgiveness of sins, to conversion, salvation and other blessed features of redeeming love, but if *sin* only were touched and the bondage of *death* forgotten, then we should be, as the Apostle exclaims, “of all men the most miserable”. In Heb. i. 3 we read that the Saviour “purged our sins” and in Heb. ii. 15 He delivers those who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. In the last epistle he wrote, the Apostle Paul speaks of Christ “Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the

gospel” (II Tim. i. 10). Elihu told Job of a “ransom” that delivered man from the pit (Job xxxiii. 23-25), and so Hosea says of the Lord:

“I will ransom thee from the power of the grave.”

But this is not all:

“I will redeem thee from death”,

for the Saviour said of His sheep “They shall never perish”, and of those who attain to the resurrection in connection with eternal life, it is written “Neither can they die any more” (Luke xx. 36). Death moreover is the last enemy that shall be destroyed:

“O death, I will be thy plagues;
O grave, I will be thy destruction”,

and of this blessed consummation the Lord declared:

“Repentance is hid from mine eyes.”

There are types of resurrection which we have not included in our survey and many allusions and statements in Prophecy and Psalm that could supplement what is here presented. We have however, a richer field to explore, namely the N.T. where type, prophecy and promise find their fulfillment in the Person and Work of Him, Who at a graveside could declare:

“I am the Resurrection and the Life.”

No.4. The Witness of the Gospels. pp. 81 - 86

We have passed in review some of the answers which the O.T. gives to the age old question “If a man die, shall he live again?” There are other types and somewhat obscure references which we have passed over, as our space is limited and our purpose simple. It may seem a strange question to ask, “With what books of the N.T. shall we start?” The natural answer will be “With the Gospels, of course”. Before we do this there are one or two facts that must be recognized. The notes in Matt xxvii. 8 and xxviii. 15 “unto this day” are in harmony with the accepted view that Matthew’s Gospel was not written *until some years* after the events recorded. It is even possible that the first literature of the N.T. was one of the early epistles of Paul. It is morally certain that the thousands who believed on and after the day of Pentecost, never saw one of the Gospels, for only seven weeks intervened. When Luke wrote his gospel he set forth in order a declaration of things which were *already* most surely believed among them, and in which his hearer had already been instructed.

The reader will know that with the best will in the world a complete harmony of the four Gospels is impossible. There are gaps in the narrative that anyone who had passed through the experience of the time could easily fill, but which remain unexplained and inexplicable to us at this later period. It is common knowledge that John wrote his Gospel last of all, but instead of seizing the opportunity to harmonize the accounts of the Resurrection given by Matthew, Mark and Luke, he supplies items of information that add further problems rather than reducing their number.

Neither we at a later date, nor the primitive church at the beginning, based their belief in the resurrection of the Lord on the Gospels, they based it squarely upon the *accredited testimony of eyewitnesses*, who in some cases suffered imprisonment for their faith, and in some cases sealed it with their blood. Instead of this being a disturbing factor, it should be an assurance that there was in the writing of these Gospels no collusion to deceive, and no attempt to produce an harmony by arrangement. The very so-called discrepancies show how innocent each evangelist must be held in this respect. It will further be observed that Luke actually tells us that his Gospel was:

“Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses”
(Luke i. 2),

and the reader will remember that in I Cor. xv., that great chapter on the Resurrection, the Apostle’s opening testimony is to review the witness of Cephas, the twelve, above five hundred brethren at once, James, all the apostles, and last of all his own personal testimony. Whatever difficulties therefore, that there may be in the Gospel narratives, the fact of the resurrection is entirely unquestioned. We quote some helpful words from Appendix 156 of *The Companion Bible*:

“That the first day of each of the three feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles was ‘a holy convocation’, a ‘sabbath’ on which no servile work was to be done. ‘That sabbath’ and ‘The High Day’ of John 19:31 was the ‘holy convocation’, the first day of the feast, which quite overshadowed the ordinary weekly sabbath. It was called by the Jews *yom tov* (Good day) and this is the greeting on that day throughout Jewry down to the present time. This *great* sabbath, having been mistaken from the earliest times for the *weekly* sabbath, has led to all the confusion.”

To this we may add the failure to realize that John uses Gentile time instead of Jewish; and the failure to remember that a Jewish day *ends at sunset*, has added to the confusion. We who read the four Gospels today, are already in possession of the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and of all the epistles, and our faith can no more be shaken by the inability to make a harmony of the four Gospels, than was the faith of the members of the early church. Many believe and teach that *Paul* borrowed from Luke when he wrote of the institution of the Lord’s supper in I Cor. xi. 23-26 but the truth appears to be just the opposite. Luke had no first hand knowledge, he did not partake of the last supper, he wrote of that which had been “delivered” by “eye-witnesses”. Paul, likewise, did not make one of the company that partook of that last supper, but he did not depend on the witness of others, he claimed that he had:

“Received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.”

The *doctrinal* significance of the resurrection belongs to the Epistles; the tragic yet triumphant *history* of that great event belongs to the Gospels. With this preparation, we turn to the Gospels to gather what they teach and what lessons we should learn concerning the blessed fact that “The Lord is risen indeed”.

It is natural, when opening the Gospel of Matthew, to turn to the sign of the prophet Jonah given in chapter xii., but it should be remembered that while it speaks of “the Son of Man” being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”, Matt. xii. 39, 40 does not reveal that at the end of that time He would rise from the dead. That is not a subject of revelation until the second half of Matthew is reached.

Jonah is mentioned nine times in the Gospels, and the point that is made at the mention of his name is that the Ninevites repented at his preaching, but a “Greater than Jonah” had been rejected (Matt. xi. 20-24; xii. 38-41).

The resurrection is not a subject spoken of in Matthew until the first half of the book has been closed. This may call for a note of explanation, and will be more easily visualized by seeing the structure.

Matthew

- A | Genealogy.
- B | Born King of the Jews.
- C | Voice from heaven. threefold temptation of King.
- D | From that time began.
- * * * * *
- D | From that time began.
- C | Voice from heaven. threefold agony of Priest.
- B | This is Jesus King of the Jews.
- A | Resurrection.

This structure is not complete, but it throws into prominence the two time periods “From that time began” (Matt. iv. 17 and xvi. 21). If the Lord “from that time began” to speak of His death and resurrection then He could not have spoken about it before, of which Peter’s immediate reaction, xvi. 22, “Be it far from Thee Lord” is evidence enough.

“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matt. xvi. 21).

In Matt. xvii. this forecast is given once again, with one addition,

“The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again” (Matt. xvii. 22, 23).

For the third time, with even fuller detail, He spoke to His disciples:

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him, and the third day He shall rise again” (Matt. xx. 18, 19).

At the first revelation in Matt. xvi., Peter objected. At the second the disciples “were exceedingly sorry”; at the third the mother of Zebedee’s children came seeking favours for her sons in the future kingdom! The enemies of the Lord remembered that “that deceiver said while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again” (Matt. xxvii. 63), but His disciples seem never to have grasped the significance of His words, for the two disciples with whom the Lord talked on the way to Emmaus could report how the chief priests and the rulers had delivered Him to be condemned to death, and had crucified Him. They could even add:

“And beside all this, today is the *third day* since these things were done” (Luke xxiv. 20, 21).

They even recounted the report of the open tomb, the vision of angels and the declaration that He had been seen alive, without being conscious of their ignorance and lack of faith. What was Peter’s attitude? “I go fishing.” What was the response of the other apostles? “They say unto him, we also go with thee” (John xxi. 3). The attitude of the followers of the Saviour can be summed up in the words:

“Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matt. xxvi. 56).

There can be no doubt that the disciples were a dispirited, disillusioned, timid and disbanded set of ineffectual pessimists.

Then a miracle happened, for nothing short of a miracle is an adequate explanation of the mighty change that came over them all. From being a scattered, timid, disheartened crowd, they were united in their stand FOR the fact of the resurrection and AGAINST the combined opposition, even unto death and imprisonment, of Rome, the Sanhedrin, Herod and all vested interests. Into the midst of the gathering to whom those who had met the Lord on the way to Emmaus gave their testimony, suddenly appeared the risen Lord Himself. They were terrified and thought they saw a spirit, but “He showed Himself after His passion by many infallible proofs”, and in this case, He showed them His hands and His feet, and ate a piece of broiled fish, and an honeycomb. Some rather crude deductions have been made from the fact that the Lord did not say “flesh and blood” but “flesh and bones” in this demonstration, but if “blood” was actually excluded, the idea of eating food of any kind wants a deal of explaining, but more serious still, a precious truth is veiled by this speculation. It is assumed that the normal phrase would have been “Flesh and blood” but this is not so. The normal phrase in the O.T. is “flesh and bone”. Adam said of Eve “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. ii. 23) but Adam was not satisfying himself that Eve was not a “spirit”. He meant something more:

“And Laban said to him (Jacob) Surely thou art my bone and my flesh thou art my brother” (Gen. xxix. 14, 15).

Laban had no idea of disproving that Jacob was “a spirit”, he was claiming him as a kinsman. So, with Abimelech in Judges ix. 2 and David in II Samuel xix. 12, 13; I Chron. xi. 1. The eating of the fish and honeycomb was a sufficient proof that He was bodily present, the “flesh and bone” would immediately help those who heard the words realize that here stood, the “Kinsman-Redeemer” Whom Job said would stand upon the earth in the latter days. We have no conception what the body of His glory will be like or how it will be composed. Luke xxiv. does not answer that question, but it provides one of the “infallible proofs” that brought about the mighty change in the attitude of the apostles. The skepticism of Thomas was overruled to provide a crowning testimony, for none exceeded his adoration, when he cried “My Lord and my God”.

The testimony of John’s Gospel to the Resurrection demands a study to itself, and we submit that the following items point to a wonderful revelation of doctrine. We start off by reminding ourselves that John’s acknowledged purpose, and which led to the selection of material that he made, was to lead the believer to “Life through His Name” (John xx. 31). This life is vitally related to Christ as “The Son of God”. Let us now go back to the opening chapter.

John i. 1-18 is in the nature of a prologue, and is divided into two parts:

John i. 1-4.	The Word before time.
John i. 5-18.	The Word made flesh, in time.

As the “Word” in the beginning, a Maker of all things, He had life in Himself, “In Him was life”. Inherent life is the sole prerogative of “God that made the world”. “The world was made by Him” (John i. 10) and all things therein (“all things” were made by Him), “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).

We then come to John i. 14 and read:

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

Keeping these words in mind, let us turn to chapter v. There the Son of God declared that He could “do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do”, and in verse 26, we have a statement that makes us look back to chapter i. 4 “In Him was life”.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. FOR as the Father hath LIFE IN HIMSELF; so He hath given to the Son to have LIFE IN HIMSELF; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, *because He is the Son of Man*” (John v. 25, 26).

This life in Himself, as the Son of Man, is connected in the context with the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of life, of *all* that are in the graves. As the

Word, before time began, He had life in Himself. As the begotten Son, having “emptied” Himself (Phil. ii. 7), all “fullness” on behalf of His redeemed people dwelt in Him, and the “life in Himself” was given Him *on our account*, and constitutes the gift of eternal life that is “In His Son”, with the result that he that hath the SON “hath LIFE”. So, in chapter vi. where the Manna is in view, He said:

“As the LIVING Father hath sent Me, and I LIVE by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall LIVE by Me” (John vi. 57).

No.5. The Witness of the Gospels. pp. 101, 102

In John x. where the Saviour said “The good Shepherd giveth His LIFE for the sheep” (John x. 11) he also said:

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My LIFE, *that I might take it again*. No man taketh it from Me I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (John x. 17, 18).

The life given, the life laid down, the life taken again, this is “life eternal”, the gift of God. So, when John wrote his first epistle, instead of going back to “the beginning”, he said:

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

So again “God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the SON hath LIFE” (I John v. 11, 12). John brings his epistle to a conclusion, much as he does his Gospel, where Thomas said “My Lord and my God”. Here he writes:

“And we know that the Son of God is come	(step No. 1).
And hath given us an understanding	(step No. 2).
That we may know Him that is true	(step No. 3).
And we are in Him that is true	(step No. 4).
Even in His Son Jesus Christ	(step No. 5).
This is the True God	(step No. 6).
And Eternal Life.”	(step No. 7).

Let there be no mistake as to the intention of John here. It is a characteristic of his to use the word translated “this”, and a survey of its usage will leave us in no doubt as to his intention, when he says “This is the true God”.

HOUTOS is the Greek word translated “this” and is found in John’s writings as follows:

“The Word was God THE SAME (*houtos*) was in the beginning with God” (John i. 2).
 “There was a man THE SAME (*houtos*) came for a witness” (John i. 7).
 “Upon Whom the Spirit THE SAME (*houtos*) is He” (John i. 33).
 “His Son Jesus Christ THE SAME (*houtos*) is the true God” (I John v. 20).

We return to the Gospel of John for the crown and climax of its teaching concerning resurrection. He had declared in chapter v. that “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God”, that all that were in the graves should hear His voice, and that they should come forth. This stupendous claim and its most blessed fulfillment constitute the seventh of the eight signs of John’s Gospel. Lazarus, was not only dead, but dead and buried. Not only so but dead four days, and the tomb had to be sealed. When the Saviour said to Martha “Thy brother shall rise again”, she replied, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at *the last day*”.

“Jesus saith unto her, I AM the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever is living and believing in Me shall never die” (John xi. 25).

The “I AM” claims of Christ which come in the Gospel, have associations of life throughout:

I AM the Bread of Life (vi. 35, 48, 50, 51).
 I AM the Light of the world the light of life (viii. 12).
 I AM the Door I am come that they might have life (x. 9, 10).
 I AM the Good Shepherd I lay down My life (x. 14, 15).
 I AM the Resurrection the life (xi. 25).
 I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (xiv. 6).
 I AM the Vine fruit (xv. 5).

In each of these titles claimed by the Lord, we find life in association with Him and it is at the central one, that of the good Shepherd, that we read of the commandment He had received of the Father, to lay that life down, and to take it again. This life, laid down as the ransom for sin, taken again as the pledge of victory over the grave, *that* life, not the inherent life of Deity, but the life given to Him as “the Son of Man”, is the eternal life, the gift of God, the life that cannot be disassociated from Him as “the Son”.

We must leave the reader the blessed opportunity of assembling and studying all that is written in the four Gospels concerning the Resurrection and the Life, while we turn our attention to the testimony contained in the Acts of the Apostles.

**No.5a. The Acts of the Apostles.
Its testimony to the Resurrection.
pp. 102 - 106**

Peter and the twelve.

Luke the writer of “the former treatise”, i.e. Luke’s Gospel, is careful to give a resumé of the last chapter of that Gospel, and to include a testimony to the resurrection, saying:

“To whom also He showed Himself ALIVE after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts i. 3).

They ‘saw’ and ‘heard’ and were convinced. They were also told to wait for the promise of the Father to be fulfilled, when they should “receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts i. 4, 8). When Peter would explain the happenings of the day of Pentecost, he linked it with the resurrection, saying concerning the prophecy of David:

“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof *we all are witnesses* He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear”,

concluding his testimony by saying:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made THAT SAME JESUS, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts ii. 31-36).

On this day 3,000 were added to the number who already believed, and let it be remembered, that they were convinced by the Apostles’ witness, for the Gospels were not then in existence. That this testimony was of God is made evident, for “many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts ii. 43) as a confirmation of their witness. The references to the resurrection that follow are:

- (1) Those arising out of the healing of the lame man. (iii. 12-18, 22; iv. 2, 9-12, 33).
- (2) Those arising out of the attitude of the Sadducees. (v. 17-32).
- (3) Those arising out of the apprehension of Stephen. (vii. 52, 53, 56, 59).

In addition to the 3,000 of Acts ii. 41 who were convinced, we must include the 5,000 of Acts iv. 4 and the unspecified number of disciples, and priests who were obedient to the faith, and last but not least, the young man named Saul who heard and saw Stephen’s testimony, and began to “kick against the goads” lest he succumb and believe.

To the testimony of the Apostle Paul, we must now give our close attention.

The Testimony of Paul.

The Acts of the Apostles is divided into two main features. In chapters i.-xii. Peter is the dominant character; in chapters xiii.-xxviii., Paul, with his distinctive ministry occupies the field, Peter's last appearance being in Acts xv., where he refers to a ministry entrusted to him "a good while ago" (Acts xv. 7). The section of the Acts that deals with Paul's ministry falls into three parts:

(1)	Acts vi. 12 - viii. 1. ix. 1-22.	Stephen and Paul. Saul's conversion.	\ /	Saul.
(2)	xiii. - xxi.	Saul also called Paul.		Separated and free.
(3)	xxii. - xxviii.	Paul the Prisoner.		Imprisoned.

Saul of Tarsus was a citizen of no mean city, and a man who profited in the Jew's religion above many, who were his equals (Gal. i. 14), and who could write of himself in a later epistle, that if any man had confidence in the flesh, he could exceed them, "I more". From what has been written of Saul of Tarsus, there does not appear any likelihood that he, honoured as he was by the Sanhedrin, and having a reputation to maintain, would succumb to the claims of One Jesus of Nazareth, Who had (so far as he knew) ended his career on the cross, and whose followers were in the main the poor of the land and of little or no consequence. Yet, in an instant he believed! There are one or two steps indicated that led to this conversion. Stephen, as his murderers gnashed at him with their teeth, said:

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 55-60).

To all this, the young man named Saul was a witness. If we turn to Acts xiii. and note the way in which Paul summarized the history of Israel, we see how closely he followed Stephen's survey and application of this history of his people, introducing the typical stories of Joseph and Moses, who were both originally rejected, but at "the second time" acknowledged (Acts vii. 13, 35), and it would have been difficult for Saul to have disagreed with Stephen's application:

"As your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts vii. 51).

It must have caused Saul great heart searchings as he realized that he was *against* a man who prayed for his murderers, and was *for* this rabble, who stoned a man whose face was as it had been the face of an angel (Acts vi. 15). The charge against Stephen was:

"We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts xvi. 14),

and this, his accusers called 'blasphemy' against the holy place and the law.

In Acts xxi. 28 Paul had to bear a similar charge laid against himself:

“Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place.”

When we consider these parallels, we can the better appreciate something of the way in which the martyrdom of Stephen is linked with the conversion of Paul. The words “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” are omitted from Acts ix. 5 in the critical texts, but are found in Paul’s own account in Acts xxvi. 14. Hosea iv. 16 is the figure that is in mind:

“For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.”

The usual interpretation put upon the word “backslider” is one that slips or slides backwards “to lapse gradually from a spiritual or moral position formerly attained”. This however cannot fit the case of Paul. He was not in danger of sliding back from the faith, he was “jibbing” as a horse or ox that moves restively sideways and backwards. Moffatt’s rendering of Hosea iv. 16 is clearer:

“Israel indeed is stubborn as a restive heifer.”

The words translated “pricks” is better translated “goads”, and the reference is to the long thin lance that was used with oxen at the plough, it being quite harmless while the oxen obeyed, but if they rebelled and jibbed, they themselves backed on to the goad. On the day of Pentecost, we read that some were “pricked in their heart, and said what shall we do?” (Acts ii. 37) and they repented. In Acts vii. 54 we read that:

“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.”

Acts viii. 1 opens with the words:

“And Saul was consenting unto his death.”

When he described that moment, speaking on the stairs of the castle, he said:

“And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him” (xxii. 20).

To stifle the pricking of his conscience, and to show the Sanhedrin that he had no leanings to the new heresy, he desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem, and on that road the miracle happened!

“Who art thou, Lord I am Jesus.”

“He was three days without sight and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Acts ix. 5, 9, 20).

Paul was, therefore, as were Peter and James and the twelve, an *eye-witness*:

“Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (I Cor. ix. 1).

“And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (I Cor. xv. 8).

In his defence Paul rehearsed the visit of Ananias:

“The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and *see* that Just One, and shouldest *hear* the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast *seen* and *heard*” (Acts xxii. 14, 15).

The whole of Paul’s speech before Agrippa, recorded in Acts xxvi., should be read. Paul himself summed it up in verses 22, 23:

“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: That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

The complete testimony of Paul to the Resurrection, as recorded in the Acts, is found in ix. 6, 20, 22, 29; xiii. 26-43; xvii. 3, 18, 30, 31, 32; xxii. 3-21; xxiii. 6-9, 11; xxiv. 10-21; xxv. 19; xxvi. 4-32; xxviii. 20.

This witness to the resurrection is overwhelming. Not only was it preached in synagogue and assembly, it was publicly affirmed before governors and kings, even as the Apostle said “This thing was not done in a corner”. Pilate seems to have mocked the Pharisees when they demanded that the sepulcher be sealed, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, saying to them “Ye have a watch, go your way *make it as sure as you can*”. When the watch reported that the stone had been rolled away and the body of the Saviour was gone, the assembled elders bribed the soldiers to say “His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept”, as if that dispirited, disheartened little band of men and women could have attempted such a thing! Every believer since that day can rebut all criticism by following the example of the man born blind:

“One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (John ix. 25).

Peter who said “I go fishing”, Thomas who said “I will not believe”, Mary who stood weeping, the five hundred brethren who saw the risen Christ at one time, Saul of Tarsus and the thousands converted in the early Acts, could all, individually and collectively say “We are witnesses”, and use the word *martus* (our word “martyr”), which means a witness ready if need be to seal his testimony with his life’s blood, as many did. The gospel preached, the reformation that followed, the epistles and the Apocalypse would have had no existence, apart from the overwhelming conviction that Christ had risen from the dead.

No.6. The Witness of the Epistles. **pp. 121 - 127**

There are, in the N.T. twenty-one epistles. Fourteen by Paul, three by John, two by Peter, and one each by James and Jude. Jude so closely follows the witness of II Pet. ii., that we can allow his epistle to pass, and II & III John are too short and too personal to provide a witness to the Resurrection, except by implication. Let us take the testimony of James, Peter, John and Paul in their order.

The Witness of James.

“There is little doubt that the writer was James ‘the Lord's brother’ (Gal. 1:19), he who was one of the ‘pillars’ (Gal. 2:9), he who gave the ‘judgment’ of the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13, 19).” *The Companion Bible*, p.1847.

This “brother” of the Lord wrote:

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons” (ii. 1).

Other believers were to James “my brethren”, but He Who in the days of His flesh was “the brother of James”, is referred to by him as “The Lord of glory”; yet no writer in the N.T. is so severely practical as James. Later he urges patience “unto the coming of the Lord” (v. 7, 8), so while the doctrine or the historic fact of the resurrection does not appear, James evinces no hesitation in acknowledging the Lord, Who could have no *second* coming had He remained in the tomb.

The Witness of Peter.

Peter, however, introduces the Resurrection in the opening of this epistle saying:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (I Pet. i. 3, 4).

The words “begotten”, “lively”, “incorruptible”, “in heaven” are meaningless and cruel, if Christ be not risen from the dead. Neither could Peter urge patient endurance of manifold temptations in view of “the appearing of Jesus Christ” if Christ had not risen from the dead. In the same chapter Peter affirms that the spirit of Christ that was in the prophets:

“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Pet. i. 11),

and links this testimony on to the preaching of the gospel. Those who believe in God, believe that “He raised Him (Christ) up and gave Him glory” (I Pet. i. 21). While Christ was “put to death in the flesh”, He was “quickened by the Spirit the

resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (I Pet. iii. 18-22). The second epistle of Peter is largely occupied with the Second Coming, and while it may not actually speak of the resurrection, necessarily pre-supposes it.

The Witness of John’s Epistles.

Before any testimony that may be given in John’s epistle to the resurrection, there can be no doubt but that he would know whether it was the Lord Himself that had appeared to the little gathering as recorded in the Gospel. Of this appearance he wrote:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have HEARD, which we have SEEN with our eyes, which we have LOOKED UPON, and our hands have HANDLED, of the Word of life” (I John i. 1).

This same One is declared by John to be our “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John ii. 1).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall SEE Him as HE IS” (I John iii. 2).

In I John iv. 2 the Antichrist does not confess that Jesus Christ IS COME in the flesh (Moffatt “incarnate” I John iv. 2, 3). In II John 7, the reference is to the Second Coming. In the first reference, the verb is in the perfect participle “has come”, whereas in the second reference, the verb is the present participle “is coming”. This naturally implies the resurrection. The fullest testimony to the resurrection however, whether as to the historic fact of the resurrection, or to the doctrines associated with it, is found in the epistles of Paul.

We will not debate here, the question of the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, this we have done in the *Alphabetical Analysis*, Part two, pages 102-105, and the validity of its testimony to the resurrection does not depend upon its human authorship. Again, the order in which the epistles of Paul appeared has a great bearing upon the matter of callings and other dispensational differences, but the testimony to the resurrection is just as valid whether it be in Galatians, a pre-prison epistle, or Ephesians, a testimony of the Lord’s prisoner. We shall see when examining II Timothy that while the Lord is “of the seed of David”, His resurrection can have separate consequences, as the Apostle suggests saying:

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel” (II Tim. ii. 8).

The testimony of Galatians.

Elsewhere we have given our reason for believing that Galatians is the first of Paul’s epistles, and with this epistle we propose to open our examination of Paul’s epistolary testimony to the resurrection. We meet it in the very first verse:

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead)” (i. 1).

In the opening testimony, both the apostleship and the gospel preached by Paul is involved; both stand or fall together.

“I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (i. 12).

The emphasis however in Galatians is placed on “a Tree” (iii. 13), the Cross (vi. 14) and the Crucifixion (ii. 20; v. 24). Before we come to the resurrection as a doctrine, we must be assured that the death of the cross was an integral feature in the plan of redemption, and that is forever settled by this initial epistle.

The testimony of I Thessalonians.

The “patience of hope” enjoined I Thess. i. 3 is expressed in i. 10 as waiting for God’s Son from heaven “Whom He raised from the dead”. After two chapters of loving interest and manifest care, the Apostle returns to the question of resurrection, this time, not so much to prove the historic fact of Christ’s resurrection, but to comfort the heart of the believer as to his own participation in that glorious deliverance. “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again” is the spring and ground of what follows. The words “will God bring with Him” cannot refer to the saints coming with the Lord from heaven for the next verse tells us “the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together WITH THEM to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. iv. 17). “The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH all His Saints” of I Thess. iii. 13 cannot refer to the church, for we have already seen that ‘together’ those that sleep and those that remain, await the coming of the Lord from heaven to the air. The reference is to Zech. xiv. 5 and to Jude 14:

“And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints (or holy ones, i.e. angels) with thee.”

We read in Deut. xxxiii. 2 that at Sinai “He came with ten thousands of saints” which are, according to Psa. lxxviii. 17 “thousands of angels as in Sinai”. Acts vii. 53 and Gal. iii. 19 reveal that the law of Sinai was given by the ministry of angels. To return however to our main quest, the matter of the resurrection, let us take this opportunity of noting the references in Paul’s epistles to “sleep” as a figure of death, and “waking” as a figure of resurrection.

I Cor. xv. 6, 18, 20, 51; I Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15 *koimaomai* to fall asleep.
Eph. v. 14; I Thess. v. 6, 7, 10 *katheudo* to go to sleep, be drowsy.
Rom. xiii. 11; Eph. v. 14 *egeiro* to rouse.
I Thess. v. 6 *gregoreo* watch, 10 wake.
Eph. ii. 6; Col. ii. 12; iii. 1 *sunegeiro* to rouse together.

The reader will note that there are two different words used in I Thess. iv. & v. and care should be taken in the translation of these passages and the inferences drawn from them. Let us attempt to make the distinctions obvious.

Koimaomai which occurs in the fourth chapter means to fall asleep *involuntarily* in death, whereas in the fifth chapter *katheudo* means to compose oneself to sleep, to be drowsy instead of watchful. A rather free summary of I Thess. v. 1-10 might help here:

“Speaking of the times and seasons, let me remind you that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Now we belong to the day, not to the night or darkness. Therefore let us not *go to sleep* as do some; but let us be watchful and sober, for sleepers sleep by night and drunkards are drunk by night, but let us who are of the day be sober Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us that whether we are watchful or drowsy, we should live together with Him”,

but while this is so, unwatchfulness may cause you to miss the added crown.

“Therefore I endure all things for the elects’ sakes, that they may also obtain *that* salvation which is in Christ Jesus *with* eternal glory. It is a faithful saying:

For if we have died with Him, we shall also LIVE with Him.

If we suffer, we shall also REIGN with Him.

If we deny Him, He also will DENY us.

If we are faithless, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself” (II Tim. ii. 10-13).

We must not allow ourselves to be carried away by this great theme, but leave the difference between “living” and “reigning”, between falling asleep involuntarily as in I Thess. iv., and being unwatchful and drowsy in I Thess. v. to speak for themselves. As an extension of the words “we which are alive and remain” of I Thess. iv. 15, the Apostle writes:

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. v. 23).

There is no direct reference to the resurrection in II Thessalonians, but the insistence upon the Lord’s Second Coming necessarily assumes that the resurrection is a fact, and so is an added testimony.

The testimony of I Corinthians.

Without any disrespect for the teaching of all Scripture, there are some passages which stand out most prominently as “classics” in some one great doctrine. Exod. xii., Isa. liii., Psa. xxiii., Rom. viii. and Rev. xx. come to mind. There is one chapter, namely I Cor. xv. that stands out most prominently as *the* chapter on Resurrection.

I Corinthians xv.

This chapter of 58 verses deals with the subject of Resurrection under three headings:

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

The opening section 1-11 begins and ends with the word “preach”:

“The Gospel which I preached unto you whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”

The opening eleven verses of this great chapter places the question of the Resurrection squarely upon “witness”. Now a valid witness must be able to give a personal testimony. He must be an eyewitness and be able to say “I was there, I saw and heard with my own eyes and ears”. In a court of law, the veracity of a witness, and the fact that he does not stand to gain anything by his testimony is taken into account, and a man’s life or possessions may be forfeit upon such testimony. So is it here. What sort of person is this preacher named Paul? What does he stand to gain by affirming that Christ is Risen? Let us see. In Galatians, Paul enters the arena and meets the possible objection:

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. i. 18).

For a man that was a Jew, to thus speak of an angel, means that he was in deadly earnest, or beside himself with passion. This the Apostle realizes, and so repeats himself, saying:

“As we said before, so say I now again”,

and then takes up the other possible objection “For do I know persuade men or God?” or as Moffatt puts it:

“Now is that appealing to the interests of men or of God? Trying to satisfy men?”

He then proceeds to show the impossibility of the Pharisaic Saul ever evolving such a gospel as he preached.

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jew’s religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.”

His conversion and his Gospel were consequent upon a “revelation”:

“I received it by the *revelation* of Jesus Christ when it pleased God to *reveal* His Son in me, that I might preach him” (Gal. i. 12-16).

Not only would the rejection of his Gospel impugn the veracity of Paul himself, but that of Peter, James and John, who had given to him the right hand of fellowship, and preached the Resurrection also. Paul was very sensitive to the implications of unbelief:

“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (I Cor. xv. 14).

That is one consequence, and if it be true, we are all of men most miserable. But there is another consequence:

“Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God” (15).

It is evident from what the Apostle writes, that to deny the resurrection, sweeps aside the complete testimony of the Apostles, including the Baptism they received from “The Spirit of Truth” on the day of Pentecost, to empower them in their witness.

“For I delivered unto you first of all THAT WHICH I ALSO RECEIVED” (3).

In chapter xi. Paul claimed to have received from the Lord particulars concerning the Lord’s Supper, and these can be compared with the witness given in the Gospels by those who were actually present. At his conversion he was told by Ananias “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and SEE that Just One, and shouldest HEAR the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast SEEN and HEARD” (Acts xxii. 14, 15). The Greek word translated “witness” is *martur*, which in English is the word martyr. In Rev. i. 5 Christ is called “The faithful WITNESS”, while in Rev. ii. 13 the same words are translated “My faithful MARTYR”. In Rev. xi. 3 we have “two witnesses”, in xvii. 6 “martyrs”. While a man may be a faithful witness without suffering actual martyrdom, the word implies that he would thus suffer, rather than betray the trust given to him. Paul paid the price; Peter and James paid the price, and such witnesses cannot be lightly set aside. Before enumerating the many witnesses who were available, the Apostle, following the example of his Lord, turns to the Scripture of the O.T.:

“For 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*” (I Cor. xv. 3, 4).

The O.T. comes into the record later in his reference to Adam, and the quotation from the prophet Isaiah and Hosea. In Luke xxiv., we find the Risen Lord rebuking the unbelief of the disciples, saying:

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken and beginning at Moses” (Luke xxiv. 25-27).

Yet again He spoke to the eleven:

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me” (Luke xxiv. 44).

Returning to the matter of witness, the Apostle cites Cephas, the twelve, above 500 at once, James, all the apostles, and last of all “me also”. It is probable that Paul had in mind the faction at Corinth who said “I am of Cephas” (I Cor. i. 12) and drew their attention to *his* testimony. *We* do not know the 500 brethren who saw the Lord at once, but it is evident from the Apostle’s challenging words “of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep”, that this reference is no fiction. And then after another reference to James, and to all the apostles, he says:

“And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

The Apostle is sensitive to the attitude some took to his claim to be an Apostle, and first acknowledges with commendable humility his unworthiness to be given such an office. Earlier in this epistle he had said:

“Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?”
(I Cor. ix. 1),

and then turns to these very Corinthians and says:

“If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (I Cor. ix. 2).

And again in the second epistle he wrote:

“For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge” (II Cor. xi. 5, 6).

Paul had already quoted:

“For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful: but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (II Cor. x. 10).

So, we may appreciate the attempt of Moffatt to give the Apostle’s meaning in I Cor. xv. 8:

“And finally He was seen by myself, by this so-called ‘abortion’ of an apostle.”

At any rate, the Apostle sums up:

“Whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed” (I Cor. xv. 11).

No.7. The Witness of the Epistles. pp. 141 - 148

As we further consider I Cor. xv., we give the outline of verses 12-58:

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

Members B | 13-33 and B | 36-57 contain the great argument of the Apostle, and in both sections the name “Adam” is significant.

It has become quite common to hear from pulpit, platform and press, that no intelligent man today can endorse as literal the early chapters of Genesis. It will therefore be sheer waste of time for anyone who considers that Adam is but a “myth”, to pursue this subject further, for no one in his senses would argue “For as in Adam, who never existed, all die, even so” Moreover we discover that the whole purpose of the ages “Then cometh the end”, is based squarely upon the reference to Adam and the transfer of Headship to Christ.

If we now follow the Apostle in his argument as contained in verses 12-19, it will be seen that if the resurrection of the dead is denied, then the resurrection of Christ must also be denied, or if the resurrection of Christ is believed, then the resurrection of the dead must be accepted, and this interchange is crystallized in the word “firstfruits”.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept”
(I Cor. xv. 20).

The Firstfruits. I Cor. xv. 20-23.

A		20-. Now is Christ risen	\	First coming.
B		-20. Type—Firstfruits.	/	
C		21-. By man came death	\	
D		-21. By Man came resurrection	\	The
C		22-. In Adam all die	/	Kinsman-Redeemer
D		-22. In Christ all made alive	/	
B		23-. Christ the Firstfruits.	\	Second coming.
A		-23. They that are Christ’s	/	

There are eight occurrences of the word *aparche* “firstfruits” in the N.T. Eight is the octave, the new start, the resurrection.

The Eight references to *Aparche*.

We which have the firstfruits of the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 20-23).
 Life from the dead. Firstfruits and lump. (Rom. xi. 15, 16).
 Firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. (Rom. xvi. 5).
 The firstfruits of them that slept. (I Cor. xv. 20).
 Christ the firstfruits. (I Cor. xv. 23).
 Firstfruits of Achaia. (I Cor. xvi. 15).
 A kind of firstfruits. (James i. 18).
 Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. (Rev. xiv. 4).

The significance of the type is seen in Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. The bearing of the figure of the Firstfruits upon the doctrine of I Cor. xv. is a vital factor in the interpretation of the whole, and particularly in connection with the reference to Adam in verse 22. We can lift these words out of their context and say with some appearance of finality, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”. “All” means “all” in both parts of this great statement and that is enough proof that universal salvation and resurrection is the goal of God.

The above statement, however, is not a complete quotation of I Cor. xv. 22. It omits the logical connective “for”, and so isolates one member of a progressive argument. Further, if “for” links verse 22 with verse 21, “for” links both with verse 20. Christ is the FIRSTFRUITS of them that slept. Now those that sleep are not all men universally; they are defined for us in verse 18 as those are fallen asleep “in Christ”. By no stretch of imagination can such a term include both *saved and lost*, sinner and saved, believer and unbeliever. We are here dealing with one class, those who are “In Christ”. The same limitation is observed in the sequel,

“But every man in his own order;
 Christ the Firstfruits:
 Afterward they that ARE CHRIST’S at His coming” (I Cor. xv. 23).

It is the essence of the type, that the “firstfruits” of a barley harvest, shall be the same kind, namely “barley”. In this “field” which is the world, there are growing together “two seeds”, namely “wheat” and “tares”, and it is an outrage of common sense, to say nothing of its dangerous doctrinal implications, to make the risen Christ a firstfruits of BOTH wheat and tares! The false seed are excluded here. By man came death—by man therefore must come life. Who is this “man”? The first man is Adam (I Cor. xv. 47). Who is the other man by Whom came life? He is “the last Adam and the second Man” (I Cor. xv. 45-47). We may paraphrase the Apostle’s words, and read:

“For as sure as any one can be described as being ‘In Adam’ he must die, but as sure as any one can be described as ‘In Christ’ he shall be made alive.”

By a series of wondrous steps, the goal of the ages will at length be reached. “Then cometh the end” (I Cor. xv. 24).

There is no word for ‘cometh’ in the original of verse 24. It simply read “Then the end”. There is no justification for translating “The cometh the end rank”, *telos* does not primarily denote termination with reference to time but a *goal reached*, as in James “Ye have seen the end of the Lord” (James v. 11).

We should read I Cor. xv. 24-28 like this:

THEN THE END	/	“When”	\	
	/	“When”	\	“For He
	\	“When”	/	must reign”
	\	“When”	/	
THEN GOD ALL IN ALL.				

All enemies, and all rule, whether “good” or “bad” will be set aside. Up to, and during the Millennium there will be a great deal of delegated authority:

David will be raised from the dead to reign (Jer. xxx. 9).
 The Twelve Apostles will sit on twelve thrones (Matt. xix. 28).
 The Overcomers will be Kings and Priests (Rev. xx. 4-6).
 The Archangel Michael will make war (Rev. xii. 7).
 Mighty angels will lead up to the Millennial reign (Rev. vii.-xix.).

Yet the Millennium will not reach the standard set in I Cor. xv. 24. *All* delegated authority will be ultimately set aside, and “The Son” alone “reign” until “God shall be all in all”.

Should the reader be bothered about “the baptism for the dead”, a doctrine and practice that emanates from Salt Lake City, he should read the context, viz., I Cor. xv. 29 and 30-32. The Apostle’s argument is that if Christ be not raised from the dead, and if the blessed goal is unattainable, then every one who is baptized, and so exposes himself to persecution and martyrdom, has been surely ‘baptized’ into death and danger.

“Else (if what has been written be not so) what shall they do which are baptized? (They have been simply baptized for the dead) if the dead rise not. You see in my case I stand in jeopardy every hour ‘I die daily’, and have been exposed in the arena to the attack of wild beasts, which is meaningless ‘If the dead rise not’.”

Again do not misquote the close of verse 32. It does *not* say “Let us eat, drink and be merry: for tomorrow we die” such cannot even be “merry”, the word is an intruder here.

We pass now to the second great division of this chapter,

“How are the dead raised up?”
“With what body do they come?”

NO ANSWER is possible to the first question. Even though God should condescend to tell us how identity can be preserved, how those who have been dead for centuries can be raised, we should be no more the wiser than an infant would be when attending its first day at school, supposing him to be instructed in the last words of science on the subject of nuclear fission, or what is implied by the fourth dimension.

With what body do they come? is answered by the words “Thou fool”. We are directed to the everyday miracle of the sown seed, and the resultant grain, “to every seed its own body”. This is a point which the Apostle desires to make. There are heavenly bodies, there are earthly bodies, with their associated glories.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead” (I Cor. xv. 42).

Further, to ensure that in the realm of the spiritual we should feel inclined to eliminate any sort of “body”, the Apostle says “There is a natural body, and there is also a spiritual body”. Those whose destiny is the New Earth, who will have access to the Paradise of God, and to the Tree of Life. These will have resurrection bodies suitable to that sphere and inheritance. But those whose blessings are “all spiritual”, and whose sphere of blessing is “in heavenly places”, such will have “spiritual” or “heavenly bodies” (I Cor. xv. 40, 44). The earthly image must be exchanged for the heavenly, and though we shall not all “sleep”, we shall all be “changed”. Someone has said that the main purpose of most books is information, but the chief goal of the Bible is “transformation” (see Phil. iii. 20, 21). It seems so here.

Immortality is linked, not with the traditional “never-dying soul”, but with resurrection,

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN (and not before) shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Cor. xv. 54).

This passage points us straight on to II Cor. v. 4 where we read:

“That mortality might be swallowed up of life”,

to which we must turn directly.

One of the reasons why death is spoken of as sleep for the believer, is that its “sting” has been removed:

“The sting of death is SIN,
The strength of sin is the LAW,
BUT
Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. xv. 55-57).

Earlier, at the close of the first section, the Apostle paused to speak of the practical outcome of the doctrine of the resurrection:

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (I Cor. xv. 34).

At the close of the second great division, the Apostle once more calls for a practical response. Let us give these familiar words in a less familiar translation:

“Well then, my beloved brothers, hold your ground, immoveable; abound in work for the Lord at all times, for you may be sure that in the Lord your labour is never thrown away” (I Cor. xv. 58 Moffatt).

The interested reader may be pleased to observe, and to work out for himself, the fact that when we compare I Cor. xv. 13-33 with I Cor. xv. 36-57, we find the five items introduced in the one section receive amplification in the second, thus:

B | 13-33. ADAM and CHRIST. Death destroyed. “When”
B | 36-57. FIRST and LAST ADAM. Death swallowed up. “When?”

The Five Amplifications.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| (1) Differences in “order” | verse 23 with verses 37-44. |
| (2) Relation with Adam | verses 21, 22 with verses 45, 47, 49. |
| (3) Relation with Christ | verses 20-22, 28 with verses 45, 47, 49. |
| (4) Destruction of Death | verse 26 with verse 54. |
| (5) Time Periods | verse 24 with verse 54. |

The testimony of II Corinthians.

No church had so full a testimony to the fact and consequence of resurrection as the Corinthians. This we have seen in I Cor. xv. It will not surprise us therefore, that in the

nothing can justify turning a blind eye on such wondrous statements of Scripture, in order to bolster up a man-made creed. Let us not put our hand to stay the ark of God.

So returning to II Cor. iv. 16:

“Though the OUTWARD man is perishing (present passive), yet the INWARD man is renewed (present passive) day by day.”

What happens to this renewed inward man? Does that perish also? From this standpoint, even we can understand that the list of sufferings enumerated in I & II Cor. can be spoken of as “our light affliction” (see I Cor. iv. 9-13; II Cor. i. 8, 9; iv. 7-12), for the Apostle follows that estimate “light” by a comparison which he calls “a far more exceeding weight”; the brevity of the suffering “but for a moment”, being set off by the words “eternal glory”, and all this,

“Whilst we look not at the things which are seen”,

and which leads on the exposition of resurrection and immortality which follows in chapter v. The last word of chapter iv. is the word “eternal” as set over against the word “temporal” or “transient” and this is picked up and developed in the opening verses of chapter v. The translation, “Our earthly house of this tabernacle” is somewhat cumbersome. The word “of” is usually the sign of the genitive case, and it might be a service, beyond the limits of this present study to acquaint the reader with the importance of this term and its varied applications. The word “genitive” indicates generation, and so possession and is called, in English grammar “The possessive case”.

- (1) The Genitive of character—Children *of* disobedience = Disobedient children.
- (2) The Genitive of origin. The righteousness *of* faith.
- (3) The Genitive of possession. The sword *of* the Spirit.
- (4) The Genitive of Apposition. The house, *that is to say*, our tabernacle.

Appendix 17 of *the Companion Bible* gives nine varieties of this figure, and *Figures of speech used in the Bible*, by Dr. E. W. Bullinger devotes fourteen pages to its exposition. Its understanding is an important factor in true interpretation. The word translated “tabernacle” should be translated “tent”, owing to the associations that the word tabernacle carries with it that cannot well be ignored. Abraham did not dwell in a “tabernacle”, neither did Isaac or Jacob (Heb. xi. 9); they dwelt in “tents”, the mark of a pilgrim, stranger and sojourner (Heb. xi. 9, 13) who seek a country. For such God has prepared a city (Heb. xi. 16), and that is an heavenly one. So we translate II Cor. v. 1, reading straight on from II Cor. iv. 16-18, where the outward man is perishing, but the inward man renewed daily:

“For we know that if our earthly house, which is a tent, were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (II Cor. v. 1).

The modern usage of the word “dissolved”, places the conversion of a solid to a liquid first in meaning, and while it could be rightly employed to speak of the dissolution of the body we can hardly use this word of a “tent”. *Kataluo*, the Greek word used here, occurs in Matt. xxiv. 2 of the stones of the Temple that were to be “thrown down”, and in

Matt. xxvi. 61 of “destroying” a temple. We should not be far removed from the intention of the Apostle if we read “If our earthly house, which is a tent, should collapse”, for that would agree with the very tentative nature of a tent at the best of times. “We have a building.” How are we to understand this? Can we not say “we have” here, exactly as we can say “our life hath been hid with Christ in God”? The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, already referred to, contains a happy thought in verse 1, where we read, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for”, especially when we learn from the papyri that, in the Apostles’ day, *hupostasis* (substance) was used in a lawsuit to refer to “the title deeds” of a property. We may be living precariously today in a tent, and are ever moving on, but we carry with us title deeds to a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The Apostle continues:

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”

The use of the words “to be clothed upon”, when referring to a building or a house, sounds slightly incongruous; the word *enduo*, being once literally translated “endue” as with power (Luke xxiv. 49).

While *enduo* primarily means “to put on clothing” (Matt. vi. 25; xxii. 11; Luke xv. 22) there is a transition from the mere idea of clothes, to what clothes may stand for. To be clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. xix. 14) is evidently but another way of saying “arrayed in fine linen clean and white” (Rev. xix. 8), which in this passage is explained as representing “the righteousness of the saints”. In Rev. xix. 13 the coming King is said to be “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood”, which can only be accepted if seen to be symbolical, as a reference back to Isa. lxiii. 1-4, together with Rev. xix. 15 will show. The word translated “arrayed” and “clothed” in verses 8 and 13 is the Greek *periballo* “to throw around”. In Rom. xiii. 12 we are exhorted to “put on the armour of light”, which when repeated in verse 14, becomes “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ”. So in Eph. iv. 24 and Col. iii. 10 & 12, we read of “putting on”, or being clothed with the new man, and “putting on”, or being clothed with bowels of mercies, and other graces. The references in II Cor. v. 3 however, looks two ways, as a contrast to being found “naked”, and in verse 2, being “clothed upon with our house which is from heaven”. This looks back to I Cor. xv. 53 and 54, where the resurrection of the believer in view, where, if all the references in both epistles be read together, all incongruity vanishes.

“For this corruptible must put on (be clothed with) incorruption, and this mortal must put on (be clothed with) immortality.”

To complete the tale, we draw attention to the occurrences of *ependuo* “to be clothed upon” in II Cor. v. 2, 4. The reader will find a number of passages in II Corinthians that are made the more understandable by linking with the primary occurrences in the first epistle, but this lies outside the present examination.

No.8. The Witness of the Epistles. pp. 161 - 165

In the context we are studying (II Cor. v.), the Apostle Paul states twice that while we are “in this tent”, i.e. our earthly house, “we groan”, “being burdened”. Most of us have known what it is to “groan”, and the Scriptures make it clear that, not only does “the whole creation groan”, but that those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, they also “groan” within themselves, waiting for the adoption, namely “the redemption of the body” (Rom. viii. 22, 23). We shall find that this word “groan” is largely associated with the need felt for ‘the glorious liberty’ that can only be enjoyed when “this mortal shall have put on immortality” (I Cor. xv. 53). The essential meaning of the Greek word translated “groan” is “to be cramped”, and it will be an enlightenment for many of us to give this our very careful attention. We may be sad or sorry or greatly moved by the misery, the poverty, the wretchedness of man, but that is not in view in this word ‘groan’ as we shall see. The words translated ‘groan’ in the N.T. are all derivatives of the Greek *sten*, except two, where the Greek word is *embrimaomai*, but every reference translated ‘groan’ except that of Acts vii. 34, is related to Resurrection, and even Acts vii. 34 refers to bondage that is typical in its character, namely the bondage in Egypt. The Greek *sten* enters into many scientific terms, narrow-footed, narrow-nosed, thin-necked, narrow-leaved and the like. Its most common and best known usage is in the word “Stenographer”, which does not mean that a shorthand typist gets the “cramp”, but that “short” hand-writing is “cramped” writing. Here are the words used in the original:

Stenagmos Acts vii. 34; Rom. viii. 26.

Stenazo Rom. viii. 23; II Cor. v. 2, 4.

Sustenazo Rom. viii. 22.

To these should be added *stenochoeomai* and *stenochoia* translated “distress” and meaning “cramped for space” II Cor. iv. 8; vi. 12; Rom. ii. 9; viii. 35; II Cor. vi. 4; xii. 10.

Stenos “strait”, the strait gate, gives the primitive meaning. The ‘groan’ therefore is associated with the ‘cramped’ or ‘frustrating’ existence here in contrast with the ‘glorious liberty’ to be entered at resurrection. The narrow chrysalis and the emerging butterfly is nature’s symbol. The ‘groan’ of II Cor. v. 2 and 4 is the result of being ‘burdened’ *bareo*. Those of you who have listened to weather reports will be acquainted with the term “isobars”, or “lines connecting places on the map having the same barometric pressure”. Hence “barometer”, a measure of pressure. We shall appreciate the better the Apostle’s use of this word *bareo* in II Cor. i. 8, where he says “We were pressed out of measure”, in a context that speaks of “despairing even of life”, and having “the sentence of death”. On the other hand, we must not omit the exultant use of this same word, this time the noun *baros* as the apostle approaches II Cor. v., where he uses this term for pressure in the phrase “The far more exceeding eternal *weight* of glory” (II Cor. iv. 17). While the listing of the number of occurrences of *baros* and its derivatives may be

outside our legitimate enquiry, this word is so used in II Corinthians as to warrant the following list before we pass on to other epistles.

Baros and its derivatives in II Corinthians:

Pressed out of measure. (i. 8).
Overcharged. (ii. 5).
Weight of glory. (iv. 17).
Being burdened. (v. 4).
Weighty. (x. 10).
Not being burdensome. (xi. 9).
I did not burden you. (xii. 16).

We return to our main theme, namely the varied aspects of resurrection that the Scriptures present, and consider the meaning of the Apostle when he said:

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. v. 8).

These words are often incorrectly quoted as a proof text, “Absent from the body, *is to be present with the Lord*”, as a proof that at death the believer immediately passes into an intermediate conscious state in glory. Let us first of all notice that at the introduction of this willingness, the Apostle says “We are confident”. In this second epistle “confidence” can be a “persuasion” *pepoithesis* (II Cor. i. 15; iii. 4; viii. 22; x. 2), a substratum or ground *hupostasis* (II Cor. ix. 4; xi. 17), or courage and good cheer *tharreo* (II Cor. v. 6, 8; vii. 16). It is this last word that we have in II Cor. v. What was it that gave the Apostle this confidence and courage? He has been speaking about the contrasting facts, while here we live in a frail *tent*, in resurrection is awaiting us a “*building of God*”. For this he earnestly waited, and expressly ruled out from his expectations “being UNclothed”, which would apply to an “intermediate state”. He waited for and desired the day when “mortality” should be swallowed up of life, when “This mortal shall put on immortality” in resurrection as I Cor. xv. has so clearly revealed.

“Now He that hath wrought us for *the self same things* is God, Who also (i.e. before the day comes, and while we wait) hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (II Cor. v. 5).

This power, purpose and earnest, gives us confidence, enabling us to walk by faith while here in the body and absent from the Lord, and willing rather:

“to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

This was Paul’s ardent wish, but if it turned out to be the Lord’s will that he should remain here in the body, his confidence was unshaken. The earnest of the blessed hope was his, and as he wrote to the Hebrews:

“Faith is the substance (‘confidence’, ‘title deeds’) of things hoped for” (Heb. i. 1).

It is strange that in a passage where the Apostle so strongly sets aside desire to be “unclothed”, so many see a desire nevertheless for an intermediate state (that Scripture teaches must wait for the resurrection and the body of glory). II Cor. v. is an inspired expansion of I Cor. xv., and both agree together.

The testimony of Hebrews.

What is the teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews as to resurrection? The actual word “resurrection” occurs but twice, namely in Heb. vi. 2 and xi. 35. *Anistemi* ‘to raise’ is found in vii. 11, 15. *Egeiro* ‘to raise’ occurs in xi. 19. It would be, however, misleading to assume that the resurrection either of Christ Himself or of His redeemed people is not looked upon as vital and fundamental in this epistle, just because the actual words were not scattered all over its pages. Let us open the Book and commence reading at chapter i. 1. We do not go further than verse 3 before the resurrection, though not stated, is assumed.

“When He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. . 3).

How could the Saviour ‘sit down’ at the right hand of God *after* He had purged our sins, unless He had been raised from the dead? In chapter ii., Christ not only came to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”, but to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. ii. 14, 15). How could He accomplish this, unless He, and they who were to be delivered, were raised from the dead?

Chapter iii. calls upon us to consider Him, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. The Apostle “came from God”, the High Priest “went to God”, and the Melchisedec Priesthood of Christ is placed in vivid contrast with the Aaronic order, in this one particular, they died; He ever lives.

“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue *by reason of death*: But this Man, *because He continueth ever*, hath an unchangeable (or an intransmissible) priesthood, and ‘He ever liveth’ to make intercession for His people” (vii. 23-25).

It is useless to exhort us to look unto Jesus Who endured the cross and despised the shame, unless we can add “And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews xii. 2). And finally, the closing commendation of Heb. xiii. 20 demands His resurrection:

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make your perfect in every good work”

The fact of the resurrection of Christ is everywhere assumed and taught in this epistle, and we need not labour our proofs further. There are other references to resurrection that demand our careful attention, and two immediately come to mind:

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ resurrection of the dead” (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection” (Heb. xi. 35).

These two passages are related together as “Hope” is to “Prize”. If we are really exhorted to *leave* “the first principles”, we can find, alas, many who would readily welcome us into their apostate ranks, but we are happy to say that Heb. vi. 1 teaches no such thing.

The fact that this chapter commences with the word “therefore” makes any interpretation that does not arise logically out of the preceding chapter of no value. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul had to say much the same of them as he here says of these Hebrews, and it will be sufficient to set this out before the eye, thus:

I Corinthians ii. & iii.		Hebrews v. & vi.	
Babes	iii. 1	Babes	v. 13
Milk	iii. 2	Milk	v. 13
Meat	iii. 2	Meat	v. 14
Perfect	ii. 6	Perfect	v. 14
One Foundation	iii. 11	Foundation	vi. 1, 2
Fire	iii. 13	Fire	vi. 8
Six elements	iii. 12	Six elements	vi. 1, 2

The Apostle complained to the Hebrews, that though for the time they should have been teachers, they needed that one should teach them again “the first principles” of the oracles of God. This he likened to “milk”, but urged that those “of full age” (Greek ‘perfect’) should go on to the solid food of an adult. “And this we will do”, said the Apostle, “if God permit”. The margin of the A.V. corrects the wrong impression that the translation “Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ” gives, for it reads:

“Leaving the Word of *the beginning* of Christ (to which we add) let us go on unto perfection, *teleios*, from *telos* ‘the end’.”

Here is no abandonment of first principles, but a recognition that there was much more in the will of God than those Hebrews realized. “The resurrection” still remained a basic and fundamental truth, but what did these believers know of a “better resurrection” (Heb. xi. 35)? *This* and all that goes with it is the theme of the Hebrews epistle. Not salvation, but “*the things that accompany* salvation”. Believing God as “Rewarder” as well as Saviour (Heb. xi. 6), with Abraham and Moses as examples of those who gladly relinquish present joys for the better things, Abraham looking for “a better country”, and Moses esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the *recompense of the reward* (xi. 10, 16, 24-26). Just as Philippians is the epistle of the “Prize” for the Body of Christ, so Hebrews is the epistle of the “Reward” for the church of the Acts period, and both are connected by the key words:

Philippians.		Hebrews.	
Perfection	iii. 12	Perfection	vi. 1
Perdition	iii. 19	Perdition	x. 39
The Prize	iii. 14	The Race	xii. 1
The “out-resurrection”	iii. 11	The “better-resurrection”	xi. 35
Work in . . . His will	ii. 13	Work in . . . His will	xiii. 21
Enemies of Cross	iii. 18	Crucify afresh	vi. 6

[For a fuller comparison, see *The Alphabetical Analysis*, Part 3, p.162.]

We cannot conclude this survey without noting the reference to Abraham and Isaac in chapter xi.:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten Son accounting that God was able to *raise him up, even from the dead*; from whence also he received him in a figure” (xi. 17-19).

To conclude our testimony, we must now pass in review the Prison Epistles of the Apostle Paul, and then exhibit the witness of the book of the Revelation.

No.9. The Witness of the Epistles. pp. 181 - 184

The Prison Epistles.

If this study was devoted to dispensational differences, we should have to set out the reasons why Paul’s prison epistles must be segregated, as they deal with a parenthesis as it were in the outworking of the purpose of the ages, known as the “dispensation of the Mystery” (Eph. iii. 9 R.V.), and revealed through the Apostle Paul after the dismissal of Israel at the close of Acts xxviii. As it is, we are dealing with a subject that knows no dispensational boundaries, but is as universal in its need as is the death that necessitates it. However, it will be necessary to differentiate between the resurrection as it is used in Ephesians and Colossians, and that which the Apostle sought to “attain unto” in Phil. iii. 11.

The testimony of Ephesians.

The resurrection has been so firmly attested, and is so integral to both the Gospel of salvation and the consequent hope and destiny of the redeemed, that, writing to a church already established in the faith, the resurrection is in every reference assumed as a fact, and applied as a doctrine influencing practice.

After the revelation of Eph. i. 3-14 which sets forth the threefold basis or distinctive character of this dispensation which can be summarized as:

- (1) The WILL of the Father (i. 3-6).
- (2) The WORK of the Son (i. 7-12).
- (3) The WITNESS of the Spirit (i. 13, 14).

The Apostle follows by a threefold prayer, which embraces:

- (1) The Hope of His calling (i. 18).
- (2) The Riches of His inheritance (i. 18).
- (3) The exceeding greatness of His power (i. 19).

It is the last member that brings to bear the resurrection of Christ upon the believer:

“That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, far above all” (Eph. i. 18-21).

The word translated “exceeding” is the Greek word *hyperballo* which gives its name to a figure of speech *hyperbole*, meaning an exaggeration. Here, there is no exaggeration intended but something surpassing the common experience of man. *Hyperballo* is used three times in Ephesians, as follows:

- (1) Exceeding power (i. 19).
- (2) Exceeding riches (ii. 7).
- (3) Exceeding knowledge (iii. 19).

No attempt is made by the Apostle to ‘explain’ the greatness of the miracles that resurrection involves. He applies it to the believer, saying “to usward who believe”, and commencing with resurrection, he goes on to the Ascension, the Headship and the Fullness, for which, “exceeding greatness of power” was a necessity. We must not miss however the object of another power which had worked in the believer in his unregenerate days, “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. ii. 1-3). Here the word “power” is *exousia* “authority”, which is translated “power” in Eph. i. 21. The Ascension which necessitates the resurrection, figures prominently in Eph. iv. 8-12, where it is associated with gifts of ministry, and the concept of resurrection meets us once more in the exhortation:

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. v. 14).

In Colossians, where this same word “authority” is used:

“Who hath delivered us from the authority of darkness”,

we find that the believer is said to have been “translated” (Col. i. 13). Here, in the sequel of Eph. ii. 6, we find the believer is:

“raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 6).

The testimony of Colossians.

Colossians, like Ephesians, speaks of “the hope” which is laid up for the believer. In the opening of the third chapter, Paul assumes that these believers are “risen with Christ”, assures them that their life is hid with Christ in God, and that when Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear “with Him in glory” (Col. iii. 4). What is potential in verse 1, “If ye then be risen with Christ”, will be actual when our hope is fulfilled “at His appearing”.

The testimony of Philippians.

The actual resurrection of Christ is not mentioned in this epistle. Knowing the teaching of the rest of Scripture, the resurrection is seen to be tacitly recognized in the reference “Unto the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. i. 6), or again in the second chapter, where “the death of the cross” is followed, not by “He was buried, and the third day rose from the dead”, but “wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him” (Phil. ii. 9). Common sense, apart from such references as Acts ii. 33, declares the resurrection is implied, though not stated. So also is it with the Apostle’s desire (Phil. i. 23). Instead of this absence being looked upon as an omission to be regretted, we shall discover that it focuses our attention all the more on one aspect of resurrection, which it is the especial office of this epistle to elaborate. This is expressed in the words of chapter iii. 11-21:

“That I may know Him,
And the power of His resurrection,
And the fellowship of His sufferings,
Being made conformable unto His death;
If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (iii. 10, 11).

The two words mostly translated ‘to know’ are seen in the Greek *oida*, meaning something seen or perceived, and *ginosko*, meaning obtain a personal insight into, so, as Dr. Bullinger, in his Lexicon put is:

“Hence the force of (this word) in Matt. 7:23, ‘I have never had a true and personal connection with you’.”

The Apostle is here expressing a desire for a deeper, personal knowledge not merely of doctrine and dispensation, but of intimate association. The words that follow indicate the direction of his thoughts:

“and the power of His resurrection.”

No one could be more convinced of the historic fact of the resurrection of Christ than Paul, but here, he wants to know its “power”. Once again, we must recognize that the Apostle has in mind some extraordinary experiences, for in his earlier epistles, the association of ‘power’ with the resurrection is emphasized:

“Declared to be the Son of God *with power* by the resurrection” (Rom. i. 4).
“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by *His own power*”
(I Cor. vi. 14).

“Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the *power of God* we shall live with Him by the *power of God*” (II Cor. xiii. 4).

“That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of *His power* to usward who believe which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead far above all” (Eph. i. 18-21).

The knowledge that the Apostle craved in Phil. iii. 10 was something special, it included the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity unto His death. *Koinonia* “fellowship” is used three times in Philippians:

“Your fellowship in the gospel” (i. 5).

“If any fellowship of the Spirit” (ii. 1).

“The fellowship of His sufferings” (iii. 10).

In each there is some element of suffering and sacrifice, as the contexts will reveal (Phil. i. 5 with iv. 14-18). Fellowship with the ‘sufferings’ of Christ must not be confused with the substitutionary death of the Lord. In that, no man can participate, but Paul could write of himself, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the church” (Col. i. 24), and even though he could thus write, he still realizes that there is something deeper, and possible, and he does not shrink from the prospect of taking these sufferings to the bitter end, “being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. iii. 10).

Morphe ‘form’, *summorphoomai* ‘conform’, *summorphos* ‘fashioned’, show the way in which this word is used in Philippians. It indicates the infinite condescension of the Lord Who, being in the “form of God”, emptied Himself by taking on Him the “form of a servant”, and the being found “in fashion” as a man, further humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 6-8). This condescension is echoed in Phil. iii. 21:

“Who shall change	<i>metaschematizo</i>
our vile body	<i>tapeinosis</i>
that it may be fashioned like	<i>summorphos</i>
to His body of glory.”	

Schema is rendered ‘fashion’ (ii. 8); *etapeinosen* “He humbled Himself” (ii. 8); *morphe* ‘form’ of a servant (ii. 7). The association of Phil. ii. 7-11, the Lord’s humiliation and subsequent glory, is echoed in Phil. iii. 21, the believer’s share in both the humbling and the likeness of His body of glory in resurrection.

In Phil. iii. 21, being made conformable unto the body of His glory is in view, whereas in Phil. iii. 10, it is conformity unto death that the Apostle envisaged. The ‘death’ which the Apostle had in mind is “the death of the cross” (Phil. ii. 8), and the particular aspect of this death is indicated by the reference to those whose walk constituted them as “enemies of the cross of Christ”. This enmity was not so much the enmity of “sin”, but in the opposition subsequent to the “following” of the “example” of both Paul and his Lord:

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction,

whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)” (Phil. iii. 17-19).

**No.10. The Witness of the Epistles.
The Witness of the Book of the Revelation.
pp. 201 - 204**

Let us now consider the approach to, and the actual goal which the Apostle had before him in Phil. iii. 11.

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Eipos “If by any means” is used four times in the N.T. and in every case the contingency is very real and the possibility of failure is stressed:

“If by any means they might attain to Phenice” (Acts xxvii. 12).

“If by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey” (Rom. i. 10).

“If by any means I may provoke to emulation” (Rom. xi. 14).

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. iii. 11).

In the A.V. there is no indication that the ‘resurrection’ about which the Apostle entertained some uncertainty was something special. “The better resurrection” of Hebrews xi. 35 and “the first resurrection” of Rev. xx. 4-6 carry with them this element of distinction, but the A.V. has not allowed the original of Phil. iii. 11 that right. The Received Text reads:

Ten exanastasin ton nekron “The out-resurrection from the dead”.

The Critical Texts read:

Ten exanastasin ten ek nekron “The out-resurrection, that which is out from dead ones”.

The presence of this word *ek* “out” is important, and indicates something over and above “the hope of the resurrection” as may be seen in the following occurrence. While we may admit that the Apostles, during the Lord’s earthly ministry showed remarkable slowness to apprehend the truth, we can at least believe that they were as far advanced as to hold with the Pharisees the resurrection of the dead. How comes it then that when Christ said to them that they should tell no man what they had seen “till the Son of Man were risen from the dead” that they questioned one another “What the rising from the dead should mean” (Mark ix. 10)? If we turn to the original we shall see that it was the added “*ek*” that caused the problem. Till the Son of Man were risen “OUT FROM dead ones”. We turn to Luke xx. 35 and take a step further in this quest,

“But they which shall be *accounted worthy to obtain* that world, and the resurrection, that which is *out from* the dead ones.”

The word “obtain” is used in II Tim. ii. 10:

“That they may *also obtain* that salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”,
and is used again in Heb. xi. 35:

“That they *might obtain* a better resurrection.”

It is important to distinguish, moreover, between the word “attain” and “obtain”, and this is not made clear in Phil. iii. 11, 12 A.V. but is recognized in the R.V. The A.V. repetition of the word “attain” in Phil. iii. 12 gives continuity to the Apostle’s argument, but two different words are employed, *katantao* in verse 11, and *lambano* in verse 12. The change from ‘attaining’ to ‘obtaining’ reveals the change in the Apostle’s objective.

- (1) he sought to “attain” to the out-resurrection.
- (2) he hoped subsequently to “obtain” the Prize.

This is made clear by a reference to I Cor. ix. 24, 25 where *lambano* occurs twice. “One *receiveth* the prize”; “to *obtain* a corruptible crown”. This most blessed attainment is in view at the close of Phil. iii. In contrast with those whose walk was so contrary to their calling the Apostle says:

“For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

We might be helped by another translation of this passage, and Moffatt has brought out one or two significant features:

“But we are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour Who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform the body that belongs to our low estate till it resembles the body of His glory, by the same power that enables Him to make everything subject to Himself.”

We must now pass on to the book of the Revelation to complete this survey, and there we shall have a parallel case where the “first resurrection” of Rev. xx. is in the same category as “the out-resurrection” of Philippians, although the citizenship of the one is the New Jerusalem and the citizenship of the other is “Far above all where Christ sitteth”.

The testimony of the Apocalypse.

The fact that the book of the Revelation speaks of a future day of the Lord, the day when He Who once wore a crown of thorns shall come with many crowns, “Kings of kings and Lord of lords”, is of itself a testimony to the resurrection, for there could be no ‘Second Coming’ if the first coming of the Saviour had ended in the grave. The title of Christ, given early in the first chapter is:

“The First begotten from the dead” (Rev. i. 5).

This title is found in Col. i. 18. Here in Rev. i., the title is followed by “The Prince of the kings of the earth”, whereas in line with its distinctive teaching, this title is followed in Col. i. 18 with the words “That in *all things* (not only over kings on earth) He might have the pre-eminence”.

The opening vision of the Saviour was such, that we read that John “fell at His feet as dead”, but the Lord said:

“Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. i. 17, 18).

Here the Risen One is seen vested with full authority, and these keys are seen in Rev. xx. 1. In keeping with his whole history we find the Evil one giving a travesty of the resurrection in chapter xiii. 3:

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”

The word used here, “wounded”, is the same that is used of the “Lamb as it has been slain” (Rev. v. 6); “marveling” or “wondering” (*thaumazo*) is associated with both the false and the true resurrection. “Marvel not at this” (John v. 28), the disciples ‘wondered’ (Luke xxiv. 41); for the raising of the dead is indeed a marvelous miracle. The special reference to resurrection however in the Revelation is that spoken of in chapter xx.:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION” (Rev. xx. 4, 5).

What does the Apostle mean by “the first resurrection”? The Greek word so translated is *protos*, and this same word is translated “former” in Rev. xxi. 4 where the reference is not to the primal creation of Gen. i. 1, but to the creation of the six days. So, Luke could not say “The first treatise have I made” (Acts i. 1) but “the former treatise” when referring to the Gospel under his name. *Proteros* and *proteron* in Ephesians iv. 22, Heb. x. 32 and I Pet. i. 14, refer to something earlier by comparison. In Rev. xx. 5, 6 two resurrections are in view, namely the resurrection of “the overcomers”, who live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and “the rest of the dead” who do not live again until the thousand years are finished. On such as attain to this

“former resurrection”, the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Judgment according to “works” is repeated seven times in the letters to the churches (Rev. ii. and iii.), and “the overcomer” is specially addressed with words of encouragement in each church:

Ephesus	Promise	Paradise (ii. 7 and xxii. 2).
Smyrna	Promise	Second Death (ii. 11 and xx. 6).
Pergamos	Promise	New Name (ii. 17 and xix. 12).
Thyatira	Promise	Rod of Iron (ii. 27 and xii. 5).
Sardis	Promise	Not blot out (iii. 5 and xx. 12, 15).
Philadelphia	Promise	New Jerusalem (iii. 12 and xii. 2).
Laodicea	Promise	Sit in throne (iii. 21 and xx. 4).

Let us examine a little more closely those passages in these letters to the seven churches that impinge upon the subject before us namely, the resurrection.

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (ii. 11).

This assurance follows the reference to martyrdom:

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. ii. 10).

It is impossible to read these two verses as though they said “You will have a crown—so do not fear Hell”! Why should such an assurance be necessary? Again in Rev. iii. 5 “He that overcometh, shall clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life”.

The Book of Life (Rev. iii. 5; xx. 12, 15).

If the book of life mentioned here contains the names of all the elect, the redeemed and the saved, such passages as Rom. viii. 31-39 and John x. 28, 29 preclude the idea that a believer can ever be “lost” or his name blotted out. If this book of life refers to the gift of eternal life, it is a gratuitous promise to tell the “overcomer” that he will not have his name blotted out of that book; the possibility does not arise. In Rev. xiii. 8 and Rev. xvii. 8 the book of life is linked with the words “from the foundation of the world”, and a reference to Luke xi. 50, 51 will associate this period with martyrdom, thus:

“That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel”

The book of life in the Revelation is the Lamb’s “Book of Martyrs”. Paul speaks of the book of life once, *not* in Romans or Ephesians, but in the epistle of the “Prize”, namely Philippians. Epaphroditus had risked his life in service, and with “Clement” and other fellow laborers (not simply fellow believers) had their names in “the book of life”. The “Lamb’s” book of life in the context we are considering may be limited to the calling that is in view in the Apocalypse. If the Lord could promise the overcomer that He would NOT blot his name out of the book of life, for the Lord does not trifle with His people, it must mean that those who failed to overcome did run that risk. And inasmuch

as the *gift* of eternal life could not be at stake, then a *prize*, crown or reward must be in view.

Here for the time we must stop. We conclude this study with the words of Col. iii. 4, "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory". Let us "live looking for that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 12-14).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The Saved only, or Saved and unsaved?

There is no doubt whatsoever that resurrection is one of the most important and basic doctrines of the Scriptures. Without it salvation is a mockery, and the whole Divine purpose of redemption falls to pieces. It is not therefore dispensational, that is, belonging to any particular stewardship of truth, but runs as a foundation throughout every dispensation. Each dispensation has a resurrection as the means of attaining its *prize*, and also as a means of attaining its *hope*, and these need to be distinguished, otherwise contradiction and difficulty will result.

However, we are not concerned at the moment to elaborate this, but to ask if the Scriptures teach that the unsaved will be raised from the dead? Some definitely assert that this is not so. Certain movements have held this as a doctrine for many years, so there is nothing new in this view. Others believe it because they say they cannot see any point in God raising unsaved sinners from the grave. Let us state this at the outset. Our knowledge or capacity to understand is no basis for truth. If it were so, many of us would have a very small Bible! There is one criterion and one only, namely, what saith the Scriptures? And so to the Word of God we turn.

To those whose minds are already made up, John iii. 36 settles the matter:

“ He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

But what does John mean by “life”? Fortunately we need be in no doubt of this. He uses the word *zoe*, life, 36 times, alternating “life” with “eternal life”:

Life (i. 4).
Eternal life (iii. 15, 16, 36).
Life (iii. 36).
Eternal life (iv. 15, 36; v. 24).
Life (v. 24, 26, 29).
Eternal life (v. 39).
Life (v. 40).
Eternal life (vi. 27).
Life (vi. 33, 35).
Eternal life (vi. 40, 47).
Life (vi. 48, 51, 53).
Eternal life (vi. 54).
Life (vi. 63).
Eternal life (vi. 68).
Life (viii. 12; x. 10).
Eternal life (x. 28).
Life (xi. 25).
Eternal life (xii. 25, 50).
Life (xiv. 6).
Eternal life (xvii. 2, 3).
Life (xx. 31).

A consideration of all these passages will surely show that not once does the writer use “life” as pertaining to this present life. The expression “eternal life” needs care, as sometimes it is used as a free gift, and in other cases as a reward, as in the Gospel of Matthew. But this is not our subject at the moment, nor whether we should render *aionios* everlasting or age-abiding. The life that John speaks of is resident only in Christ (John xiv. 6; I John v. 11), and is experienced only by the regenerate. *This is the life that the unsaved will not see or enjoy.* But this does not prove that there cannot be a resurrection to a different kind of life, or a restoration to natural life. Lazarus was both dead and buried, yet, at the command of the One Who said “I am the Resurrection and the Life”, he came forth alive from the grave. But with what kind of life? Did he put on corruption and immortality? If so, he ought to be with us today? In Matt. xxvii. 52, 53 we read:

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose; And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.”

Here is a similar resurrection to that of Lazarus, and on this occasion it touched many. In Heb. xi. 35 the writer states:

“Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

This verse sets *two* resurrections side by side, a resurrection to what we may call natural life, that is, the present one, and in this case it cannot be limited to the saved as previously. The other resurrection is “better”, that is, contrasted with the previous natural life, in that it gives incorruption and immortality and leads to a prize or crown. To get the truth on this subject balanced and complete, we must completely keep these two kinds of resurrection in mind.

Charles H. Welch, who was one of the profoundest students of Scripture of this century, after careful examination, rejected the doctrine of the non-resurrection of the unsaved. Not that he claimed infallibility, but at least, if we want truth, we should give attention to and test what he has written. Those who have *The Alphabetical Analysis Part 7* should carefully read pages 203-210. For those who do not have this we will summarize. John v. 27-29 reads:

“ the Father hath given the Son to have life in Himself and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done (practiced) evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Before we go any further, we must stress one golden rule of interpretation and that is, *a text can only be understood in the light of its context.* This rule never varies, and if broken, will only lead to error and disaster. It has been suggested that those who are raised to the resurrection of condemnation or judgment are saved people who are carnal, such as some of the Corinthians were (I Cor. iii. 1, 3). But we search in vain for any such

idea in this passage. Rather is it an expansion of the truth of *salvation* offered to all who believe in Christ, not the service of those already saved:

“. . . . He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*” (v. 24).

The careful reader will note that the regenerate is guaranteed that he *will not come into condemnation or judgment*. Therefore the resurrection unto judgment of those who practiced evil cannot apply only to the saved otherwise we have a direct contradiction. Moreover, *ALL that are in the graves must be universal*, and therefore unbelievers must be included. The word *krisis* translated ‘damnation’ (A.V.) or ‘judgment’ (R.V.) occurs five times in John v., namely verses 22, 24, 27, 29 and 30, and these should be studied carefully.

Mr. Welch continues:

This, however, is not all. There is but one occurrence of *krisis* written in John’s Gospel before this fifth chapter and that is John iii. 19, “This is the condemnation”, and it is of the utmost importance because it contains not only the word *krisis*, but *the only other occurrence* in the four Gospels of the words translated “done evil”. These words are in the original *hoi ta phaula praxantes* (John v. 29), and *pas ho phaula prasson* (John iii. 19), the one reading, “those that evil things having practiced”, the other reading “every one who practices evil things”. Nowhere else does John use the verb *prasso* (practice) throughout his writings than in John iii. 20 and John v. 29. Nowhere else does John use *phaulos* (evil) than in these self-same passages. The conclusion is irresistible. John v. *is a continuation and expansion of John iii.*, and if John iii. deals with two classes, the saved and the lost, John v. deals with them also. If John iii. deals with one class, the saved, which are divided into two companies, then John v. will teach the same. Let us, therefore, turn to John iii., and examine this passage afresh.

The section commences with verse 14 and ends with verse 21. Two classes and two classes only are envisaged in the passage where Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Those who lived, and those who perished, and these alternatives are clearly stated in verse 16. At the close of the chapter, the testimony of John iii. 14-21 is summed up:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (36).

They that have done good—the resurrection of LIFE.

They that have practiced evil—the resurrection of judgment, condemnation and wrath.

“This is the condemnation.” Such hate the light and will not come to it, lest their evil deeds be exposed. Those who enter the resurrection of life are said to have done ‘truth’, and that their deeds are ‘wrought in God’. John iii. 36 contains the only reference in this Gospel to the wrath of God. His other references, namely Rev. vi. 16, 17; xi. 18; xiv. 10; xvi. 19 and xix. 15, cannot possibly speak of the redeemed.

Whatever future judgment the saved person may have for the quality of his service (I Cor. iii. 11-15), he certainly will not experience God's wrath. Rom. v. 9 expressly declares that ". . . . being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him", and further such is assured that he will not come into condemnation (Rom. viii. 1). However, the solemn occurrences of wrath in the book of Revelation show that this is directed primarily against the LIE and Babylonianism. *Wrath is never associated with Adam's sin.* Though the heart of God must have been intensely grieved at the sin of Adam, we do not once read of wrath in Gen. iii. We have heard it that when the unsaved die they are experiencing the wrath of God. But this is putting Divine wrath in a wrong context. Many an unregenerate man has died peacefully in his bed, and if this is experiencing God's wrath we do not wonder if some think the awfulness of this has been greatly exaggerated. The day of wrath, as the Book of the Revelation teaches, is yet future, and it is a most solemn and terrible experience to undergo as the seven vial judgments testify, for in them "is completed the wrath of God" (Rev. xv. 1, 7).

The Apostle Paul told the pagan philosophers at Athens, that God "will judge *the world* in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). These philosophers were certainly not saved, so Paul is *not* addressing saved people who were walking carnally, and in order for the message to have had a very practical bearing, it must have included them when they were informed of this future day of judgment, in which case they will be raised from the dead. Later on in Acts xxiv. 15, Paul declares before Felix, that there will be a "resurrection of the dead, both of the just *and the unjust*", and Felix trembled when he heard of "judgment to come" (xxiv. 25). Can "unjust" ever describe a saved person? *Adikos* 'unjust' occurs eleven times, and we give the references (Matt. v. 45; Luke xvi. 10, 11; xviii. 11; Acts xxiv. 15; Rom. iii. 5 (??); I Cor. vi. 1, 9; Heb. vi. 10; I Pet. iii. 18; II Pet. ii. 9). The reader should consult each verse and note the context. There is only one reference that might be construed as referring to the saved, and that is the unjust steward of Luke xvi. But if the way the Holy Spirit has used a word is a guide to its meaning, then it must normally refer to the unsaved. "The *unrighteous* shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. vi. 9), and it is certain that *Paul never uses the word "unjust" of a saved person.* Peter, in his first epistle, refers to Christ bearing the sins of His people, "the Just for the unjust" (I Pet. iii. 18), and later on in the second epistle states that the "Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and *to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*" (II Pet. ii. 9). In the third chapter he declares "the heavens and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire *against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*" (iii. 7). These contexts cannot possibly relate to the saved. Peter is using the word 'ungodly' in exactly the same way that Jude does (see Jude 4, 15, 18).

(Matt. v. 45): That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the **unjust**.

(Luke xvi. 10): He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is **unjust** in the least is **unjust** also in much.

(Luke xvi. 11): If therefore ye have not been faithful in the **unrighteous**⁹⁴ mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

(Luke xviii. 11): The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, **unjust**, adulterers, or even as this publican.

(Acts xxiv. 15): And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and **unjust**.

(I Cor. vi. 1): Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the **unjust**, and not before the saints?

(I Cor. vi. 9): Know ye not that the **unrighteous** shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

(Heb. vi. 10): For God is not **unrighteous** to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

(I Pet. iii. 18): For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the **unjust**, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

(II Pet. ii. 9): The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the **unjust** unto the day of judgment to be punished:

We may well ask, who are those who are cast into the lake of fire in Rev. xx. 15? Are they the saved or the lost? In verse 12, John states that he saw the “dead, small and great, stand before God”. They were raised from the dead, for verse 13 says:

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (marg., the grave) delivered up the dead which were in them”

If the unregenerate are never to be raised from the grave, then these referred to in this context must all be saved people. This is the only occasion in Scripture which refers to a resurrection from the sea of those who have been drowned. Are we going to assert that only saved people have ever been drowned? Surely we must include the unsaved here!

In Matt. xi. the Lord begins to upbraid the cities in which most of His mighty works were done. Regarding Chorazin and Bethsaida He said:

“But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for *Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you*” (Matt. xi. 21),

and of Capernaum (verses 23, 24):

“. . . . for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it *shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.*”

There is surely no need to stress the character of the men of Sodom. They were certainly not the Lord’s children, yet He assures us there is a future reckoning for them and also for the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon who rejected Him after so much miraculous proof of His Messiahship. In the next chapter the Lord declares to the

opposing Pharisees and Scribes that the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South would rise in the judgment with “this generation” and condemn it. The word translated ‘rise’ is *anistemi* the normal word for physical resurrection, and is used some 38 times in this sense. The queen of the South was not of the chosen race of Israel, nor were the men of Nineveh. God had instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and warn them His judgment for their evil ways and God withheld the threatened judgment, for they had not filled their cup of iniquity. Assyria was well known for its violence and cruelty. The king of Nineveh sent out a decree that they should amend their ways and turn from “the violence that is in their hands” (Jonah iii. 8). “And God saw their *works that they turned from their evil way* and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not” (Jonah iii. 10).

However, the judgment did fall on Assyria later. It should be clear that the repentance of the Ninevites to which Christ refers in Matt. xii. was a cessation from their abounding sin that called for judgment. In no sense can we say that it turned the Ninevites into the people of God as Israel were. Yet they are to rise in resurrection and condemn the favoured generation to which the Lord came in the flesh!

Coming to the O.T. and Isa. xxvi. 14:

“They are dead, they shall not live; they are the deceased, they shall not rise, therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.”

The ‘deceased’ does not refer to ordinary human beings but to the *Rephaim*, having their origin in the days of Satan, corrupted all flesh on the earth except Noah and his family. The word is used in the singular and plural, and we see no valid reason for making any difference in the meaning of singular and plural for the simple reason that neither *rahphah* (singular) or *rephaim* (plural) are the normal words for death or the dead. These are *muth* translated to die some 420 times and *maveth* death 128 times. The *Rephaim*, as monsters, are to have no resurrection, “they shall not rise”. If the reader has *The Companion Bible* he should read appendices 23 and 25 which deal with this subject including the *Rephaim* very fully, also *The Berean Expositor* Volume XX, p.193 in the article “Who are the Deceased?” *The Companion Bible* notes each of the eight occurrences of the plural *Rephaim*, including Prov. xxi. 16, “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead (*rephaim*)”. (See also ii. 18 and *The Companion Bible* note). Prov. xxi. 16 clearly teaches that the sinner will end up in destruction like the *Rephaim*. The word remain ‘*nuach*’, does not mean “to permanently stay in” but “to rest”. Young’s *Literal Version* read “in an assembly of *Rephaim* resteth”, or Moffatt, “will find his rest among the dead below”. The assembly of the *Rephaim* is not a description of dead human beings as such. If it were, then the usual word *muth* would have been used and not *rephaim*. As *The Companion Bible* points out, there is no reason why this word, either singular or plural, should not be treated as a proper name, “*Rephaim*”, in all its occurrences and not just ten times as it is in the A.V. It would then be apparent that it does not refer to the normal dead, but to the monsters and their descendants of Gen. vi., and so cannot be used to support the idea that there is no resurrection for the unsaved.

As for Psa. i. 5 “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment”, the Hebrew *qum* (stand) is of frequent occurrence in the O.T. “Arise”, “rise”, “rise up” translates 354 of its occurrences. Its basic meaning is “to stand” or “stand firm”, and there is no need to render it in any other way in Psa. i. Moffatt’s version is “When judgments come, the ungodly shall not stand, nor shall the sinful last in the community of the just”. No indeed, they are likened to the chaff which is swept away by the wind (verse 4) which clearly shows what the phrase “the ungodly shall not stand” means. Psa. i. 5 surely gives no secure basis for teaching that the unregenerate have no resurrection from the dead.

We might further consider the implication of the challenging question put by the Apostle Paul in Rom. iii. 5, 6, “For then *how shall God judge the world?*” or of Heb. ix. 27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, *but after this the judgment*”, but we feel there is no need to pursue this matter any further. If only *one verse* of the Scriptures clearly teaches the raising to life of the unsaved, then we cannot assert with truth that they will be left in the grave for ever.

Does it really matter whether we believe this or not? Eph. vi. brings before us the armour that God has provided so that the child of God can be safe from the malignity of his great enemies, Satan and the world-rulers of this present darkness (vi. 12). *Truth is part of this protective shield* (verse 14). We dare not let error of any kind come in, otherwise there is a hole in the shield through which the fiery darts of the evil one will surely penetrate. Any departure from Truth simply gives place to the Devil, the arch-deceiver.

The N.T. clearly shows that resurrection is so basic and important that we cannot afford to be wrong about it in any detail. Hymenaeus and Philetus *did not deny* the truth of resurrection; they merely mis-dated it, yet this brought upon them the severe condemnation of the Apostle Paul, who asserted that such teaching had an evil effect on others and overthrew their faith, and in doing so militated against the progress of the Truth of God (II Tim. i. 17, 18). Men are not helpless machines. They are moral creatures with a responsibility to their Creator. To what degree this is so, only He knows and we do not pretend to judge. To those who have never had the witness of the Person and redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is conscience, the law in miniature, speaking to their minds (Rom. ii. 14-16). God is not only the righteous Judge of all His people, but the *Judge of all the earth*, the moral Governor of the Universe. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. xviii. 25). We leave the future of the unbeliever in His hands at the Day of Judgment.

Sanctification in the Epistles of the Mystery.

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Sanctification falls under 3 headings: (a) Elective. (b) Redemptive. (c) Progressive and practical. These three aspects of sanctification for the members of the church of the One body are set forth in three passages that are contained in Ephesians and Colossians.

1. *Elective.* “According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. i. 4).
2. *Redemptive.* “In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight” (Col. i. 22).
3. *Progressive.* “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. v. 26, 27).

Two words are repeated in these three references. One is evident to the English reader. The word “Holy” is in each passage *hagios* in the Greek. The second word *amomos* is translated “without blame” (Eph. i. 4); “without blemish” (Eph. v. 27); and “unblameable” (Col. i. 22). Sanctification and Holiness therefore can be considered as (1) A state in which there is “no blemish”. (2) A state in which there is “no blame”. These two states are further expanded and explained by the context and by the terms with which they are associated. These associations are (1) near, (2) remote. The near associations are such as “before Him”, “In His sight”, and such words as “cleanse”, “wash”, “spot”, “wrinkle”. The remote associations are the use of the word translated “without blemish”, in the typical offerings of the Levitical law. The other word “unreprouvable” is connected with the court of law, and so reveals that holiness includes justification and righteousness. This is a mighty theme, and demands our most prayerful attention, for the subject itself is one that has been “bought with a price!”

“Without blame”, “without blemish”, “unblameable” are three translations of the one word *amomos*.

This Greek word has two associations which necessarily colour its meaning (1) The use of the term in classical Greek. (2) The employment of the term by the LXX translation of the Hebrew O.T. The use of the term in the LXX is by far the most important so far as our understanding of the doctrine is concerned, but its use by the Greeks themselves is suggestive.

“A” in the word *amomos* is a negative, *mos* means “blame, ridicule, or disgrace”. *Momus* was the name given to the son of night, who is called “The critic of God”—the fault finder. The word was used by the Greeks in connection with their sacrifice. A *momoskopos* was one who looked for blemishes in the sacrificial animals, while a *momates* was a mocker, a scoffer.

The use of the term *momos* to refer to blemishes in the sacrificial victim is the one adopted by the translators of the LXX, and upon consulting the original Hebrew we discover that the Greek word *momos* occurs 17 times in the LXX and translates but one Hebrew word *mum*, meaning blemish, blot or spot. (Some concordances list *m'um* separately.) This Hebrew word is translated “blemish” 16 times, “blot” twice, and “spot” three times, one reference, namely Deut. xxxii. 5, being translated *mometos*, which leaves but three occurrences which are translated by some other Greek word.

There are two passages in Job which are translated from the LXX into English as follows:

“For thus shall thy countenance shine again, as pure water” (Job xi. 15).
“If too I have touched gifts with my hands” (Job xxxi. 7).

In the first passage Zophar the Naamathite is urging Job to put away wickedness, which he supposed was the cause of Job’s affliction. In the second passage Job maintains his integrity and brings his defence to a close. The value of these two passages is that the “blemishlessness” of the Levitical sacrifice employs a word that originally pertained to the realm of morals, “blame” being predicated only of moral intelligent creatures, “blemishlessness” being its equivalent in non-moral types. This moral meaning reappears in the book of Proverbs, as we might have anticipated, where it occurs in Prov. ix. 7, and which the LXX is translated by the English “shall disgrace himself”.

A somewhat problematic passage is that found in Deut. xxxii. 5 where the A.V. reads “They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not *the* spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation”.

This the R.V. retranslates as follows:

“They have dealt corruptly with Him, they are not His children, it is their blemish: they are a perverse and crooked generation.”

Coming now to the employment of the term in the Levitical law, we find that it is used of the physical condition of both priest and offering:

“Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God” (Lev. xxi. 17).

A list follows that includes being blind, lame, flat-nosed, anything superfluous, scurvy or scabbed.

Concerning the offering, it is written:

“Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish but whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you it shall be perfect to be accepted” (Lev. xxii. 19-21).

The fact that the word “blemish” originally had a moral significance shows that the Levitical sacrifices were no dead formalism, which the prophets repudiated, demanding

in their stead a moral and just manner of life (Micah vi. 6-8). It was because Israel failed to relate the physical blemishlessness of the sacrifice with the moral requirement of the law that the Prophets used such scathing language as they did.

When therefore we read in Eph. i. 4 that the church was chosen that it should be “without blame”; when we read in Col. i. 22 that those who were aliens by wicked works had not only been reconciled, but presented “unblameable”; and when Eph. v. 27 uses the words “without blemish” of the Church, we realize that by electing grace, by redeeming love, and by the continuous washing of the water of the Word, the spiritual equivalent of both priest and sacrifice in Israel’s Tabernacle service becomes a reality in the dispensation of grace.

Col. i. 22 adds to this condition yet another—“unreproveable”. *Anekletos* occurs but five times in the Greek N.T. and in the passages other than that of Col. i. it is translated “blameless” (I Cor. i. 8; I Tim. iii. 10; Titus i. 6, 7).

Egkaleo from which this word is derived is a law-court term, and occurs 7 times in the Greek N.T. Six of these occurrences are found in the Acts (xix. 38, 40; xxiii. 28, 29; xxvi. 2, 7), where the word is translated in the A.V. “implead”, “be called in question”, or “accuse”. The seventh occurrence is in that glorious chapter, the eighth chapter of Romans, where the challenge rings out “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” The accuser’s place in the court of law was at the right hand. “Satan standing at his right hand” (Zech. iii. 1), “let Satan stand at his right hand” (Psa. cix. 6). When however the Apostle contemplates the challenge in the High Court of God, He sees Christ “Who is even at the right hand of God” (Rom. viii. 34). The holiness of the believer therefore is set forth in terms both of Tabernacle and Law Court. Associated with these terms are subsidiary, but important ones, that should not be passed over without remark. This state of blemishlessness is said to be “before Him” (Eph. i. 4) and “in His sight” (Col. i. 22). There is no difference however in the original, the word in both passages being *katenopion*. The root *op*, whether written with a long or short “o”, while originally separate, have become merged in the process of time, and refer to the “eye”, and *optano* means “to see”. The reader will recognize the origin of the English words “optics” and “optician”. *Enopion* in the simpler form is of frequent occurrence, and is found in the phrases “in the sight of God” (II Cor. iv. 2) and “before God” (Acts vii. 46). *Katenopion* the intensive form occurs but five times, as follows:

“*In the sight of God speak we in Christ*” (2 Cor. 2:17).

“*We speak before God in Christ*” (2 Cor. 12:19).

“*That we should be holy and without blame before Him*” (Eph. 1:4).

“*Holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight*” (Col. 1:22).

“*To present you faultless before the presence of His glory*” (Jude 24).

That searching Eye that the Apostle acknowledged, looked into his heart and discerned his motives (II Cor. ii. 17; xii. 19) from which the unredeemed must shrink in fear, that searching Eye, looking upon the sinner saved by grace, pronounces over him the words of the O.T. “Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee” (Cant.4:7). These three passages, presenting as they do three aspects of sanctification, are of supreme interest to every member of the One body. We will not go into the great question of the

doctrine of election, neither can we discuss the true translation of the word *katabole*, translated in Eph. i. 4 “foundation” for the present purpose. It amounts to much the same thing whether we read that this intention on the part of God, that the Church should be “holy and without blemish” dates from before the ‘foundation’ of the world, or from its ‘overthrow’ as recorded in Gen. i. 2. In either case, the choice took place long ages before man was created, consequently human merit plays no part in it. Here we are on the ground of sheer grace.

In Colossians, the subject shifts forward into time, and deals with the object of sanctification as one who had become an ‘alien’ and an ‘enemy’ by wicked works. Here election is unmentioned, it is redemption that is the only ground upon which we stand.

“In the body of His flesh through death” places sanctification squarely upon the basis of the One offering, where by the very nature of things, all human merit or co-operation is impossible.

In the third phase, sanctification is likened to “washing”, and the washing is brought about by “the Word” which is likened to “water”. While the passage ends, as do the others with the words “holy and without blemish”, this condition is here interpreted as being without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”. This is the practical, the progressive, the day-to-day sanctification, the growth in grace that arises from and is entirely dependent on the elective and redemptive phases already considered. Finally, in two places, the word “present” is used.

“In the body of His flesh through death to present you” (Col. i. 22).

“That He might present it to Himself a glorious church” (Eph. v. 27).

It will be remembered that in Jude also we read “to present you faultless”, but it must be noted, that while Jude 24 uses the word *histemi*, “to set, place or station”, Ephesians and Colossians use *paristemi*, “to set, place or station ALONGSIDE”, so near, so high, so wonderful is the high calling of God made known in the dispensation of the Mystery. This word occurs 12 times in the Gospels, 13 times in the Acts and 14 times in Paul’s epistles, and the fourteen passages in Paul’s epistles contain enough teaching to justify a separate study. This we commend to the reader who would be fully apprized of the wonder of His calling in grace.